Title: Linguistic and pictorial metonymy in advertising

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Abstract

The paper investigates the role of linguistic and pictorial metonymies in advertising from the cognitive perspective. The study is based on the e-business advertisements that appeared in the Western culture contemporary magazines. It seeks to demonstrate that the advertisers try by means of metonymies to facilitate the understanding of their persuasive messages not only by the target audience in our culture but also at a global level, since metonymy as a conceptual phenomenon is viewed as even more basic to cognition than metaphor. As regards the typology of metonymies to be used in discussing the role of this conceptual phenomenon in e-business advertisements, I will basically follow the one proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez (2003), since their insights in the domain-internal nature of metonymic mappings and in the conceptual interaction of metonymies seem to be especially suited for the purposes of this study. In the discussion, I argue that the advertisers' goals are achieved, on the one hand, by their frequent use of double linguistic and pictorial metonymies in an advertisement, and on the other, by the creative use of the Great Chain of Being cultural cognitive model, which contributes to the construction of cognitive space in the e-business advertisements.

Keywords: e-business advertising, linguistic metonymy, pictorial metonymy, conceptual interaction, source-in-target metonymy, target-in-source metonymy, subdomain, domain expansion, domain reduction, double metonymy, reversibility, cultural cognitive model.

1. Introduction

Cognitive linguistics offers a promising approach for the analysis of metonymy in advertising, by providing a framework especially suited to its description and interpretation. From this perspective, the cognitive view of metonymy allows the analysis of both linguistic and pictorial metonymies, since they are regarded as two kinds of the manifestation of this conceptual phenomenon. On the other hand, advertising as a type of mass-communication with fairly clear-cut intentions forms part of our everyday life (e.g. on roadside billboards, on TV, in the press, on the Internet) and we are constantly exposed to its influence (Vestergaard and Schroeder, 1985; Cook, 1992; Forceville, 1996; Goddard, 1998; Ungerer, 2000). Turning to metonymy, it is seen as a powerful cognitive device in the advertisers' hands, so my aim in this article is to investigate the creative use of metonymy in printed advertisements by seeking a description of linguistic and pictorial metonymic realizations that contribute to the accomplishment of the advertisers' persuasive goals. One of the main goals of the e-business advertisements is to build up the positive perception of the advertisers' corporate image. It can be argued that the advertisers' goals are mainly accomplished by their conscious choice of double linguistic and pictorial metonymies, on the one hand, and of the Great Chain of Being cultural cognitive model, on the other, which are systematically sustained throughout the advertisement.

The article is based on e-business advertisements that appeared in *Fortune, Newsweek, The Economist, Business Week* and *Time*, in the period between 1999 and 2002. A corpus of 260 e-business advertisements from 121 companies provides a suitable source and context for the analysis of this cognitive phenomenon. It should be pointed out that the

above-mentioned magazines, in which these advertisements are published, assume a certain type of readership. The readers of these magazines, generally speaking, are seen as either users or potential users of e-business products and services at a global level.

2. **The theoretical framework**

It is not surprising that the importance of metonymy is increasingly being recognized and studied by cognitive linguists, since this cognitive phenomenon is, to quote John Taylor (1995: Chapter 7), "one of the most fundamental processes of meaning extension". Most of the literature is drawn on Lakoff and his collaborators' basic tenets that in metonymy "a mapping occurs within a single domain, and that there is a "stand for" relationship" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 36; Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 103). However, in Kövecses and Radden's (1998:39) terms metonymy is a "cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or ICM". Kövecses and Radden's view of metonymy is partially based on Langacker's (1993: 30) claim that "the entity that is normally designated by a metonymic expression serves as a reference point affording mental access to the desired target (i.e. the entity actually being referred to)". With regard to this aspect of metonymy, I agree with Barcelona (2000:12-13) and Ruiz de Mendoza's (2000:113-115) view that in metonymy, the projection of the source simultaneously causes the mental activation of the target, but the mapping does take place.

Turning now to the pragmatic aspects of what is unsaid or unwritten but communicated in advertising makes us pay more attention to the psychological notions such as background knowledge, beliefs and expectations. Such notions function like

familiar patterns from the previous experience that the addressees employ to interpret new experiences (Yule, 1996:84-85). The most general pattern is a *frame*. The notion of frame was proposed by Minsky (1975) in his frame-theory and Fillmore's (1975) frame-semantics. Minsky explains that knowledge is stored in memory in the form of data structures, which represent stereotyped events. Fillmore (1975:124) initially perceived frames as a collection of linguistic alternatives, but later he changed his conception of frames assigning them a cognitive interpretation (Fillmore and Atkins, 1992:75). Similarly, Yule (1996:86) suggests that a frame is shared by everyone within a social group as something like a prototypical version.

