

32nd International Conference of the Spanish Association of Applied Linguistics (AESLA):  
Language Industries and Social Change

## Visual wine metaphor and metonymy in ads

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### Abstract

The aim of advertising is to persuade consumers to buy a product or service. A distinct feature of advertising is its reliance on pictures to achieve this aim. Many ad images encode a metaphor. In this paper we posit the view that visual metaphor relies upon perceptual similarity, conceptual similarity, or in the combination of both types. We shall examine the ways in which visual metaphors in Spanish ads for wines are construed on the basis of formal and conceptual criteria. Two issues will be addressed: (i) the representation of the target and the source; (ii) the role of visual metaphor as a persuasive strategy which enhances the appeal of wine.

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Peer-review under responsibility of Universidad Pablo de Olavide.

*Keywords:* visual metaphor; winespeak; perceptual/conceptual similarity; persuasion.

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### 1. Introduction

The goal of advertising is to persuade prospective consumers of the benefits or positive attributes of a product or service. A distinct feature of advertising is its reliance on pictures to achieve this goal. Many ad images instantiate a metaphor. In the last years visual (or pictorial) metaphor (e.g. Forceville, 2002) has been a research line within metaphor theory. Many studies have focused on the use of visual metaphor in specialised language, including economics (e.g. Rojo & Orts, 2010) political cartooning (e.g. El Refaie, 2003, 2009; Shiperoord & Maes, 2009) and advertising (Forceville, 1994, 1996, 2008; Cortés, 2001; Velasco-Sacristán & Fuertes-Olivera, 2004, 2006a,b; Caballero, 2009; Urios-Aparisi, 2009). The present article is concerned with the use of visual metaphor in ads for

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wines. The choice of the domain of wine is justified on the grounds of its cultural and linguistic relevance, which has given rise to a new genre, winespeak. Some investigations have shown the role of verbal metaphor (Amararitei, 2002; Caballero & Suárez-Toste, 2008; Negro, 2011; Bosio & Cubo, 2012, 2013) and visual metaphor (Caballero, 2009; Caballero & Suárez-Toste, 2010) in Spanish, English and French wine discourse. This contribution examines visual wine metaphors in a corpus of Spanish and French ads.

Within the Cognitive Metaphor Theory (e.g. Lakoff, 1987, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Kövecses, 2002; cf. Ruiz de Mendoza & Pérez, 2011 for assessment on the later versions), metaphor involves understanding a domain of experience (target) in terms of a concrete domain (source). Cross-domain mapping thus relies upon conceptual similarity.

In the cognitive view, visual metaphor is the pictorial representation of a metaphorical concept. It is the relationship between the source and the target that generates the metaphorical link between them.

Several models have been developed for the analysis of visual metaphors in terms of their formal and/or conceptual features. Most models highlight the importance of visual structure. Thus, Forceville's (1994, 1996) taxonomy of visual metaphor differentiates four types of pictorial metaphor on the basis of the way the target and the source are physically pictured in the ad:

1. Pictorial simile: the source and the target are present but shown separately.
2. Hybrid metaphor: the source and the target are merged into a new composite object.
3. Contextual metaphor: only the target is present, whereas the source can be inferred from the visual context.
4. Integrated (or verbo-pictorial) metaphor: the metaphor is cued visually and verbally.

Other researchers (e.g. Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004) further differentiate visual figures in terms of the meaning operation required to comprehend the image. They postulate three types of cognitive processing: connection ('A is associated with B'), comparison for similarity ('A is like B') and comparison for contrast ('A is not like B').

In this paper we shall examine visual metaphor in wine ads on both the formal and conceptual level. It is also argued that conceptual similarity can be grounded on perceptual similarity, i.e. direct physical similarity between the source object and the target object.

An important point to be mentioned is that advertising metaphors often have a metonymic basis. Metaphor-metonymy interaction has been discussed by a number of scholars (e.g. Ruiz de Mendoza & Ota, 2002; González, Peña & Pérez, 2011). We follow Ruiz de Mendoza and Ota's (2002) view that, whenever metaphor and metonymy interact, it is the latter that is subsidiary to the former.

## 2. Analysis of visual metaphor in wine ads

To illustrate the presence of visual metaphor in wine advertising, we have analysed a sample of online Spanish and French ads. The Spanish ads have been drawn from the online version of the magazine *Vino-Vinum* published between January and May 2011.

The first two ads (Fig. 1 and 2) enhance wine by drawing an analogy between wines and women, 'appeal' being the mappable feature. This is particularly noticeable in the ad for Vaudois wines (Fig. 1), where we see a sexy woman holding a glass of wine in her hand. In structural terms, we are thus confronted with a pictorial simile.



Fig. 1. Ad for Vaudois wines.

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