Analyzing creative metaphors in advertising: Integrating relevance theory and conceptual blending approaches

Аналіз креативних метафор у рекламі: інтеграція підходів теорії релевантності та концептуального змішування

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Abstract

This article introduces a hybrid model for analyzing creative metaphors in commercial advertising by combining Relevance Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory. The model's algorithm for metaphorical mapping considers contextual assumptions and relevance principles to select mental input structures for blending. The initial stage of explicature decoding, following Relevance Theory, identifies input mental spaces through reference assignment and content enrichment. In the Composition stage, an ad hoc source concept is adapted to the target, establishing metaphorical alignments within the blend. The blending's cognitive context involves abstract structures and vital relations in a generic space, rooted in human experience, to facilitate interpretations with minimal cognitive effort. At the Completion stage, contextual assumptions

Анотація

У статті пропонується гібридна модель для аналізу креативних метафор у комерційній рекламі, що поєднує інструменти теорії релевантності та теорії концептуального змішування. Алгоритм для отримання метафоричних відповідностей враховує контекстуальні припущення та принцип релевантності, які пояснюють вибір структур із ментальних вхідних даних для проєкції у змішування. Початковий етап декодування екплікатур, що слідує за теорією релевантності, визначає вхідні ментальні простори через призначення референцій і збагачення змісту. На етапі композиції формується ad hoc концепт джерела, який адаптується до цілі, створюючи метафоричні відповідності у змішуванні. Когнітивний контекст змішування включає абстрактні структури та життєві зв'язки в

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about the brand's implied meanings generate new structures within the blend. Finally, the Elaboration stage incorporates assumptions about the brand's messaging, aimed at addressing the audience's motivational needs and encouraging them to fulfill these needs by purchasing the advertised product.

Keywords: metaphor, advertising, hybrid model of analysis, relevance theory, conceptual blending.

загальному просторі, що сприяють мінімізації когнітивних зусиль. На етапі завершення контекстуальні припущення щодо додаткових значень бренду генерують нові структури у змішуванні. Нарешті, етап розробки спирається на припущення про повідомлення бренду, спрямовані на задоволення мотиваційних потреб цільової аудиторії та заохочення їх задовольнити ці потреби шляхом придбання рекламованого продукту.

Ключові слова: метафора, реклама, гібридна модель аналізу, теорія релевантності, концептуальне змішування.

Introduction

Relevance Theory (hereinafter referred to as RT), as a key approach in contemporary cognitive-pragmatic research, consistently faces the challenge of processing creative or "category crossing" metaphors (Wilson & Carston, 2008, p. 14), which do not fit into the interpretative framework of so-called loose uses, where metaphors are analyzed similarly to cases of non-metaphorical usage (Sperber & Wilson, 1995, p. 233-237). Despite the introduction of several productive ideas, such as ad hoc concepts, emergent properties, dual processing, and metarepresentations into RT's analytical toolkit, the problem of inferring the meaning of creative and extended metaphors is still far from being resolved. Specifically, RT does not provide clear answers to questions like how implicatures derived from ad hoc concepts of the source domain adapt to the target, how emergent properties are derived, and which positive cognitive effects justify the processing efforts involved in the interpretation of creative metaphors. Conceptual Integration Theory (henceforth CIT), which offers the most effective tools for analyzing novel, unconventional metaphors, can enrich the relevance-theoretic approach by filling in some of its gaps. In turn, the RT method can complement the method of conceptual blending by providing a clear algorithm for deriving metaphorical mappings in blends, considering contextual assumptions and the principle of relevance (the optimal balance between processing effort and positive cognitive effects), which explains the selection of specific structures from mental inputs for projection into the blend.

Thus, the relevance of the article is determined by its specific contribution to the development of cognitive linguistics and cognitive pragmatics theories and methods. The novelty of the research lies in its attempt to propose a hybrid method for analyzing creative metaphors by integrating the relevance-theoretic approach with the analytical tools of Conceptual Blending Theory.

This article is organized as follows: First, we present the theoretical framework integrating Relevance Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory. Then, we describe our hybrid methodology for analyzing creative metaphors. Following this, we present our analysis of advertising metaphors using this integrated approach. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for both theoretical understanding and practical applications in advertising.

