

Metaphors in Food Advertising Slogans

Chennan Yu
Kristianstad University College
The School of Teacher
Education/English
English III, Autumn 2009
C-essay in English Linguistics
Tutor: Carita Lundmark

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Aim	2
1.2 Material	2
1.3 Method	2
2. Theoretical background	3
2.1 Conceptual Metaphor	3
2.2 Structural Metaphors	5
2.3 Ontological Metaphors	5
2.4 Personification	6
2.5 Orientational Metaphors	7
2.6 Metaphorical entailments	7
2.7 Creative and novel metaphors	8
2.8 Metonymy	10
3. Analysis and Discussion	12
3.1 LIFE IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE	12
3.1.1 LIFE IS AN ENTITY WITH TWO SIDES	13
3.1.2 LIFE IS FOOD	14
3.1.3 DAYS ARE FOOD	15
3.2 FEELING/DESIRE IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE	16
3.2.1 FEELING IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE	17
3.2.2 DESIRE IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE	18
3.3 STATES/CHARACTERISTICS ARE LOCATIONS	19
3.4 THE PRODUCT IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE	20
3.4.1 THE PRODUCT IS A CONTAINER	21
3.4.2 THE PRODUCT IS A PERSON	21
4. Conclusions	24
List of References	25

1. Introduction

Metaphor is used by people to understand an abstract concept by referring to a concrete one. It appears so often and is utilized so widely that sometimes we use it subconsciously and without realizing it. Lakoff and Turner (1989:1) consider it as “omnipresent”, “accessible to everyone” and “irreplaceable”. As a matter of fact, everyone has acquired a mastery of metaphor used in our daily lives and it helps us understand the world around us.

People have applied metaphor to all walks of life for centuries, such as politics, economy and the entertainment industry. With the fast commercialization of the society and the booming of the media industry, advertising, as one of the most efficient ways of publicizing products, has become an indispensable part of our life and “a major manifestation of conceptual metaphors”(Kövecses 2002:59). The selling power of the advertisements largely depends on the conceptual metaphors (pictures or words) used in them. A well-chosen metaphor will greatly prompt people’s desire to buy a certain product.

Plenty of previous discussion has been focused on the metaphors used in the field of advertising. For example, Elizabeth M. Anderson (1998) has investigated the use of metaphor in on-line advertising and Carita Lundmark (2005) has discussed metaphor and creativity in British magazine advertising.

However, among the previous discussion, less attention has been paid to the slogans of advertising, which perhaps are some of the most powerful component elements of all the advertisements. They are widely used to attract potential consumers’ attention and may be the very essence of advertising. This essay mainly focuses on the slogans in the field of food advertising and discusses the metaphors used in those slogans.

1.1 Aim

This essay mainly focuses on the metaphors used in food advertising slogans. The aim is to identify and analyze both the conceptual metaphors and the creative metaphorical linguistic expressions used in those slogans and the possible reasons why a certain source domain is chosen for a certain target domain.

1.2 Material

The advertising slogans are mainly from three sources, which are textart.ru, Wikipedia and Google. To begin with, 60 food advertising slogans were collected from the three sources. After that, a selection was carried out. The ones that did not contain metaphorical linguistic expressions were left out and the material was thus narrowed down to 20 slogans. Among them, nine are from McDonald's and Burger King, six are from Coca-Cola and the others are from other food brands. The 20 slogans were then classified into four sub-categories according to the conceptual metaphors reflected in them.

The reason for choosing the advertising slogans of McDonald's, Burger King and Coca-Cola as the main component of the material is that they are three of the most popular food brands in the world. Their advertisements are directed towards the vast majority of the society. As a result, no special knowledge would be required to understand them. All the twenty slogans are used within the last ten years and were collected from English-speaking countries in the world to make sure that they are representative and not out-of-date.

1.3 Method

First, the advertising slogans were selected and classified. To achieve this end, the three sources for the collecting of material were investigated in advance.

After that, the metaphorical use of words and expressions was identified and categorized into

four categories according to both of their source domain and target domain. Then the theory of conceptual metaphor has been applied in the analysis and discussion of those metaphorical expressions.

2. Theoretical background

With the development of cognitive linguistics and the publication of *Metaphors We Live By* by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the understanding of metaphor has been changed dramatically. Cognitive linguistics takes a conceptual approach to linguistic analysis. They consider linguistic knowledge — knowledge of meaning and form — as being basically of conceptual structure (Croft & Cruse 2004:2).

