



Multimodal metaphor and multimodal metonymy in television advertising

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Abstract

In television advertising, persuasiveness is evident, often escalating into manipulateness. Advertisement creators employ strategies that media advertising discourse allows them to use. As with cinematic art, commercials often contain a micro-narrative that simulates reality. Synchronously, they employ other expressive devices, both verbal and non-verbal. These devices possess properties that enable advertising to access the realm of human unconscious thought. Metaphor and metonymy, as cognitive operations, are fundamental in natural language, often used unconsciously by language users. Their iconicity and invariance are strategically and creatively exploited in advertising, where they are accumulated or combined. The multi-level semantics of advertising may not always be fully understood by the recipient. The study considers advertising as a multimodal discourse. The focus of analysis is on multimodal metaphors and multimodal metonymies in selected television advertisements. The study is conducted in accordance with the principles of cognitive linguistics.

1. Introduction

Television advertisement creators focus on synchronizing a brief narrative with product promotion within a short, dynamic advertisement. These advertisements are designed to evoke emotions and stimulate the emergence of associations. The frequency of the advertisements, along with their specific visual and audio elements, in conjunction with the strategies employed by the creators, influence viewers' thoughts and behaviours.

An advertisement is perceived as discourse shaped by the context in which it occurs. As a situational phenomenon, it encompasses a range of social, cultural, and pragmatically significant factors that extend beyond linguistics but influence the communication process.

Contemporary advertising is multimodal. Creativity in advertising discourse resides in the combination of expressive devices that not only attract attention but also help to shape the

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image of a specific product. Since advertising lacks fixed forms and its functional value is variable, the modifications within advertising discourse are extensive and gain persuasive power through their variability and rapidly evolving originality.

In the case of television advertising, a short duration – typically only a few seconds – delivers a highly saturated message, with language that is significantly condensed. Information is conveyed to the recipient through multiple channels and initiates communication that is content-relevant, entertaining, astonishing, exciting, and inviting, encouraging the perception of interaction across multiple semantic levels.

Advertising discourse aimed at an anonymous mass recipient utilizes and strategically applies what cognitive linguistics has discovered and emphasizes about the nature of human thought and expression. Lakoff's book *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (1987), his earlier work with Johnson (1980), and Langacker's book (1987) provided a fundamental impetus for cognitive linguistics. These works sparked worldwide interest not only in metaphor but also in metonymy as a conceptual phenomenon. Cognitive linguistics refers to a shared set of basic assumptions about the nature of language and emphasizes the methodological principles it prefers in its study.¹

In considering advertisements as a persuasive tool, it is relevant that, within the framework of cognitive linguistics, there is the claim that the ability to acquire language results from the specialization of a person's general cognitive abilities and categorization strategies. Additionally, imagination plays a crucial role in the construction of new categories. The foundational principle of cognitive linguistics – embodiment – means that experience, derived from physical, cultural, or social interactions, is essential for both the formation and emergence of concepts, as well as for their reinforcement in a person's mental space. The advertising industry deliberately leverages this knowledge today.

2. Theoretical and methodological foundations

The study is methodologically grounded in the fundamental principles of cognitive linguistics. It focuses on the identification of a concept, its source and target domains, and the processes involved in their formation, interaction, or combination – specifically, conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy. These processes are crucial in advertising discourse because they influence a person's emotional experience and stimulate the formation of associations.

Conceptual structures in cognitive linguistics, considered active in language use and comprehension, are closely related to an individual's knowledge and experience. From a

¹ These basic methodological principles are reflected in various theories and descriptive models. They emerged as a critical response to certain assumptions favoured by generative linguistics in the late 1970s – particularly in its approach to semantics – that were in conflict with scientific knowledge from the fields of psychology and philosophy.

semantic perspective, meaning is pragmatic and often holistic. As Barcelona (2025, p. 14) states:

If experiential knowledge permeates linguistic meaning at every level, these levels are themselves open, so there is no precise boundary between them—particularly between symbolic levels, such as lexicon and grammar, or between levels in the organization of meaning, such as semantics and pragmatics.

The perception of this continuity was an important research question in cognitive linguistics during the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s (Fillmore, 1985; Fillmore and Atkins, 1992; Lakoff, 1982, 1987, pp. 5–157).

Conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy are considered to be two fundamental cognitive mechanisms² that underpin the ability to imagine. In the cognitive-linguistic context, these are understood as mental projection or, more precisely, mapping between domains. They are of crucial importance for the creation of concepts within mental spaces. Historically, considerably more attention has been devoted to the study of metaphor. However, some recent studies have begun to address this gap. Notable contributions to this area have been made by Panther and Radden (1999), and Radden and Kövecses (1999), which have significantly advanced the theory and typology of metonymy.

3. Current status of the research topic

In 1994, Fauconnier introduced the theory of conceptual integration, building upon his earlier work on mental spaces (1985). The theory of conceptual integration, developed by Fauconnier and Turner (Fauconnier, 1997; Fauconnier and Turner, 1996, 2002; Turner and Fauconnier, 1995, 2000), explains the understanding of online discourse by the creation of new, temporary conceptual domains or “blends” by both sender and recipient. The issue of the occurrence and distinction between conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy gained particular attention in the late 1990s – discussed by Goossens (1990), Goossens et al. (1995), Kövecses and Radden (1998) – and in the early 2000s by researchers such as Dirven and Pörings (2002), Goossens (2002), and Barcelona (2001, 2002, 2003, 2011). These scholars focused especially on problems arising from unclear domain boundaries.

