

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A conceptual blending analysis of a metaphorical advertisement: applications in ELT

Elisa Mattos de Sá¹

¹ Universidade Nova de Lisboa Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies. <mattos.elisa@gmail.com>

ABSTRACT

Advances in Cognitive Linguistics have focused on the centrality of meaning and conceptual structure in human language (Evans & Green, 2006; Geeraerts, 2006), placing phenomena such as metaphor as central to human cognition (Lakoff, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This paper analyzes the process of meaning construction of a metaphorical print advertisement in which cognitive operations of conceptual integration (cf. Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) can be mapped through the interplay between verbal and nonverbal language. Seeing that adverts can provide learners with real-life communicative opportunities for language development due to their up-to-date language, cultural-bound content, and creative discourse techniques (Mishan, 2005; Picken, 2000; 1999), this paper additionally provides four pedagogical applications of the chosen advertisement in English Language Teaching, drawing on the principles of the theoretical framework presented.

KEYWORDS: metaphorical advertisements; conceptual blending; meaning construction; ELT.

A análise conceitual de *Blending* de um comercial metafórico: aplicações em ensino de inglês

RESUMO

Os avanços na Linguística Cognitiva têm focado a centralidade do significado e da estrutura conceitual em linguagem humana (Evans & Green, 2006; Geeraerts, 2006), colocando fenômenos como metáfora como central para a cognição humana (Lakoff, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Este artigo analisa o processo de construção do significado de uma propaganda metafórica em que as operações cognitivas de integração conceitual (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) podem ser mapeadas através da interação entre linguagem verbal e não verbal. Ao constatar que os anúncios podem oferecer aos aprendizes oportunidades comunicativas da vida real para o desenvolvimento do idioma graças a sua linguagem atualizada, conteúdo cultural vinculativo e técnicas de discurso criativo (Mishan, 2005; Picken, 2000; 1999), este artigo também fornece quatro aplicações pedagógicas para os anúncios em Ensino da Língua Inglesa, com base nos princípios teóricos apresentados.

Palavras-chave: propagandas metafóricas; mistura conceitual; construção do significado; ensino de inglês.

Corresponding Author:

ELISA MATTOS DE SÁ
<mattos.elisa@gmail.com>



This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original publication is properly cited.
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

1. INTRODUCTION

Meaning is at the core of human communication: an interaction situation, in speech or in writing, is grounded in a variety of elements from which meaning is constructed as communication unfolds. This presupposes the notion that meaning is neither static nor ready-made: it is created from within the context in which interaction takes place, rendering comprehension dependable not only upon linguistic expressions, but also on discourse features, such as intention, genre, the interlocutors' social role and the medium through which interaction is held. In this aspect, a number of other elements needs to be accounted for: gestures, facial expressions, and intonation, for speech, and graphic features and non-verbal language, for writing.

In this complex and dynamic process, several cognitive operations are at play, from the visual or auditory perception of symbolic units of form and sound, to the speed at which such information is mentally processed, and the interplay between the knowledge triggered by linguistic expressions and non-linguistic input – a usually unconscious, interconnected, and highly abstract mental procedure. Indeed, human beings are constantly making sense of the world through their bodies and senses, storing and categorizing impressions in the process, be it in the classroom, while studying science or learning a foreign language, when reading a magazine or an e-mail, or while listening to music. Language and the need to make meaning out of the information surrounding us are two fundamental human abilities.

Meaning is therefore central to this paper, whose purpose is to analyze the process of meaning construction of a metaphorical advert in which cognitive operations of conceptual integration can be readily mapped through the interplay between verbal and nonverbal language. In addition, this paper provides pedagogical suggestions for working with the selected advert in English Language Teaching (ELT). Hence, the first section presents a discussion of meaning construction as seen in Cognitive Linguistics (CL), followed by a concise presentation of two theories: Conceptual Metaphor and Conceptual Blending, and an analysis of the metaphorical advert, which is accompanied by ways in which it can be pedagogically explored in ELT. Lastly, the final section presents concluding remarks

2. MEANING, METAPHOR AND CONCEPTUAL INTEGRATION

2.1 Meaning construction in CL

Cognitive Linguistics is a relatively new subarea of Linguistics, not bound to a single theory, but rather regarded as an approach that investigates “the relationship between human language, the mind and socio-physical experience” (Evans, Bergen, & Zinken, 2007). As a scientific enterprise within the field of Linguistics, CL is guided by the Generalization Commitment and the Cognitive Commitment: the former seeks broad generalizations “that apply to all aspects of human language” (p. 2), much like how the natural sciences are approached, and the latter searches for general, linguistic principles that reflect human cognition – a truly multidisciplinary task.