Before the publication of the great work, metaphor was viewed by most people as an extraordinary form of language rather than a form of language used in everyday life. It was understood to mostly appear in poetry and literary works for the sake of decoration and beautification. It was considered as a language phenomenon alone. However, in the work of Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor is seen as a conceptual process that people use to understand and categorize the world around them. It exists everywhere and plays an important role in our daily life. It exists not only in language but in thought and action as well (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:4)

2.1 Conceptual metaphor

A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains and one conceptual domain is used to understand the other. CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (A) IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (B) can be used as a convenient way to capture this view of metaphor (Kövecses 2002:4). When people understand life in terms of a journey, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY is drawn on to understand the concept of life. However, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY is not directly used in everyday life. It is realized by **metaphorical linguistic expressions**

(Kövecses 2002:3), such as the following:

He's *without direction* in life.
I'm *where I want to be* in life.
I'm *at a crossroad* in my life.
She'll *go places* in life.
He's never let any one *get in his way*.
She's *gone through* a lot in life.

From the above examples, we can see that the way we speak about life in English is similar to the way we speak about journey. People use the concept of journey to understand the highly abstract concept of life.

The two domains involved in a conceptual metaphor are called the **target domain** and the **source domain**. And the source domain is used to understand the target domain. Normally the target domain is more abstract (as LIFE) and the source domain is more concrete (as JOURNEY) (Kövecses 2002:4).

A set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target is the basis for conceptual metaphors. These conceptual correspondences are named as **mappings**. Take the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY as an example. There're a set of mappings between the source and the target (Kövecses 2002:6).

<i>Source: JOURNEY</i>	<i>Target: LIFE</i>
the travelers	→ the people
companions	→ friends
guides	→ people who give us suggestions
the starting point	→ birth
distance covered	→ events experienced
the obstacles encountered	→ the difficulties met
different roads	→ different choices
the destinations and stops	→ the goals and achievements
the end of the journey	→ death

From the example above we can see that the constituent elements of the conceptual domain

JOURNEY are in systematic correspondence with constituent elements of the conceptual domain LIFE. The application of the journey domain to the love domain provides the concept of life with this particular structure or set of elements (Kövecses 2002:7).

2.2 Structural metaphors

In structural metaphors, rich structure knowledge is provided by the source domain for the target concept. By the structure of the source, the speakers are able to understand the target. The understanding process happens when the elements of the source are conceptually mapped onto the elements of the target (Kövecses 2002: 33).

Take the TIME IS MOTION metaphor as an example. Here, time is structured according to motion and space and we can get the following mappings in this metaphor (Kövecses 2002: 33):

Times are things.

The passing of time is motion.

Future times are in front of the observer; past times are behind the observer.

One thing is moving, the other is stationary; the stationary thing is the deictic center.

Our concept and understanding of time is structured and understood in this way. Without structural metaphor, it would be difficult to understand and imagine what our concept of time would be.

2.3 Ontological metaphors

Ontological metaphors can also be understood as entity and substance metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:26). Ontological metaphors are based on our experience with the physical world around us. When things we want to refer to are not very concrete and do not have a clear physical shape, we tend to understand them as entities or substances. This means that we can “refer to them, categorize them, group them, and qualify them” (Lakoff & Johnson

2003:26). Take the INFLATION IS AN ENTITY metaphor from *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:27) as an example. Inflation is understood as an entity and it enables us to refer to and qualify it in the following sentences (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:27):

Inflation is lowering our standard of living.

If there's much *more inflation*, we'll never survive. We need to *combat inflation*.

Inflation is *hacking us* in to a corner.

In the above cases, *inflation* is understood as something that can affect our lives and be *combated*. The use of ontological metaphor enables people to talk about and understand inflation as a physical entity.

2.4 Personification

Human thoughts and characteristics may be the most familiar physical entity to us among all the physical objects. As a result, a wide range of abstract concepts are conceptualized as human beings. Personification can also be conceived as an extension of ontological metaphors, for the reason that the source domain is further specified as a person and human characteristics are applied to nonhuman entities (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:35). The above INFLATION IS AN ENTITY metaphor can sometimes be written as INFLATION IS A PERSON based on the following examples (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:34):

Inflation has *attacked* the foundation of our economy. Inflation *has pinned us to the wall*.

Our biggest *enemy* right now *is* inflation.

The dollar *has been destroyed* by inflation.

Here inflation is understood by utilizing the concept of a human being. However, a person or a human being is also a concept on a quite general level. Looking at the sentences more carefully we can see that the more specific metaphor underlying these metaphorical linguistic expressions is INFLATION IS AN ADVERSARY. From our everyday experience, we have the knowledge that inflation as an adversary or enemy can attack and hurt us. It is not our friend and it will do us no good.

2.5 Orientational metaphors

Most orientational metaphors are related to basic spatial orientations of human beings, such as up-down, center-periphery, and so on. The cognitive function of orientational metaphor is a series of target concepts coherent in our conceptual system. It could sometimes be called a “coherence metaphor”. In the following examples, an upward orientation characterizes certain target concepts, while their opposite concepts are characterized by a downward orientation (Kövecses 2002: 36).

MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN: Speak *up*, please. Keep your voice *down*, please.

HEALTHY IS UP; SICK IS DOWN: Lazarus *rose* from dead. He *fell* ill.

CONTROL IS UP; LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN: I’m *on top* of the situation. He is *under* my control.

HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN: I’m feeling *up* today. He’s really *low* these days.

It should also be pointed out that the spatial orientation up-down is not the only spatial source image. Orientational metaphors also utilize spatial images such as whole, center, link, balance, and so on (Kövecses 2002:36).

2.6 Metaphorical Entailments

Owing to our detailed and everyday understanding of the world, we have a relatively rich and extensive knowledge about the source. This kind of knowledge is not totally ignored. It is made use of to reach the end of metaphorical comprehension, which yields **metaphorical entailments**. Metaphorical entailments are produced when rich additional knowledge about a source is mapped onto a target. “Many metaphors do map additional knowledge from the source onto the target” and “metaphorical entailments are a common property of conceptual metaphors” (Kövecses 2002: 94).

Take the metaphor AN ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY as an example (borrowed from Kövecses). The constituent element that the journey happens along the road is mapped to the progress of

an argument. But we also have the additional knowledge that sometimes we can leave the main path and stray from it. It is a nonconstituent element of the source concept JOURNEY. But it is utilized in the expressions such as “digress from” the essence of an argument (Kövecses 2002: 33).

2.7 Creative and novel metaphors

Ortony (1993:2) points out that metaphor can be regarded as “an essential characteristic of the creativity of language” or “deviant and parasitic upon normal use”. It is often the case that metaphors used in creative works such as literary works, advertisements and films are different from metaphors in our everyday life. They are usually more creative and new. Creative people such as advertisers usually create novel metaphors to meet various needs. As a result, there is a widespread view held by most people that these creative and novel metaphors belong to a distinct and independent category from ordinary metaphors. This view is only partially true. When talented people create new metaphors for their creative works, they do not simply leave the ordinary metaphors behind. On the other hand, they make use of a great deal of conventional and everyday metaphors. Actually “everyday language and the everyday conceptual system contribute a great deal” to their works (Kövecses 2002:43).

To create novel and unconventional metaphors, several devices have to be employed in the reworking of normal and everyday language. These include **extending**, **elaboration**, **questioning** and **combining** (Kövecses 2002: 47). Here only extending, elaboration and combining will be explained since these three appear most frequently in the material that is analyzed in section 3.

In **extending**, a new conceptual element is introduced in the source domain to an already existing conventional metaphor and the ordinary conceptual metaphor is expressed by new metaphorical linguistic expressions. Take the following two linguistic expressions as examples (Kövecses 2002: 47):

Tow roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by.

In the middle of life's road
I found myself in a dark wood.

In both of the two examples, the conventional metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY is utilized and at the same time the ordinary metaphor is expressed in a new way. In the first case, a traveler is faced with two roads leading to the destination on his way. The novel element here is that of the two roads, one may be chosen less frequently than the other. The novel element in the second example is that one's road may go through a dark wood.

What is common for the two cases is that the novel metaphors are created by using and extending conventional metaphors. An “unused” element is added in the creative process (Kövecses 2002: 47).

The difference between elaboration and extension lies in that in elaboration, people elaborate on an already existing element of the source in detail rather than adding a new element to the source domain (Kövecses 2002: 47).

According to Lakoff and Turner (1989), Horace refers to death as the “eternal exile of the raft”. The conventional metaphor DEATH IS DEPARTURE is reflected in this expression but is elaborated by detailing the type and means of departure (exile and raft). It includes details instead of adding new elements from the source as in the case of extension. That departure is described in terms of exile helps us understand that death is viewed as something enforced upon us. Choosing a raft as the means of transport indicates that there is no certain destination. (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 67-69)

Several conventional everyday metaphors can be combined in a single metaphorical linguistic expression to create novel metaphors. It is said to be “perhaps the most powerful

mechanism to go beyond our everyday conceptual system” (Kövecses 2002: 49). Take the expression below as an example:

You took away the light of my life.

In this short sentence, light is understood as a substance that can be taken away and life is understood as a substance that has light. At least two conventional metaphors are combined here, namely LIGHT IS A SUBSTANCE and A LIFE TIME IS A DAY. The combination of conventional metaphors thus enables the creation of new ones.

2.8 Metonymy

Metonymy is understood as a conceptual process where the target entity is referred to by the vehicle entity. The vehicle entity can direct attention or provide mental access to the target entity. Examples are as follows (borrowed from Lakoff and Johnson’s 2003:37):

He bought a *Ford*.

