

## **LANGUAGE-PICTURE INTERACTION IN ADVERTISEMENTS: A MULTIMODAL APPROACH**

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Original scientific paper

DOI: 10.31902/flj.40.2022.12

UDK 81'42:659

**Abstract:** This article studies interesting print advertisements, i.e., those with intriguing pictures, which are viewed here as types of multimodal discourse with an implicit transfer of meaning. It proposes that the advertisements have a unique surface structure, involving concise verbal and unexpected visual elements in interaction, which at the cognitive level prompt multimodal metaphors and metonymies used for inferring meaning. The aims are 1) to show that the intended meaning mainly stems from the interaction of two modes, i.e., language and picture, 2) to specify the dominating types of verbo-visual interaction, and 3) to point to the use of multimodal metaphor and metonymy as the main cognitive structures underlying the carefully designed structure of creative advertisements. Five common types of verbo-visual interaction are identified, whereby surface, i.e., verbo-visual and cognitive dimensions in creating meaning are unified. The specified types of verbal and visual elements in interaction are based on the notion of the level of verbal figurativeness and the visual creative continuum, rather than the notion of rhetorical figures. The article detects the typical functions of multimodal metaphor and metonymy and particularly stresses the role of multimodal metonymy in interaction with multimodal metaphor and the RESULT FOR ACTION multimodal metonymy. It is proposed that the picture acts as an attention-grabber, but that meaning inference results from the interaction of the language and the picture, i.e., multimodality.

**Keywords:** advertisements, English, language, picture, cognitive, multimodality, metaphor, metonymy

### **1. Introduction**

The present article studies print advertisements with intriguing visual elements, which are here viewed as types of multimodal discourse with an implicit transfer of meaning. They employ the soft-selling advertising strategy (Cook 2001), which rather than directly informing, affects people's positive feelings (Silaški 2009, 931-932), or in other words, establishes a metaphorical link with concepts representing a desired quality – jet-set yachts suggest prestige, a beaming baby health, etc. (Ungerer 2000, 325).

We hypothesize that the specific purpose of advertisements – *to sell a product* – dictates their unique structure, which is multimodal and commonly encompasses a dominating picture often with a *conceptual clash* (Filipović Kovačević 2013, 20), a logically unusual combination of concepts. Furthermore, we hypothesize that the picture in advertisements primarily functions as an attention grabber and that message inference relies on combining verbal and visual cues. In particular, this article strives to further studies of communication in advertising by pinpointing dominating types of language and picture interaction in creating implied meaning and by specifying conceptual metaphors and metonymies underlying the verbo-visual elements in advertisements. As such, it covers two dimensions – surface, i.e., verbo-visual and deep, i.e., cognitive.

So far there have been three major trends in advertising research from the perspective of language and communication. First, studies into advertising focused on language, dominantly on various rhetorical figures of speech (e.g., Leigh 1994; McQuarrie and Mick 1996; McGuire 2000; Fuertes-Olivera, et al. 2001; Mulken van, van Enscjot-van Dijk and Hans Hoeken 2005). A significant step in advertising research occurred with the recognition of the importance of the visual element itself and its interaction with language. Phillips and McQuarrie (2004, 113) claim that “the reliance on pictures to persuade has become a distinctive feature of advertising”, while McQuarrie and Phillips (2005) empirically show that visual figures are more effective than verbal ones since they evoke inferences spontaneously at the time of ad exposure. This approach encompasses studying visual rhetorical figures (e.g., Scott 1994; McQuarrie and Mick 1999), with a special focus on visual metaphor (e.g., Forceville 1996; Kennedy, Green and Vervaeke 1993; Phillips 1997), and the pun in the visual form (e.g., McQuarrie and Mick 1992), their comprehension (e.g., McQuarrie and Mick 1996; Phillips 1997) as well as language and picture in interaction (Barthes 1986; Phillips 2000; Phillips and McQuarrie 2003). Finally, the cognitive linguistic approach (e.g., Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003, 1999), which placed metaphor as a matter of thought at the centre of attention, led to a new approach to advertising, but also to other genres like film, gestures, etc., with the focus on non-verbal and multimodal manifestations of metaphor (e.g., Forceville 1996, 2000, 2009; Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009; Mulken van, le Pair and Forceville 2010; Pérez Sobrino 2017. For a discussion of these works see Section 2.2).

The aims of the article are the following: 1) to show that the intended meaning mainly stems from multiple modes, i.e., language and picture in interaction, 2) to specify the dominating types of verbo-visual

interaction, and 3) to point to multimodal metaphor and metonymy as the main cognitive structures underlying the carefully designed structure of creative advertisements.

