

A Study on the Triple-Fold Rhetoric: the Cognitive Blending of Metaphor, Metonymy and Metaphtonymy from a Conceptual Integration Theory Perspective

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Keywords: Triple-Fold Advertising Slogans, Conceptual Integration Theory, Metaphor, Metonymy, Metaphtonymy

Abstract: With the continuous innovation of advertising communication forms in the mobile Internet era, tri-fold advertisement slogans, as an emerging expression paradigm, gradually show their unique information coding advantages and cognitive construction value in commercial communication. This paper utilizes the conceptual integration theory to explore the interweaving and synergistic mechanism of metaphor, metonymy, and metaphtonymy in tri-fold advertisement slogans. Through the detailed analysis of specific advertisement examples, the paper reveals how they work together to shape the advertisement message, enhance the attractiveness and persuasiveness of the advertisement, and trigger the emotional resonance and cognitive response of consumers to realize the commercial purpose of advertisement communication.

1. Introduction

In today's competitive market, advertising slogans are crucial for companies to convey messages, capture attention, and drive sales. Huawei, as a global tech pioneer, exemplifies this aspect with its 'Triple-Foldable' smartphone and slogan: No Matter How You Fold It, It's Always 'Face - Enhancing'. This slogan highlights the phone's innovative design and versatility, resonating with consumers' increasing demands for sophisticated, multifunctional smart devices. This paper will examine how such slogans use metaphor, metonymy, and conceptual integration to achieve cognitive resonance and optimize marketing outcomes.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Conceptual Blending Theory

Conceptual Blending Theory, proposed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner^[1], is a key framework in cognitive linguistics. It explains how the mind integrates diverse concepts to create new meanings. Its core components are mental spaces, cross - space mapping, and blending networks. Mental spaces are temporary cognitive domains representing specific knowledge or entities. Cross - space mapping connects these spaces, with metaphor linking source and target domains, and metonymy creating mappings through contiguity. Metaphtonymy involves complex interplay of both.

During conceptual blending, these mental spaces merge in a blending network. Through selective projection, elements from different spaces combine into a new blended space, generating innovative meanings. For tri - fold advertisements, this theory shows how metaphors, metonymies, and metaphtonymies integrate product info, brand identity, and consumer expectations to craft compelling ad copies that quickly convey messages, evoke emotions, and drive purchases.

2.2. Characteristics of Metaphor

Lakoff^[2] has proposed theories that metaphor, as a fundamental tool for human conceptualization, is a cognitive-rhetorical mechanism grounded in cross-domain similarity-based mapping. At its

core, metaphor systematically projects structures, relationships, attributes, and knowledge from a source domain onto a target domain, constrained by embodied, cultural, and social experiences. This mapping process exhibits three defining features: systematicity, unidirectionality, and partiality.

In daily expressions like "Time is money" from *Metaphors We Live By*^[2], abstract temporal concepts are conceptualized through tangible monetary schemata. The source domain (MONEY) transfers its attributes — scarcity, quantifiability, and expendability — to illuminate analogous yet abstract qualities of the target domain (TIME), thereby foregrounding the value and urgency of temporal management.

2.3. Characteristics of Metonymy

Metonymy is a cognitive - linguistic mechanism that substitutes a salient entity for a related target within the same conceptual domain, according to Radden and Kövecses^[3]. Rooted in spatial adjacency, causal links, or part - whole relationships, it streamlines communication by using culturally entrenched schemata.

For example, "White House" denotes the U.S. government through spatial - functional contiguity. Unlike metaphor, metonymy emphasizes referential economy and diagnostic salience, highlighting components to activate broader concepts. Its efficacy relies on shared cognitive frames, enabling efficient inference of implicit meanings, as seen in advertising tropes like 'triple - fold screen' symbolizing technological innovation. This mechanism simplifies complex ideas and serves as a cultural code.

2.4. Characteristics of Metaphonymy

The concept is explored in several studies^[4,5,6], stating that metaphonymy is a complex linguistic phenomenon that combines metaphor and metonymy. It happens when metaphorical mappings based on similarity meet metonymic references based on contiguity, creating multilayered meanings.

For example, the Chinese idiom "dragons soaring and phoenixes dancing" uses dragons and phoenixes as symbols of auspiciousness and nobility (metaphor) while also representing abstract artistic expressions through their dynamic imagery (metonymy). This dual mechanism blends the expansive power of metaphor with the efficiency of metonymy, requiring audiences to decode both simultaneously. This process conveys cultural nuances and emotional undertones, creating dense and memorable meanings that resonate deeply.

3. The Interplay of Metaphor and Metonymy in Conceptualization

Metaphor and metonymy collaborate in shaping conceptual frameworks by mapping abstract ideas. Metaphor links domains through analogy, while metonymy uses contiguity for reference. Their interaction builds cognitive structures to interpret complexity. As discussed in the book: *A Course in Cognitive Linguistics*^[7], the core functions of Metaphor and Metonymy in linguistic representation not only enriches expression but also operates as a persuasive calculus in advertising, where layered tropes transform product attributes into cultural narratives.

3.1. Vivid conceptualization

Vivid Conceptualization is achieved through the use of metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor embodies abstraction by creating vivid imagery that visualizes complex concepts. For example, the phrase 'skin smooth as a peeled egg' effectively communicates the efficacy of skincare products by leveraging a concrete visual reference. Similarly, metonymy condenses complexity by using a part to represent a whole. For instance, 'the pen' can stand for authorship or writing, encapsulating a broader concept through a specific reference. A notable example is the metaphor 'Books are ladders of human progress,' which frames education as a vertical ascent, drawing on embodied spatial schemata to convey the transformative power of knowledge.