Metaphorical mappings (transfers) occur between two mutually independent domains, meaning neither domain is part of the other, nor do they belong to the same superordinate domain. In contrast, metonymic mappings are proposed to connect two domains where one contains the other (e.g., whole for part or part for whole), or both are part of a single superordinate domain (part for part). This characteristic of metonymy is inferred from its occurrence within a single

² Metaphor and metonymy are primarily grounded in image schemas (Johnson, 1987; Talmy, 1978, 1988, 1996, 2000; Langacker, 1987b, 1991a), which are preconceptual mental structures formed through the influence of a child’s earliest bodily experiences.

domain, which may be the source, the target, or a shared superordinate domain that encompasses both. (Barcelona, 2025, p. 14)

While conceptual metaphor involves a transfer from one – the source domain – to another – the target domain – metonymy, on the other hand, involves projection within the same domain.

There can be an interaction between metaphor and metonymy. This has long been noted in cognitive linguistics (among others: Barcelona, 1986, 1995, 2000, 2002, 2011; Dirven, 2002; Goossens, 2002; Goossens et al., 1995; Kövecses, 1986, 1988, 1990, 2002; Geeraerts, 2002; Littlemore, 2015, chap. 7; Radden, 2000, 2002; Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco, 2002; Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera, 2014, 2.1, 4.4.2, and chap. 5; and all articles by Dirven and Pörings, 2002). This phenomenon has also been noted in other traditions in the study of metaphor and metonymy. Barcelona (2025, p. 35) characterizes the issue by identifying two main patterns of metaphoric-metonymic interaction: 1) conceptual motivation of metaphor by metonymy; and 2) co-occurrence of metaphor and metonymy within the same linguistic expression.

In the first type of interaction, a certain conceptual metonymy can motivate a specific conceptual metaphor if the latter is enabled by the conceptual metonymy; or, alternatively, if the metaphor cannot exist independently of this particular metonymy. Many conceptual metaphors are motivated by conceptual metonymy, emerging as a generalization or decontextualization of the metonymy. In numerous other cases, the metonymic understanding of both target and source facilitates the abstract structural correlation necessary for the metaphor to be possible.

The second type of interaction involves a wide range of possibilities for combining metaphor and metonymy within the same expression. This interaction consists of a conceptual connection between a conceptual metaphor and a conceptual metonymy, resulting in their combination within a single expression. In these cases, the metaphor is conceptually independent of the metonymy with which it is combined; that is, the metaphor can occur independently of the metonymy.

A fundamental requirement for the textual combination of metaphor and metonymy³ is conceptual compatibility. This compatibility can be demonstrated, for instance, by sharing a metaphor and a metonymy that pertain to a specific area as either source or target.⁴

³ Previous research on metaphor-metonymic complexes (so-called metaphonyms) highlights the fact that the opposition between metaphor and metonymy is not always binary; therefore, it is necessary to consider their discursive nature.

⁴ The concept of attention is metonymically accessible through the part of the body primarily involved in attention – the ear. The combination is possible because both metaphor and metonymy share the same goal, namely attention. However, the compatibility and frequent co-occurrence of this metaphor with this metonymy do not imply that it is motivated by it. In fact, many instances of this metaphor appear without any explicit or implicit

The most systematic – and to date most influential – detailed typology developed within cognitive linguistics is that of Kövecses and Radden (1998). They proposed a general “ontological” classification of metonymy, comprising three main types: “sign” metonymies, “referential” metonymies, and “conceptual” metonymies. Among these, they consider the third type to be the most common.⁵

Forceville (2009, p. 22) acknowledged that it is not easy to determine what constitutes a multimodal metaphor and a multimodal metonymy. He proposes a definition of a “mode” and a whole complex of “modes.” He states that a mode can be understood as a sign system that is interpretable because it involves a perceptual process based on one of the five human senses. There is no clear-cut connection between these five senses and modes, as some senses participate in more than one sign system, and a single sign system can involve multiple senses. Forceville preliminarily identified a list of nine modes: 1. pictorial signs; 2. written signs; 3. spoken signs; 4. gestures; 5. sounds; 6. music; 7. smells; 8. tastes; and 9. touch.

Forceville defined a monomodal metaphor as one in which the source and target domains are “exclusively or predominantly expressed in one mode.” According to Forceville (2009, p. 24), this formulation is necessary because the sources and/or targets of nonverbal metaphors are often signalled simultaneously in more than one modality. Multimodal metaphors are accordingly defined as “metaphors whose target and source are each exclusively or predominantly represented in different modes” (Forceville, 2009, p. 23). In television advertising, these mechanisms are realized through a combination of visual, auditory, and verbal elements.

4. Methodology and methods

For the analysis of selected advertisements, we have chosen a combination of two qualitatively oriented methods. To identify the psychologically relevant meanings within the advertising narrative, we employ the method of immanent analysis (Kyshtymova, 2017, p. 18). This approach, originally used in the analysis of literary works, is defined as an analysis “not going beyond what is said in the text” (Gasparov, 1997, p. 8), thereby minimizing the subjectivity of the interpreter. We treat the media narrative as a semiotic object, aiming to identify its content and the formal attributes that influence the association or transmission of

involvement of the metonymy. For example: *She managed to attract / arouse the minister's attention* (Barcelona, 2025, p. 35).