### 1.1. Methodology and corpus

The corpus was selected from numerous results of the Google search for *interesting/creative print advertisements*, which showed advertisements with intriguing pictures. The analysis was conducted on 30 advertisements mostly from the website entitled: *33 powerful and creative print ads that'll make you look twice*<sup>1</sup> since it includes advertisements reflecting different common types of verbo-visual interaction, i.e., multimodality.<sup>2</sup> They typically consist of a prominent, more or less unexpected visual element and a short text, fluctuating in length (one word – one or two sentences), in the form of a slogan, a headline, or just the product name. Importantly, the verbal part is in English, but the advertisements are international since they were created by advertising agencies all over the world (e.g., Brazil, Germany, Spain, Turkey, the USA, Saudi Arabia, etc.). This is important in today's globalizing world, with companies trying to reach as many consumers as possible with one advertising campaign inter-culturally and internationally. In addition, the cognitive strategies underlying the advertisements may be suspected to work universally. The analysis encompasses two levels: (1) verbo-visual, and (2) cognitive. At the surface level, dominating types of language-picture interaction have been identified based on (non)figurativeness of language and the level of visual creativity.<sup>3</sup> At the cognitive level of analysis verbal and visual elements are shown to activate multimodal metaphors and metonymies as paths to inferring meaning by relying on Forceville's (2009), Forceville and Urios-Aparisi's (2009) and Pérez Sobrino's (2017) approach to multimodality, and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980/2003) and Kövecses and Radden's (1998: 37–78) approach to conceptual metaphor and metonymy.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.boredpanda.com/creative-print-ads/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=organic](https://www.boredpanda.com/creative-print-ads/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic)

<sup>2</sup> If the analyzed representative advertisement is not from the mentioned website, its source is cited in a footnote.

<sup>3</sup> Visual creativity is discussed in Section 2.1.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Verbal and visual elements in advertising

Studying the interaction between verbal and visual elements in advertisements was initiated by Barthes (1986), who insists on the verbal part as conveying the linguistic message, which may have the function of relaying or anchoring in relation to the pictorial part. In its relaying function language contains important information not present in the image. In its anchoring function, which Barthes sees as more common, language guides the identification and interpretation of the image. Phillips (2000) concludes that an explanatory headline, signalling just a clue to the image's meaning as opposed to a fully explanatory headline, increases comprehension and ad liking.

Furthermore, Forceville (1996: 70) stresses that his approach to communication in advertisements is of multimedial character since it comprises both a linguistic and a pictorial component. Forceville (1996: 72–74) believes that Barthes' (1986) strictly relaying and anchoring functions are too limited and simplistic in modern advertising and specifies how language- picture interaction is more intricate. Here we support Forceville's view, insisting on an intricate interaction between language and the picture.

Forceville identified four types of pictorial metaphors in advertisements determined on the basis of the nature of the secondary term, i.e., the object with which the target, or primary term is associated (Forceville 1996: 108–164): (1) metaphors with one pictorially present term (MP1s), in which the secondary term, i.e., the source<sup>4</sup> is visually absent, but is unambiguously suggested by the pictorial context; Mulken van, le Pair and Forceville (2010) use the term contextual metaphors, (2) metaphors with two pictorially present terms (MP2s), in which the target and the source are fused into a single *gestalt*; this is "violent fusion" (Forceville 1996: 143); Mulken van, le Pair and Forceville (2010) call them hybrids, (3) pictorial similes, in which the target and the source are visually presented separately but resemble each other, and (4) verbo-pictorial metaphors, in which one of the terms is supplied by language, while the other is supplied visually. The first three categories represent monomodal metaphors, i.e., metaphors in just the visual mode, where only visual means signal both source and target terms. However, even Forceville (2009) contends that purely pictorial metaphors are relatively rare since they often interact with verbal

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<sup>4</sup> Forceville (1996) alternatively uses the terms the primary term for the target and the second(ary) term for the source.

information. This opens the issue of multimodality (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009), the topic of the present article.

According to our view, all these advertisements with four types of pictorial metaphors identified by Forceville manifest interaction of both language and the picture, i.e., information necessary for inferring the message is rendered verbally and visually and arises from the interaction of the two codes. Even Forceville (1996) indicates the role of the verbal part in setting and interpreting pictorial metaphors, such as reinforcing which element is the source and which is the target, guiding the transfer of particular features, supplying the source or the target, etc. Also, when summarizing the typology, Forceville (1996: 163) states directly that if we remove the verbal context in MP1s, MP2s and pictorial similes, the primary and secondary subjects are still recognizable, although deciding which is the primary and which is the secondary subject may be problematic. As for verbo-pictorial metaphors, if we remove the pictorial context, we can still identify the two metaphorical terms, but if we remove the text, one term is lost and so is the metaphor.

