

الاستعارات في إعلانات التوعية الاجتماعية : تحليل من منظور علم اللغة الاجتماعي المعرفي

م. د. نور محمد نور الدين
جامعة البصرة، كلية الاداب، قسم اللغة الانكليزية

البريد الإلكتروني Email : noor.nooruldin@uobasrah.edu.iq

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستعارة، إعلانات التوعية، علم اللغة الاجتماعي المعرفي، نموذج التفاعل لماكس بلاك، العمليات المعرفية، اللغة المجازية، الإقناع، الوعي الاجتماعي.

كيفية اقتباس البحث

نور الدين ، نور محمد، الاستعارات في إعلانات التوعية الاجتماعية : تحليل من منظور علم اللغة الاجتماعي المعرفي ،مجلة مركز بابل للدراسات الانسانية، أيلول 2026، المجلد:16، العدد:9.

هذا البحث من نوع الوصول المفتوح مرخص بموجب رخصة المشاع الإبداعي لحقوق التأليف والنشر (Creative Commons Attribution) تتيح فقط للآخرين تحميل البحث ومشاركته مع الآخرين بشرط نسب العمل الأصلي للمؤلف، ودون القيام بأي تعديل أو استخدامه لأغراض تجارية.

Registered في
ROAD

مفهرسة في
IASJ



Metaphors in Awareness Advertising: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Analysis

Metaphors in Awareness Advertising: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Analysis

Lect. Dr. Noor M. Nooruldin

University of Basrah, College of Arts, English Department

Keywords : metaphor, awareness advertising, cognitive sociolinguistics, Max Black's Interaction Model, cognitive processes, figurative language, persuasion, social awareness.

How To Cite This Article

Nooruldin, Noor M , Metaphors in Awareness Advertising: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Analysis, Journal Of Babylon Center For Humanities Studies, September 2026, Volume:16, Issue 9.



This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

المستخلص

تتركز الدراسة الحالية على استخدام الاستعارة في إعلانات التوعية الاجتماعية، وتركز بصورة خاصة على الأنواع اللغوية للاستعارة ونظرياتها المختلفة. وتعتمد الدراسة المنظور النظري العام للسوسيولسانيات المعرفية، كما تتبنى نموذج التفاعل (Interaction Model) بوصفه المنهج التحليلي الرئيس، من أجل بحث الكيفية التي تُوظف بها الاستعارات بوصفها أدوات معرفية قادرة على التأثير الفعّال في التفكير الاجتماعي والقيم والسلوكيات. وتعكس هذه الدراسة قضية أوسع تتمثل في وظيفة اللغة المجازية باعتبارها وسيطاً يربط بين الإدراك الفردي والإنتاج الاجتماعي الجماعي للمعنى. فالدراسة لا تنظر إلى الاستعارة بوصفها مجرد أسلوب بلاغي أو عنصراً هامشياً في النص، بل تعدّها جزءاً أساسياً من العملية الإدراكية، إذ تسهم في تشكيل فهم الجمهور للرسالة النصية وتؤثر في الطريقة التي يدرك بها المتلقي مضمونها. وفي سياقات الاتصال الجماهيري أو غيرها من أنماط الخطاب، يمثل هذا التحول من النظر إلى

الاستعارة باعتبارها أداة جمالية إلى اعتبارها آلية معرفية تحولاً مهماً ذا آثار واسعة على تحليل الخطاب الإقناعي. وقد أكدت النتائج المتوصل إليها أن الاستعارة لا تقتصر على كونها ظاهرة لغوية فحسب، بل تُعد أداة معرفية فعّالة تؤثر في عملية بناء وتمثيل الواقع الاجتماعي، وتؤدي دوراً مهماً في تشكيل الوعي العام. وتشير النتائج كذلك إلى ضرورة التعامل مع الاستعارة بصورة أكثر منهجية واستناداً إلى أسس نظرية راسخة، بوصفها أداة محورية في مجال الاتصال المرتبط بالتنوع والمناصرة الاجتماعية.

Abstract

The present research is built on the ground of the usage of metaphor in social awareness advertising, and it is particularly regarding the Linguistic types of metaphor as well as theories of metaphor. It takes the general theoretical approach of cognitive sociolinguistics and the main analytical approach of Interaction Model and considers how metaphors are employed as cognitive tools that can actively shape sociological thinking, values and actions. This study is a reflection of the larger issue of the function of figurative language as a medium between individual cognition and a collective social product. The metaphor is not considered a stylistic figure of speech or a semi-peripheral element of the text, but it is considered an integral part of cognition, which involves the public understanding of the text's message and determines the perception of the reader. Whether in public communication contexts or in other genres of discourse, this shift from metaphor as aesthetic to metaphor as cognitive is a significant one and has broad implications for the analysis of persuasive discourse. The obtained results confirm the idea that the use of metaphor is not only a language level; it is an effective cognitive tool that influences the construal process of social reality and is an important part in the process of building public awareness. The results suggest the need for a more systematic and theoretically grounded handling of metaphor as a tool in the social area of "awareness and advocacy communication".