⁵ In identifying conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy, we rely on the definitions provided by Barcelona (2002, p. 246; 2011): “Metonymy is an asymmetrical mapping of a conceptual area, a source, onto another area, a target. The source and the target are in the same functional area and are linked by a pragmatic function in such a way that the target is mentally activated.” The same author offers a schematic definition of metaphor: “Metaphor is a mapping of a conceptual area, a source, onto another area, a target. The source and the target are either in different taxonomic areas and are not linked by a pragmatic function, or they are located in different functional areas” (ibid.).

psychologically relevant meanings. The method of immanent analysis integrates elements from psycholinguistic, semiotic, and narrative approaches. In our case, it is an immanent analysis presented in a modified form, adapted specifically for the analysis of media texts. This choice aligns with the contemporary trend of television advertising striving to attain the status of art.

For the study of television-mediated advertising discourse, in addition to the immanent analysis method, we employ the method of narrative-discursive analysis. This approach is an alternative content analysis technique that emphasizes the manner in which information is obtained or inferred. It addresses questions such as “how” or “in what way” the perceiver derives meaning from the advertisement’s text or image. Narrative-discursive analysis of advertisements is capable of uncovering the latent meanings embedded within the text (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 15).

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. Such research produces descriptive and interpretive data, with findings presented as detailed descriptions of phenomena rather than statistical analysis. It aims to understand phenomena deeply and offers a phenomenological perspective, or an analysis of the underlying structures that compose advertising discourses. The central question we explore is: what added value do multimodal metaphors offer as manipulative devices? We examine concepts such as conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, and their interactions, using examples from television advertisements and the simulated narratives embedded within them.

The answer to the aforementioned question is sought in the research section, which examines the interaction between multimodal metaphor and multimodal metonymy.

4.1 Identification of conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy

The procedure used to distinguish metaphor from metonymy states that if domains X and Y are linked through the same functional domain (such as culture and experience) or frame, and connected by a pragmatic function, then their connection is metonymic. This holds true regardless of whether these domains belong to the same overall taxonomic category: their connection via a pragmatic function indicates that they are classified within the same functional domain.

A pragmatic function connection is a (privilegedly constructed) pragmatic link between the role of a domain (or subdomain) within a functional domain or framework and the role of another (sub)domain within the same functional domain or framework. This privileged connection facilitates the activation of one role by the other. The position of the context is crucial in establishing and interpreting this connection. (Barcelona, 2025, p. 33)

It is essential to understand the context, including the situational context, that frames the utterance, in order to distinguish between metaphorical and metonymic expressions. However, the challenge of determining the context does not undermine the validity of the

cognitive-linguistic theoretical distinction between metaphor and metonymy as two mechanisms of conceptual mapping. These mechanisms can often be interchanged freely as interpretive schemes for nonlinear expressions.

Before applying this procedure, it is necessary to characterize the concepts of “taxonomic domain” and “functional domain.” A taxonomic domain⁶ is a conceptual domain arising from human “hyponymic” sorting and classification of experiences. Taxonomy is a hierarchy of domains organized according to “species” relationships, where the generic taxonomy and the superordinate domain of physical entities include two main subdomains: living physical entities and non-living physical entities. The subdomain of living physical entities further includes animals, humans, and plants; animals are divided into vertebrates and invertebrates, and so on. Like taxonomies, functional domains are also culturally and experientially dependent. Moreover, they are often interconnected with other functional domains (Barcelona, 2025, p. 32).⁷

4.2 Conceptual blending theory

Conceptual blending theory (also called conceptual integration theory) appears to be the most appropriate framework within multimodal fields for addressing the issue of creativity in advertising, as it offers a unified approach for working with literal and figurative language across modalities (Lundmark, 2003; Petäjäaho, 2012). Developed during the 1980s and 1990s (Coulson, 1996; Fauconnier, 1994, 1997; Fauconnier and Sweetser, 1996; Fauconnier and Turner, 1998; Oakley, 1996), this theory eventually culminated in the monograph *The Way We Think* by Fauconnier and Turner (2002).

In using and understanding a metaphor, part of the conceptual structure of the “source domain” is “mapped” onto the conceptual structure of the “target domain”, and this mapping is unidirectional as opposed to “interacting” (Lakoff and Turner, 1989). However, as Forceville

⁶ A “domain” (i.e., a frame or propositional ICM) is a relatively coherent cognitive model of a field of experience that schematizes and organizes our detailed knowledge of that field. There can be many types of functional domains; well-known examples include the restaurant frame, the causality frame, the business transaction frame, and so on. Although these terms were introduced by two different linguists (Fillmore and Lakoff), the terms “frame” and “propositional idealized cognitive model” (ICM) can be considered synonymous. The detailed knowledge represented in functional domains is often schematically organized and includes, among other aspects, the connections between two or more roles (such as agent, action, instrument, cause, effect, etc.) attributed to their elements, certain sequences of events, the conditions for these events, and metonymic relations (such as part-whole relations between two elements of a frame: car-tire, home-stead, etc.) (Barcelona, 2025, p. 31).

⁷ For example, the functional domain of the car is part of frames such as travel and communication, and/or is associated with frames like law enforcement or industrial frames, among others. This demonstrates that functional domains are also open, meaning they have vague boundaries, just like all kinds of domains and cognitive models. Nevertheless, they are a useful construct for distinguishing metonymy and metaphor (Barcelona, 2025, p. 32).