In this article, we recognize the following types of linguistic and visual elements. Linguistic elements are recognized as being used literally or figuratively. Boers and Lindstromberg (2008: 161–162) claim that figurative senses range from the metonymic to the metaphorical, whereas Dirven (2002) introduces the notion of the figurative continuum, which shows that figurative word senses are located along a continuum stretching from purely literal, through metonymic to metaphorical. In advertising, along the literal – figurative continuum, we differentiate between the following possibilities:

- (1) Language is used literally;
- (2) Language is used ambiguously in two possible variations:
  - (a) Only the figurative sense of a lexeme/phrase is active; it may be metonymic, or metaphorical;
  - (b) Both the literal and figurative senses (metonymic or metaphorical) of a lexeme/phrase are active, resulting in intended ambiguity.

Visual elements in advertising are categorized on the basis of the presence, absence and type of visually manifested conceptual clash. The more conceptually incongruous or unexpected the arrangement of the visual elements is, the higher is the degree of creativity. The classification proposed here differs from Forceville's (1996) on certain points: (a) Forceville considers just pictorial metaphors, whereas here both metaphors and metonymies are encompassed, (b) Forceville's classification is based on whether the source and/or the target are visually presented, whereas here the criterion is the degree of creativity depending on whether the visual representation is impossible, unlikely,

or seemingly unrelated to the object of advertising. This yields three levels of creativity:

(1) *High visual creativity*. Visual elements depict impossible situations, associating logically unrelated elements or scenarios and thus evoking a *strong visual conceptual clash*. This type often coincides with Forceville's visual metaphors of the MP2 or hybrid type involving a "violent fusion" of elements (Forceville 1996; Mulken van, le Pair and Forceville 2010). Commonly visual metaphors or metonymies are present.

(2) *Medium visual creativity*. Visual elements depict unlikely or unexpected but not impossible scenarios. It manifests itself in two variants, which is not covered by Forceville's classification: (a) elements from one domain of experience are visually presented in unlikely or unexpected relationships and thus commonly involve visual metonymies, thus evoking *weak visual conceptual clash*; (b) there is a similarity in form of the crucial visual element and another element having the promoted characteristics. This involves *iconic visual representations*. Commonly such advertisements feature a metonymy or metaphor focusing on a particular favourable characteristic to be associated with the product.

(3) *Low visual creativity*. Visual elements depict possible situations at first glance unrelated to the object of advertising, which are usually based on the before-after consumption relationships and as such visually present metonymies of the RESULT FOR ACTION type. These also do not fit into Forceville's classification. In this visual type, there is *no visual conceptual clash*, yet the consumer realizes that the depicted difference must be meaningful.

## **2.2. Cognitive linguistic concepts in advertising**

Cognitive linguistics claims that semantic structure is cognitive structure, while meaning is encyclopedic, whereby lexical items are points of access to encyclopedic knowledge (Evans and Green 2006: 215; on the guiding principles of cognitive semantics see Evans and Green 2006: 157–163). Stressing the fact that meaning is at the level of concepts is important for this study because the visual element in advertisements is also seen as prompting meaning. Furthermore, metaphor and metonymy are cognitive rather than linguistic mechanisms, which structure world knowledge in the mind, primarily based on man's everyday sensory-motor experience of the world (On the embodied cognition thesis see Lakoff and Johnson 1999). Conceptual metaphor and metonymy involve conceptual domains and mappings, i.e., matching equivalent conceptual elements, but in

different ways and for different purposes. Conceptual metaphor is used for understanding abstract concepts through concrete concepts from our everyday physical and sensory-motor experience ('A IS B') (On conceptual metaphor see e.g., Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003, Kövecses 2010; A comprehensive list of conceptual metaphors in English is provided by Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz 1991). On the other hand, conceptual metonymy allows one concept, the vehicle, to stand for another, the target, in the same conceptual domain providing mental access to an aspect of the same domain that is to be highlighted, which depends on communicative or referential requirements ('B for A') (On metonymy see e.g., Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003, Kövecses and Radden 1998).