CL theories are deeply grounded in Cognitive Semantics, which is concerned with meaning construction and knowledge representation, and is guided by four tenets: a) conceptual structure is embodied; b) semantic structure is conceptual structure; c) meaning representation is encyclopedic; and d) meaning construction is conceptualization (2007).

Embodiment means that human experience is partly structured by bodily experience – as we interact with and in different environments, these experiences are gradually imprinted in our cognition, the effects of which consequently influence the linguistic representation of the events we undertake in the world (2007). Moreover, the shape of our bodies also forms the experiential basis from which we understand conceptual structure.

Differently from the dictionary view, which understands words as “neatly packaged bundles of meaning” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 160), the encyclopedic nature of meaning implies the recognition that words do not refer to entities in the world – rather, they are access points to conceptual structure, or “vast repositories of knowledge relating to a particular concept or conceptual domain” (ibid). Meaning is therefore constructed at the conceptual level by means of cognitive operations in which the appropriate concept is selected, taking into account the context in which language is at use.

A simple and straightforward example¹ of these assumptions is the combination of verbs and prepositions in English, non-metaphorically and metaphorically, as in *Look up – it’s a plane!* and *She really looks up to her father*. In the first sentence, the preposition *up* refers to the vertical movement we make with our heads, while in the second sentence verticality is associated with admiration, usually in regards to an authority figure or a role model. *Look up to* is most probably grounded in the physical movement children make of looking up to their parents, who are at a higher physical position.

According to Lakoff (1999) and Johnson (1987), preconceptual bodily experiences contemplate i) basic-level categories that are culturally salient and built from the association of perception, physical engagement with the world and our ability to create rich and intense mental images; and ii) image schemas, which are “schematic representations of specific, embodied experience” (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 44), such as the source-path-goal schemas in construction grammar², and orientation-based relations – the up-down and center-periphery schematic models, among others. Conceptualization is a result, at least in part, of the way we experience the world through our bodies³, which is reflected in the semantics of the language, rendering

¹ Such examples demystify the long held belief that English prepositions are empty of meaning and can only be understood when used in conjunction to verbs. Language teachers who are not trained in Linguistics tend to overemphasize such claim, as based on a prescriptive view of grammar. In CL, however, prepositions are investigated under a new light, as units of meaningful conceptual information. For an in-depth exploration of this matter, please see Langacker (1992), Kemmer & Shyldkrot (1996) and Rice (2003). For examples of how prepositions can be analyzed under the CL framework, please see Tyler & Evans (2003) and Evans & Tyler (2005).

² For a review of construction grammar and other theories of grammar in CL, please see Geeraerts et al. (2006) and Evans & Green (2006).

³ This seems very much related to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which CL understands in its weak version, recognizing that language can have an impact in thought and action (Evans & Green, 2006). For an in-depth review of embodiment in CL, please see Feltes (2010).

meaning a social and a cognitive process intertwined by verbal and nonverbal language⁴.

Moreover, language is understood as context-bound, with meaning emerging from the interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic signs and contextual information. Salomão (1999) states that contextual clues are paramount for meaning construction, sometimes even composing the core of interpretation, and defends that not only linguistic forms but also the different semioses arising from a communicative event should be taken into account in this process: linguistic expressions are just one of many clues that contribute to comprehension, and nonverbal language is oftentimes at the heart of meaning construction.

2.2 A different understanding of metaphor

As already highlighted in this paper, in CL metaphor is understood in a different light. From its Aristotelian roots, the phenomenon had always been regarded as a figure of speech exclusive to poetic and literary language, thus having little – or nothing – to do with everyday language and the mind. With the development of CL, numerous analyses carried out in different languages and genres have shown that metaphor is pervasive in language and in thought, most importantly Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Therefore, in this perspective, metaphor is part of our cognitive system (Evans, Bergen, & Zinken, 2007).