1- Introduction

Advertisers increasingly depend on metaphors to capture viewers' thought, efficiently link product message, and ultimately improvement auctions. This shows the important role of metaphors in the advertising atmosphere. Kovecses (2002) states that "part of the selling power of an advertisement depends on how well-chosen the conceptual metaphor is that the picture and/or the words used in the advertisement attempt to evoke in people. An appropriately selected metaphor may work wonders in promoting the sale of an item" (p.59).



Metaphors in Awareness Advertising: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Analysis



Etymologically, the concept of advertising originally denoted the act of observing or attending to something. Evans (2012) states that “cognitive linguistics is one of the fastest growing and influential perspectives on the nature of language, the mind, and their relationship with embodied experience” (p.129). Thus, the aim of advertising is to generate a constructive awareness of a message, deal, or product that demands to possible clients. The growth of marketing accords with the advance of customer costs. Also, advertisers deliberately recognize morals, and insights that reverberate with their target audience. This makes advertising an influential means for constructing societal characteristics and user performances.

It should be added that advertising, culture, and metaphor are associated in a dynamic way. Advertisements often imitate social ethics and principles, just like metaphors, which are molded by social consideration. To make publicizing appealing and convincing, advertisers regularly utilize imaginative metaphors. As a convincing device, advertising aims to trade products by making enjoyable, fascinating, or pleasurable communications. Metaphors are among the inspired methods used to realize the message.

Haack (1994) states that “metaphors are sometimes cognitively vital; not seldom illuminating; perhaps more often than not at least harmless. Metaphors can also be feeble; can be exploited to the purpose of persuading by emotional appeal rather than rational argument; can serve as lazy substitutes for adequate theoretical articulation; can lead inquiry into what turns out to be quite the wrong direction. Metaphor is neither a Good Thing nor a Bad Thing in end of itself; rather, it is a linguistic device capable of being put to good or bad use, sometimes a help, sometimes harmless, sometimes a hindrance” (p. 4).

It is precisely this cognitive and persuasive duality that renders metaphor a particularly significant object of inquiry in the context of awareness advertising, where the boundary between rational information and affective manipulation is frequently negotiated through figurative language. Metaphors have a deep influence on the audience as they stimulus new awarenesses, explore unpredicted networks between items or concepts, and arouse bright intellectual descriptions full with sense and passion. This compound procedure includes an advanced preparation of sentences and a new situation, inspiring the viewer’s imagination. Refaie (2003) argues that “the context reliance of many visual metaphors means that their meaning is often implicit and that they tend to be open to quite a wide range of understandings” (p. 89).

In addition, the present study presents metaphor as not just a rhetorical decoration, but also as a cognitive mechanism that shapes, structures and conveys social meanings in awareness advertising. The study explores the interaction between the nature of figurative language, the cognitive aspects of the processes and the public perception to help shed light upon how metaphor helps to bring into focus abstract social problems and make them affectively compelling stories.

1.2- Research Questions

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

- 1 - How do the metaphors in advertisements affect the perception of society?
- 2- How can max Black model analysis contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between language, cognition, and advertising?
- 3- What are the implications of cognitive sociolinguistic analysis of metaphors in awareness advertising?

1.3 Research Objective

The present study aims at several goals that focus on the cognitive-linguistic crossovers between advertising discourse and social awareness. The high ideological influence of the communicative practice of advertising is highlighted by the observation of Ágnes (2009) that advertising “influences the values and choices of consumers in a powerful way” (p. 19). For this reason, the research is aimed at achieving the following:

- 1.To examine the cognitive processes through which metaphor operates in awareness advertising and to assess the impact of these processes on public attention and social consciousness.
- 2.To demonstrate how the multimodal dimensions of awareness advertising — encompassing the integrated interplay of verbal, visual, and acoustic elements — enhance the persuasive force of metaphorical constructions and render abstract social messages more accessible to diverse audiences.
- 3.To apply Max Black's Interaction Model as an analytical framework for investigating the structural and cognitive dimensions of metaphor in selected awareness advertisements, with a view to elucidating how primary and secondary subjects interact to generate layered social meaning.



4.To establish that metaphors are not incidental features of advertising language but are, rather, fundamental cognitive instruments that shape the ways in which individuals think, reason, and respond to social realities.

