

Analysis of Multimodal Metaphor in TV Advertisement

Hongce Wang

College of International Studies, Southwest University, Chongqing, China

Abstract—Advertisements are becoming increasingly popular and are being presented in multifaceted ways due to their unique features and artistic techniques of expression. Advertisements are primarily presented through visual, sound, and verbal modality. These modalities have their own functions, and they interact with each other. Based on the working mechanism of conceptual metaphor, the metaphorical meaning of an advertisement is constructed in cooperation with each modality while demonstrating the social cognition behind advertising discourse.

Index Terms—advertisement discourse, conceptual metaphor, multimodal metaphor, modality

I. INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is an exceedingly important cognitive tool for interpreting abstract concepts. For that reason, it has long been a major focus of linguistic research. Statistically, nearly 70% of expressions originated from metaphorical concepts. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) posited that metaphor exists in daily life—not only in language but also in thoughts and activities. Even people's conceptual systems are essentially metaphorical. As an important propaganda instrument, advertising is similarly metaphorical. The understanding of metaphor experiences has two stages: the identification of the metaphor and the deduction of its meaning (Shu, 2000). People transfer main characters of the source domain to the target domain, which provides them a profound understanding of the advertising and strikes a chord.

The rapid development of informatization and the resulting combination of texts, pictures, gestures, and other developments have formed a multimodal phenomenon that has become a salient feature of daily life (Zhang & Zhan, 2011). Metaphor as an indispensable way of thinking tends to be presented by multimodalities.

Most early metaphor studies analyzed the language representation of static discourse, focusing primarily on the textual analysis of novels and other textual discourses, print advertisements, and static cartoons. The first comprehensive and systematic elaboration of image metaphors in print advertising to take a cognitive perspective was Forceville's (1996) study titled "Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising." As technology has developed, multimodal research has gradually expanded to include a variety of dynamic modal symbols such as visual and auditory elements, including television commercials and music.

In recent years, foreign researchers have uncovered several new findings in dynamic multimodal video discourse. For example, O'Halloran (2004) explored the salient symbolic choices in film clips, and Tan (2009) proposed a systematic functional multi-semiotic analysis framework to analyze how dynamic multimodal discourse expresses potential meaning through symbolic interaction.

Domestic scholars have conducted relevant research in multimodal metaphorical discourse analysis as well. Zhang and Zhang (2022), for instance, have made several key discoveries. Over three decades, they constructed a comprehensive theoretical framework of multimodal discourse and established the grammatical metaphor theory. Furthermore, they posited that the development of multimodal discourse analysis in the field of cognitive linguistics is based mainly on its conceptual metaphor theory. Feng (2011) provided a multimodal theoretical framework from a systematic functional view and systematized and classified the construction and types of images and multimodal metaphors. Moreover, Zhao (2011) systematically overviewed the cognitive study of multimodal metaphor transfer.

Although several scholars have also gradually turned to multimodal video analysis in recent years, most continue to examine the multimodality of static texts. Overall, the research remains relatively limited.

II. MULTIMODAL METAPHOR THEORY

A. Conceptual Metaphor

The understanding and experience of conceptual metaphor are influenced by the culture in which it is located. From a cognitive perspective, metaphor is a mapping from one conceptual domain or cognitive domain to another—in other words, from the source to the target domain (Wen, 2007). In general, the source domain is a concrete, familiar concept, while the target domain consists of more abstract and less familiar concepts. Metaphor is the conceptualization of abstract things. Metaphors have two "entities:" the ontology (i.e., subject) and the vehicle (i.e., subordinate). For example, in the phrase "Man is a wolf," *man* is the ontology and *wolf* the metaphor. According to Black (1962), at least

one feature of each metaphor's subordinate domain (i.e., the source domain) is projected onto the subject domain. This projection process involves the foregrounding, adoption, or modification of certain features of the subject (i.e., the target domain). Similar elements are projected between the source and target domains, so there is an elemental match between the two. For example, the metaphor "the car beetled along" transforms the characteristics of the beetle into those of the car.

In addition, the concept of metaphor is systematic, culturally articulated, and anthropomorphic. Metaphors include directional and entity types. A directional metaphor refers to abstract words with directional metaphorical features. These include happiness, consciousness, good, life, health, more, and high status, which are upward, and sad, bad, sick, death, less, low status, which are downward. The entity metaphor involves considering part of the experience of a concrete entity or substance so that it can refer to abstract things and make them domained, grouped, and quantified, such as inflation is lowering our standard of living.

