THE POWER OF METAPHORS IN COMMUNICATION

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INTRODUCTION

Un bon croquis vaut mieux qu'un long discours.”
- Napoleon Bonaparte

“A good sketch is better than a long speech” as a translation and also as said in a Chinese proverb: “One picture is worth ten thousand words.”

Visual thoughts can be complex, but makes possible to easily absorb a large amount of information, if the metaphors are used in correct forms. The persuasive impact of visual metaphors are enriched by its complexity, but the meaning is still comprehensible at the same time. A single metaphor may be worth of a hundred words of advertising text, it attracts the curiosity of the reader about the product. Every single moment in communication, every word and image that used have a reason for a specific purpose. As Chehov said: “If you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired. Otherwise don’t put it there.”

Metaphor plays an important part in our daily life to categorise the reality of the world around us by interacting with the creation of meaning. Metaphors can also serve to redefine the process of communication problems and can be utilized as a research tool to comprehend new subject areas in order to create new ideas for better communication.

In general, the objective of this study is, the reason why advertisers and designers prefered using metaphors, and the way of its intelligibility and effects on salability of product. It is going to be analysed according to the linguistic impact of metaphors, the conceptual parts, the secret of its effectiveness and how they are used in advertisements. I am going to make the analysis of memorable advertisements that made up with visual metaphors. I argue that it’s impossible to illuminate the real purpose of language and thought in advertisements without using metaphors. I suggest that metaphors are the best way to describe and expres the idea, and creates a superiority over people.
CONTENTS

i  INTRODUCTION
3  1. UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD OF METAPHORS
3  1.1 Thinking Metaphorically
3  1.2 Analysing Deep metaphors
5  1.3 Cultural Diversity of Metaphors
5  2. HOW METAPHORS ARE SHAPED IN COMMUNICATION
5  2.1 Metaphoric Effects on Consumers
6  2.2 Persuasive Complexity of Metaphors
7  3. METAPHORIC ADVERTISEMENTS
15  CONCLUSIONS
16  REFERENCES
1. UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD OF METAPHORS

1.1 THINKING METAPHORICALLY

Metaphors are the way of building construction to organize our mind, by classifying the world we live by according to our senses. Thus, metaphors serve to display how we conceptualize the ambience of the world as visualizing mentally.

By thinking metaphorically, it provides to create equivalent thoughts about the concepts that evokes particularly. For example; depending on the concept of balance, when describing a balanced person; smooth-mannered, quiet, sane, enjoys life are suitable expressions, as describing an unbalanced person; unstable, extreme emotional or freak may represent the same idea that generated. Therefore; balance is calm, imbalance is hectic. This conceptualizing system has a basic function, as not only a model of analysing ideas, but also increase metaphorical thinking.

Metaphors allow the designer to think comprehensively to re-diagnose the design problems. Metaphors can exemplify familiar explanations when presenting new or complex ideas. A good metaphor comprises more than an analytic clarification. Metaphors are creative entrances of an element to compare, make a connection and examine the contrary situations with another to fix problems. Metaphors assist to designers to comprehend the unknown problems by collocating the factors with the familiar ones. By creating connection between the objects, the perspective of thinking introduce different approaches and ideas that transform to new ideas.

Creativity is not a necessity for analysing the problems with a different perspective, and applying new accesses. The aptitude of thinking metaphorically develops the possibility of recognizing the concealed and irrelevant parts of a problem that may turn to an answer as a result. While comparing the problems to something unfamiliar, breaking into common pieces creates new forms and affiliation that may generates innovating ideas. As David Brooks mentioned the effect of using metaphors;

“Most of us are not good at understanding new things, so we grasp them imperfectly by relating them metaphorically to things that already exist.” (‘Poetry for Everyday Life’, New York Times, April 11).

Metaphors are an instance to creating new concepts and meanings, by using familiar objects to transform into abstract circumstances. Thinking metaphorically is a way of thinking that related with perception and description of the object that focuses on prominent features.