5.To contribute to the growing body of scholarship that examines figurative language as a mechanism of social meaning-making within mediated public discourse, particularly in the domain of awareness and social advocacy campaigns.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cognitive Sociolinguistics

Cognitive sociolinguistics is a developing and growing interdisciplinary area of study, which aims to explain linguistic variation in social situations using the framework of a cognitively oriented description of language. The cognitive sociolinguistic approach is not formalistic; it investigates the influence of social and cultural contexts on linguistic forms and the influence of linguistic forms on social and cultural contexts. According to Kristiansen and Dirven (2008), cognitive sociolinguistics attempts to build a coherent theoretical model of communities, individuals and institutions and the intricate relationships that exist among them, especially regarding the social production, transmission and transformation of meaning, which takes place within a conceptual and mental model framework.

At the heart of this field is the understanding that meaning is not a linguistic property but rather a social and cultural construction that is linked to the cognitive frameworks with which human beings make sense of the world. In this general theoretical framework, the current study locates the analysis of metaphor in awareness advertising in the broader context of cognitive and communicative practices that are socially embedded, and through communicative practices the shared cultural values and social meanings are built and spread.

2.2 Metaphor: Definition and Conceptual Scope

Metaphor has long been at the heart of language and philosophy studies, and it is always a topic of a debate to define its meaning precisely. From a cognitive perspective, metaphor is the cognitive and linguistic mapping of one domain of experience onto another, creating meaning that goes beyond what either domain would be able to contain on its own. According to Kövecses (2002), in the cognitive linguistic approach to metaphor, it is not merely a linguistic property of words, but rather a “cognitive device by which one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another conceptual domain” (p. 4). This definition is a radical shift from the rhetorical perspective of traditional thinking on metaphor, which

characterized it as a form of decorativeness or ornamentation of language, and places it in the very heart of human thought and understanding.

The basis for this cognitive reconceptualization was laid to a large extent by Richards (1936), whose concept of interaction theory established the now-basic distinction between the vehicle (the figurative term used to convey the underlying subject or idea) and the tenor (underlying subject or idea). Richards claimed that metaphor is not a mechanically transferable meaning from one term to another, but rather is a product of the relationship between the two, with each influencing the other. This interactional account rejected the substitution paradigm that dominated much of the research on metaphors. Accordingly, a metaphor is only an equivalent figurative expression of a literal one, and it laid the groundwork for the cognitive view of metaphorical meaning that followed.

In addition to Richards' model of interaction, Black (1962) developed his own Interaction Model of metaphoric cognition, which is among the most influential theories to explain metaphoric cognition. Black suggested that a metaphor functions in terms of the opposition between a "primary" and a "secondary" subject, the latter being linked to a system of implications. These implications of the secondary subject are now transferred to the primary subject, thereby reorganizing and reframing the audience's understanding of the primary subject. Importantly, Black (1962) emphasized that this is not a process of simple comparison and analogy, but rather a process of genuine cognitive interaction: "The metaphor selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the primary subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the secondary subject" (p. 44). It is this ability to selectively emphasize and re-organize one's cognitive world that makes metaphor so special and unique and makes it such a powerful tool of meaning-making, compared to other figurative devices.

The cognitive dimensions of metaphor were best summarized by Lakoff & Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), which was a major contribution in the field. Lakoff & Johnson claimed that metaphor is not a poetic or literary invention, but is basic and essential in everyday thinking, speaking and doing. To them, the human conceptual system is in essence metaphorical: abstract domains of experience (time, emotion, morality, causation) are systematically understood and expressed in terms of more concrete, embodied, domains (time, feeling, moralities, causes). According to their definition "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). This discovery moves metaphor from linguistic



“interest” to a fundamental aspect of human thinking and social awareness.

Building on this cognitive model, Kittay (1987) holds that metaphor is used as a major means of assimilating new knowledge into existing conceptual frameworks. Metaphor does not simply ornament or embellish pre-existing thoughts, but rather actively contributes to the process of achieving understanding by creating new relationships between previously unrelated domains. Speakers and writers use this process to produce new ways of thinking about things that are familiar, to make abstract or foreign ideas seem more familiar or to make them seem more accessible intellectually. Metaphor, in this sense, is not just a necessity for communication, but also for thinking, which also grounds the study of the role of advertising discourse in the construction of public consciousness.

2.3 Metaphor Review: Multimodal and Hermeneutic Extensions

There are two important directions in which subsequent research has extended the work of Richards (1936), Black (1962), and Lakoff and Johnson (1980). These are the multimodal dimension of the meaning-making process and the hermeneutic power of metaphor to transform human experience through language. The implications are both direct for metaphor analysis in awareness advertising where meaning is typically shaped by a convergence of verbal, visual and acoustic channels.