(2008, p. 463) points out, the main drawback of the conceptual theory of metaphors is that it largely ignores the multimodal aspects of metaphors.

The theory of conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 37) has significant potential in the model of structuring multiple spaces. This model emphasizes that it considers not only linguistic expression but also various non-linguistic phenomena, such as communicative behaviour and multiple manifestations of human imagination. The conceptual blending theory serves as a relevant complementary framework for the analysis of multimodal metaphor, enabling us to capture the dynamics of meaning creation across various modalities.

The author of the model also devised a graphical representation of conceptual blending, which is based on the concept of mental spaces. These are depicted as “small conceptual packages” (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 40) containing conceptual material that individuals create in the online space as a dynamic process – such as when they think or talk. Blending is therefore a cognitive process that establishes a partial correspondence between two or more input mental spaces, selectively projects conceptual material from these input spaces into a new blended mental space, and dynamically develops new conceptual material that is not fully determined by the input spaces. Additionally, there is a fourth mental space, known as the generic space, which contains common material from all input spaces and facilitates their blending.

We have concentrated the analytical, interpretative, and research components in Chapter 5. This chapter is systematically divided into three parts: 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. Each part is further subdivided into four sections, which explore the taxonomic structure, discursive-narrative analysis, immanent analysis, and the sequence of mapping processes involving metonymic and metaphorical mappings.

5. Analyses of the conceptual blending of multimodal metaphor and multimodal metonymy in television advertising

5.1 Case Study 1: Advertisement for the Relax Fruit Drink⁸

This is an older Czech advertisement from 2002, characterized by minimal verbal expression. The situational context is primarily conveyed through visual storytelling: a boy approximately 10-12 years old, dressed in cycling gear, rings the doorbell of an apartment – presumably because he is thirsty. An older man, visibly angry and disturbed from his rest, opens the door, picks up the boy, and begins shaking him. After a moment, the man, in a display of anger, throws the boy aside. On his way back into the apartment, he rips the doorbell off the wall, explicitly emphasizing his negative emotion – anger. The scene aims to illustrate the primary meaning of the word *shake*. The boy, initially appearing unresponsive on the ground, begins to revive when his friends gather around him – also due to the influence of the soft drink he

⁸ The advertisement is available on the website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APKOr0ssssk>

had in his backpack during the incident. The final shot depicts several boys, all in cycling gear, each holding a bottle of the advertised soft drink in various colours and flavours. This image is accompanied by the slogan: *Čím víc protřepeš, tím líp chutná* ‘The more you shake it, the better it tastes’. At the conclusion, the name of the beverage, Relax Fruit Drink, appears on the screen and is also spoken aloud. The slogan *třeste se!*, which literally translates to ‘shake (yourself)!’ is displayed prominently on the screen.

The appeal of the beginning of the advertisement is based on anticipating the viewer’s astonishment when conflict and anger are simulated. Strategically, the advertisement leverages the meaning of the word *shake*, specifically the act of shaking someone or something rapidly. The final statement, *Třeste se!*, can be understood in two ways: as a threat implying intimidation (towards those who disturb by ringing), or as a friendly reminder not to forget to shake the drink before consuming it.



Figure 1. Sequence of images from the Relax Fruit Drink advertisement

5.1.1 Taxonomic structure of advertisement 1

Taxonomic domain: people, or hyponym – children / child; = metonymic source domain;

Functional domain 1: thirst, anger, shaking → functional domain: fainting, paralysis;

Functional domain 2: awakening, friends → metonymic target domain.

The emergence of a new coherent cognitive and idealized concept is a metaphor: a drink is a joy shared with friends.

5.1.2 Discursive-narrative analysis

The child in cycling clothes, as a metonymic target (representative of consumers of the advertised product), serves as a metonymic source (source taxonomic domain) for another metonymy (functional domain): an angry man shakes a child who is brought back to life by the influence of the advertised drink. The angry man is irrelevant in the final metonymic-metaphorical chain; he functions solely as a means of expressing the primary meaning of the verb *to shake*. One metonymic medium involves the boy as a thirsty athlete and as a part representing a group of peers (*pars pro toto*), expressing two metonymic targets, but only the second one is significant and that is the latter in order. In this gradual metonymy, space is created for the metaphorical expression that Relax Fruit Drink is joy, fun, and life.

From the aspect of blending, the feeling of thirst, the inducing of anger – the physical experience – and the subsequent fainting have entered one mental space in a gradual chain. The result is an exaggerated or hyperbolized effect of the advertised drink, which needs to be shaken.

From the aspect of identifying the pattern of metaphorical-metonymic interaction of two main types by Barcelona (2025), it is the first type, where metonymy creates space – or rather, serves as the motivation for the realization of a conceptual metaphor, as mentioned above. In a broader experiential aspect, this also includes the metaphor “water is life.”

From the perspective of blending mental spaces, the physical experience was combined: feeling thirsty, enduring the consequences of anger, experiencing fainting, and the alleviation of physical discomfort (thirst) associated with joy and celebration as a result of consuming the drink.