For Lakoff (2006), metaphors are “primarily conceptual, conventional and part of the ordinary system of thought and language” (p. 186), organized by cross-domain mappings in which abstract notions are understood by way of concrete concepts founded in our embodied experience. This view strongly rejects the secular distinction between figurative and literal meaning, as well as the false assumptions such a differentiation entails. Traditionally, everyday language has been seen as literal and non-metaphorical and metaphor has been regarded as an unconventional linguistic device based on figurative language. Now evidence shows that “It is a system of metaphor that structures our everyday conceptual system, including most abstract concepts, and that lies behind much of everyday language” (ibid., p. 187).

It should be noted, however, that not all language is metaphorical: Lakoff (2006) lists examples of concepts that are not to be taken metaphorically. Such concepts refer to rather straightforward physical descriptions of events, when it is undoubtedly clear that the physicality is the focus, such as in *the balloon went up*. The author asserts that “as soon as one gets away from concrete physical experience and starts talking about abstractions or emotions, metaphorical understanding is the norm” (p. 188), which goes to show how much of our understanding of the world is indeed metaphorical – and how the metaphorical system is mostly unconscious.

In such perspective, metaphorical conceptual structure is organized by cross-domain mappings oftentimes built on pre-conceptual embodied experience, with mappings regarded as fixed structures of conceptual

⁴ Dealing with meaning in such a way entails recognizing that language is not autonomous: categories, the meanings of words, sentences, and linguistic structures are not sets of universal features (Barcelona, 1997) acquired separately, as purported in Generative Linguistics.

correspondence between source and target domains, which “do not occur isolated from one another” (p. 207). Mappings are asymmetrical, partial, and not arbitrary, and emerge from mental spaces prompted by linguistic units' meaning potential. They are also internally structured by previous knowledge built on frames, image schemas, categorization and Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs).

ICMs are stable mental representations of categories and prototypes, triggered by linguistic expressions and non-linguistic information, that is, “accessed and activated by grammatical forms or pragmatic inferences”⁵ and then integrated to meaning construction, as stated by Chiavegatto (2002b). As abstract constructs built on experiences, ICMs refer to typical conceptual representations that are socially and culturally acquired (Chiavegatto, 2002a) and play an integral role in human cognition, since they allow for the organization of knowledge (Miranda, 1999).

ICMs are idealized because reality is much too complex to be grasped in a single abstract model and therefore such models do not fit every situation to which they refer. This is why it is helpful to think of them in clusters or in a typicality continuum (Lakoff, 1987). For example, *mother* includes prototypical information that may not be encompassed in a single ICM, thus requiring a cluster model with converging ICMs (Evans & Green, 2006). A cluster model is organized by subcategories: in the case of *mother*, we have the birth model, in which a mother is the individual who gives birth, and the genetic model, in which a mother is the person who provides the genetic material for the child (Lakoff, 1987).

Lakoff's (1987) theory⁶ of ICMs is similar to Fillmore's idea of frames (Evans & Green, 2006). However, ICM theory goes further to include yet another source of typicality: in addition to cluster models, ICMs are related to radial categories, which are founded on a central and primary prototype from which non-central cases can be understood. For *mother*, we have more or less divergent cases, as in stepmother, surrogate mother, or even “cat mothers”, as we now often see in social media.

As sources of typicality, ICMs structure mental spaces (Lakoff, 1987); but unlike ICMs, which are generalized and prototypical, mental spaces are partial, transient, and can be altered as interaction unfolds. For Fauconnier & Turner (2002, p. 40), these small conceptual “packages” are generated as we think and speak, aiming at the construction of meaning, or at local understanding and action.

2.3 Conceptual integration: a theoretical model

Conceptual integration, as conceived by Fauconnier & Turner (2002), refers to the highly abstract cognitive operations involved in meaning construction, that is, in how we interpret information in social interaction. These abstract operations emerge from a network of cognitive connections that compose the

⁵ My translation from the original: “acessados e ativados por formas gramaticais ou inferências pragmáticas”.

⁶ ICM theory is much more extensive than this paper could cover. Please see Lakoff (1987) for a source of foundational information about ICMs and Evans & Green (2006) and Ungerer & Schmid (2006) for reviews.

conceptual blending or conceptual integration model, which is dynamically built as we make sense of linguistic forms, extra-linguistic information, non-verbal signs etc. Such operations are carried out in mental spaces. As previously discussed, mental spaces are temporary and localized domains in which conceptual information is projected for meaning construction. The model proposed by Fauconnier & Turner (2002) involves at least four mental spaces, namely: a) *input space 1*; b) *input space 2*; c) *generic space*; and d) *blended space*.