1.2 ANALYSING DEEP METAPHORS

“It is not the role of metaphor to draw our sight to what is there, but to draw our vision toward what is not there and, indeed, cannot be anywhere. Metaphor is horizontal, reminding us that it is one's vision that is limited, and not what one is viewing.” (James P. Carse)
All of the thoughts and emotions, even conscious or unconscious, are mental products as a result that fire up in a set of neurons in the brain. (Zaltman, 2008) Shootings between neurons produces a thought, and other thoughts that activates other neurons, that these thoughts are called as concepts. Deep metaphors are the product of these complex neurological activities. Neurons in different regions of the brain’s, when firing together by establishing a connection between them, they create ideas. The same parts of the brain can interact for many different reasons, that may represent different ideas. For example, an advertisement with the intention of triggering a sense of fear, is enabling part of the brain related to emotions, and containing positive and negative feeling is also possible to cause a confusion.

Senses and motor system; allow understanding, perception and expressing about abstract thoughts and feelings to provide categories that contribute to a great extent. (Zaltman, 2008) This process of categorization is called embodiment of the cognition. Sense of sight is the most commonly used source of embodied cognition. The majority of stimuli that reach to brain via the visual system, deep metaphors are tools to perceive the things, and making sense of the events encountered. Thus, to figure out the meanings and have a reason, the elaborations of visual and motor system should be recognized.

“Our sensorymotor systems thus limit the abstract reasoning that we can perform. Anything we can think or understand is shaped by, made possible by, and limited by our bodies, brains, and our embodied interactions in the world. This is what we have to theorize with.” (George Lakoff)

Deep metaphors start developing since our birth, and are shaped with our social environment. In this sense, metaphors are involved with language, emotion, and our innate abilities. Highly, metaphors work unconsciously, still they are deep. Metaphors are essential ways in language of defining ideas. According to Mark Johnson and George Lakoff, most people use metaphors as a tool to creating a sense of meaning with mental visualisation to appreciate daily living. Metaphors are encountered in general, mostly with nature, that the way we behave and imagine in everyday life, not only exist in language we talk, also seen in ideas and activities.

The significant role of metaphor is understanding the conceptual system of human being, that starts with experiencing a concept with the others. According to Aristotle, metaphors are transformed into novel usage, also can be shaped as an educational devices. For example; when a lecturer uses a metaphor to describe a new subject to the students, they learn different attributes of the subject owing to the metaphor, as Aristotle says, “Now strange words simply puzzle us; ordinary words convey only what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh.” (Rhetoric, III)

Our conceptual system, the very way that we perceive our world, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Metaphors are not immensely widespread to realize at first sight, but extremely concerned with acts and thoughts. Additionally, metaphors are not exclusively about everyday language, but rather about the ideas that the way we associate the concepts with each other.
“Reason is physical, it does not fit the world directly but only through the brain and body, it uses frames and conceptual metaphors (which are neural circuits grounded in the body), it requires emotion, it serves empathic connections and moral values as well as self-interest, and language fits frames in the brain not the external world in any direct way.” (George Lakoff)

1.3 CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF METAPHORS

Lakoff and Johnson classify metaphors that may change from culture to culture because they are not randomly chosen and reproduce the meaning due to social and cultural experience in the physical world that we live.

Metaphors can be made use of to draw a picture how cultures visualize spaces that familiar. Metaphors analyse two objects and collate them by suggesting that two objects are similar to each other, as well as they are quite unlike. The way that metaphors are used, they allow obtaining information from a fresh sight, and improving new learning methods. Visual metaphors are a concept that demonstrate how the visual imagination is systematized by meanings through culture and experiences. Forms, icons and symbols may represent different meanings and seem in different appearance as visual metaphors, but that express the same influence across cultures.

We make metaphors to use as a reason to understand the concepts that based on our experiences and actions. A sound, sometimes a picture or a word may represent the feelings and ideas, and how we perceive the concept metaphorically.

Metaphors allow us to imagine and comprehend about abstract concepts, by offering to compare tangible objects to intangible objects, in order to make a sense. (e.g. Time is money)

Lakoff and Johnson conjecture that we think metaphorically and generate our ideas through physical experiences, accordingly that we have physical bodies to perceive the space. Visual metaphors are tools that work unconsciously, but portray the space by our everyday actuality (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980)

2.How Metaphors are Shaped in Communication

2.1 METAPHORIC EFFECTS ON CONSUMERS

Lakoff and Johnson’s studies proved that, we use metaphors that contributes to our cognitive process, to make sense of the space we live in, and create abstract things to turn them into products. Although advertisements or products can be made without using metaphors, but the result does not change so much. Users would add their own meanings to products by using metaphors, to comprehend things in terms of comparing them to the other things.