5.1.3 Immanent analysis

(1) [written text – alternating phrases during a visual narrative]

- a. Relax FRUIT DRINK
- b. *třeste se!*
- c. *www.relax.cz*

(2) [spoken text]

- a. *Čím víc protřepeš, tím líp chutná.*
‘The more you shake it, the better it tastes.’
- b. Relax FRUIT DRINK
- c. *Třeste se!*

Třást ‘to shake’ is intentionally predicated in the following meanings:

- a) to shake someone or something in a fit of anger;
- b) to shake someone to wake them up from fainting;
- c) to shake a liquid – transferred metaphorically to the context of a drink;

- d) to shake a drink to homogenize it – a synonym for the meaning of c.

The imperative at the end of the advertisement, *Třeste se!*, has the following meanings:

- a) Primarily, it refers to the introduction of this advertising narrative (recognition of the adult's anger), i.e., the fear evoked as a negative emotion;
- b) As a metaphorical meaning, it refers to the condition for experiencing the joy of consuming a drink that must be shaken;
- c) It indicates (in a colloquial sense) the desire of the viewers of the advertisement (a specific group of young people); someone desires something so intensely that they tremble for it.

This last, unspoken but immediately perceived meaning of the word *to shake* at the end of the advertisement is no longer synonymous with the verb *třást* and corresponds to what is mentioned above as **the latent meaning of the text** (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 15). From the perspective of the advertisement's effect, it points to desire as an extremely intense emotion and is related to persuasiveness, which in the target audience – teenagers – borders on manipulateness.

The statement *Třeste se!* is spoken by a rough adult male voice at the very end of the advertisement, associated with the character introduced earlier. In relation to the semantics of the advertising narrative, it is perceived as a cumulative echo.

The result of blending mental spaces is the creation of a new conceptual space within the advertising narrative in the media environment, aimed at capturing the attention of the mass audience for a new soft drink on the market, with an emphasis on the process prior to consumption.

5.1.4 The sequence of mapping processes involving metonymic and metaphorical mappings

The source metonymic domain for the target metaphoric domain is rooted in a physical experience – the controversial contact between a child and an adult (and the subsequent fainting) – which is metonymically depicted as an experience leading to a serious consequence. Subsequently, a metaphoric source is chosen: a drink, which can be understood as requiring a shaking-like movement, symbolizing the action that caused the aforementioned effect. There is a parallel between the source metonymic domain (physical experience and emotion) and the condition of consuming the advertised drink, which is associated with positive emotions. The final target domain is metaphorical: the Relax Fruit Drink, in a figurative sense, signifies joy and fun. The imagery of teenagers having fun emphasizes the word *relax* in the drink's name. The source metonymic domain thus facilitates the emergence of a figurative, metaphorical association between the drink and joy. Overall, this represents a

multimodal metonymy, as both metonymic and metaphoric mappings are integrated within a unified pragmatic space of the advertisement.

In the sense of **blending mental spaces** (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 40), a new mental space has emerged – namely, a generic space that incorporates common elements from all input spaces and enables their integration.

5.2 Case Study 2: Advertisement for the banking product “Everest” by Slovenská sporiteľňa

It has two television variants: a shorter one (20 seconds)⁹ and a longer one (30 seconds),¹⁰ both in the form of television commercials. At the end of several versions of this advertisement (which exists both in print and as a television commercial), it says: *Budúcnosť je vaša*. ‘The future is yours.’ The closing inscription reads: *Dohodnite si u nás konzultáciu*. ‘Arrange a consultation with us.’ Following that is the logo and website of Slovenská sporiteľňa.

5.2.1 Taxonomic structure of advertisement 2

Taxonomic domain: Everest = metonymic source domain representing inanimate nature

Functional domain 1: effort → functional domain of various financially demanding life situations and their conquest

Functional domain 2: banking product = metonymic target domain

The emergence of a new, coherent, cognitive idealized concept is the metaphor of conquering “your Everest” (through the Slovenská sporiteľňa product), i.e., “The future is yours.” This suggests that reality becomes easier with finances, or that finances (provided by the Slovenská sporiteľňa product) are the way to solve problems.

5.2.2 Discursive-narrative analysis

Everest, as the highest mountain in the world, is perceived in the public consciousness as a four-thousander that is difficult for climbers to conquer. In the advertisement, Everest is metonymically presented as a symbol whose conquest requires enormous effort. This is compared to the effort – or rather, the financial burden – faced by an ordinary person due to various life situations (such as studying, buying an apartment, a romantic relationship, etc.). The metonymic function of Everest also serves as a tool of hyperbole.

The use of hyperbole in this advertising discourse corresponds to the statement that “hyperbole contains accidental elements, but does not contain any relevant incongruent structure; instead, it implicitly contains a partially similar structure that carries the main share

⁹ The shorter variant is available on the website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBqxrrdsDdE>

¹⁰ The longer variant is available on the website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEgVJoAU3fi>

of the interpretive burden by serving as a basis for deriving attitudinal conclusions” (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Barreras Gómez, 2022, p. 29).

The aforementioned pair claims that there are several levels of similarity in language: similarity based on attributes, which is non-figurative (including simile, which has an inferential character); structural similarity, a type of metaphor; and a high level of similarity based on conceptual constructs, which also includes hyperbole. The latter is grounded in obvious exaggeration, exemplified by likening coping with life situations to the extreme sports performance of a mountain climber. It is therefore impossible for an ordinary untrained person to overcome such obstacles. The essence of hyperbole introduced in the advertisement’s introduction is to evoke astonishment in the percipient.