The input spaces are mental spaces in which essential information for the construction of meaning is activated: *input space 1* corresponds to a concept-part and *input space 2* is equivalent to the concept-counterpart. The conceptual structures projected in the input spaces are derived from more permanent cognitive domains such as the ICMs. Meaning is first apprehended from the partial mapping of the connections between these domains. The generic space, in turn, brings together common conceptual structures mapped between the input spaces, in a highly dynamic way: the similarities between the properties of the conceptual structures activated in the input spaces are captured in the generic space and mapped back to their counterparts in the input spaces.

The blend space derives from the interconnections between the input spaces and the generic space. According to Fauconnier & Turner (2002), a selection of conceptual structures is projected into the blend, forming new structures. Hence, the blend consists of the combination between structures that, paired in the generic space, originate in the input spaces. Chiavegatto (2002b) reiterates that blend spaces are "composite and original structures"⁷, because they contain conceptual association inexistent in the input spaces. It should be noted that the blend space can also be composed of structures derived directly from the input spaces that do not need to be paired in the generic space.

Below is Fauconnier & Turner's Conceptual Blending model (2002, p. 43):

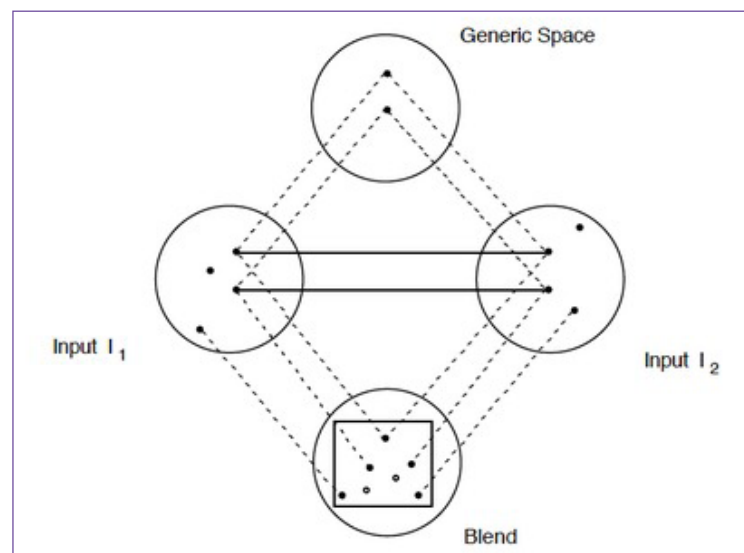


Figure 1: Conceptual Blending basic diagram

⁷ My translation from the original: "estruturas compósitas e originais".

In figure 1 above⁸, the mental spaces are represented by circles: the solid lines are the combination and the partial mapping between the input spaces and the dotted lines are the connections between the input spaces, the generic space, and the blend. The square encompasses the new conceptual structures projected in the blend, which are created by means of a) *composition*: a combination of the elements from the input spaces; b) *completion*: the structures and background knowledge unconsciously activated and projected onto the blend; and c) *elaboration*: based on our imagination and according to principles established for the blend. The connections between these structures are dynamic and unconsciously maintained (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

3. ADVERTISING, METAPHOR AND ELT

According to Mishan (2005) and Picken (2000), advertisements present contemporary language, culturally-bound information, and condensed imagery to sell products or services. Seen as a valuable resource in which customs and social behavior are inventively portrayed, adverts draw on "concepts readily available to the target audience" (Stamatelou, 2015, p. 28) by means of straightforward verbal and nonverbal language imaginatively employed to create favorable, alluring images of products or services. In this section, a discussion is presented on the use of adverts in language teaching and the centrality of metaphor in advertising.

3.1 Using ads in ELT

Creativity, simple and assertive language⁹ (Delin, 2000) associated to non-verbal, visual forms, and shared cultural knowledge (Goddard, 2002) are the basis of advertisements. As "one of society's most pervasive forms of discourse" (Delin, 2000, p. 123), adverts are mainly aimed at selling to ever more diversified groups. However, this genre can be productively applied in teaching contexts in a number of ways, since its prominence in (most) societies around the world "gives it trans-cultural accessibility" (Mishan, 2005), making it easily transferable to learning situations.

Particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT), adverts can be used as a real-life source for language learning through skills-integrated discourse analysis (McCarthy & Carter, 2014; Hemais, 2009), that is, by examining the language employed in original samples of the genre, or by using it as basis to teach new language or to practice skills in a highly contextualized and engaging fashion. Because ads intentionally use verbal language peripherally (Cook, 2003), much of their impact lies on image (or sound, for non-print texts), thus providing teachers with ample ground to develop speaking skills through classroom discussions. Other possible explorations of how adverts can be used in ELT are found in Stamatelou (2015), Hambali (2010), Petrovska (2008), and Mishan (2005), among others.

⁸ The authors emphasize that this basic diagram is just a "snapshot" of a much more complex process, implying that more than two input spaces can be created, as there may be more than one blend space – the number of mental spaces involved in the blending process depends on a number of factors specific to each communicative event. In this paper, I will deal with a simple blend.

⁹ For a review on the language of advertisements, please see Goddard (2002) and Cook (2008), (2003).

In their discussion of how TV commercials can be incorporated in ELT, Davis (1997) and Cunningham (2013) state that advertisements consist of present authentic, thematic, short and focused messages, with "culturally loaded slices of modern society" (online) depicted through visual, verbal, and written images. For these authors, such attributes help to increase learner motivation and, if well planned, advertisement use can provide learners with opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, a point also made in Hemais (2009). Picken (1999), Goddard (2000) and Corbett (2003) are of the same opinion, arguing that ads can help learners to reflect on their own consumer habits and on how social groups are represented in the media, potentially leading to greater motivation to learn English.

The strong connection between adverts and cultures is discussed in Picken (2000), to whom cultural beliefs should be dealt with carefully, since ads may not only be "reflecting a culture, but also contributing to the values and patterns of behavior of members of that culture" (p. 350). For Mashan (2005), transnationality may "facilitate schematic access to the learner", but advisement variations of "internationally marketed products (...) may also be revealing of different cultural priorities" (p. 188). In this sense, an understanding of critical thinking and critical literacy (cf. Cervetti, Pardales & Damico, 2001) and of culture and language teaching (cf. Kramsch, 2004) seems paramount for teachers who plan on using ads in their practice.

3.2 Metaphor in advertising

As argued in Forceville (2006), one of the reasons why adverts are so short and conceptually dense is money: ads are expensive, rendering ad producers with a limited amount of space for text. This, in turn, creates a fertile ground for the employment of metaphorical language since metaphors can seamlessly condense information, which "would require a much longer exposition" (Denham, 2000, p. 265) if conveyed non-metaphorically. Furthermore, the author argues that with the explosion of advertising in Western society, ad producers compete for people's attention and therefore need to "create a maximally effective impact during the brief time span in which – if lucky – he has captured the consumer's attention" (p. 68).

For Zaltman & MacCaba (2007), metaphor has a privileged place in advertising, since it mediates "emotion and memory (...) establishing enduring impact on consumers especially as they create their own meanings or stories based on advertising stimuli" (p. 136). Albeit in a different way, this assertion encapsulates Lakoff's (1987) notion of ICMs (memory) and Fauconnier & Turner's (2002) reflections on imagination (emotion) and Zaltman & MacCaba (2007) include both Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory as references in the study of metaphor in advertising.

Emotion is certainly a key piece in the dazzling puzzle of advertising, drawing on metaphor for power and effect. For Kövecses (2003), the language of emotion is "largely metaphorical (...) in order to capture the variety of diverse and intangible emotional experiences" (p. 191). Zaltman & MacCaba (2007) add that the successful employment of metaphors in advertising entails a comprehension of "how metaphors can activate and represent emotions in order to select the appropriate cues to include in an advertisement" (p. 138).

In other words, metaphor is crucial for understanding emotions, which are heavily explored (and exploited) in the realm of advertising.

4. A CONCEPTUAL BLENDING ANALYSIS OF METAPHOR IN ADVERTISING

Metaphor is a conventional yet highly complex and sophisticated human cognitive mechanism. As such, it is a prime device employed in persuasive genres, as in the case of advertisements, which make use of smart and elaborate techniques to persuade potential customers into purchasing the products or services promoted. In print adverts, metaphor can be structured through linguistic expressions associated to non-verbal information such as pictures and drawings. Supporting elements, the use of color, for instance, also play a role in how metaphor is shaped in ads.