Theoretical Framework

The article draws on the idea that the differences in approaches to understanding and analyzing metaphor in cognitive linguistics and Relevance Theory do not imply that these approaches are mutually exclusive, as both involve the cognitive processing of metaphor with conceptual adjustment of verbally encoded information. Specifically, previous research has suggested the impact of contextual assumptions on mappings (Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008) and noted that metarepresentations, as non-propositional level structures considered in RT as tools for "inspection of implications, associations" (Carston, 2010, p. 13), may include categorization-based conceptual metaphors (Stöver, 2010). Noting the complementarity of the relevance-theoretic and cognitive linguistic approaches to metaphor study (Wu, 2020), the researchers have also pointed out that the tools of cognitive linguistics can be valuable in explaining the inference of emergent properties (Wałaszewska, 2014) – a concept introduced in RT for analyzing creative "category crossing" metaphors. Also fruitful for hybrid analysis of metaphor is the idea that cross-space mappings in the conceptual processing of a metaphor can modify the cognitive environment (Romero & Soria, p. 14)

and that such mappings are constructed based on the principle of relevance – seeking matchings that allow the interpreter to achieve maximum positive cognitive effects with minimal processing effort.

At the same time, the ideas of an integrative approach to metaphor analysis remain rather hypothetical regarding the possibility of integrating different approaches. A hybrid approach that combines methods from cognitive linguistics and Relevance Theory has been proposed in two monographic studies (Stöver, 2010; Tendahl, 2009). However, both of them integrate Relevance Theory with Lakoff's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) leaving Conceptual Integration Theory – arguably the most optimal approach for studying creative metaphors – out of the analysis. The attempt to integrate the approaches of RT and CIT has been undertaken in individual studies. Notably, this aspect has been explored in the analysis of the classical Butcher-Surgeon metaphor (Wałaszewska, 2014), as well as in visual metaphors (Kravchenko & Yudenko, 2021; 2023; Kravchenko & Zhykharieva, 2023). However, such studies are clearly insufficient to introduce a hybrid method of metaphor analysis that considers the complementary tools of the relevance-theoretic approach and conceptual blending. To our knowledge, unconventional verbal metaphors in commercial advertising have not been analyzed from this perspective.

This article attempts to fill this gap.

According to *Conceptual Integration Theory*, the processing of a metaphor is presented as online dynamic cognitive work (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 368), which involves an integration network that includes: (a) two or more input mental spaces, which provide structures for blending; (b) a generic space containing common properties of the input spaces, allowing for matching between them. The common properties in the generic space are represented by stable, abstract conceptual structures (Fauconnier & Turner, 1996), traditional (in the sense of Lakoff's metaphors) metaphorical and metonymic mappings that function as a kind of "template" to help link elements (Coulson & Oakley, 2003) and maintain relational connections across the entire network; and (c) the blended space, into which elements and relationships from the input spaces are projected, generating the metaphor's meaning. Emergent properties in the blend are determined by the mapping schemes of the input spaces, yet they contain new structures that did not exist in them.

The interaction of elements from the input mental spaces is based on vital relations such as Change, Identity, Time, Space, Cause-Effect, Part-Whole, Representation, Role, Analogy, Disanalogy, Property, Similarity, Category, Intentionality, and Uniqueness (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 101). These relations not only underpin the structural connections between the original concepts, enabling their combination, but also create new levels of meaning and associations within the blend. In the context of this study, an attempt will be made to justify the structures of the generic space within the integration network, as well as vital relations as cognitive tools that activate mental processes during the search for relevant interpretations and the execution of mappings.

The conceptual processes underlying the mappings between the input spaces include selective projection from the inputs with subsequent matching during the Composition stage of the blend, as well as Completion and Elaboration (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 47-48). In the Completion phase of the blend, gaps in the new structure formed during the Composition stage are filled with missing elements and structures based on the recipients' previous experience or knowledge. In terms of Relevance Theory, such structures from the cognitive base of the interpreters correspond to new contextual assumptions, which in metaphorical commercial advertising are related to the brand's identity and its constituting concepts, including secondary signifieds underlying its mythology.

The elaboration and development of the conceptual structure occur during the Elaboration stage of the blend through its expansion – application to new contexts or situations; projection—using elements of the blended space in other conceptual domains; scenario building, and so on. In creative metaphors of commercial advertising, the completion and elaboration of the blend are associated, as we will demonstrate in the subsequent analysis, with positive cognitive effects (in accordance with the principle of optimal relevance) – enhancement of branding associations, including brand values, the implicit promise to satisfy the motivational needs of the target audience through the advertised product, and the activation of positive emotions.