Many metaphors have been used so often that they have become conventional and so entrenched in people's perceptions that their metaphorical function has been forgotten. Grady (2005) noted that basic metaphors have three properties: 1) direct experiential relevance, 2) strict unidirectionality of mapping, and 3) universality across languages.

B. Multimodal Metaphor

The multimodal view of metaphor suggests that metaphors exist not only in language but also in other modalities, such as sound, music, color, and line. The term "multimodal metaphor" refers to the use of two or more modalities to represent the phenomenon of mapping metaphors in the source and target domains (Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009). Multimodal research focuses on the complementary and regular features of non-verbal symbols such as images and music in multiple media. Such symbols are used to convey meaning, establish the relationship between modality and media, and communicate the synergy of multimodal visual and verbal elements in second-language classrooms (Barthes, 1977; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Royce, 2002). Paula (2014) argued that multimodal metaphor theory must be further developed and conceptual interaction models devised to give richer connotations to multimodal information. For example, there is a need to develop dynamic multimodal conceptual integration patterns to explore the structure of multimodal expressions. The creative integration of multimodal input in this model is largely conditioned and guided by the interplay of multimodal metaphor and metonymy complexes. Based on the previous study, the characteristics of multimodal metaphor are as follows (Zhao, 2011).

(a). Dynamics and Narrativity of Multimodal Metaphor

Non-verbal modality often has a spatiotemporal sequences feature. It can construct basic metaphors, which include the Great Chain of Being and Event Structure metaphors (Lan & Cai, 2013), from people's cognitive experiences. Multimodal metaphor reflects the dynamics of narrativity through visual extension, sequences of scenes, and sound fluctuation.

For example, the use of music, images, and color in "Isolation Keyboards" helps depict people confined to keyboards, lost in online networks and with relationships between family members fading away. Video provides the audience a story to consider in their minds.

(b). Vividness of Multimodal Metaphor

Compared with pure language text, the source domain of the visual field is more direct in both form and spatial dimension. For example, the conceptual metaphor +POWERFUL IS BIG+ is presented in linguistic form, which makes it difficult to imagine how big it is. However, with images, it is easy to form a concept in people's minds that causes reactions and emotions.

(c). Universality of the "Concrete Is Concrete" Multimodal Metaphor

The typical conceptual metaphor emphasizes that people can only use the concrete object to map the abstract object. However, many researchers have illustrated that people can actually combine the properties of two domains to form a new integration concept. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) noted, both domains can be specific objects. Other metaphorical approaches have revealed that the "concrete is concrete" metaphor is common in people's lives (Forceville, 2009). For example, in the image metaphor +WATCH IS BUTTERFLY+, both the source and target domains are perceptible and specific objects.

III. MODALITIES IN TV ADVERTISEMENT

A. Functions of Modality

To study the concept of modality, Forceville (2006) subdivided modality into nine modes: 1) pictorial signs, 2) written signs, 3) spoken signs, 4) gestures, 5) sounds, 6) music, 7) smells, 8) tastes, and 9) touch. Following Forceville (2006), as well as features of public service advertisements, this paper mainly discusses two modalities: 1) visual modality, which is composed of pictorial and written signs, and 2) auditory modality, which is composed of spoken signs, sounds, and music.

(a). Pictorial Signs

The purpose of advertising is to promote a certain product or service in a limited time and space. Therefore, the metaphors in advertisements differ from conventional metaphors, and more image metaphors are used to attract customer attention.

Broadcast on CCTV in 2006, the public service advertisement “Will Love Passed On” used images to present its background. The broadcast was received well by audiences. The story of the advertisement can be divided into four stages: beginning, developing, climaxing, and ending. In the opening part, the mother is gently washing her child’s feet and telling the story of “duck swimming.” After the child goes to bed, the mother brings her own mother water. Then, as the story progresses, the elder affectionately says “You’ve had a busy day, take a break.” “I’m not tired; a foot bath is good for your health,” the mother replies with a smile. The child next door hears the conversation. Then, during the climax, when the mother returns to the child’s room, the child is not in bed. At the same time, the mother hears footsteps and then sees the child holding a foot basin, shambling and saying, “Mom, let me wash your feet.” Finally, the scene shows the son washing his mother’s feet and telling the story of “duck swimming.” Then the screen darkens. Without the pictorial mode, the audience would neither understand the story that had taken place nor receive the educational enlightenment from the TV public service advertisement.