Among these developments, the most systematically elaborated is the work of Forceville (1996), who pioneered the study of pictorial metaphor in advertising discourse and demonstrated that metaphorical mappings are not confined to verbal language alone. According to Forceville (1996), metaphors can be built and shared by images, graphic array and multimodal/sign combination in which the target and source domains are presented in different semiotic modes. He emphasizes the context-sensitive aspects of pictorial metaphor, arguing that the complete range of meaning for a pictorial metaphor can be realized only if the surrounding discursive and cultural contexts are considered. Visual metaphors are especially amenable to multiple readings, as they are not stated outright, but rather are implied by the relationship between the elements they contain, and the viewer must make the leap in order to understand them.

It is a highly important analytical remark in the case of awareness advertising in which the intentional ambiguity and emotional content of the visual metaphor is often used to maximise audience engagement and emotional effect. This multimodal model was further extended by Forceville (1996), who explored it in the context of filmic, gestural and

sound-based metaphors and laid the groundwork for a full-fledged theory of metaphor in all semiotic modes (Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009).

The second noteworthy contribution to metaphor theory that is relevant to the present study comes from the philosophical hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur, who writes that metaphor has the power to bring about a significant new meaning rather than simply rearranging the conceptual content. Ricoeur (2004) states that metaphor is not merely a tool of substitution or a tool of comparison, but a “semantic innovation,” a creative event in the act of meaning-making in which the function of language in the world moves beyond its known role into new possibilities.

For Ricoeur (2008), the metaphor alive yields a ‘surplus of meaning’, an over-meaning which cannot be summarized without significant loss or paraphrased without losing the metaphor. The irreducibility is not a flaw, but an inherent property of the metaphorical language which allows it to capture the aspects of human experience that cannot be captured directly in the conceptual language. Ricoeur (2004) also assumes that metaphor is a joining of language and imagination, and that it not only affects the audience's understanding of the language used, but also affect their perceptual and experiential orientation toward the reality being described. The multimodal approach to the task of analyzing Forceville's awareness advertisements and the hermeneutic approach to analyzing Ricoeur can together considerably enhance the theoretical background in which the metaphor in awareness advertisements can be studied. They argue that the metaphorical meaning of advertising exists on multiple levels in its semiotic modes and has many different layers of cognitive and experiential depth, and that the complete persuasive and social power of advertising metaphors cannot be fully understood by analyzing the verbal word alone. The present study, therefore, aims to examine metaphorical constructions in selected awareness advertisements as multimodally realized, cognitively complex and experientially transformative social meaning making tools in the light of the above extended theoretical background.

2.4 Previous Studies

A number of prior studies have examined the role of sociocognitive perspectives in the analysis of figurative language and its effects on public awareness and social perception. The following review surveys the most directly relevant contributions, focusing on empirical and analytical work that intersects with the present study's concern with metaphor, advertising discourse, and cognitive meaning-making.



Metaphors in Awareness Advertising: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Analysis



Journal of Babylon Center for Humanities Studies: 2026, Volume: 16, Issue: 9



Pan and Tay (2023) investigate the extent to which individual differences influence the identification and interpretation of creative metaphors in video advertising. The study recruited two distinct participant groups — seasoned metaphor specialists with established expertise in figurative language analysis, and novice participants with no prior formal training in the field — and applied a uniform analytical procedure across both groups to examine their identification and interpretation of metaphors in a corpus of twenty Chinese video advertisements. While there was high agreement on the acknowledged metaphors, this study discovered that individual understanding and the dynamic nature of video ads influenced the specific metaphors identified. Thus, it can be understood that dependable documentation of metaphors is possible, but the personal perceptions still play a role. This study shows the role of considering different views on multimodal discourse. It also contributes to a profound experience about the capability of individual understandings in the explanation of pictorial and acoustic factors in advertising.

A further study of direct relevance to the present inquiry is that of Mamonto, Kamagi, and Wongkar (2023), who examine the deployment of figurative language in online commercial advertisements, with particular focus on content distributed through YouTube. The study found that hyperbole is the most common figure of speech, followed by metaphor, metonymy, and simile. These linguistic tools are used to convince spectators and make advertisements more attractive. The study highlights the importance of language in advertising accomplishment and commends further examination of figurative language in different media and settings.

Another relevant study is carried out by Septianto, Pontes and Tjijtono (2022) which examined the persuasiveness of advertising communication through the use of metaphor. The focus of the study was to investigate if metaphorical messages have any impact on the audience's reaction and advertisement effectiveness. The results indicated that metaphoric ads are more cognitively processed, more apt to involve the audience, and more memorable than literal ads. The researchers concluded that metaphor is a very potent persuasive tool which can influence attitude formation and interpretation. This study is in line with the one that posits that metaphor is not just a linguistic adornment but a good cognitive mechanism in advertising discourse.