In cognitive linguistics conceptual metaphor was given priority over metonymy for a long time, but nowadays many authors consider metonymy to be essential, indicating that many metaphors are motivated by metonymies (Lakoff 1987; Radden 2000; Barcelona 2000).<sup>5</sup> Ungerer (2000: 321–340) explains that advertising is essentially based on metaphor since the advertised product is always conceptually associated with some other domain of experience, but also on metonymy since the product is never present in the advertisement, but represented by a picture or a brand name metonymically standing for it. Ungerer (2000: 325–326) also identifies an important joint conceptual setup in advertising – the interaction between the GRABBING metonymy, connecting the act of grabbing something and a desire for something, and the VALUE metaphor (THE DESIRED OBJECT IS A VALUABLE OBJECT). Later Ungerer (2000: 326–327) reformulates the VALUE metaphor into the INTEREST metaphor along with the new trend in which advertisements increasingly attract attention on the ground of being unusual, mysterious, exotic, even grotesque.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), although claiming that metaphor is a matter of thought and action, almost exclusively studied metaphoric verbal expressions, i.e., it was focused on the verbal mode. Only later did some researchers point to the limiting aspect of such an approach and thus focused on studying metaphor in the visual mode, referring to it as a visual or pictorial metaphor (e.g., Forceville 1996). After these monomodal approaches a number of authors (e.g., Forceville 2009; Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009; Perez Sobrino 2017) started investigating conceptual metaphor and subsequently, metonymy as multimodal phenomena, based on mappings of domains

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<sup>5</sup> On the interaction between conceptual metaphor and metonymy, i.e. metaphonymy see Goosens (1990).

from different modes, e.g., visual and verbal, or visual and acoustic (On potential problems in determining modes see Forceville [2009: 22–23]). In this article, we focus on pictorial and written signs, i.e., the interaction between verbal and visual modes. The most comprehensive study of multimodality in advertising is Pérez Sobrino's (2017) monograph, which detects novel versions of interaction between metaphor and metonymy in multimodal settings. Perhaps the most important findings are that metonymy is a core device in the construction of advertising messages and that metaphonymy is by far the most frequent conceptual operation in her corpus.

### **3. Analysis: Types of verbo-visual interaction in print advertisements with an intriguing picture**

The following subsections identify, explain, and illustrate five types of verbo-visual interaction in print advertisements with an intriguing picture, involving both the surface, verbo-visual level, and the deeper, cognitive level of analysis.<sup>6</sup>

#### **3.1. Type 1: literal language and high/medium visual creativity**

In this type of verbo-visual structure, the picture manifests high or medium creativity, whereas language is literal and directly informs the consumer about the characteristics, contents, use, effects, etc. of the advertised product or service. The established tendencies are the following:

(a) *Literal language describes the purpose or results of using the product/service.*

*High visual creativity – the favourable results of using the product/service are depicted.*

In an advertisement for a parking sensor the headline states *Precision parking. Park Assist by Volkswagen*.<sup>7</sup> The picture is metaphorical since it represents a hedgehog preceded and followed by transparent plastic bags filled with water and a goldfish in each of them. Such bags could easily be pierced by spines, which does not happen here. The implied

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<sup>6</sup> The representative advertisements are not shown in this article due to copyright issues. Thus, they are described taking into consideration both linguistic and visual elements, while footnotes contain links leading to the sources of the advertisements. The descriptions and analyses of the advertisements are used exclusively for academic purposes as part of the practice of fair use in academic research.

<sup>7</sup> <https://static.boredpanda.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/creative-print-ads-74.jpg>



meaning is: 'Park Assist by Volkswagen is extremely precise.' There are two underlying multimodal metaphors: A VOLKSWAGEN CAR WITH THE PARKING SENSOR IS A HEDGEHOG, and THE PARKING SENSOR EQUALS HEDGEHOG'S SPINES, the target (*Volkswagen* and *parking*) being signalled by the language, and the source (the hedgehog) by the picture. The RESULT FOR ACTION multimodal metonymy, specifically relating to not damaged bags, metaphorically representing cars, indirectly relates to the advertised parking sensor. It is multimodal because the source is entirely in the picture, but the target is entirely rendered by language.

(b) *Literal language describes the purpose or the results of using the product/service.*

*Medium visual creativity – the picture iconically shows the purpose of using the product.*

In an advertisement for Nivea facial cream, the headline states: *Nivea Night*,<sup>8</sup> and the picture shows the lid of a cream jar positioned so that it creates an image of the Moon. The implied meaning is: 'Nivea cream nourishes skin during the night.' The cognitive structure involves multimodal metonymy MOON FOR THE NIGHT, with the target signalled by the language (*night*) and the vehicle by the picture (the shape of the Moon). Also, two other metonymies are chained<sup>9</sup> in inferring meaning: TIME OF ACTIVITY FOR THE ACTIVITY, i.e., NIGHT FOR APPLYING NIVEA CREAM and INSTRUMENT FOR ACTIVITY, i.e., NIVEA CREAM FOR APPLYING IT.