(b). *Spoken Signs*

Spoken signs are the main expressive instruments of multimodal metaphor. People use the spoken modality to understand advertisements’ main meaning. In addition, when combined with other modalities, spoken modality can act as a comprehensive tool; it can better demonstrate and explain the meaning, add new elements to the meaning that are perceived by other modalities, and enhance understanding of the meaning. It can even conjure other modalities in people’s minds to construct a meaning.

The advertising for “Sidashu Stomach Medicine” in China has succeeded in using spoken signs. In the advertisement, a mother says “your dad’s stomach troubles again! Get Sidashu!” The son then runs into a room, pointing to another man, and says “Four uncle!” The mother anxiously replies that “I didn’t ask you to find Four uncle. It is Sidashu!”

In this advertising, “Sidashu” and “four uncle” are a pair of sound homonyms in different Chinese. Therefore, as Yu (2009) observed, “Sidashu” (medicine) stimulates another symbol of the unit “Sidashu” (Four uncle).

(c). *Written Signs*

The functions of written signs are similar to the first two functions of spoken signs.

Written signs are a main expressive instrument that can add new information to what is already known to increase understanding and better explain meaning. In addition, written signs imply that the information rendered in public service advertisements (PSAs) is formal and important. Most CCTV public service advertisements, for example, conclude with a sentence explaining the central theme.

(d). *Sound*

Based on the particularity of sounds, the source domain is indirectly activated by metonymy (Barcelona, 2000). A successful example with sounds is the “Save Paper” TV advertisement. In this ad, a man places a piece of paper in a printer. When he does so, the shrill sound of a chainsaw can be heard, and powder fills the screens. Then, in the black background, a line of text appears on the screen: “today, how many trees have you cut down?” The chainsaw noise reminds people of cutting trees with a saw.

(e). *Music*

Music is one of the most important elements of a complete presentation of multimodal metaphor in TV advertisements.

Music is mainly used to establish atmosphere and is one of basic elements of multimodal TV advertisement, playing an important role in the dynamic meaning construction of metaphors.

Music in TV advertisements encompasses all the music used in the advertising process. Music primarily works with words and images to transmit information and can be divided into two categories: vocal and instrumental music. Vocal music generally refers to advertising jingles with lyrics, whereas instrumental music is played in the background, is composed of instruments, and contains no lyrics. Music not only renders the atmosphere but also plays an important role in the construction of multimodal metaphor.

The perfect combination of corn and peas, for example, is the raw material used to animate products in “Promoting Fast Food” foreign television commercials. The metaphor is that the “corn and pea is the bride and groom.” The advertisement only uses the “Wedding March” music to remind of the wedding event, which effectively activates the concept of “wedding.”

It is important to note that these modalities are intertwined. Perceiving a meaning construction of one modality is the first stage in meaning construction. The second stage is to use the relations of modalities to make the meaning sufficient.

B. *Relations Between Modalities*

After discussing the function of modalities, it becomes clear that each one interacts with the others. Perceiving the meaning construction of a pattern is the first stage of meaning construction, and the second stage is the use of pattern

relationships to make meaning sufficient.

The function of modalities determines the relationship between patterns. One example is the “Haifeisi Shampoo” TV advertisement.

1). +HAIFEISI SHAMPOO IS A POWERFUL FIGURE+

In this case, the combination of applications of pictorial modality and spoken modality implies the similarity of shampoo and a powerful figure. Pictorial modality is present throughout the advertisement, with music modality combining with spoken modality. In general, pictorial, spoken, and musical signs interact. Spoken modality helps to reinforce figurative meaning, which is based on the pictorial modality.

2). +HAIR IS MUSICAIN+

In this example, pictorial symbols, musical symbols, and spoken signs interact and trigger the theme metaphor +HAIR IS MUSICIAN+. Modalities in this instance have their own functions while simultaneously cooperating. The music modality coexists with the pictorial and spoken modalities.

3). +WOMAN IS BUTTERFLY+

In this example, the spoken sign has only 13 characters. The music modality plays the most important role in this advertisement. The spoken modality has a bridge with music and pictorial modalities.

4). +SHAMPOO IS THE ERASER+

In this example, the application of musical and spoken signs is extremely limited. This places the pictorial signs in a prominent position. The music is only interspersed in this advertising.