However, previous research has investigated metaphor in advertising from a linguistic, cognitive and multimodal perspective, with the majority of studies being conducted on commercial advertising, interpretation of the advertisement by the audience or the persuasiveness of metaphor. There has been relatively little research that has focused on awareness advertising in terms of the combined view of Cognitive Sociolinguistics and the Interaction Model of Max Black. Moreover, little attention has been paid to the multiple functions of metaphor as a cognitive and sociocultural mechanism in the construction of social meaning and raising public awareness. Thus, the present study is aimed at bridging this gap by examining selected awareness advertisements based on the integration of Cognitive Sociolinguistics and Black's Interaction Model with the aim of gaining insight into the relation between the metaphor, cognition and social awareness.

3. Theoretical Framework

Alice (2023) states that “for Black, the idea of interaction between systems of implications is adequate in explaining metaphors acting like cognitive devices” (p.81). Therefore, metaphors can be seen as figures of speech utilized in advertising in order to improve the supposed worth of a concept, make it special, and shape societal beliefs, values, and norms.

Black (2019) assumes that metaphor consists of two subjects; a primary subject “frame” and a secondary “focus”. Black (2019) believes that the supremacy of a metaphor derives from the technique its two subjects link and interrelate. A positive metaphor involves a worthy connection between the concepts related together. This linking drives from comparing the two subjects; it generates something novel and complicated. Therefore, to fully recognize a metaphor, it is essential to realize the meanings of every subject in a mutually responsive way.

Black's Interaction Model converges with cognitive sociolinguistics in its emphasis on the cognitive processes underlying metaphor comprehension and the sociocultural factors that shape metaphorical meaning, positioning the two frameworks as mutually reinforcing analytical tools for examining metaphor's role in social communication.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Collection and Sampling

The data used in this study are four social awareness advertisements in English which were selected from accessible online platforms such as YouTube and awareness campaign websites. The advertisements were selected purposively because they include explicit metaphorical constructions which play a central role in conveying social messages.





Unlike commercial advertisements, awareness advertisements focus on the social values, ethical responsibility and public awareness instead of marketing products or services. They therefore serve as a suitable sample of analysts to examine the cognitive and rhetorical roles of metaphor in public communication. The chosen ads reflect different social problems, such as road security, racism, cooperation, and social inclusion, and provide an array of metaphors for analysis.

4.2 Selection Criteria

A number of criteria were used in the selection of the advertisements. First of all, every ad was required to be of social awareness advertising. Second, it needed to have a clearly defined metaphoric expression that was at the heart of the message it was communicating. Third, the metaphor had to serve a purpose other than to be an ornamental flourish. Third, the metaphor had to be more than an aesthetic or embellishing touch. Last, enough verbal, visual, and, if there was any, acoustic information had to be given to allow a full cognitive sociolinguistic analysis. The criteria were used to determine the suitability of the selected corpus in studying the role of metaphor in building social meaning and increasing public awareness. The analytical procedure and framework have been applied.

4.3 Analytical Procedure and Framework

The study uses qualitative analytical method that was based on the Interaction Model by Max Black and supported by theoretical framework in the Cognitive Sociolinguistics theory. The analytical process starts with identifying the main metaphor in each of the ads, followed by the identification of the main and secondary subjects of each ad. This analysis then moves on to the system of implications of the secondary subject, and to the possibilities for projection of the secondary subject's implications onto the primary subject by metaphorical interaction. Special focus is given to the meanings that are created cognitively and socioculturally from this interaction, as well as the impact of metaphor on the audience's perception and understanding of social issues. Moreover, the study takes into account the role of verbal, visual and acoustic features in the consolidation of metaphorical sense and in the improvement of the persuasive power of the awareness ads. The integration of the Black's Interaction Model and the Cognitive Sociolinguistics aims at illustrating how metaphor is a cognitive mechanism for constructing, communicating and shaping social awareness.

5. Analysis

This section presents a comprehensive cognitive analysis of four selected awareness advertisements through the systematic application of Max Black's Interaction Model, with particular attention to the metaphorical constructions through which cognitive representations and social meanings are encoded and communicated. This model stands as an analytical tool for understanding how metaphor is used to convey meaning, ideas relations, and social conceptions in advertisements.