Regarding *Relevance Theory*, the theoretical foundation of the article includes the research categories and tools used in RT for metaphor analysis. Specifically, for analyzing the procedural aspects of deriving representations and relational structures between domains, RT employs the ad hoc concept (Bowdle &

Gentner, 2005; Carston, 2002; Romero & Soria, 2014; Wilson & Carston, 2008) – a special concept derived from the source domain concept, and constructed by selecting a core or non-core ad hoc property from its encyclopedic entry (Sperber & Wilson, 1995, p. 86) (Rubio-Fernández, 2008, p. 381-382). Implicatures from the ad hoc concepts allow for the metaphorical adaptation of the source to the target.

The second category used in Relevance Theory for interpreting metaphorical expressions is the emergent property of the metaphor. This category is employed to explain the inference process in "category crossing" metaphors, where a literal interpretation of the predicate is incompatible with a literal interpretation of the subject (Wilson & Carston, 2008, p. 14). Emergent properties cannot always be derived using standard rules of semantic composition (op. cit., p. 1) and through the derivation of an ad hoc concept. In such cases, the cognitive processing of "category crossing" metaphors become more complex, involving the mutual adjustment of explicit content (explicature), context, and contextual implications – from the encoded concept to the communicated concept and from the communicated concept to implicatures (op. cit., p. 19).

One of the key tenets of Relevance Theory is the distinction and interrelation between the notions of explicature and implicature – two key components involved in the interpretation of an utterance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, p. 182; Kravchenko, 2017; Kravchenko et al., 2021, 2024), with their mutual adjustment according to expectations of relevance. The process of interpreting any message, including a metaphorical one, begins with forming a hypothesis about the explicature, as its constructing is the most readily accessible to processing and requires minimal procedural effort. The explicature, or "explicitly communicated content", constitutes a proposition recovered by a combination of decoding and inference, which provides a premise for the derivation of contextual implications and other cognitive effects (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, p. 176-193). The propositional form of the message is filled not only with meanings derived from dictionary definitions and syntax, but is also inferred by the recipient with consideration of the context. The presumption of optimal relevance assumes that the addressee initially completes the propositional (logical) form by: (a) resolving ambiguities: choosing one of the possible meanings of polysemous words or phrases; (b) reference assignment: identifying the specific entities or concepts referred to; (c) enrichment: adding additional elements such as time, place, intention, which may not be explicitly stated but are implied; (d) filling in gaps: adding information necessary for the completeness of meaning, which may be omitted from the statement itself.

The meaning derived at the level of explicature is complemented and expanded at the implicit level through the construction of hypotheses about implicated premises – "the intended contextual assumptions". The next step in the overall comprehension process is the construction of implicated conclusions – an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (Wilson & Sperber, 2005, p. 621). In Relevance Theory, implicatures can be strong or weak. Strong implicatures are more obvious and necessary for understanding the meaning of the utterance. Weak implicatures can vary depending on the listener's perception and are optional. Their recovery is relevant, but is not itself essential because the utterance suggests a range of similar possible implicatures. Implicatures and ad hoc concepts are closely related in the interpretation process. An inferred ad hoc concept generates a weak or strong implicature, or multiple implicatures, that allow for metaphorical adaptation of the source to the target.

The aim of the article is to propose a model for analyzing creative metaphors in commercial advertising slogans from the perspective of various approaches to the cognitive processing of verbal metaphors. This aim is further specified in the *research objectives*: (1) to identify research tools from Relevance Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory for metaphor analysis; (2) to analyze a metaphorical slogan from the perspective of Relevance Theory; (3) to conduct cognitive processing of the metaphor using Conceptual Blending Theory; (4) to propose and test a hybrid method for analyzing creative metaphors
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Methodology

The article employs metaphor analysis methods based on the approaches of (a) Relevance Theory, using tools such as ad hoc concept, ad hoc properties, and emergent properties, and (b) Conceptual Integration Theory, incorporating the method of mapping in the conceptual network at various stages of blend construction, based on vital relations, and abstract conceptual structures of the generic space. Given that the slogan belongs to commercial advertising, an additional method used in the article is semiotic analysis based on R. Barthes' (1972) secondary semiology and advertising mythology. The analysis aims to reveal the secondary signified of the brand discourse – the connotatum – which is metonymically identified with the brand and embodies the key motivational value of its target consumer identity (Kravchenko et al., 2021).