Figure 2: Print ad for Nivea Beaute Calcium Power¹⁰.

Based on the conceptual integration model presented in the previous section, the advertisement depicted in Figure 2 can be analyzed as follows¹¹:

¹⁰ Retrieved from: <<http://adsarchive.com/nivea-nail-polish/>>, where the original ad can be visualized in color.

¹¹ This analysis is an adaptation of the conceptual integration model proposed by Fauconnier & Turner (2002). As pointed out by Miranda (1999), graphical models invariably present limitations and I reiterate that this analysis does not cover all the information that possibly may be activated by the linguistic and non-linguistic cues from the text. Additionally, it is not my goal to recreate in this paper the conceptual integration model as graphically formulated by the authors.

Input space 1: In this space, information and conceptual schemas of a more permanent nature are activated, such as frames and ICMs for women's nails, along with associated information: different types of nails, the fact that women have their nails painted, healthy nails are long and strong, long nails tend to be more desired in western culture, red coats are more popular with women, long nails are easily breakable etc. However, only information relevant to processing meaning is projected onto the generic space. The advert depicts a rather optimal representation of the concept as based on the current social standards for female beauty. Such representation is linked to the small nail polish bottle picture on the left hand side of the advert and to the linguistic units "for extra strong, extra long nails". This facilitates the selection of applicable features to be cast in the generic space.

Input space 2: In this space, conventional conceptual information about cans and can openers is concomitantly brought about, such as the resistant material cans are made of; different types of can, with this specific kind in the range of can images activated; the fact that this type of can usually contains food (given its size) and that we open food cans in the kitchen when we are going to cook or eat something; the notion that we need a can opener when handling cans that do not come with a ring etc. There might also be activation of ideas connected to the act of cooking and the belief that in western culture this practice is still eminently female. Such knowledge is indeed acquired through experience and may come more readily to women, since the ad is clearly directed at the female audience.

Generic space: This space pairs the conceptual structures projected from the input spaces and functions as an intermediate level between these spaces and the blend. Here we find sets of the similar conceptual features between long strong nails and can openers, as activated through ICMs and frames in the input spaces. Such attributes are: the sharpness and strength of can openers, more specifically in regard to the blade, which is the part used to pierce resistant material such as metal; the length and strength of healthy nails (as in the one pictured in the ad).

Blend: This space comprises new and original conceptual structures based on the cross-mappings information that first emerged from the input spaces and that was then projected in the generic space. The association between concepts initially perceived as highly unrelated is made possible in the blend, through the imaginatively elaboration our brains make upon the relevant features selected in the generic space, so that we can successfully understand how strong fingernails can be used in the place of can openers. This highly complex process is carried out unconsciously, with new emergent structure developed within seconds of the initial contact with the linguistic and pictorial information in the text.

As indicated in the analysis above, more specifically in the blend, imagination plays a crucial role in how we process metaphor: new, original meanings are only made possible through our natural ability for imagining different and unusual scenarios, for speculating on unlikely outcomes or for imaginatively reflecting on situations that are more concrete. Ultimately, this is how we make meaning of the advert.

In other words, meaning in this case is constructed upon: i) the frames and conceptual models related to the two main concepts; ii) the identification and connection between similar characteristics and properties; and iii) the imaginary projection resulting from the integration of such properties. These cognitive operations are the essence of the metaphorization process, as they enable the employment of (apparently) dissimilar ideas in a creative and coherent way, with an unexpected concept replacing a typical one.

5. APPLICATIONS IN ELT

Seeing that advertisements are an engaging, interesting genre found in everyday life, it would seem reasonable if they were a popular choice of text for developing language skills in the English classroom. Surprisingly, they are not: as maintained in Picken (1999) and Cunningham (2013), adverts are under-used in ELT, despite their ubiquitous presence in daily communication.

As previously mentioned, due to the use of up-to-date language, culturally-bound content, and creative discourse techniques, adverts provide learners with real-life communicative opportunities for language development (Cunningham, 2013; Hemais, 2009; Mishan, 2005; Picken, 2000, 1999; Davis,

1997). They are also an excellent classroom resource to work critically on visual literacy and the interplay between image and words (Hemais, 2009; Corbett, 2003) and metaphorical visual language, as shown in this section.