6.1 Heaven can wait – belt up

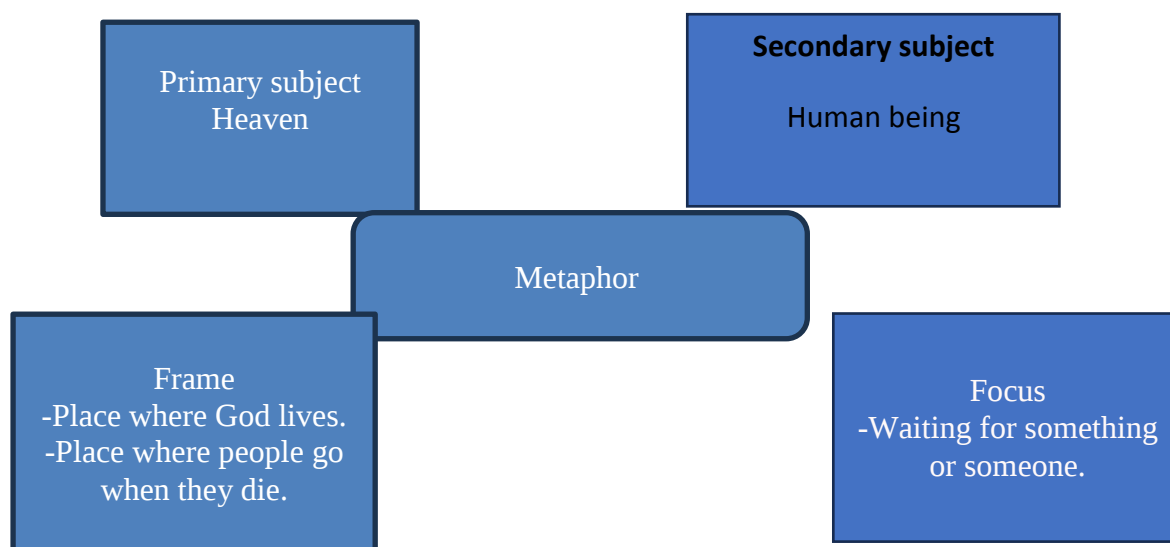


Fig. 1 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=milaFROO3So>)

The advertisement opens with a scene depicting the deaths of three men inside a car. As the scene unfolds, funeral music plays in the background. Suddenly, the music stops and one of those men, who was buckling up, wakes up. This scene ends with the metaphor "heaven can wait, buckle up". In this advertisement, the heaven is resembled to a person who can wait for something or someone. Black views metaphor as a rich cognitive construct, not just a linguistic pattern. the metaphor connects the idea of waiting (associated with heaven) to the act of buckling up (prioritizing safety). The metaphor "heaven can wait, belt up" is thought-provoking and carries a powerful message about seatbelt safety.

The cognitive power of this metaphor lies in its ability to arouse emotions and create an outstanding connotation between the idea of heaven and the necessity of tiring seat belts. Using a mixture of pictorial and acoustic factors, such as the burial music and the vision of souls leaving bodies, the metaphor generates a thought-provoking scene that captures the



attention of people and let them reflect on the potential consequences of the lack of buckling up.

5.2 The More you Apply it, the Uglier you Become

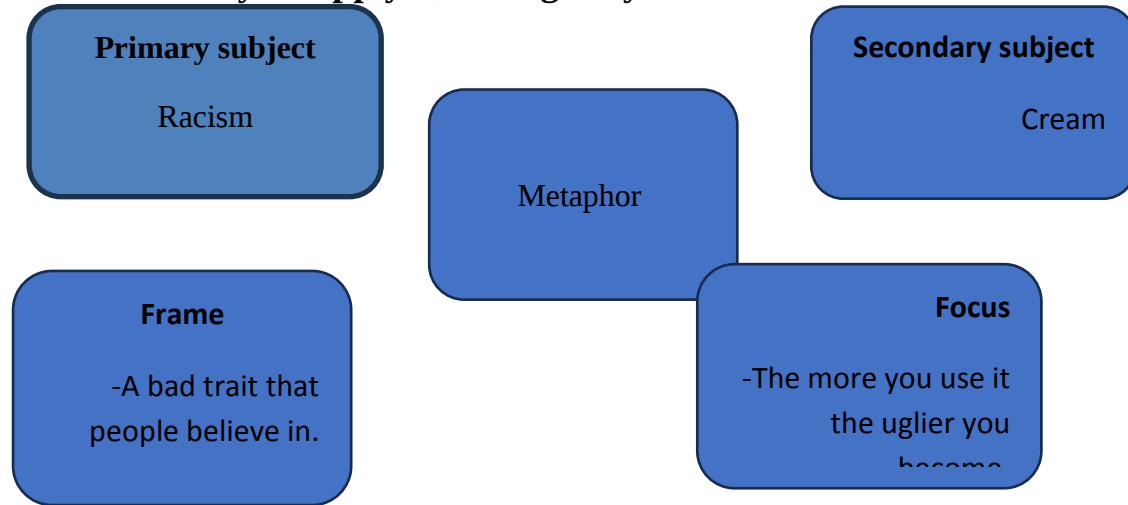


Fig. 2 (<https://skintheblog.wordpress.com/2013/04/29/the-more-you-apply-it-the-uglier-you-become/>)