(c) *Literal language describes the characteristics of the product/service.*

*High visual creativity – the characteristics of the product/service are depicted.*

In an advertisement for the McDonald's fish burger, the headline is just the product's name: *Fillet-o-fish*.<sup>10</sup> The picture depicts metaphorically a fish tank shaped like a burger, with a fish swimming in it. The implied meaning is: 'Fish meat in McDonald's burgers is very fresh'. This is inferred from the interaction of the multimodal metaphor A MCDONALD'S FISH BURGER IS A BURGER SHAPED TANK WITH FISH (the source is signalled by the picture of the fish tank, the fish, while the target is

<sup>8</sup> <https://static.boredpanda.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/creative-print-ads-102.jpg>

<sup>9</sup> Metonymic chains are the chained combination of two or more metonymies in which the expanded or reduced domain that results from an initial metonymic operation constitutes the point of departure for another metonymic shift (Pérez Sobrino 2017: 60–62).

<sup>10</sup> <https://i.pinimg.com/736x/d6/16/5b/d6165bbb9b41bb7fa7500170696c3e35--advertising-agency-creative-advertising.jpg>

signalled by the language: *fillet* and the picture: the burger shape of the fish tank) and the multimodal metonymy OBJECT FOR MATERIAL CONSTITUTING THAT OBJECT, i.e. FISH FOR FISH MEAT (the vehicle is signalled by the picture: the fish, but the target is signalled by the language: *fillet*).

In Type 1, with its subtypes, the main function of the language employed is twofold: first, to directly state the intended meaning relating to the product advertised and thus, direct the attention of potential consumers to the crucial pictorial elements which need to be in focus, and second, to instruct consumers how to associate the logically incongruous signals provided by the picture. Conversely, the main function of the picture is to attract attention by being unbelievable, shocking, or illogical and only secondly to convey meaning. Considering the cognitive dimension, verbal and visual cues signal various multimodal metaphors and/or metonymies. The picture is itself metaphoric or metonymic, in the latter instance depicting RESULT FOR ACTION, and it shows elements from the source or vehicle domain, whereby language provides elements from the related target domain. Commonly the picture does not show the very advertised product, but some part of the scenario relating to it, which highlights its effects, purpose, characteristics, the activity in which it is used, etc. indicating a metonymic connection.

### 3.2. Type 2: literal language and low visual creativity

- *Literal language is extremely brief, consisting of just one or two words, and hints at the situation before and after using the product/service.*
- *Low visual creativity – the situation before and after using the product/service is depicted.*

In an advertisement for a weight-loss programme<sup>11</sup> the image depicts a wide door on the left side with the caption *Entrance*, and on the right side a much narrower door with the caption *Exit*; between the doors, there is the inscription *Weightwatchers*. Neither the picture itself nor the language conveys the intended meaning: 'With this weight-loss programme you will become much thinner'. However, the interaction of the two modes does so by effecting two metonymic relationships: THING PERCEIVED FOR THE PERCEPTION, i.e., A WIDE DOOR FOR A FAT PERSON, and A NARROW DOOR FOR A THIN PERSON, i.e., entering a wide door and exiting a much narrower door means that the person exiting got thinner (the vehicles are the doors, the targets are the imagined fat and thin person),

<sup>11</sup> <https://static.boredpanda.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/creative-print-ads-10.jpg>

and implicitly RESULT FOR ACTION, i.e., BEING THIN FOR UNDERGOING A WEIGHT-LOSS PROGRAMME.

Overall, in Type 2 the focus is on the effect of the product, both in language and the picture, often with an element of exaggeration or hyperbole in the picture. Fyock (2011: 5) claims that the role of hyperbole in visual images is the visual exaggeration or understatement of a product's benefits or losses. The low degree of visual creativity is strengthened by linguistic cues, i.e., language shows that the picture should be interpreted creatively for the sake of conveying the intended meaning. The understanding of such advertisements is based on the multimodal RESULT FOR ACTION metonymy, with the result in the picture and action suggested by language.

### 3.3. Type 3: literal language and visual non-creativity

- *Literal language describes the purpose or the effect of using the product.*
- *Visual non-creativity – the picture is simple, non-creative.*

This strategy involves two non-creatively used modes whose interaction produces creative effects. In an advertisement for *Veet*, a hair removal product, the headline states: *No hair is better*,<sup>12</sup> and thus addresses the effect of the cream, which is depicted by means of a used spotlessly white soap. Neither language nor the picture in isolation is creative; considered separately they do not convey the intended meaning: 'The *Veet* cream removes hairs perfectly'. However, their interaction produces a creative result since language directs the consumer into interpreting the picture creatively. What arises are two chained multimodal metonymies INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION, i.e., SOAP FOR WASHING ONESELF and RESULT FOR ACTION, i.e., a perfectly white soap with no hairs after washing oneself following the treatment of removing hairs with the advertised product. The metonymic target, a spotlessly clean soap is rendered by the picture, whereas the vehicles are rendered by language (*Veet, no hair*).