Figure 2. Sequence of images depicting Mount Everest and various life situations from the Slovenská sporiteľňa advertisement

5.2.3 Immanent analysis

Hyperbole plays an important role in the “Everest” advertisement. It is a key element of the advertising script’s **metalanguage**, primarily expressing conviction, which also serves as the background for presenting a banking product to the advertisement’s recipients. The great exaggeration – naming the world’s highest mountain Everest – evokes emotion in the recipients: their efforts in life situations are compared to conquering the highest mountain in the world, which confers a sense of recognition and satisfaction. This comparison, based on perceived analogy, is expressed metaphorically through the phrases *svoj (môj) Everest* ‘my Everest’ and *svoje (moje) Everesty* ‘my Everests’. The authors consider the arousal of emotion when receiving the advertisement to be extremely important. Among the linguistic devices

used, the possessive pronoun *svoj* ‘my own’ is particularly significant, as it reflects the impossibility of truly possessing Everest. *Svoje Everesty* ‘my own Everests’ is a strategically created metaphor, resulting from the combination of the possessive pronoun and the plural form of Everest.

(3) [written text – alternating phrases during a visual narrative]

- a. [context: article headline on a notebook]

Začínajúci podnikateľ

‘Aspiring Entrepreneur’

- b. [context: headline on a mobile phone]

Môj Everest

‘My Everest’

- c. *Dohodnite si u nás konzultáciu*

‘Arrange a consultation with us’

- d. *Slovenská sporiteľňa*

- e. *buducnostjevasa.sk*

(4) [spoken text]

Everest nie je len jeden. Len si spomeňte na tie vaše. Momenty, keď ste zvládli ťažkú skúšku, či rozbehli svoj prvý biznis, keď ste sa nasťahovali do svojho, konečne pozvali toho druhého na rande, alebo keď ste si s rodinou užili vysnívanú dovolenku. Dobrý pocit, však? Tak, ako sme na ceste na Everest podporili prvú Slovenku, podporíme aj vás. Sme Slovenská sporiteľňa – partner vašich životných Everestov.¹¹

‘There isn’t just one Everest. Just think about your own. Moments when you passed a tough exam, started your first business, moved into your own home, finally asked that special someone out on a date, or enjoyed your dream vacation with your family. Feels good, doesn’t it? Just as we supported the first Slovak woman on Everest, we will support you too. We are Slovenská sporiteľňa – your partner for life’s Everests.’

In this advertisement, Everest can be perceived as a precedent name, and the phrase *your Everest* as a candidate for phraseologization, similar to what is common in political and social discourse and as suggested in Kalechyts’ monograph *Frazelogizmy “v deystvii”* (2020).

¹¹ A shorter variant of the Slovenská sporiteľňa “Everest” television advertisement:

(5) *Everest nie je len jeden. Len si spomeňte na tie vaše. Momenty, keď ste zvládli ťažkú skúšku, keď ste sa nasťahovali do svojho, keď ste konečne pozvali toho druhého na rande. Podporíme vás pri zdolávaní vašich životných everestov. Budúcnosť je vaša. Slovenská sporiteľňa.*

‘There isn’t just one Everest. Just think about your own. Moments when you passed a tough exam, moved into your own home, finally asked that special someone out on a date. We will support you in conquering your life’s Everests. The future is yours. Slovenská sporiteľňa.’

5.2.4 The sequence of mapping processes involving metonymic and metaphorical mappings

The sentence *Everest nie je len jeden* ‘There isn’t just one Everest’ describes a source situation, to which “lifesituations” are added by analogy. The protagonists in the advertisement manage the (almost) impossible. This situation is strategically aligned with the source situation, where the protagonists’ goals are achieved (she conquers Everest), and, analogously, the recipients of the advertisement manage life situations from the perspective of financial burden (they conquer their own Everest/Everests). In this correspondence, there is only one denotative difference, which is between the exaggerated source element – i.e., conquering Everest – and the real target element: managing the financial burden. Added to this is the attitudinal implication resulting from judging the target element according to the source element. In the above example, we observe an individualized impact on the recipients of the advertisement, as if it were the same as the scenario depicted in the source.

The pre-planned value of the hyperbole’s attitudinal component, as intended by the advertisement’s creator, is amazement. In positive contexts, such as the given example, this default understanding may acquire additional attitudinal values in the recipient. In this case, it is admiration or, rather, recognition.

From the aspect of similarity, the source and target domains in the advertisement’s used hyperbole denotatively match completely – that is, they exhibit full similarity between “conquering Everest” and conquering “your Everests”, i.e., financial burdens. The key component, “Everest”, functions as a tool or device of intentional (exaggerated) hyperbole. The intentionally exaggerated source component is related to its target, which is the individual situation. Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera (2014, p. 45) describe such a connection as domain-based scalar similarity. This concept falls under metalinguistic similarity. Metalinguistic similarity differs from linguistic similarity, which pertains to the relationship between the denotative and attitudinal aspects of meaning.

Metalinguistic similarity operates on a different basis. It captures similarities between representations of meaning, not between the entities and states of affairs that these representations denote. It is an aspect of what Wilson (2000) and Wilson and Sperber (2012a) have called metarepresentation, i.e., the representation of a representation. (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Barreras Gómez, 2022, p. 29)

The combination of metonymic and metaphorical mapping, along with hyperbole, in this case, exhibits a similar conceptual structure. In this framework, the core of the interpretation is anticipated by the recipient, who is provided with justification for deducing a conclusion that reflects a particular attitude.