The *sax* has the flu today.

Nixon bombed Hanoi.

In the above examples, one entity (the vehicle entity) is used to refer to the other (the target entity). The producer is used to refer to the product, the object used refers to the user and the controller refers to the controlled. It can be conceived that in all the three cases above, the vehicle entity and the target entity are contiguous and closely related. As a result, the main difference between metaphor and metonymy lies in the fact that metaphor is based on the similarity between two domains to achieve the understanding of the target domain while metonymy is based on the contiguity between two entities within the same domain and the main function of it is its referential use. Originally Lakoff and Johnson (2003:37) explained this difference in the following way.

Metaphor and metonymy are different kinds of process. Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding.

Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another.

Despite the difference, metonymy, like metaphor, is also a conceptual process. It does not occur randomly or arbitrarily. It cannot be viewed merely as an isolated mere linguistic phenomenon. Metonymy, like metaphor, is also a reflection of our daily experience and a reflection of how we think of the world around us. Take the metonymic linguistic expressions for the metonymy THE FACE FOR THE PERSON as examples (taken from Lakoff and Johnson 2003:38):

She has just *a pretty face*.

There are *an awful lot of faces* out there in the audience.

We need some new *faces* around here.

This metonymy occurs frequently in our everyday life, and it is based on our everyday experience. It is common for us to remember and think of a person by his face, and by seeing someone's face, you can say that you have seen somebody, not by seeing his other body parts. Moreover, if you want to keep a photograph of someone, the person's face has to appear on the photo. Thus, metonymy is not just a characteristic of language. It is grounded in our experience, such as our thoughts, attitudes and action (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:40).

3. Analysis and discussion

It is undeniable that metaphor has become an indispensable part of advertisements, the selling power of which largely depends on conceptual metaphors. Cosmetics are often presented as women's friends who have the magic of bringing them beauty. Cars are often portrayed as lovers of successful men in society. These all trigger the customers' desire to buy products. Slogans, being one of the most important components of advertisements, contain a large amount of conceptual metaphors. They are often abbreviated and do not contain a complete sentence. In addition, due to the fact that they lack context, they could be understood in several different ways.

In this part, conceptual metaphors in advertising slogans are identified and analyzed, and possible ways of understanding the slogans are further discussed.

3.1 LIFE IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE

In our everyday conversation, life is commonly understood as an entity, so that people can *give life to something, take away someone's life* or even *sell one's life dearly*. The abstract concept of LIFE is conceived by people in this way everyday to help understand it or refer to it. Another conceptual metaphor, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which frequently underlies daily metaphorical linguistic expressions, is also based on this method of understanding life, only that the source domain is elaborated in more detail as JOURNEY.

LIFE is a popular target domain in advertising slogans as well since the advertisers want to convince the consumers that their products will make our life better, which might be the greatest motivation for them. The advertising slogans in this section are mainly centered around the ontological metaphor LIFE IS AN ENTITY. The source domain of the two slogans in section 3.1.1 stays at a general level, not pointing to what exactly the entity is, while the three slogans in section 3.1.2 elaborate the source domain in detail and involve more

creativity in some respects. The slogan included in section 3.1.3 is used as a supplement because it also utilizes the source domain of food.

3.1.1 LIFE IS AN ENTITY WITH TWO SIDES

Both of the two slogans analyzed below are from one of the world's most famous soft drink brands — Coca-Cola. The first one made its appearance in 2006. Based on this one, the second was created by adding a new aspect.

- 1) *The Coke Side of Life*. (Coca-Cola, 2006)
- 2) *Live on the Coke Side of Life*. (Coca-Cola, 2009)

In order to deliver the message that Coca-Cola makes life different, the metaphorical linguistic expression *the Coke Side of Life* appears in both of the two slogans. By this expression, we can clearly see that LIFE here is understood as an entity which we cannot define owing to the fact that there is too little information provided. However, at least certain characteristic of the entity can be determined by looking into the word *side*. LIFE is conceived as an object that has at least two sides. This metaphorical understanding of *life* is in fact very common in everyday conversation. We encourage others to *look at the bright/good side of life* when things are not going well. Conventionally, we think of the two sides of life as being opposite to each other—*the good/bright/positive side* and *the bad/dull/negative side*. These two slogans of Coca-Cola improve on the conventional way of conceiving life. Instead of *the bright and dull sides*, with or without Coca-Cola becomes the difference between the two sides. Since advertising slogans are designed to have positive meanings, the Coca side of life would probably mean the bright side of life.