In this advertising strategy, language provides crucial information that leads to interpreting the simple picture creatively and thus contributing to the intended meaning. The picture usually presents the result of using the product, and accordingly, such advertisements are based on the multimodal RESULT FOR ACTION metonymy.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://static.boredpanda.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/creative-print-ads-76.jpg>

### 3.4. Type 4: figurative language and high/medium visual creativity

Another common strategy involves double creativity by employing figurative language and high or medium visual creativity.

(a) *Figurative language – both literal and figurative senses of the key lexeme/phrase are active.*

*High visual creativity – both literal and figurative senses of the key lexeme/phrase are depicted.*

An advertisement promoting a place for developing creative ideas is shocking and revolting since it presents the image of a young man's head, with the top of it open and the brain shown.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the head is served on a plate, with a knife and fork beside it. The headline states: *Hungry for fresh ideas*. The intended meaning of this advertisement 'Here you get great, creative ideas' is based on the conventional metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD manifested multimodally. The source domain is signalled by the lexemes *hungry* and *fresh*, and the picture in which the table is laid, whereas the target domain is signalled by the lexeme *ideas* and the open head with the brain inside. Thus, both the literal sense of *hungry* and its figurative sense 'eager' are made active by both language and the picture, whereas the extreme creativity of the advertisement fitting into Ungerer's metaphor THE DESIRED OBJECT IS A REVOLTING OBJECT (Ungerer 2000: 325–326) results from the visual combination of the metonymic representations of the source and the target domains, i.e., PLATE AND CUTLERY FOR EATING/FOOD, and BRAIN FOR IDEAS.

(b) *Figurative language – both figurative and literal senses of the key lexeme/phrase are active.*

*Medium visual creativity – the literal sense of the key lexeme/phrase is depicted.*

In an advertisement for coffee, there is the image of a cup of coffee which looks like a switch, and the inscription: *on, off*, on different sides of the cup. At the bottom of the advertisement, it is written: *The Black and Blaze. Coffee roasting company*.<sup>14</sup> The picture is moderately creative, and without interaction with the language prompts (*on, off*), we could not interpret the intended message: 'The coffee gives you extra energy so that you can be quick and efficient'. Through the interaction of language and the picture arises the new multimodal metaphor A CUP OF COFFEE IS A SWITCH,<sup>15</sup> which entails the new multimodal

<sup>13</sup> [https://d3nuqriibqh3vw.cloudfront.net/images/garage\\_oescritorio.jpg](https://d3nuqriibqh3vw.cloudfront.net/images/garage_oescritorio.jpg)

<sup>14</sup> <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/6b/be/31/6bbe31b77c246cd425773732d52e10a9.jpg>

<sup>15</sup> The target and the source in multimodal metaphor may both be concrete entities (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009).

mapping COFFEE IS ELECTRICITY, whereby the source is signalled by both the picture (the shape of the cup) and the language (*on, off*), whereas the target is also signalled by both the picture (a cup of coffee) and the language (*Coffee roasting company*). Furthermore, relying on our encyclopedic knowledge we know that people drink coffee to become alert when feeling tired, and combine this knowledge with the implicit conventional metaphor PEOPLE ARE MACHINES, which in this context entails that people need stimulation to function, i.e., perform their daily routines yielding the new metaphor: COFFEE IS FUEL. The picture of the coffee and the inscription *Coffee roasting company* activate the figurative meaning of *on* meaning ‘able to work, perform daily activities’ and *off* ‘not able to work, i.e. perform daily activities’. If the stated figurative meanings of *on* and *off* were depicted, a person with a battery inserted in the body, drinking coffee and moving would be depicted, for example.

In Type 4, language and the picture, both ambiguous and creative, contribute equally to conveying the message. The meaning of such advertisements is inferred via multimodal metaphor, whereby both the source and the target domains are signalled in both modes. This can be compared with Yus (2003), who applied a relevance-theoretic approach to studying humour in advertising. He singles out two types of puns important in advertising: puns with both meanings relevant, and applicable, and puns in which one interpretation has to be discarded if it does not make a favourable claim about the product. Puns with two relevant meanings correspond to words with two active meanings, literal and figurative, which is typical of the strategy described here. Yus’s (2003) finding is that puns with two relevant meanings, which the consumer entertains simultaneously unable to choose one, are humorous and appreciated more.