3.2. Expressive Amplification

Expressive Amplification is another key function of these figures of speech. Metaphor unveils

latent affinities by highlighting hidden similarities. For example, describing a CPU as ‘the brain of computers’ anthropomorphizes technology, making it relatable and understandable. Metonymy, on the other hand, economizes reference by using a specific term to represent a broader concept. For instance, ‘Hollywood’ can symbolize the global film industry. In advertising, this function is particularly powerful. A slogan like ‘Land Cruiser conquers every terrain’ uses metonymy to equate the robustness of a vehicle with naval dominance, thereby magnifying the brand’s mythology and enhancing its appeal to consumers.

4. Analysis of ‘Tri-Folding’ Advertising Slogans: No Matter How You Fold It, It's Always ‘Face-Enhancing’

4.1. Metaphor Analysis of Huawei Tri-Folding

From a metaphorical perspective, the character ‘face’ here embodies a metaphorical expression.

On one hand, it maps the physical surface of the foldable phone (when unfolded or folded) onto the abstract concept of ‘respectability’ in Chinese culture. By leveraging the familiar connotations of ‘face’—such as dignity, glory, and advantage—it highlights that the tri-folding phone always demonstrates unique advantages, bringing ‘face’ to users. As stated in the report by Zhang^[8], this conceptual mapping is based on the symbolic similarity between the physical surface and the abstract idea of social prestige. For example, in important business scenarios, using this tri-folding phone with unique functions and a novel appearance is like possessing a ‘face’ that highlights one's identity and strength, making it stand out among other phones and satisfying users' psychological needs for products that reflect their taste and status.

4.2. Metonymy Analysis of Huawei Tri-Folding

In terms of metonymy, the term ‘tri-folding’ can be regarded as a metonymic representation. It refers to the entire Huawei Mate XT Extraordinary Master phone with a tri-folding screen, using the product's unique tri-folding structure—a key feature—to represent the whole product. This conceptual substitution is based on the close correlation between the part (the tri-folding design) and the whole (the phone). Through this metonymy, audiences can quickly associate the slogan with this distinctive phone when seeing it, focusing attention on its innovative folding design. This highlights the product's core selling point and simplifies language expression, making information transmission more efficient and concise.

4.3. Metaphtonymy Analysis of Huawei Tri-Folding

Within the context of the entire slogan, these two rhetorical devices interweave and function together, forming a phenomenon of metaphtonymy.

In the slogan that No Matter How You Fold It, It's Always ‘Face - Enhancing’, ‘Tri-folding’ metonymically denotes the product's design, while ‘face-enhancing’ metaphorically suggests social dignity and user satisfaction. This intertwining allows consumers to associate the folding form with social value, enhancing the slogan's expressiveness and communication power. By stimulating these associations, the slogan attracts attention and resonates emotionally, prompting audiences to explore product details. This aligns with modern consumers' preference for creative content, making the advertisement more effective.

5. Detailed Analysis of Metaphtonymy Phenomenon

5.1. Application of Metaphtonymy in Diverse Contexts

Metaphtonymy, blending metaphor and metonymy, offers unique expression across various contexts. In literature, the line ‘The setting sun sinks westward, as a heart-broken wanderer stays afar’ uses ‘sinking westward’ metaphorically for time's passage and ‘heart-broken person’ metonymically for the sorrowful, painting a bleak wanderer image. Modern literature's ‘His belly is full of ink’ metaphorizes knowledge and talent through ‘ink’ and metonymizes the mind with ‘belly’.

In advertising, ‘skin as smooth as a peeled egg’ metaphorizes product effects, and ‘Land Cruiser’ metonymizes off-road performance.

5.2. Roles and Effects of Metaphtonymy in Advertising Slogans

Metaphtonymy is vital in advertising. Huawei's slogan: Tri-Folding: No Matter How You Fold It, It's Always 'Face - Enhancing' uses metonymy in ‘tri - folding’ to denote the product's design and metaphor in ‘face - enhancing’ for social dignity and user satisfaction. According to a study by Forceville^[9], this strategy bypasses tedious function listings, capturing attention by linking ‘folding form’ to ‘social value’. It strengthens the ad's emotional impact by associating product recognition with emotional resonance. Moreover, metaphtonymy combines ‘folding structure’ and ‘face’ to create a tech - social product image, meeting consumers' preference for creative ads and offering brands an effective way to shape unique perceptions.

6. Conclusion

Prior metaphor/metonymy research focused on universal contexts. Advertising slogans—as unique linguistic forms—demonstrate distinct patterns under specific creative/communication constraints. Product-based metaphor construction deepens understanding of contextual metaphor mechanisms. Metonymy (e.g., ‘tri-fold’ for Huawei Mate XT) simplifies information and highlights core features, refining metonymy application theories. Metaphtonymy generates unique expressive effects in slogans, offering cognitive linguistics new research perspectives on linguistic interplay. These devices fundamentally reflect human cognitive mechanisms and effective audience communication strategies.

Amid fierce market competition, Huawei's slogan demonstrates the power of integrated rhetoric: precise metaphor selection aligns with product traits and audience psychology; key-feature metonymy efficiently highlights core advantages; metaphtonymy fusion creates depth and resonance. This approach builds distinctive brand imagery, strengthens market recognition, and drives synergistic growth in product sales and brand value – proving these devices' vital role in overcoming information overload and achieving advertising impact.

Acknowledgements

Phased research results of the General Project of Guangdong Provincial Social Science Planning (2024), “Research on Human-Machine Community in British and American Posthuman Science Fiction” (GD24CWW04).

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