In this advertisement “An advertisement on racism “we see a beautiful girl in front of a mirror, putting a cream on her smooth face. It is also possible to notice the counting of days through ads, and day after day from putting a cream she became ugly. In other words, the more she uses cream, the more she became ugly. According to the advertisement, after seven days from applying this cream, she becomes very ugly. Finally, the advertisement ends with the metaphor “the more you apply it, the uglier you become”. In this advertisement, racism, a deeply destructive social trait, is akin to a bad cream shown as very harmful. From a cognitive standpoint, this metaphor involves numerous cognitive processes as it draws upon the idea of attractiveness and ugliness, which are often related to the physical presence and beauty. By connecting the application of the cream to the girl's transformation into an ugly status, the metaphor conveys the concept that racism dulls and reduces one's true beauty.

5.3 Union is strength

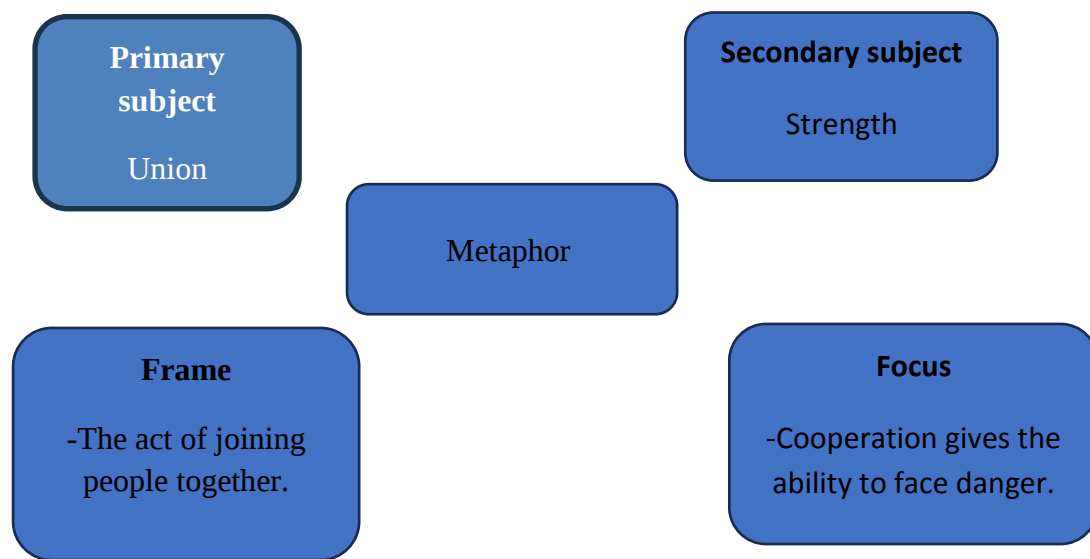


Fig. 3 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSQxYWEExG50>)

In this advertisement, a seagull is hanging over a group of crabs walking separately on the beach. When this seagull comes closer to eat one of these crabs, it makes a sign to gather them. Once they heard the sound, they gathered immediately and raised their claws. When the seagull becomes closer, its feathers were attacked by the crabs' claws. This advertisement shows the importance of unity and cooperation in facing the opponent by mentioning the metaphor "union is strength". According to the Black Model, it is shown that the metaphor "union is strength" in the advertisement serves to emphasize the cognitive processes, emotional impact, and moral or social message related to unity and cooperation. Employing visual symbolism and a metaphorical narrative, the advertisement effectively conveys the concept that cooperative action and teamwork lead to strength and effective defense against threats.