The inclusion of Barthes' secondary signified analysis is motivated by the function of such a connotatum as a component of the cognitive context of advertising recipients, tied to the testing of interpretative hypotheses and the positive cognitive effects derived from metaphor interpretation.

The analysis algorithm corresponding to the research stages includes four steps:

1) Cognitive processing of the metaphorical slogan from the perspective of Relevance Theory.

At this stage, the slogan is analyzed in terms of how it evokes associations and captures the recipients' attention through cognitive context, focusing on the deriving of ad hoc concepts and emergent properties.

2) Justification of the analysis results based on the principle of optimal relevance, according to which the effort expended on cognitive processing of the metaphor is balanced by the positive cognitive effects of its interpretation.
3) Cognitive processing of the metaphorical slogan from the perspective of Conceptual Integration Theory. At this stage, the focus is on identifying and analyzing the mappings between domains that form the conceptual networks, as well as examining the vital relations and structures present in the blend.
4) Processing the metaphor using a hybrid analysis method, which combines the tools of the Relevance Theory approach (ad hoc concepts, emergent properties) with Conceptual Blending methods (mapping, conceptual network construction). This method allows for viewing the metaphor in terms of complementary cognitive processes.

The slogan of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle brand, "Go beyond 3D with HD" (https://www.ebay.com/itm/225817141093), was chosen for analysis from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and cognitive pragmatics. The creativity and unconventionality of this slogan make it suitable for analysis from the perspective of various approaches to cognitive processing of metaphors, as well as for hybrid analysis, combining the research tools of cognitive linguistics and cognitive pragmatics.

Results and discussion

Cognitive processing of the H-D metaphor based on the Relevance Theory approach

The first stage of cognitive processing for the metaphorical slogan "Go beyond 3-D with H-D" involves decoding the explicature – filling in the propositional (logical) form, resolving ambiguity by hypothesizing about the explicit content. Decoding the explicature is achieved through reference assignment: interpreting "3-D sensations" as ordinary sensations in the earthly world with three-dimensional spatial dimensions, and through enrichment – unveiling the meaning of the phrase "beyond 3-D" as extreme (otherworldly, non-three-dimensional) sensations from riding a Harley-Davidson. By decoding the explicature, the source and target domains are established and connected in the proposition Harley-Davidson is a Four-dimensional world.

However, the explicature does not provide a basis for relating the source to the target, and is insufficient for inferring the metaphor's full meaning. Therefore, cognitive processing continues with constructing the ad hoc concept 4D* (non-three-dimensional world). It is derived by selecting from its encyclopedic entry a non-core ad hoc property "beyond ordinary sensations". The ad hoc concept is adapted to the goal by generating a series of implicatures: Harley-Davidson – otherworldly (beyond-earth) emotions, Harley-Davidson – freedom from gravity, Harley-Davidson – four-dimensional/superluminal speed. The metaphor's meaning is inferred as a mutual alignment of the explicature, contextual implications about the brand, and the implicature based on the constructed ad hoc concept, generating the emergent property of the metaphor: Riding Harley-Davidson motorcycles will free you from the confines of the familiar (3D) world, giving new non-three-dimensional sensations of time and space. At this stage, the metaphor processing concludes, as the inferred meaning aligns with the principle of optimal relevance, where the cognitive effort invested in processing the metaphor "pays off" with positive cognitive effects from the interpretation. These effects include (a) cognitive ease and emotional satisfaction from grasping the metaphor, (b) the development of new associations and ideas related to the sensation of fast riding as a break from the familiar three-dimensional world, and (c) the discovery, on the one hand, of the new (non-three-dimensional sensations) in salient (high-speed driving) and, on the other hand, of salient – an easily

recognizable secondary signified "freedom" constructing the brand identity – in novel (associating the sensation of freedom with transcending the three-dimensional world).