The 2006 slogan was recreated in 2009 by adding the phrase *live on*. Although the exact object is still not known it does provide more details and another kind of metaphor is utilized here. By the preposition *on* we know that life is conceptualized as an object that has a surface and living people are understood as being on this surface. The understanding of people living

on the surface has a connection with a very popular orientational metaphor making use of our spatial up-down image. The upward orientation is usually connected with positive concepts, for instance, HAPPINESS IS UP, HEALTHY IS UP and CONSCIOUS IS UP. Their opposite concepts, on the other hand, often receive a downward orientation, for example, SAD IS DOWN, UNHEALTHY IS DOWN and UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN (Kövecses 2002:36). The state of people being energetic, alive and conscious is usually related to the upward orientation. On the contrary, states like being asleep and dead are related to the downward orientation, because we are quiet and we think that we lose consciousness when we are asleep or dead. The conceptual metaphor DEAD IS DOWN comes from this understanding of being dead. So its opposite concept, BEING ALIVE, can be conceptualized as BEING UP. With the particular example of slogan 2, it tends to deliver a positive message that life with Coca-Cola is good and full of happiness.

3.1.2 LIFE IS FOOD

The abstract concept of *life* is also conceptualized as a physical substance in the following three slogans just like the ones in section 3.1. However, the difference is that a concrete source concept *food* is introduced.

3) *Life tastes good.* (Coca-Cola, 2001)

4) *Progresso. A taste of the good life!* (Progresso soup brand)

5) *Earth Grains. Discover a healthier slice of Life!* (Earth Grains bread)

It can be seen from the word *taste* that the underlying conceptual metaphor in slogan 3 and 4 is LIFE IS FOOD, despite the fact that it is used as a verb and a noun respectively in the two slogans. We can eat food and thus experience different tastes of food. By understanding life as food, this special property of the source domain is mapped onto the target. So life is conceived of as something that can be tasted and have different kinds of tastes.

It is noticeable that in the example of slogan 3 and 4, both the literal and metaphorical

meanings are contained in one expression. They have the same literal meaning that the product to sell tastes good and they also use the same conceptual metaphor, but there is still a slight difference between the ways they are expressed. In comparison, slogan 3 has a simpler linguistic expression. It is rather clear that the advertisers want us to believe that by drinking Coca-Cola we can experience the good taste of life; hence the taste of Coca-Cola is the taste of life. However, the expression in slogan 4 is not the same and can be understood differently. By saying *Progresso, A taste of the good life*, LIFE is still understood as FOOD yet the product *Progresso* is comprehended as the taste, more specifically the good taste of life. If it is understood in this way, there are actually two metaphors combined in slogan 4. Except for the common conceptual metaphor LIFE IS FOOD, THE PRODUCT TO SELL IS THE TASTE is also realized in the slogan.

Slogan 5 is to some extent similar to the third and fourth one. From the word *slice* we know that life here is conceptualized as food for the third time, which is the same as in the former two slogans. However, if we try to understand the slogan in connection with the context in which it is used, we may get a deeper comprehension. It is used as an advertising slogan for Earth Grains bread. If we connect this fact with the linguistic expression *slice*, we can easily reach the conclusion that here the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS BREAD is utilized. And since a loaf of bread can have several slices, so does life. Different slices of life represent variable parts or aspects of life. Just like slices of bread, different parts or aspects of life are able to bear variant properties. By claiming that *Earth Grains is a healthier slice of life*, the advertisers actually mean that Earth Grains is a part of life which bears the property of healthiness. The property of the special slice is a characteristic of the product. The end is reached to tell the customers that Earth Grains represents a healthy part of life and by eating Earth Grains that healthy part can become part of you own life.

3.1.3 DAYS ARE FOOD

The slogan in example 6 was used in 2000 by McDonald's, one of the world's biggest fast

food restaurant chains. It is included here for the reason that the concept of food is made use of as the source here as well, which is coherent with the former examples. But it can quickly be spotted that the target is different in this slogan and the linguistic expression involves a higher level of complexity and creativity than the slogans discussed before, which is why it is classified separately.

6) *Mac your day* (McDonald's, 2000)

In order to draw the conceptual metaphor DAYS ARE FOOD, the metonymical use of *Mac* have to be analyzed first. People who are familiar with McDonald's and fast food know that *Mac* is the nickname of the star product of McDonald's called Big Mac. It is a kind of hamburger and is originally used as a noun, only in this slogan it functions as a verb and could be understood in two ways. It could mean *eat your day like eating the Big Mac* or *turn your day into a Mac*. Either way, the conceptual metonymy OBJECT INVOLVED IN AN ACTION FOR ACTION is utilized. *Mac* is the object involved in the action and is used to stand for the action. Only at this point can we come to the conclusion that *day* is conceptualized as food (or the Big Mac hamburger) in the slogan.