Metaphors are effective tools to create inventions that occurs as new perspectives, by juxtaposing two contrary or different objects, we may approach to realize the possible outcome. Metaphors are categorized to differentiate the utilization of visual metaphors in advertising.
Visual metaphors have a connection with advertising, that the purpose is transferring one message to another. Therefore, advertisers pay attention to distinguish the same and different products and determine about what to apply in ads, accordingly to the culture and social values in terms of semiotic principles.

Consumers try to understand visual metaphors in advertisements by adding their meanings and results. When visual metaphors used in advertisements, consumers tend to acquire more positive effects and comprehend deeper meanings to unravel the complex parts of an advertisement. Visual metaphors may appear in the form of images as delightful concepts to obtain receptive ideas, if they are used in eligible conditions. The most powerful visual metaphors consolidate two extremely different categories together to demonstrate the characteristics between them. When comparing two extensively different objects, those should be obviously simple to figure out. Visual metaphors, if they are not understood accurately by consumers, would not draw attention as planned. The essence of composing visual metaphors is, to assure stability between unlike objects by using them adequately proper forms. The fundamental causation of using metaphors in problematical conditions is to divulge the fact that; actual feelings about a concept can effect result and also the situation. If problems are analysed from another sight with different perspective, new occasions and solutions may be noticeable.

When metaphors are used in appropriate forms as orientation, classification and representation, they can be an influential tools for products. The power of metaphors is seen in the relationship between a user and a product, the way that user approaches to perceive. Using improper or atypical metaphors can be misinterpreted and cause irritation that makes disappointment as a result.

Advertisements have a prominent role more than communicating with products and service, the primary role is to point out how people compose ideas according to their experiences, that concerned about physical surroundings that we live.

2.2 PERSUASIVE COMPLEXITY OF METAPHORS

Metaphors are persuasive tools for creating ideas in both written language and thinking. Visual metaphors have powerful persuasive influence that can affect buyers attention and interest. In advertisements, it is crucial to indicate how message behaviours in language metaphorically that impress the sensation of consumers to make an accurate communication.

According to Phillips and McQuarrie, visual metaphors can be classified by the level of their complexity that may impress the persuasive effect. They defined that; when concepts get more complex, attract more discretion. The complexity of visual metaphors may have a diversity and different persuasive effects on consumers. More powerful persuasive effects are occurred, when visual metaphors get more complex in communication. Therefore, the amount of complexity in visual metaphors is involved with the persuasive influence consequently.

4. Edward F. McQuarrie is a professor in the Department of Marketing, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University. He received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Cincinnati in 1985. His research interests include customer value, qualitative research, and market research appropriate to technology products, on the one hand, and advertising research, rhetoric and semiotics on the other.

5. Barbara J. Philips highly focused on technical writing, marketing writing, publicist, copy writer, editor, graphic designer, web site builder, social media. A collaborative, team-oriented professional who thrives on achieving organizational and personal goals.
3. METAPHORIC ADVERTISEMENTS

Metaphors are formed in different classification of species in itself, still it has a wide diversity in ads. Usage of metaphors in ads can vary to product, culture, message and purpose. In this section, 15 advertisements are analyzed according to the products that serve different purposes with using different metaphor patterns.

1. Metaphors can serve a lot of things and appear in different types in ads. In this example; fortune cookie is used to impose a combination of two different emotions such as expectation and frustration. Alcoholic beverages generally cause emotional reactions, thus, metaphors make a connection between the object and emotions by indirection. The message in the fortune cookie (That wasn’t chicken) is a kind of confession note that reminds us the fact that we assume the things as we wish, but notice the reality at the end as well as in everyday life.