Cognitive processing of the metaphor based on Conceptual Blending Theory

The integration processes during metaphor processing combine Input Space 1 (Harley-Davidson), Input Space 2 (sensations beyond the three-dimensional world), the generic space of shared elements from the input spaces in the form of abstract structures and relations common to both inputs, and the blended space, where mappings of corresponding elements from the inputs are projected. The Generic Space includes elements such as Space, Time, Speed, Sensations, general-level conceptual metaphors like STOPPING BEING IN A STATE IS LEAVING A LOCATION and FREEDOM IS FLIGHT, and image schemas such as Force and Transformation, Container (ordinary earthly world), In/Out, Limitation, Motion, and Intensity. In terms of the type of conceptual integration, the metaphor represents a Single-Scope Network (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 126-131), as Input Space 2 is dominant, providing the structure for integration and facilitating cross-space mappings in the blend. From Input 2, elements and relations like otherworldly (beyond-earth) emotions, four-dimensional/superluminal speed, and freedom from gravity are projected into the blend. Input 1 (Harley-Davidson) provides the structure to be filled with the elements of input 1.

As a result, new mapping structures, absent in the separate inputs, emerge in the blend during the Composition stage: Harley-Davidson's speed – transcending the three-dimensional dimension; extreme emotions from riding a Harley-Davidson – sensations in a multidimensional world. The integration of inputs is based on vital relations of Change, Time, Space, and Similarity (of sensations). The last vital relation attracts metonymic tightening as one of the key principles of optimality in conceptual network. According to this principle, metonymically related elements, which are inherently diffuse, are projected into the blend space to compress the "distance" between them, while what is inherently condensed is, on the contrary, decompressed in the blend (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 119). Thus, emotions from high-speed riding on Harley-Davidson motorcycles are metonymically compressed to stand for Harley-Davidson itself, while the intensity of emotions stands for the multidimensional world (beyond 3-D). During the Completion stage of conceptual integration, a causal connection is projected into the blend between speed and freedom, with freedom serving as the secondary signified that constructs the discourse and mythology of Harley-Davidson: high-speed riding on a Harley-Davidson provides freedom from the physical limitations of the ordinary world.

In the Elaboration stage, the blend functions as a commissive promise to fulfill the target audience's motivational needs for sensations impossible in the three-dimensional world, and as an implicit directive urging the audience to transcend the ordinary space-time world by joining the Harley-Davidson world – through purchasing the advertised product.

Processing the metaphor based on the combined methods of Relevance Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory

The tools of the Relevance Theory approach complement the analysis based on conceptual blending by explaining (a) how contextual assumptions influence the selection of elements and relations from mental spaces that are projected into the blend, and (b) why certain mappings in the blend are more preferable, guided by the principle of relevance – achieving an optimal balance between the cognitive effort invested and the positive cognitive effects gained.

In the analyzed metaphorical slogan, the stage preceding the composition of the blend is the establishment of the input mental spaces. Applying the Relevance Theory approach, the inputs are established through decoding the explicature – a detailed elaboration and expansion of the propositional form of the slogan, based on disambiguations, reference assignment, and enrichments, allowing the identification of comparable domains (in terms of Conceptual Blending Theory—mental spaces for subsequent integration). The explicated inputs – Harley-Davidson and the four-dimensional world – have shared structural elements and relations that enable their integration in the blend.

In terms of conceptual integration, the generic space in the integration network is constituted by basic structures including conceptual metaphors like FREEDOM IS FLIGHT, STOPPING BEING IN A STATE IS LEAVING A LOCATION, and image schemas (Lakoff, 1987, 459-461), along with concepts of motion and spatial relations. These abstract basic-level structures (Turner 1991, p. 177), universal cognitive

primitives, are pre-conceptual structures accessible in the cognitive base of any recipient as the "embodied" anchors of the entire conceptual system (Hampe, 2005, p. 1-3). As a foundation for more complex conceptual structures, they help interpret input spaces, forming a cognitive context for their understanding and comparison. Accordingly, from the perspective of Relevance Theory, abstract structures in the generic space can be viewed as part of the recipients' cognitive context, helping to simplify and speed up the interpretation of information, minimizing cognitive effort.

Another component of the audience's cognitive context is the key conceptual connections between elements of the mental spaces, which, in Conceptual Blending Theory, are referred to as vital relations (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 101). These vital relationships ensure that structural connections and relationships between elements are preserved when they are projected from input spaces into the blend, simplifying access to relevant interpretations. Similar to image schemas and conceptual metaphors, vital relations, rooted in experience, are automatically activated by the recipient of metaphorical advertising, facilitating the process of finding relevant interpretations, consistent with the principle of minimizing cognitive effort in Relevance Theory.