### 3.5. Type 5: figurative language and low visual creativity

(a) *Figurative language use with only the figurative sense of the key lexeme/phrase active.*

*Low visual creativity – only the figurative sense of the key lexeme/phrase is depicted.*

This subtype is the least common among the listed. An advertisement for an optician’s shows two images of the same attractively dressed blonde woman, wearing a bright red sleeveless shirt exposing a big bosom; in one image she’s not wearing glasses, and the caption below states *easy*, whereas in the second she is wearing glasses, and the caption states *hard*; there is also the headline: “Get the respect you

deserve".<sup>16</sup> Just the picture, a woman with and without glasses, does not lead to the inference 'By wearing eyeglasses that we sell, you look more sophisticated, intellectual'. Likewise, considering just the words *easy* and *hard* and even the *optician*'s is also not informative. Only through the interaction of verbal and visual elements can the consumer get the message. *Easy* meaning 'promiscuous' and *hard* meaning the opposite are used metaphorically; however, these senses are activated by the two images the only difference being glasses, which changes the perception of the woman from being promiscuous to being moral, intellectual and sophisticated. The picture, along with our cultural stereotype that people wearing glasses are intellectual, activates the figurative sense of the lexeme *easy*. From this interaction arises the new multimodal metaphor: WEARING GLASSES MEANS BEING RESPECTFUL with the target in the picture (glasses, and the images of the woman) and the source in the language (*easy*, *hard*). Looking more deeply, it is based on the multimodal metonymies PERCEPTION FOR THE THING PERCEIVED, in this case specifically manifested as the perception of a woman as more sophisticated on the basis of her looks, and RESULT FOR ACTION, i.e., having glasses for the perceived transformation of a person's status.

(b) *Figurative language use with both the literal and the figurative senses of the key lexeme/phrase active.*

*Low visual creativity – both the literal and the figurative senses of the key lexeme/phrase are depicted.*

In an advertisement against physical abuse, the headline states *Some things can't be covered*.<sup>17</sup> In the picture there is a woman wearing a hijab, but the area around one eye is bruised. The word *cover* is used ambiguously, literally meaning 'forming a layer over a surface', which is enhanced by the image of the hijab, and metaphorically in the sense 'put something over in order to hide, close, or protect it', which is signalled by the bruise in the picture. The intended message of the advertisement 'Violence cannot be concealed' is based on the multimodal metaphor DECEPTION IS PURPOSEFUL PREVENTION OF SIGHT (THROUGH THE USE OF COVERS), i.e., CONCEALING VIOLENCE IS COVERING BRUISES, with the source in the picture (the hijab) and the language (*cover*) and the target in the picture (the bruise). The depicted bruise reflects the RESULT FOR ACTION metonymy (BRUISE FOR VIOLENCE).

<sup>16</sup> [https://d3nuqriibqh3vw.cloudfront.net/styles/aotw\\_detail\\_ir/s3/images/Oogmerk\\_hard\\_rgb\\_1.jpg?qQmB9EUTHXCf2zzv29IOTw09FjGDQxMz&itok=PRoaZgMI](https://d3nuqriibqh3vw.cloudfront.net/styles/aotw_detail_ir/s3/images/Oogmerk_hard_rgb_1.jpg?qQmB9EUTHXCf2zzv29IOTw09FjGDQxMz&itok=PRoaZgMI)

<sup>17</sup> <https://static.boredpanda.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/creative-print-ads-64.jpg>

In this advertising strategy, the focus is on transferring the figurative meaning, either alone (as in case (a)) or along with the non-creative, literal meaning (as in case (b)), relying on both verbal and visual means.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

Overall, the intended meaning in interesting print advertisements, i.e., advertisements with an intriguing picture arises from the specific types of interaction of both verbal and visual elements, and not just solely from one mode. At the verbo-visual level of analysis, this article brings some insights and conclusions. It proposes a classification of verbal elements based on the level of figurativeness, and of visual elements based on the concept of the creative continuum. Furthermore, it can be concluded that language and the picture may perform two general mutually interacting functions in the process of inferring meaning: (1) *disambiguation*, i.e., directing the consumers' attention to literal verbal and/or non-creative visual elements providing interpretation for the creatively used mode; the main purpose is conveying the intended meaning, and (2) *enhancing creativity*, i.e., particular verbal and/or visual elements instruct how literal language or visual elements featuring little or no creativity are to be interpreted creatively to produce a shocking effect and primarily attract attention, and secondarily convey meaning. Verbal figurativeness much more frequently manifests itself as metaphorical than metonymic, whereas metonymic interpretations commonly result from the interaction of language and the picture.