5.4 life is struggle

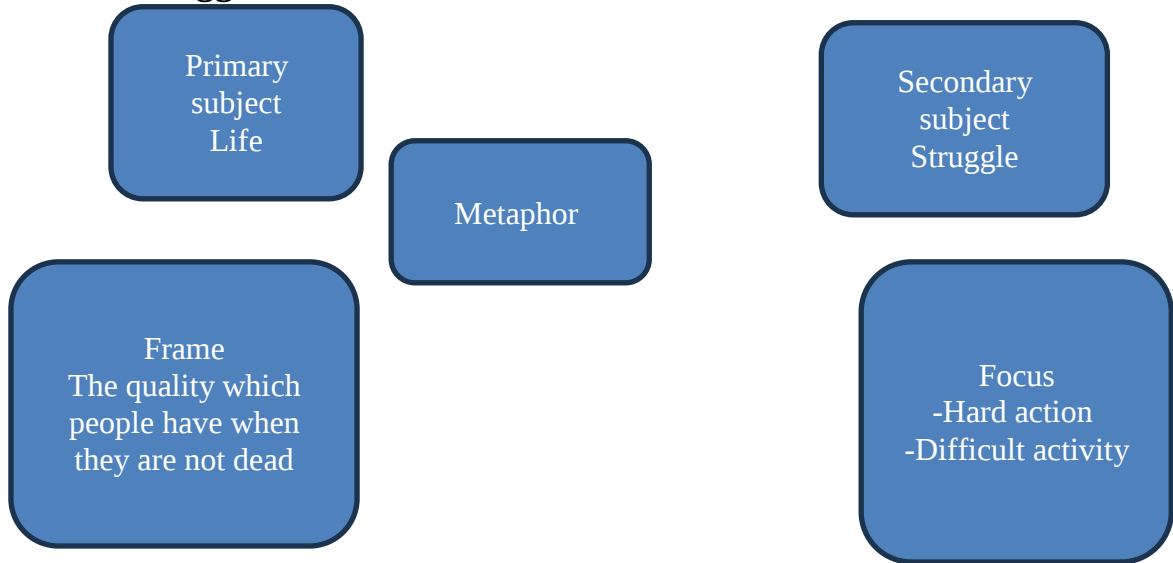


Fig. 4 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23NZ1OW5DTY>)

The advertisement depicts a child living with a developmental syndrome, portrayed in a state of social isolation. Nobody is surrounding him; only a dog tries to be close to him. The metaphor is at the beginning of the ads, "life is struggle, accept it ". We also affected by the music, and its lyrics. The advertisement concludes with the child and the dog forming a bond of companionship. In this way, life can be seen through the concept of struggle. This means that as life demands a great effort in order to do something. According to the Black Model, it is shown that the metaphor "life is struggle " in the advertisement stands to highlight the cognitive processes, emotive effect, and ethical or mortality message interrelated to harmony and collaboration. Employing pictorial representation and a figurative story, the advertisement effectually transfers the sense of heartwarming moments. Dogs have an unexpected ability to sense feelings and offer relief. Their unrestricted love and friendship can be especially expressive for people with Down Syndrome or any special needs. The advertisement is a testament to the transformative power of empathy in alleviating social isolation.

6. Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated that metaphor occupies a central and indispensable role in the discourse of social awareness advertising, functioning not merely as a stylistic device but as a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which complex social meanings are constructed, communicated, and internalised. By examining the intricate relationship between metaphor, cognition, and social consciousness, the

study has shown that metaphorical constructions in advertising transcend surface-level linguistic expression, operating instead as powerful instruments of persuasion that shape audience perception and orient public understanding toward meaningful social realities.

Through the systematic application of Max Black's Interaction Model within a cognitive sociolinguistic framework, the analyses conducted in this study have illuminated the structural and cognitive processes by which metaphors encode ideological content and generate affective resonance in awareness campaigns. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on figurative language in mediated public discourse and offers a replicable theoretical framework for future investigations into the role of metaphor in shaping social values, moral consciousness, and collective awareness across diverse cultural and media contexts.

References

- Ágnes, A. (2009). The use of metaphors in advertising. *Argumentum*, 5, 18–24.
- Black, M. (1962). *Models and metaphors: Studies in language and philosophy*. Cornell University Press.
- Evans, V. (2012). Cognitive linguistics. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science*, 3(2), 129–141.
- Forceville, C. (1996). *Pictorial metaphor in advertising*. Routledge.
- Haack, S. (1994). *Evidence and inquiry: Towards reconstruction in epistemology*. Blackwell.
- Kittay, E. F. (1987). *Metaphor: Its cognitive force and linguistic structure*. Clarendon Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Kristiansen, G., & Dirven, R. (2008). Introduction: Cognitive sociolinguistics: Rationale, methods and scope. In G. Kristiansen & R. Dirven (Eds.), *Cognitive sociolinguistics: Language variation, cultural models, social systems* (pp. 1–17). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mamonto, J. L., Kamagi, S., & Wongkar, Y. (2023). An analysis of figurative language expressions in online shop advertisements. *JoTELL: Journal of Teaching English, Linguistics, and Literature*, 2(9), 1112–1121.
- Pan, M. X., & Tay, D. (2023). Individual differences in identifying creative metaphors from video ads. *Metaphor and the Social World*, 13(2), 221–247.
- Refaie, E. E. (2003). Understanding visual metaphor: The example of newspaper cartoons. *Visual Communication*, 2(1), 75–95.
- Richards, I. A. (1936). *The philosophy of rhetoric*. Oxford University Press.



Metaphors in Awareness Advertising: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Analysis

Ricoeur, P. (2004). *The rule of metaphor: The creation of meaning in language*. Routledge.

Septianto, F., Pontes, N., & Tjiptono, F. (2022). The persuasiveness of metaphor in advertising. *Psychology & Marketing*, 39(5), 951–961.



Journal of Babylon Center for Humanities Studies: 2026, Volume: 16, Issue: 9