In the metaphor under analysis, the recipient interprets how one situation or concept is mapped onto another through relations such as cause-effect, change, similarity, and space. The cause-effect vital relation establishes causal connections between high-speed riding on a Harley-Davidson and the concept of freedom, activating cognitive processes aimed at generating implicatures about Harley-Davidson riding as a form of liberation from the constraints of the everyday world. The similarity relation underpins the connection between the ordinary world and riding regular motorcycles *versus* the 4D world and riding a Harley-Davidson. The change relation establishes links between the sensations and emotions from ordinary riding and the extraordinary (beyond 3D) emotions provided by Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The space relation activates cognitive processes underlying cross-domain mappings such as "the three-dimensional space of the everyday" and "the 4D space of extraordinary possibilities with Harley-Davidson."

Thus, from the perspective of Relevance Theory, vital relations from Conceptual Blending Theory, which help establish connections between domains, and activate mental processes that facilitate interpretation, can be seen as cognitive tools that reduce the processing costs in metaphor comprehension and ease the process of identifying relevant mappings.

The relevance-theoretic approach justifies the selection of elements and relations from mental spaces that are projected into the blend. In the analyzed metaphor, the mappings during the Composition phase of the blend are preceded by the construction of an ad hoc concept from the dominant input space, 4D* (non-three-dimensional world), based on the ad hoc property of "extraordinary sensations." The implicatures from this ad hoc concept are projected onto the structure of the non-dominant space, H-D. The resulting mappings structure the blend, generating the meaning of the metaphor.

At the Completion stage, the blend is completed by incorporating new contextual assumptions in relevance-theoretic terms. These assumptions are linked to the discourse-forming secondary signified of "freedom" associated with the Harley-Davidson brand (Kravchenko et al., 2024). This generates a new integration: HD as freedom from the limitations of the three-dimensional world. At the Elaboration stage, the blend runs as a promise to fulfill the target customer's desire for extraordinary sensations and as a call to attain freedom from the constraints of everyday life through the purchase of the advertised product.

The elaboration of the blend aligns with the principle of optimal relevance – where cognitive efforts spent on processing the metaphor are rewarded with maximal positive cognitive effects. Among these effects are: (a) Strengthened branding associations, with the promise of unique sensations linked to riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, exceeding traditional experience; (b) Enrichment of existing knowledge about H-D as a symbol of something greater than mere transportation – "infinite possibilities," "multidimensional experiences"; (c) Reinforcement of values such as freedom and self-expression, along with the associated positive emotions tied to the opportunity to experience something exceptional and innovative;   (d) Emotional impact and motivation to explore new horizons.

In this way, the blend operates not only as a cognitive process but also as a powerful persuasive mechanism that resonates with the audience's emotions and aspirations.

Conclusions

The article makes a valuable contribution to the problem of interpreting unconventional metaphors by employing research tools from Relevance Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory, and attempting their integration within a hybrid method of metaphor analysis. The main findings of the paper concern the algorithm for deriving metaphorical mappings in blends, taking into account contextual assumptions and the principle of relevance, which explain the selection of specific structures from mental inputs for projection into the blend. The stage of decoding the explicature, aimed at identifying input mental spaces for subsequent integration in the blend, follows the relevance-theoretic approach – eliminating ambiguities, assigning references, and enriching the content – allowing for the establishment of comparable domains and their propositional connection. During the Composition stage, an ad hoc concept of the source is inferred. Implicatures from the ad hoc concept allow the source to be adapted to the target, creating matchings with elements from the structure of the target space and structuring blend mappings, thereby generating the primary meaning of the metaphor. Abstract basic-level structures, constituting the generic space of the integration network and accessible in the cognitive base of the target audience of metaphorical advertising, form the cognitive context for understanding and comparing input spaces, minimizing the cognitive effort of interpreters. Another component of the cognitive context is vital relations – key conceptual connections between elements of mental spaces, which, due to their grounding in human experience, are automatically activated by the recipient of metaphorical advertising, facilitating the process of searching for relevant interpretations in accordance with the principle of minimizing cognitive effort. At the Completion stage, the integration is filled by including new contextual assumptions related to the brand's secondary signified, generating new structures in the blend. During the Elaboration stage, the blend is evolved based on the inclusion of contextual assumptions about the brand's messages, related to fulfilling the motivational needs of the target audience and encouraging them to satisfy those needs through purchasing the advertised product.

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