From this perspective, we can argue that a frame is a very effective cognitive device for the analysis of advertisements. The notion of frame refers to a knowledge structure or structured set of elements drawn from various conceptual domains and consisting of encyclopedic knowledge associated with a given linguistic form (Dirven, Frank, and Ilie, 2001:1). Cognitive linguists (see Langacker, 1987, 1991; Lakoff, 1987; Fauconnier, 1985; Ungerer and Schmid, 1996) have also discussed the concept of frame. Thus, Lakoff (1987), for instance, has developed similar ideas under the name of an Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM), while the notion of the *cultural cognitive model* is proposed as another type of Lakoff's ICM. ICMs differ from cultural cognitive models because cultural models are part of specific cultural worlds rather than general human experience. From this standpoint, ICMs and cultural cognitive models can be seen as the subtypes of the overarching, hyperonymic category "frame" (Dirven, Frank, and Ilie, 2001:2).

The following aspects of the cultural cognitive models seem to be the main reasons for their frequent use in advertising: they operate at an unconscious level of thought and they are strongly tied to value systems, and, thus, highly charged

emotionally. Actually, we think about social reality in terms of cultural models (Lakoff and Turner, 1989:66; Dirven, Frank and Ilie, 2001: 1-7). One of the most prototypical cognitive models in our culture is the Great Chain of Being (Lakoff and Turner, 1989:66, 160-213; Kövecses, 2002:126-127). This large-scale cultural cognitive model ranges over the wide scope of forms of beings in the universe (Lakoff and Turner, 1989:66). The Great Chain of Being is outlined as the following hierarchy of concepts: at the top of the Great Chain of Being hierarchy is the Supreme Being, while the Human Beings occupy the following level in the hierarchy. Since this cultural model concerns not merely attributes and behavior but also dominance, higher forms of beings dominate lower forms of beings by virtue of their higher natures. Commonly, the Great Chain of Being is thought as background to works of art; therefore, it is not surprising that advertisers make use of this cultural model in the creation of their advertising messages. The role of the Great Chain of Being cultural model in the process of creation of metonymies in e-business advertisements will be discussed more at length in the following section.

As regards the typology of metonymies to be used in discussing the role of linguistic and pictorial metonymy in e-business advertisements, I will basically follow the typology proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez (2003), since their view of the domain-internal nature of metonymic mappings and of the conceptual interaction between two metonymies seem to be especially suited for the purposes of this study. According to Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez (2003:496-497), there are

> two possible situations in a metonymic mapping: one in which a whole domain, which we shall call *matrix domain*, stands for one of its subdomains (e.g. *She's taking a pill* where "pill" stands for "contraceptive pill"), and another one in which a subdomain stands for its corresponding matrix domain (e.g. *All hands on deck*, where by "hands" we refer to sailors who do hard physical work in virtue of the hands playing an experientially prominent role).

Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez refer to the former as cases of *target-in-source* metonymy and to the latter as cases of *source-in-target* metonymy. These authors view a matrix domain as a unitary framework of reference for a number of domains, which are part of it (e.g. "hand", "elbows", "wrist" all share the same matrix domain, that is, the notion of "arm") (Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez, 2003:497). The two types of metonymic mappings correlate with the two basic functions of referential metonymy, thus, source-in-target metonymies involve domain expansion, that is, they give "full access to the matrix domain by means of one of its subdomains. On the other hand, target-in-source metonymies involve domain reduction, which […] results in the subsequent highlighting of a relevant part of a domain" (Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez, 2003:498). It should be pointed out that although it has been traditionally assumed that metonymy involves an additional part-for-part relationship, that is, one subdomain within a domain stands for another subdomain within the same domain (see Kövecses and Radden, 1998; Radden, 2003), I adopt Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez's (2003:497-498) view that this and other examples are instances of metonymic domain inclusion where the target is a subdomain of the source. Consider the following example:

(1) *Bush* bombed *Baghdad.*

In (1) the ruler stands for the army under his command within the frame of war. Moreover, I consider that Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez's (2003:512-518) idea of the conceptual interaction between two metonymic models, which they call "double metonymy", is particularly suitable for the analysis and the interpretation of the complex scenarios that are used in advertising. Of course, I extend the notion of double metonymic mappings to the interaction between linguistic and pictorial metonymies. Finally, I will pay attention to the reversibility of double metonymies in my data

because it seems that this type of interaction allows the advertiser to achieve subtle persuasive effects.

3. An analysis of linguistic and pictorial metonymy in e-business advertising

Let us have a closer look at the above-introduced typology of metonymies by applying it to my data. We will start with the target-in-source metonymy. Our first example of this type of metonymy may be identified in the Hitachi advertisement (see Figure 1). The metonymic expressions used in this article, which I wish to draw attention to will appear in italics.

> (2) Because *Hitachi makes* hardware and software, major infrastructure as well as multimedia products, such info-electronics applications are a natural fit for us.