5.3 Case Study 3: Advertisement for the new Bigster car model¹²

This is an advertisement for a new product from the Renault automobile group: a higher-end version of the older Dacia Duster model.

5.3.1 Taxonomic structure of advertisement 3

Taxonomic domain: car = metonymic source domain: means of transport

Functional domain 1: travelling → functional domain: exploring unknown regions

Functional domain 2: advantageous (spatially, ecologically, and cost-effectively) car model = metonymic target domain

The blending of these mental models gives rise to a new, coherent, and idealized cognitive concept: a spacious, environmentally friendly car available at an affordable price. The source and target domains are identical; the chain of metonymies is not followed by a metaphor. The multimodality of this conceptual multiple metonymy is grounded in the reception of sound and visual sensations.

5.3.2 Discursive-narrative analysis

The vehicle is marketed as a family car. It differs from the previous Dacia Duster model in size, being taller and longer, with a larger luggage compartment and a greater passenger capacity. Additionally, it features a hybrid engine, thereby integrating an ecological theme.

The advertising narrative begins with the entire family entering the car and embarking on a journey. The imagery of the road and the predominant landscape features evoke the impression of a lengthy trip through multiple countries. The parents and children gradually traverse these countries, continuously admiring local attractions from the vehicle, a process conveyed through visual hyperbole. It is reasonable to interpret that the exaggerated objects depicted in relation to their locations serve a metonymic function, expressed solely through visual means. As evident hyperboles, these objects are presented in significantly oversized forms: a gigantic strawberry, a shrimp, a telescope, a woman wearing an enormous hat, and a substantial storm approaching from the sea. In this context, the car is perceived as a refuge – a safe space that offers protection from the elements.

¹² The advertisement is available on the website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8P-t_sJMi0c



Figure 3. Sequence of images depicting exaggerated objects (hyperboles) from the Dacia Bigster advertisement

5.2.3 Immanent analysis

The name *Bigster* was created through the combination of two elements: the word *big* and the second syllable of *Duster*, referencing the Dacia Duster model. The advertisement emphasizes the word *big*, highlighting notions of size and magnitude, which is reinforced by the song *I'm Mr. Big Stuff* by Jimmy Hicks, a cover of Jean Knight's *Mr. Big Stuff*, and its lyrics. The entire commercial, which features images, text, and a song, is constructed around this semantic core. Additionally, the text explicitly states that the vehicle is environmentally friendly due to its hybrid drive.

- (6) [written text – alternating phrases during a visual narrative]
- a. [context: giant shrimp] Restaurant
 - b. [context: huge animal] Hotel Montana
 - c. SOMETIMES BIG IS JUST BIG
 - d. SOMETIMES BIG IS JUST WHAT YOU NEED
 - e. DACIA BIGSTER
 - f. BIG BOOT
 - f. BIG SUNROOF
 - g. BIG HYBRID ENGINE
 - h. SMALL PRICE
 - i. DACIA

- (7) [lyrics from a song used in the advertisement: *I'm Mr. Big Stuff* by Jimmy Hicks, a cover of Jean Knight's *Mr. Big Stuff*]

I'm Mr. Big Stuff

Just like you say I am

I'm Mr. Big Stuff

I'm not hard up for love

Now I know I wear all these fancy clothes

I've a big fine car now, oh yes I do [...]

The advertisement repeatedly features the image of the emblem of the product, which was created by modifying the graphic form of the letters D and C (from the word Dacia). This symbolizes the strong connection and trust between Dacia and its customers (hence the name “Dacia Link”). The emblem is visible on the car itself and also appears in the advertisement as a special inscription, accompanied by a voiceover.

In this case, there is a metalinguistic similarity between the representations of the meaning of specific graphemes, which, as symbols, represent particular phonemes. It is an originally created sign – a symbol of a model of a specific brand that redefines graphemes. Graphemes are signs by nature; they are symbols that function to represent specific sounds and their meanings.



Figure 4. Dacia Bigster logo

5.3.4 The sequence of mapping processes involving metonymic and metaphorical mappings

Nonverbal metonymy: specifically depicted parents and children represent a broader set of family communities that use the car for everyday travel as well as for joint trips. A common situation is illustrated, accompanied by an undertone of enthusiasm for a new, spacious vehicle. This metonymy is succeeded by a nonverbal metaphor – a large strawberry symbolizes a region known for its attractive fruit production. The strawberry also serves as a symbol for other popular fruits. Following this, another nonverbal metaphor appears: several elements chained together to emphasize a local attraction – seafood as a delicious food, shopping and travel, and trips to the seaside. These are always target domains with a representative function, but the environment is metaphorically based on hyperbole. Finally, a parallel nonverbal metonymy is observed – the sea and storm symbolize danger, while the car acts as a protector through a nonverbal metaphor. In a broader communicative context, the roles of

participants in advertising discourse have been examined by Gallo and Miliaev (2024). It appears that this question involves several additional aspects that warrant further analysis.

6. Conclusion and discussion

Advertisement 1 represents a multimodal metonymy – or rather, a chaining of several multimodal metonymies – that are based on voice representation, accompanied by text and visual expression. This is evident both in the commercial and on the label of the advertised drink, which constitutes another form of visual-verbal reception. Within the same domain, a metonymic connection arises, which subsequently facilitates metaphorical interpretation; together, they form the basis for the metaphor Relax Fruit Drink is fun and joy. This metaphor is implicitly conveyed through the visualization of teenagers having fun, but it would not have emerged without the metonymic visual foundation. The metaphor Relax Fruit Drink is fun and joy can be attributed to its multimodal nature, as it is realized through visual, phonetic, and verbal means – such as the written text on the screen and the verbal-pictorial elements on the bottle label.