2. Newspapers and editorials generally use ads or cartoons to show metaphor often relevant to political issues. Sonntags Zeitung newspaper figures the presidential system as visually. Snow White is used to highlight the Kingdom history that started in story books since our childhood, as well as this story will continue likewise. Matryoshka dolls are used as a visual effect to create continuity, and emphasize that, following persons will be from their families and generation to assure continuation process.

Figure 1- Sauza Advertisement
3. Occasionally, metaphors bring irrelevant objects to make a relationship in unfamiliar ways. The purpose of using different elements in ads is, as clear as the meaning of objects. Rabbit is rabbit rabbit arguably as seen, while juxtaposing them together, the same meaning is transferring to the product.
4. Advertising metaphors sometimes illustrate verbal metaphors from everyday life speech. For example; "If it was possible to stop time..." There is no such an invention to stop time yet, but metaphorically the actions and moments can be captured by the cameras to keep them frozen.

Figure 4- Olympus Advertisement

5. Advertisements, with the help of metaphors like to draw attention to the product by appealing to senses. Using a baby and a father figures in a composition activate paternal bond and heartwarming in order to give smooth personal touch.

Figure 5- Bic Advertisement
6. In ads according to their purpose, human characteristics and actions are transferred to the objects, in order to be effective. Nuisance of being overweight is described as a bag that suffers from exhausting. Carrying own burden is shown as metaphorically.

![Figure 6- Pilates with Gerda Advertisement](image)

7. In another metaphor method in advertising is, using two objects that mean and refer the same thing. Toys and games exist to contribute to the world of imagination, by giving abstractness to perceive different shaped objects as a same figure.

![Figure 7- Lego Advertisement](image)
8. Metaphorical advertisements make meaning by bringing same elements together, such as using different elements to build a powerful message to the majority. When visual objects are alike, the content of the words create meanings to have metaphorical connection.

Figure 8- Benetton Advertisement

9. In advertisements, logos, and product designs; usage of hand icon is substantial to dwell on gaining trust over audience. A lot of advertising, the messages highlight the importance of social connection that uses symbolic hand. Metaphors are as well as the reflection of a culture, also indicates the origin of the product visually.

Figure 9- AT&T Advertisement
10. Visual metaphors are powerful tools that allow us to view something from another perspective. By using another point of view, metaphors in ads can create exaggeration. Sky window of a car offers us to open the curtain of a new world that is brought with the invention we create visually.

11. Sometimes products do not appear in the ads obviously, but we can understand the attribute of the market through the action. The aim is to increase the interest in the product, thereof the possible results are depicted in the deficiency of that product. Emotional difficulty of waking up in the morning is shown as physical distress metaphorically.
12. For creating metaphorical effects for products, situations are compared as before and after conditions. In this example to highlight the purpose of the product, the surface of the sofa has been used instead of a human skin that indicates the destination of the body.

Figure 12 - Nivea Advertisement

13. Another drawing attention to products, especially for low-income ones, is to show that the products can make more than its aim. As in the ad, paper towels can transform into creative tools that increase the demand of people to the product.

Figure 13 - Sopalin Advertisement
14. Metaphors are not used to replace the objects all the time. Sometimes the metaphors used to create a story, and show the following action and next frame through photograph. In this example, verbal abuse has been expressed as physically to impress two sided effect at the same time.

15. Metaphors are composed from everyday life and common knowledge. Most of the social warning advertisements are made with visual metaphors to be more apprehensible. These ads should appeal to the majority to be more clear for everyone, even not include text in it.
CONCLUSIONS

Metaphors should be defined in the context of the current culture diversity that is one of the basic assumptions of approaching to the language, because the thoughts of people from different cultures, can not be defined as universal.

Metaphors can be a powerful tool for designers to develop user experience by getting an idea of what is expected. Being conscious about importance of mental visualizing help to differentiate the unfamiliar parts in a problem. We use metaphors to build a sense of familiarity to create solutions by examining the problem in a new concept. Designers would take advantage of using metaphors in order to make innovations with looking from different perspective. By solving the problems with new approach, it gets simpler to notice the possible outcomes for a problem.

Metaphors are usually based on emotions, even with verbal or visual. To draw an attention of customers to one product, it is the ideal way to make an introductory advertisement that are intended for emotions.
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