In summary, all metaphorical meanings are composed of pictorial, written, and spoken symbols as well as sounds and music. Pictorial modality is more salient than the others. Typically pictorial metaphor is considered the most important factor when identifying the source and target domains. The accuracy and interpretations of written and spoken signs are often used to indicate the mapping process from source to target domain. Sound and music modalities tend to be combined with pictorial signs to achieve their function and are often used to evoke emotions and set the mood. Using sound and music can improve the effectiveness of messaging (Lan & Cai, 2013).

There are, then, four main model relationships: symbiosis, reinforcement, interweaving, and bridge.

IV. METAPHORICAL MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN TV ADVERTISING

A. Analysis of Metaphorical Meaning Construction

The main modalities in TV advertising are widely understood, but how do people’s minds construct the metaphorical meaning of TV advertising through each modality? The following section addresses this question using examples from cognitive perspective.

(a). Case One: “Let Everything Full of Hope”

This is a public service advertising designed to encourage patients with depression to remain positive, change a few aspects at a time, and find hope. This entire multimodal discourse can be divided into two parts: 1) the inner world of the depressed person and 2) the depression patient facing life with hope after changing himself.

1. First Part: The Inner World of the Depression Patient

+DEPRESSION PATIENT IS IN GLOOMY AND PASSIVE MOOD, SHUTS HIMSELF IN HIS INNER WORLD AND SUFFERS FROM THE DISEASE CONTINUOUSLY+

TABLE 1
THE INTERPRETATION OF MULTIMODAL METAPHOR IN FIRST PART

	Source Domain	Target Domain
Pictorial Sign	Black and dark grey background	The gloomy mood of patient with depression
Pictorial Sign	Small and closed room	The patient with depression isolates himself in his narrow inner world
Spoken Sign	The low passive noise	The passive way the patient with depression perceives the world
Pictorial Sign	The figure “D” around the man all the time	The depression bothers the patient continually
Pictorial Sign	Sitting in the dark corner	The passive thought of the man
Pictorial Sign	Hanging up the phone	Getting away from the world
Music Sign	The dolorous music	The depression atmosphere around the man

In lenses 1–6, black and dark gray act as basic color tones that fill the screen, which is dimly lit. Though it may be simple common sense, it should be noted that when there is no light, there is no way to see. According to human cognition, there are similarities between darkness and depression. Therefore, since black and gray represent the feelings of people suffering from depression, they imply depression in the advertisement’s protagonist.

The written signs that emerge in the beginning in this case act as subtitles that explain the pictorial signs. In addition to lens 1, the text “Depression” appears on the right side of the screen. Figure “D” in the following lens is a symbol of

depression. This advertisement uses the part-whole relationship to use “D” to symbolize “depression.” In this advertisement, spoken language is used in the beginning and plays an explanatory role. However, the tone of the spoken language also has metaphorical implications. Lens 2 shows a dark, empty chamber that represents the inner world of someone suffering from depression. The depressed man isolates himself in a narrow inner world. Lens 3 shows the man lying on the ground, “D” with him. In Lens 1, with the help of the spoken and written signs in this advertising, the audience is aware that the figure “D” in this ad is anthropomorphic. It is the enemy of this man. The emergence of “D” shows that the patient has been suffering from depression. However, the tone of the spoken language also has metaphorical meaning. Lens 4 depicts the man sitting in a dark corner with a handsome smile as the sun shines on his old photograph. Though the sun is directly above him, he does not seem to notice. We share the common sense that sun represents positivity. In this case, the sun represents hope. Avoiding sunlight demonstrates that the depression patient is depriving himself of hope. In lens 5, the man hangs up the phone. Today, it is generally understood that the phone is the main or only way to connect with others and the outside world. This means that hanging up the phone actually represents this man’s desire to say goodbye to his life. He wants to isolate himself. Then, lens 6 shows the man in the water. This photo evokes the concept of drowning. In the spoken language of “he wants to leave the world,” the audience can infer that he wants to kill himself.