This article establishes five types of verbo-visual interaction and thus complements Barthes's (1986) anchoring and relaying and confirms Forceville's (1996) claim that in modern advertisements the interaction between language and picture involves more complex interrelation. As for the cognitive dimension, this article indicates that brief, usually block language, and more or less complex pictures interact and activate various underlying multimodal conceptual metaphors and/or metonymies, from which the intended meaning is inferred. As for multimodal metaphor, its primary role is to present the advertised product/service as something else, thereby accentuating only particular *eligible* positive characteristics of the source, which is governed by the genre of advertising with the ultimate aim to sell the product. We refer to this phenomenon as the *positively focused invariance principle*, meaning that metaphorical mappings do not only preserve the cognitive topology of the source domain but also focus exclusively on its positively evaluated features. This especially refers to advertisements with high or medium visual creativity, in which case language directs the positive

transfer of eligible features. Similarly, Ungerer (2000: 327–334) discusses modes of muting, i.e., imposing constraints, on the conceptual wealth of the source domain to yield a positive transfer. The article establishes that the picture acts as an attention grabber due to visual creativity. It also indicates that visual creativity can be based on depicting just the source/vehicle, but also both the source/vehicle and the target. Furthermore, as Forceville and Urios-Aparisi (2009: 11) note, the target and the source in multimodal metaphor may both be concrete entities, as opposed to the classical CMT according to which an abstract entity is conceptualized in terms of a concrete entity. This article indicates that the target is concrete in the following contexts: (a) if the target is the advertised product itself (e.g., COFFEE IS FUEL), (b) if the advertisement focuses on a service or an idea, which is abstract, the abstract target is made concrete in the visual mode via a metonymic relationship with something concrete (e.g., the bruise in the ad against violence). This leads us to stress the role of multimodal metonymy in advertising, which is in line with Pérez Sobrino's (2017) view that metonymy is a core device in the construction of advertising messages. Our finding is that multimodal metonymy may have three functions in creative advertising: (1) It interacts with multimodal metaphor, especially in the form of metonymy within metaphor, depicting the metaphorical target and/or source (e.g., the Nivea ad and anti-violence ads); thus, its important function is to visually prompt the wanted target or source domain, (2) The RESULT FOR ACTION multimodal metonymy is the most common; the picture shows the wanted effect or result of the product (e.g., a spotlessly white soap after hair removing). It is the main cognitive mechanism underlying the before-after advertisements described in types 2 and 3, which address the situation before and after using the product or just the effect of its use, and (3) The RESULT FOR ACTION multimodal metonymy often interacts with multimodal metaphor, whereby it depicts the result of the activity presented metaphorically (e.g., looking sophisticated as a result of wearing glasses). Overall, the visual element may be crucial for attracting attention, but message inference relies on verbo-visual interaction.

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## INTERAKCIJA JEZIKA I SLIKE U U REKLAMAMA: MULTIMODALNI PRISTUP

U ovom radu izučavaju se interesantne reklame, tj. one koje sadrže intrigantna sliku, koje se ovde posmatraju kao tip multimodalnog diskursa sa implicitnim prenošenjem značenja. Polazi se od pretpostavke da takve reklame imaju specifičnu površinsku strukturu, sa konciznim jezičkim i neobičnim vizuelnim

elementima, koji na kognitivnom nivou aktiviraju multimodalne metafore i metonimije pri izvođenju značenja. Ciljevi rada su: 1) pokazati da nameravano značenje uglavnom proizlazi iz interakcije dva modaliteta, jezika i slike, 2) konstatovati dominantne tipove jezičko-vizuelne interakcije, i 3) pokazati da su pojmovna metafora i metonimija u osnovi brižljivo koncipirane strukture ovih reklama. Utvrđeno je pet tipičnih tipova jezičko-vizuelne interakcije, pri čemu su objedinjene površinska, jezičko-vizuelna, i kognitivna dimenzija u procesu stvaranja značenja. Pomenuti tipovi jezičkih i vizuelnih elemenata u interakciji zasnivaju se na stepenu figurativnosti jezičkog izraza i na vizuelnom kreativnom kontinuumu. U radu se ukazuje na tipične funkcije multimodalne metafore i metonimije, a posebno se ističe uloga multimodalne metonimije u interakciji sa multimodalnom metaforom i značaj multimodalne metonimije **REZULTAT ZA RADNJU**. Zaključuje se da slika ima funkciju privlačenja pažnje, a da izvedeno značenje proističe iz interakcije jezika i slike, tj. multimodalnosti.

**Ključne riječi:** reklame, značenje, engleski, jezik, slika, kognitivno, multimodalnost, metafora, metonimija.