(Insert Figure 1: Hitachi advertisement)

The metonymy ADVERTISED COMPANY FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE, is of the target-in-source type because a whole domain or matrix domain stands-for one of its subdomains. The metonymy involves domain reduction, which results in the subsequent highlighting of the target domain.

On the other hand, the source-in-target metonymy can also be found in the Hitachi advertisement (see Figure 1). Consider the following example:

> (3) As *we* progress on this path, *I* promise you there will be *one company* you can trust to lead the 21st century info-electronics revolution, i.e. *HITACHI*' *Mr. Shoyama, President* and *director of Hitachi*.

In the above example a subdomain stands-for its corresponding matrix domain. In this case, we can see that the PERSON RESPONSIBLE STANDS FOR COMPANY metonymy

involves domain expansion, that is, it provides full access to the whole domain by means of one of its subdomains. Actually, domain expansion and domain reduction are the natural consequence of the domain-internal nature of metonymic mappings (Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez, 2003:496). Thus, by means of these two metonymies both the role of the ADVERTISED COMPANY and the role of a PERSON or PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE are highlighted. This type of interaction of metonymies contributes, on the one hand, to the promotion of the advertised company among the target audience, and on the other hand, the metonymic message may strengthen the relationship between the company and their staff. In both cases, the goal of the e-business advertisement is to build up the positive perception of the advertisers' corporate image. This is achieved principally by projecting the human aspects of the entity on our perception of the advertised company.

In the analysis of metonymy in e-business advertisements, we can identify the frequent use of the following parts of human body as the source domains:

(i)   head or brain

(ii)   hand

(iii)   fingers.

The advertisers' choice of these parts of human body is not surprising because they are the most relevant parts of our body in the use of the Internet. The examples of head or brain are manifested verbally in examples (4), (5) and (6), while (ii) and (iii) are represented visually in Figures 8 and 11 below. The extracts of advertising texts that are used as examples in this article contain the name of the advertised entity in the parenthesis at the end of each extract.

(4) Over half of the world's leading Internet businesses come into the

world with a Sun Microsystems *brain*. (Sun Microsystems)

(5) Now all your *heads* can work together. (Xerox)

(6) Its *brain* is huge. It just happens to be wrapped in a very small, thin *body*. (Ericsson)

Turning now to double metonymy, this conceptual device can be defined as the conceptual interaction where two metonymies work together (Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez, 2003:512). The double metonymic mappings may involve processes either of domain expansion or of domain reduction. Let us examine first the type of double metonymy which concerns the process of domain expansion, that is, the target domain of the first source-in-target metonymy is the source of the second source-in-target metonymy.

(Insert Figure 2: Unisys advertisement)

Consider the following example, which is taken from the Unisys advertisement (see Figure 2):

(7) We have a head for e-business.

The head is commonly distinguished as the place of intelligence and cleverness as can be seen in example (7). Here "head" stands for a person's ability to think, make plans and organize things in business activities. In (7), there are two processes of domain expansion. As Figure 3 illustrates, there are two source-in-target metonymies where the target domain of the first mapping is the source domain of the second mapping.

(Insert Figure 3: Double linguistic metonymy, in *We have a head for e-business*.)

Similarly, in Figure 4 we come across another double metonymy. We can identify the pictorial manifestations of the following conceptual metonymies: COMPUTER SCREEN FOR COMPUTER FOR ACTION OF ARTIFICIAL REASONING. Here the addresser tries to activate our perception of the computer as an artificial intelligence source that is able to think and act rationally.

(Insert Figure 4: Double pictorial metonymy, in *We have a head for e-business*.)

Finally, Figure 5 illustrates the interaction between the linguistic and pictorial metonymies, which further activates another metonymy: THE ADVERTISED COMPANY FOR A HYBRID (PERSON-MACHINE) RESPONSIBLE. Thus, the interaction of double pictorial and linguistic metonymies in the Unisys advertisement illustrates that metonymy not simply substitutes one entity for another entity, but interrelates them to form a new complex meaning. These double metonymies involve the process of domain highlighting and consequently of domain expansion. The advertiser's goal is to make the audience conceptualize the advertised company as a hybrid entity, which should be viewed as a superior entity.

(Insert Figure 5: Advertised company for a hybrid (person-machine) responsible)

Let us now examine the second type of double metonymy which concerns the process of domain reduction, that is, the target domain of the first metonymy is the source domain of the second metonymy.

(Insert Figure 6: InterBiz advertisement)

Our following example is the InterBiz advertisement in which we can see that the whole page spread illustrates the picture of huge granite figures (*moais*) from Easter Island (*Rapa Nui*) in their natural environment. Consider the following expressions:

(8) *Let's face it*. E-business *is* still *a mystery to* most people.