2. Second Part: The Depression Patient Faces the Life With Hope after Changing Himself

+SEEKING HELP IS SEEKING HAPPINESS AND A POSITIVE ATTITUDE+

TABLE 2
THE INTERPRETATION IN MULTIMODAL METAPHOR IN SECOND PART

	Source Domain	Target Domain
Pictorial Sign	The sunlight	Hope and happiness
Pictorial Sign	The determined look and tears in his eyes	Change is necessary but difficult
Pictorial Sign	Look at the sunlight	Seek help
Pictorial Sign	Big smile and thumps up	The patient getting better
Pictorial Sign	The paper airplane	The patient
Music Sign	Faster and louder music	A positive attitude toward life

Lens 1 illustrates that the patient with depression wants to touch the sunlight. Based on people’s basic information, sunlight means hope and happiness. The image shows the man trying to catch the sun, reflecting his desire to be happy and hopeful. From the spoken and written signs in lens 7, “However, there is something in the world that wants to retain him,” the audience infers that sunlight is what keeps the person from giving up. In lens 8, the patient with depression has a determined look and tears in his eyes simultaneously. When people decide to take action, that determined look is present. Based on the similar body experiences, the determined look implies that the man has definitively chosen to change. In lens 8, the music quickens and becomes louder, spoiling the positive atmosphere, which aligns with the metaphorical meaning that pictorial modality has constructed. Lens 9 depicts a man sitting on the floor and looking into the sun. At the same time, the text “Depression, seek medical help” appears. Written symbols, as an interpretive tool, help audiences understand meaning. Lens 10 implies that sunshine is the doctor, presenting a doctor with a large smile and a thumps up. Smiles and gestures send a message to viewers that the patient with depression is healing with the help of doctors. Then, in shot 11, the patient throws a paper airplane. The action reflects the patient’s willingness to face life and fly in his own world like an airplane. In contrast to the dark background of lens 1, lens 12 is brighter and has a wider field of vision. This contradiction allows the audience to really see a change in the man. With the phrase “Let everything be hopeful,” the audience can deduce that where there is hope there is opportunity.

(b). Case Two: “World No-Tobacco Day”

TABLE 3
THE INTERPRETATION OF MULTIMODAL METAPHOR IN “WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY”

Source Domain		Target Domain
Smoking	mapping	Chronic suicide
Smoke shaped like a gun	☐	Killed by gun
Smoke shaped like a rope	☐	Suffocated by rope
Smoke shaped like a plastic bag	☐	Suffocated by bag

This advertisement consists of four parts. At the beginning of the commercial, there is gloomy music and dark conditions. In lens 1, a young man in a black suit is seen sitting in a white chair. He lights a cigarette with a lighter and the screen shows the following text: “One million people in China have died from tobacco-related disease.” The man begins to exhale the cigarette smoke, which continues to expand, gradually forming the shape of a pistol to the left of his head.

Then, the screen darkens with the sound of gunfire. Lens 2 depicts a beautiful young woman sitting in a chair, lighting a cigarette as the smoke gradually forms a white silk wrap around her neck. At the same time, a series of texts

flashes across the screen: “The rise in smoking among young women should be a cause for concern.” Lens 3 shows a young man with a puff of smoke in his mouth. The smoke expands in the direction of the two lovely ladies, forming two plastic bags that land on the ladies’ heads in lenses 4 and 5. A list of words reads “the rate of passive smoking women suffering from lung cancer is six times as normal people.” Three smokers are then filmed using the same lens. They inhale smoke back in their mouths. Above, a list of red words reads “the 23rd world no-tobacco day.” In large letters, the picture states that “Smoking equals chronic suicide.” The dark and gloomy background foils a passive atmosphere about smoking.

The metaphor reveals itself to be “Smoking is chronic suicide.” This meaning is accomplished by three sub metaphors. The shape of cigarette smoke formation depicts three ways of committing suicide: shooting, hanging, and suffocating oneself. People understand that the shape of an object can represent a real object, all of which—in this case—are linked to smoking. This is a new way to establish a relationship between smoking and other factors. In this advertisement, smoking is divided into active and passive forms. At the end of the video, the view can conclude that smoking is tantamount to suicide.

All four metaphors share the same source domain of “smoking.” However, they have different target domains for the source of “chronic suicide,” such as “shooting yourself in the head” and “hanging up the phone.” In this ad, certain modalities interact with each other. In the case of the “smoke gun shape,” both images and sounds refer to shooting and popping movements, illustrating common shooting patterns. Smoking is also known to be harmful to health.

Despite that people have never thought smoking to be so terrible, this ad states that it can be as damaging as guns, white silk, or plastic bags. In the first part, the ad constructs a metaphor meaning “a person who smokes will be shot.” The metaphors are based on similarities and correlations between two input spaces, both of which are harmful to humans and both of which are “spontaneous.” In addition, these metaphors link to the important relationship of “identity,” which in this case involves the same person. They are related to each other. Furthermore, based on the establishment of incentive mechanisms, there exist relations of identity, analogy, attribute, causal category, and others. The analysis of the final three metaphors is similar to that of the first.