This slogan is particularly creative and worth analyzing for it combines both metonymy and metaphor, and metaphor is realized through the usage of metonymy. Many people tend to feel satisfied when they have a big bite of a hamburger with their mouth filled with food. This may be the desired effect for the advertisers. When you want to feel the pleasure or satisfaction of your day, you can eat at McDonald's.

3.2 FEELING/DESIRE IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE

Feelings and states of people are another prevailing target in advertising slogans since the producers and advertisers encourage us to believe that the products have the power to make us feel better.

3.2.1 FEELING IS AN ENTITY

- 7) *Put a smile on.* (McDonald's, 2002)
- 8) *Unwrap a smile.* (Little Debbie snack cakes)
- 9) *Open Happiness* (Coca-Cola, 2009)
- 10) *Real taste, Uplifting refreshment* (Coca-Cola, 2009)

Among the four slogans above, the conceptual metaphor in slogan 7 is rather conventional and represents a relatively common kind of metaphorical use in our daily language. It could be understood that the abstract concept *smile* is conceptualized as an entity at the general level so that customers can *put a smile on* after eating at McDonald's, just like expressions such as *receive a smile from someone* and *give somebody a smile*. More specifically, it could also be explained that the source domain is the concept of clothes, similar to expressions like *wear smiles*.

The conceptual metaphor SMILE/HAPPINESS IS AN ENTITY is extended and elaborated in a new way in slogan 8 and 9. A possible interpretation would be that SMILE and HAPPINESS are conceived of as something in a parcel or box so that it can be *unwrapped* or *opened*. Now the context of the two slogans ought to be drawn on. Slogan 8 is used for snack cakes and in most cases cakes are wrapped in boxes. So the most likely understanding would be that the smile is understood as something contained in a box. What the advertisers mean would probably be that opening the product means unwrapping a smile. Customers can get a smile when they open the snack cakes. Slogan 9 can be understood in the same way. Opening Coca-Cola means opening happiness. Happiness is contained in the bottle. A great number of people would feel excited or curious before opening a box or bottle without knowing what is in there. This may be another intended effect of these two slogans.

Slogan 10 is analyzed separately because it bears both the literal meaning and the metaphorical meaning. The word *refreshment* is a polysemy¹. It can be both understood as the drink and a state of people. When it is understood metaphorically, this slogan is novel and

¹ The theories of polysemy are not within the scope of this essay.

a combination of different kinds of metaphors. If we ask ourselves what is the subject of the verb *uplift*, two different answers would lead to two different redrafts of the slogan – either *the taste of Coca-Cola uplifts the state of refreshment* or *Coca-Cola is real taste and uplifting refreshment*. Whatever the redraft is, conceptual metaphors emerge. Firstly, the taste of the soft drink or the product Coca-Cola itself is personified and understood as a human being. A personification, which belongs to the category of ontological metaphor, is realized here (Kövecses 2002:35). Also, the state of customers feeling refreshed and energetic (*refreshment*) is conceptualized as an object that can be *uplifted*. Moreover, it is presumably the case that advertising slogans are supposed to deliver positive messages about the products. By using the word *uplift* a third kind of metaphor — orientational metaphor — is also realized in this slogan. Our experience with basic human orientation up and down is made use of in the conceptual metaphor MORE IS UP (Kövecses 2002:36). Hence *uplifting refreshment* means people would feel more refreshed and energetic after drinking Coca-Cola.

3.2.2 DESIRE IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE

The advertising slogans in this part are focused on customers' desire or longing for the product. They try hard to persuade us that the desire is irresistible and we should just follow our heart.

11) *Make up your own mind.* (McDonald's, 2006)

12) *Feed your inner child.* (McDonald's, 2005)

The two slogans are both from McDonald's and deal with our mental activity before purchasing commodities. The linguistic expression used in slogan 11 is pretty common in daily use. We can talk about a person using expressions like *he has lost his mind* or *he changed his mind*. The conceptual metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS is rather conventional and used regularly due to the abstract nature of human beings' ideas and thoughts. With this special of slogan 13, *mind* (in other words our decision) is conceptualized as an object. When

we have decided to do something, we understand it as that we have *made our mind*.

In slogan 12, two possible metaphors are realized by the expression *feed one's inner child*. Firstly, we understand a person's appearance different from what he is inside. The PEOPLE ARE LAYERED OBJECTS metaphor is conventional and common. We very often use expressions like *preserve one's inner child* and *he is still a child inside* a lot to refer to the different person inside us. Secondly, our desire is personified as a child. A personification is also realized. Our extensive knowledge would be triggered by the image of a *child*. A child is still on his way of becoming an adult. He is still growing, which means that our inner desire to eat at McDonalds is ever growing and we can stop it. Children are always naughty and disobedient. If they are hungry, they will not stop until their demands are met, which delivers a messages that you can do nothing but follow you heart. This slogan gives out a message successfully. Feeding yourself by eating McDonald's is fulfilling your desire in your heart. It is just like feeding a child.