(9) *Unlocking* the mysteries of e-Business.

The expression "Let's face it" interacts with the picture of the stone head covered by the advertised entity's logo and facing the reader, while the domain of a mystery of moais (source) is projected onto the domain of a mystery of e-business (target) in the metaphorical expression *E-business is still a mystery to most people* in (8). On the other hand, Figure 7 illustrates two metonymies. From this perspective, metonymies can be described by their position in a hierarchy according to the level of abstractness at which they are classified. The use of the over-arching metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE reveals the advertiser's use of the highest level in the hierarchical structure of this conceptual phenomenon. It can be argued that the advertiser chooses this over-arching metonymy because of its universality in order to trigger at the audience at a global level. The target-in-source type of this metonymy is identified in the idea of the mystery that is related to the origin of moais, which stands for an important subdomain of our knowledge of the world mysteries. Whereas THE UNLOCKING AN OBJECT STANDS FOR THE UNLOCKER is in turn, a manifestation of the metonymic mapping that is based on a generic ICM – like action, process or result. Finally, the image of the stone head covered by the advertiser's logo and the statement in (9) allows the identification of the following mapping THE UNLOCKER OF

MYSTERIES STANDS FOR THE ADVERTISER. This double metonymy involves the process of domain highlighting and of subsequent domain reduction.

(Insert Figure 7: Double metonymy with domain reduction)

Let us now consider the following example, which shows that double pictorial and linguistic metonymies can also be reversible. For that purpose, I have chosen the Goldman Sachs advertisement (see Figure 8). On the top part of the advertisement, we find the photo of hands working with a string, while the bottom part contains the advertising text.

(Insert Figure 8: Goldman Sachs advertisement)

We will start with the description of the double pictorial metonymy: HAND FOR AGENT FOR ACTION OF HANDLING. As Figure 9 illustrates there are two processes of domain expansion. The target domain of the first source-in-target metonymy is the source domain of the second source-in-target metonymy.

(Insert Figure 9: Reversibility of double metonymy - Pictorial mapping)

The double linguistic metonymy can also be found in the Goldman Sachs advertisement (see Figure 8). Consider the subheading of this advertisement:

(10)   The global connections *to handle* the largest FX transactions.

In Figure 10, we find the double process of domain reduction where both the role

of "action of handling" in the first metonymy and of the target domain of the "hand" in the second one are highlighted.

(Insert Figure 10: Reversibility of double metonymy - Linguistic mapping)

Finally, let us have a look at the interaction between two single linguistic metonymies and one double pictorial metonymy in the double page Invensys advertisement (Figure 11). We will start with the ADVERTISED COMPANY FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE linguistic metonymy, which can be seen in the following extract from this advertisement:

(11)   *Invensys* does not believe in the philosophy that in the future, whatever will be, will be.

Another linguistic metonymy, PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADVERTISED COMPANY can be identified in the following page of the same advertisement:

(12)   We've already thought of the solution two pages ahead of the problem.

(Insert Figure 11: Invensys advertisement)

As Figure 11 illustrates the FINGER FOR PROTECTOR FOR ACTION OF PROTECTING double pictorial metonymy dominates the whole advertisement. It seems that this over-arching metonymy is based on one of the most important cultural cognitive models, the Great Chain of Being, so the extension of meaning achieved by means of this double metonymy does not simply refer to any protector but this huge finger activates the Great Chain of Being cultural cognitive model of the Supreme Protector.

Let us consider the mechanisms used by the addresser to channel our perception of

the advertised entity within the Great Chain of Being hierarchical order of forms of beings. From this standpoint, the huge finger activates via the Great Chain of Being our cultural knowledge of the attributes and behavior of the Supreme Being. This double metonymy seems to motivate the conceptual projection of the prototypical aspects of the Supreme Being onto the attributes and behavior of the advertised entity so that we can conceive of the advertised entity in terms of the Supreme Being.

(Insert Figure 12: Double pictorial metonymy FINGER FOR PROTECTOR FOR ACTION OF PROTECTING)

4. Conclusions

In this article, I have argued that the role of linguistic and pictorial metonymies is important for the construction of cognitive space in advertisements. The analysis of metonymies in e-business advertisements has followed the typology proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez (2003), since their view of the domain-internal nature of metonymic mappings and of the conceptual interaction between two metonymies seem to be particularly suited for the purposes of this article. I have focused on the interaction of double linguistic and pictorial metonymies, with the emphasis on the over-arching metonymy (e.g. EFFECT FOR CAUSE), which seems to be universal and consequently may be understood by the audience at a global level. In a similar way, the creative use of the Great Chain of Being cultural cognitive model, which is activated by metonymy (e.g. PROTECTOR FOR ACTION OF PROTECTING) may provide the basis for the understanding of advertisers' messages not only in our culture but also at a global level.

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