According to Fauconnier and Turner (1998), projection is selective. For instance, space need not contain all the elements of an input relationship, and integration spaces contain only expected results. At times, two domains are expected, and at others only one. In certain cases, one domain predicts two domains (Fauconnier, 1985). The synthesis space is selected from the input elements, and a new structure is formed through the combination process. Since the first three metaphors have similar mixing mechanisms, this paper analyzes the first one in detail before combining the different mixing mechanisms of the first three the multimodal metaphors. For the first metaphor, “a smoker is a shot of suicide,” the discussion above is projected into the integrative space. In it, people are compressed into a unique relationship, while others are projected onto the integrative space. The multimodal metaphor “smoking is Chronic Suicide” is the end of the text ad, and it appears to be the conclusion of the first three metaphorical forms.

The above table illustrates that the pictorial modality in this TV advertisement is also in the predominant position. There are no spoken signs at all in this TV advertisement. The few written signs in such advertisements serve a primarily explanatory function. The relationship between music and pictorial signs is essentially a co-occurrence. Music form is additionally important in such advertisements. The relationship between music and pictorial modality is also strengthened. The metaphorical meaning in this ad is, then, constructed through pictorial, music, and written modality.

B. Other Influential Factors

(a). Background Sound

The role of music in the multimodal metaphor of multimodal metonymy should not be ignored. The multimodal metaphor, a source and object metaphor, is primarily or entirely presented in different patterns, including minimal visual effects, written language, spoken language, sound, and music. Therefore, the study of musical function continues to belong to the multimodal metaphor domain.

There are two kinds of music in the background: music with and without lyrics. The above analysis referred to wordless music, which can establish the mood and affect the audience's emotions. It can also construct metaphorical meanings in other ways.

Just like music without lyrics, music with lyrics can establish mood and affect audience emotion. Moreover, since the lyrics belong to written or spoke modalities, music with lyrics can function as an explanation instrument. At the same time, musical lyrics can be overly externalized in their metaphorical meaning of existence. Those have the reinforcement function.

(b). Cultural Characteristics

It is important to note that cultural characteristics should also be considered when analyzing multimodal metaphors in TV advertisements. To make the study more objective, a group of foreign teachers working in Western cultures at Xuzhou’s English Language Teaching Center received an ad saying “Mom and Dad, I love you.” Reading the ad provided them a solid understanding of what it was attempting to express. However, they also observed that such ads cannot be public service announcements or be broadcast on national television.

The difference is distinct cultural characteristics. Because of China's special circumstances, such as the "one child" family policy, it is necessary to establish a complete social welfare system and strengthen the cultivation of traditional Chinese family values. Chinese family members are closer to each other than their Western counterparts are. Young children are valuable assets to parents, and many Chinese people consider children the center of the family. When children grow up, they take care of their parents in their retirement age and support the entire family in spiritual and material matters. This example demonstrates that the multimodal metaphor in intercultural communication and intercultural advertisements can only be accepted and understood by audiences with specific cultural characteristics.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper used specific cases to analyze multimodal metaphor in TV advertisements from a cognitive perspective. Each model constructs a metaphorical meaning related to the thematic meaning of TV advertisements. Therefore, it is not sufficient to study the meaning construction of a pattern. Understanding the concepts and characteristics of multimodal metaphors can enhance understanding of complex source domains. This analysis of metaphorical construction in TV advertisements revealed five modalities in the medium: pictorial signs, written symbols, spoken signs, sounds, and music. These models not only have their own functions of meaning construction; they also play an auxiliary role in the metaphorical meaning construction of other models. All these modalities interact with each other. This study of multimodal metaphor in TV ads uncovered that the modality of pictorial signs is more salient than that of other patterns. The meaning structure of these advertisements showed to rely on pictorial signs with the help of music and text signs. In addition, an example was given to illustrate the influence of cultural differences on metaphorical meaning construction. The results of this paper will enhance and deepen people's understanding of TV Advertisements. As an important method for shaping people's behavior and humans' morality, the information conveyed through TV advertisements must be disseminated in the correct way. Moreover, the analysis of multimodal metaphor in TV advertisements can provide new methods and perspectives for linguistic research.

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Hongce Wang is a PhD candidate from College of International Studies at Southwest University. Her main research interests include cognitive linguistics, socio-cognitive linguistics and discourse constructions.