3.3 STATES/CHARACTERISTICS ARE LOCATIONS

The two slogans below utilize people's common knowledge of locations to understand the abstract concept of states of mind and characteristics of the product.

13) *Things that will make you go MMMMMM*. (McDonald's, 2002)

14) *A million Miles from Humdrum*. (Chicago Town pizza)

In our daily life, we may often talk about somebody using the phrases *go crazy* or *go mad* if he has done something extremely strange. In those cases, our knowledge of locations is drawn on to understand abstract concepts such as states of people feelings and moods. The conceptual metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS appears form time to time in daily linguistic expressions (Kövecses 2002:135). It could also be understood as CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS metaphor since *go* signifies the change of moods. These two comprehensions do not contradict to each other. They correspond with each other and are the prerequisites of one

another. States can be understood as locations so that changes to states can be understood as movements from one location to another.

This common conceptual metaphor speaks for itself by the linguistic expression *go MMMMMM* in slogan. The complexity and novelty of slogan 13 lie in the metonymical use of the second half of the expression. Many of us have the experience that after having a square meal, we would feel satisfied and make the sound *MMMMMM*. It is a human manifestation of emotion to show that we are full and satisfied. The conceptual metonymy HUMAN MANIFESTATION OF EMOTION FOR EMOTION is used regularly by people. *Our faces would screw up* if we feel angry and on the other hand, our faces would crumple into a smile if we are happy. What happens in the slogan is that the metonymical linguistic expression *MMMMMM* is also the first letter of the brand McDonald's. There is an implication passed on to the customers. If you want to arrive at the state of satisfaction, you can turn to McDonald's.

In slogan 14, instead of the states of human beings the source concept of location is used to understand the characteristic of the product. The trait of *humdrum* is conceived as a place or location. In addition to the knowledge that we can move between locations, we also have a common sense of the distance between two places. The longer the distance is, the less the two places have in common. This rich knowledge of the source gives rise to another conceptual metaphor SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS which could also be recognized as a metaphorical entailment. In this slogan, Chicago Town pizza is *a million miles from humdrum*. Judged through our experience, *a million miles* is a long distance. The distance between the product and *humdrum* implies their difference. It infers that the food is very different from *humdrum*. It is full of fun and interest.

3.4 THE PRODUCT IS AN ENTITY/SUBSTANCE

All the slogans analyzed in the above sections show that a variety of abstract concepts can be

utilized as the target in advertising. Whatever they are, the ultimate purpose is always to sell the product. The product to sell is definitely the most important and prevailing target in advertising slogans. The ones that are analyzed and discussed in section 3.4 are focused on the product.

3.4.1 THE PRODUCT IS A CONTAINER

The slogan included in section 3.4.1 derives from a well-known idiom and at the same time is recreated to display its uniqueness.

15) Think outside the bun. (Taco Bell)

Seeing this slogan, people would by large chance recognize that the original idiom is *think outside the box*. There would be no difficulties for us to comprehend this slogan as encouraging people to break the traditional boundaries and think creatively.

What has been done in slogan 15 is that *box* is replaced with *bun*. Since a box is a container, bun (a part of the product) is understood as a container in the recreation. We can choose to stay in or outside of the container while we are thinking. At this point we have to get in touch with the limited context to have a better insight of the slogan. We all know that bun is used to make hamburgers. However, Taco Bell is a new kind of restaurant selling tacos instead of hamburgers. Here, *think outside of the bun* still means to have new thoughts while has more implications—when you think about fast food, you should try something else (like tacos) other than hamburgers.

3.4.2 THE PRODUCT IS A PERSON

More often, the products to sell in advertisements are animated and given human characteristics so that people would feel they have an intimate relationship with the product

(or the brand). It helps to sell the commodities. The slogans in this section belong to this category.

16) *Hand in hand* with Australia. (McDonald's, 2006)

17) *That's McDonald's ... with Yee-Hah*. (McDonald's, 2009)

18) *Benecol. Keep cholesterol at bay*. (Benecol yoghurt drink)

Slogan 16 was used by McDonald's in Australia. The restaurant (McDonald's) is personified as a human being that walks together with the country. We can imagine a picture of Ronald McDonald (the character which represents McDonald's) grabbing a person's hand. Usually if we hold each other's hands while walking, it means that we are close friends and have a nice relationship. Moreover, walking ahead means that progresses are made. Australians who see this slogan would feel that McDonald's is their friend. At the mean time, McDonald's is doing good to the country and progressing with their country.