In the case of Advertisement 2, both the source, Everest, and the target are explicitly depicted across written, audio, and visual modalities. The metonymic representation is multiple: Everest, the mountaineer, the Slovak female representative, and the multiplication of the metonymy aim to manifest arguments in favour of achieving conviction and to identify the target – a person and their financial burden – with the burden of the source. This constitutes a combination of metonymies sharing a common element. The metalinguistic similarity of effort, viewed as a scalar similarity, is central to the attitudinal conclusion.

In the case of Advertisement 3, both the source and the target are explicitly depicted across written, audio, and visual modalities. The metonymy has multiple representations and is complemented by explicit visually conveyed hyperbole. Despite the presence of metonymy and repeated visually mediated hyperbole, it ultimately functions as a multimodal metaphor, expressed verbally, visually, auditorily, and as a logo-pictogram. In this case, the following applies:

The accumulation of modalities leads to co-modality or resonance. In fact, we can have resonance between domains (source domains of a single metaphor or different metaphors, as well as the resonance between target domains of a single metaphor or different metaphors), and also resonance between parallel realizations of a metaphor. (Brdar-Szabó and Brdar, 2022, p. 217)

Table 4. Overview of combinations of verbal and non-verbal metonymies and metaphors discussed in case studies 1–3

Case study	Combinations of metonymies and metaphors	Metaphors and metonymies involved	Other dominant devices contributing to multimodality
Advertisement for the Relax Fruit Drink	Mnnv – Mn – Mnnv – Mnv – Mphv (<i>Třeste se!</i>)	Nonverbal metonymy succeeded by metonymy, then nonverbal metonymy followed by verbal-figurative metonymy, and finally, verbal metaphor.	Polysemy Ear Latent meaning
Advertisement for the banking product “Everest”	Mnv/Mnnv – Mnv/ Mphv – Mnv/Mnnv – Mnv/Mnnv – Mphv (<i>Budúcnosť je Vaša. ‘The future is yours.’ Slovenská sporiteľňa.</i>)	Multiple parallel verbal metonymy and nonverbal metonymy, followed by verbal metaphor.	Exaggeration (hyperbole) used as a scalar value (Everest).
Advertisement for the new Bigster car model	Mnnv – Mphnv – Mphnv – Mnnv /Mphnv	A nonverbal metonymy is followed by a nonverbal metaphor, then another nonverbal metaphor, and finally by a parallel nonverbal metonymy and nonverbal metaphor.	Co-modality Resonance Hyperbole expressed in a picture A pictogram as a symbol of existing conventional symbols (graphemes D and C), created by modifying their graphic forms

The accumulation of modalities leads to co-modality or resonance. Resonance occurs between domains, which can be the source domains of a single metaphor or different metaphors. It can also occur between target domains of one or multiple metaphors, or it can be resonance between parallel realizations of a metaphor. Du Bois (2014, p. 360) defines it as “the catalytic activation of affinities across utterances.”

In other words, the accumulation of modalities contributes to the coherence of the entire advertising discourse. In the case of advertisement 3, the word *big* resonates. It appears in different contexts mainly due to visual hyperbole, but it is clearly a strategic tool for coherence. This explanation corresponds to the statement “that resonance can also obtain between signs belonging not only to the same semiotic system, but also to signs from different systems, i.e., to signs, or their aspects, across modalities” (Brdar-Szabó and Brdar, 2022, p. 217).

Each of the analysed television advertisements contains a repetition of the name of the advertised product or of some key concept, which we identify as an echo. In this type of

discourse, echoes serve not only a pragmatic role but also represent a repetition of an idea. This cumulative echo is realized through the successive appearance of different, yet semantically related, echoic expressions that refer to the same target situation. It is a metalinguistic similarity, rather than a linguistic similarity, that creates meaning through linguistic expression. The emphasis on the entity and state of affairs is marked by this repeated device, which is regarded as an echo. In the case of a metaphor, which is primarily denotative, the denotative meaning in advertising, as a result of this strategy, contrasts with the attitudinal meaning that becomes the focus of attention. To thoroughly understand metaphors, it is necessary to analyse them within the context of their emergence and consider the speaker's intention.

As Danesi (2015, p. 1) points out, a strategy specific to advertising discourse involves entering the realms of unconscious thought. Therefore, despite studies (Stern, 1988; Morgan and Reichert, 1999) indicating that most consumers do not fully understand or perceive the correct meaning of metaphors in advertising, they are still employed by advertising creators. These creators are aware that the use of metaphors and metonymies stimulates the imagination of the recipient and facilitates memorization. Particularly in television advertising, their use allows creators to transport the consumer from the real to the imaginary world through creative presentation. When considering the persuasive or manipulative power of metaphors, the speaker's intention is of key importance, because the use of metaphors or metonymies does not necessarily imply manipulation. Instead, they serve as powerful tools that effectively advance the intentions of those who employ them pragmatically. In this regard, it is essential to consider the intentions of advertising creators when using metaphors, especially concerning environmental themes and the possibilities of media dissemination.

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