Slogan 17 is also used for a new menu of food in McDonald's. People who have a basic knowledge of how English is spoken in the UK and America would know that *Yee-Hah* is typically used by American people in spoken English. With this knowledge and in the context that it is used in UK and for the tastes of American series, it is possible to understand the food of the new menu as American people who are saying *Yee-Hah* to the customers. The conceptual metaphor THE TASTES OF AMERICAN SERIES ARE PEOPLE is realized in the slogan. The products become vivid and alive by this conceptual metaphor. It becomes fun to try American series because the food is lively and they remind you of the energetic American people saying *Yee-Hah*.

Slogan 18 is used for a famous yoghurt brand called Benecol, which features healthiness and low fat. Firstly, cholesterol is conceived of as an entity that could be kept under control. It is rather conventional to conceptualize an abstract concept in terms of a physical object as we have discussed in the previous sections. There is also another conceivable conceptual metaphor if we rewrite the slogan into a complete sentence—*Benecol keeps cholesterol at*

bay. Then it could be identified that Benecol is conceived of as a person that can keep an eye on and control an object.

Slogans 19 and 20 are from another famous fast food restaurant chain Burger King. They both detail the source concept by pointing out exactly what type of people the product is.

19) *In the land of Burgers, Whopper is **king**.* (Burger King, 2001)

20) *Earl: **Employee of the Month*** (Burger King)

To understand slogan 19, we have to know that the *Whopper* is the star product of the famous fast food chain Burger King (just like the Big Mac of McDonald's). In the slogan, the *Whopper* is personified as a person, more specifically as a king. It can be viewed as an ontological metaphor from this point of view. But if we examine the first half of the slogan, we can find out that the burgers are conceptualized as forming a kingdom. The structure of the restaurant Burger King is understood by the structure of a kingdom. The king is the highest in the hierarchy, which means that the *Whopper* is better than other burgers. The other burgers have lower status, which means they are not as good as the *Whopper*. The land (territory) of burgers can be understood as the conceptualization of the Burger King restaurant.

Different from slogan 19, the source in slogan 20 is the appliance which is used to make the product. Before analyzing this slogan, we have to know that *Earl* is the nickname of its broiling unit, an automated gas grill. The conceptual metaphor EARL IS THE EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH is utilized here. It is also a personification since the broiling unit is portrayed as an employee. It is common knowledge that the employee of the month does the best job. So *Earl* (the grill of Burger King) makes the best burgers. The message is passed on vividly to the customers in a creative way.

4. Conclusions

Conceptual metaphors are used extensively in food advertising slogans to arouse customers' interest. Various aspects related to the product are conceptualized into different kinds of entities and objects. Many conventional and common metaphors are utilized in advertising slogans, but much creative work has also been done by the advertisers. A large number of everyday metaphors are extended and elaborated in a new way in the slogans analyzed here in this essay.

The LIFE metaphor contributes to a large portion of metaphors used in slogans. The concept of LIFE is conceptualized as OBJECT and FOOD. The taste of the source concept of FOOD is used as well to pass on the message that the product will make people's life better. Slogans focused on the target concept of FEELINGS and STATES of customers are analyzed as well. They intend to make people believe that the product is fun and eating the product is an interesting experience. People's thoughts and inner desire appear regularly in food advertising slogans. By conceptualizing them into objects and people, they tend to encourage people to fulfill the desire to buy the product. Personification makes up an important part of metaphors in advertising slogans. The products are personified and given personal characteristics. By doing this, customers would probably feel close to the product and the brand. It would by large chance promote the selling power of the advertisements.

Since advertising slogans carry the property of briefness of lack of context, there could sometimes be more than one possible interpretation of a single slogan. Different interpretations may arise among different people. But no matter the understanding is, the advertising slogans are intended to deliver positive messages to customers.

List of References

Primary materials

Textart Database. (2009) [Online] Available from:

<http://www.textart.ru/database/slogan/list-advertising-slogans.html>
[accessed November 2009]

Wikipedia. (2009) [Online] Available from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page [Accessed November 2009]

Google. (2009). [online] Available from:

<http://www.google.com> [Accessed November 2009].

Secondary materials

Anderson, A. E. (1998). *The Use of Metaphor in On-line Advertising*. PhD Thesis, University of Florida. Available at
<http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/amd0034/master.pdf>

Croft, W and Cruse, D.A. (2004). *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lakoff, G and Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By*. London: The University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G and Turner, M. (1989). *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lundmark, C. (2005). *Metaphor and Creativity in British Magazine Advertising*. PhD Thesis, Luleå University of Technology. Available at
<http://epubl.ltu.se/1402-1544/2005/42/LTU-DT-0542-SE.pdf>

Ortony, A. (1993). *Metaphor, Language and Thought. Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.