Essentially, all application stages can be combined to form new tasks, that is, teachers can choose stages from different applications to create their own classroom project. In addition, the pedagogical tasks below have been designed for B1-B2 levels English learners and above, as defined by the CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference¹².

Application 1

STAGE 1
Show students (SS) photos of different types of nails: long and strong, cracked, short, decorated, broken, extra-long, brittle;
Ask SS to rank the photos featuring the strongest nails;
Place the photos on the board.
<i>Resources:</i> photos of fingernails.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> (limited) speaking and listening, vocabulary.
STAGE 2
Show photos of useful things we do with our nails;
Ask learners to think about unusual ways in which we can use our nails. Write answers on the board;
Draw a line and number it from 1 to 10. Ask SS to number the photos and the actions elicited from least to most typical.
<i>Resources:</i> photos of things we do with our fingernails, whiteboard.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> (limited) speaking and listening, vocabulary.
STAGE 3
Bring traditional can openers to the classroom;
Pair up SS and hand each team a can opener;
Ask them to think about the attributes of can openers and discuss any differences and similarities they can think of between the nails chosen in the previous stage and the can opener;
Elicit answers and write them on the board under DIFFERENCES and SIMILARITIES;
Ask SS to think about similar ways in which nails and can openers can be used (if at all).
<i>Resources:</i> can openers, whiteboard.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening, vocabulary.
STAGE 4
Show the selected advertisement to the SS and have them read it;
Ask SS to discuss the ad, examining the association between nails and can openers;
Have SS report answers as a group discussion;
Ask SS to rank from 1 to 10 the level of typicality of the way nails were portrayed in the text;
Discuss answers as a group, asking SS to justify their choices.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> reading, speaking and listening.
STAGE 5
Have SS discuss why the producers of the ad decided to associate nails with can openers;
Ask SS if associations between nails and other objects could also have been made and whether the intended effect would also have been achieved;
Elicit answers and have a final group discussion about whether the ad achieves its purpose.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening.

In this application, the initially disparate concepts from the advert can be examined in an attempt to lead learners into making essential associations. By ranking the actions and unusual ways we use our fingernails, learners are tapping into the typicality continuum of this concept and of actions related to it, an exercise made easier by the use of visual aid. Through the typicality continuum, background knowledge pertaining the ICMs of fingernails is accessed and new vocabulary ("brittle", "peel", for instance) is introduced.

¹²<https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf>.

The can openers, on the other hand, provide students with an experiential opportunity to closely examine the features that will be used for the interpretation of the text. With the object in hand, learners automatically update their ICMs for can openers, while learning new vocabulary or reviewing adjectives such as "strong", "long", "sharp", and "pointy", among others.

Furthermore, by reflecting on similarities and differences learners are indirectly anticipating the metaphorical connection between nails and can openers. In Fauconnier & Turner's (2002) blend model, these characteristics are mapped in the input spaces, from which the affinities are selected and projected onto the blend. Elicitation of such attributes reveals the rich and unconscious conceptual repertoire accessed for meaning construction.

The final discussion about the reasons behind the long fingernails-can openers association offers learners the chance to place themselves in the advertisers' shoes and to imagine what possible connections could have been made for this advert. This is not only an exercise in imagination, but also a way of indirectly addressing the discourse techniques special to advertising.

Application 2

STAGE 1
Write the word ADVERTISEMENT on the board;
Ask SS to think about interesting and memorable print adverts (have a selection of memorable ads in place in case the learners cannot remember any);
Elicit answers and ask SS to justify their choices.
<i>Resources:</i> a whiteboard (a computer, an overhead projector and a selection of ads);
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening.
STAGE 2
Bring nail polishes similar to the one featured in the ad (for strengthening nails);
Ask SS to think about what they would expect from an ad for this type of product;
Elicit answers and write them on the board;
Pair up SS and ask them to discuss inventive ways to promote this product in a print advert;
<i>Resources:</i> nail polish bottles.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening.
STAGE 3
Show the selected advertisement to the SS and have them read it;
Ask SS to answer the following question: "what do you need to know to understand this text?";
Have SS report answers as a group discussion;
Explain to the SS that oftentimes comprehension emerges from the interplay between linguistic expressions and other elements featured in the communicative situation.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> reading, speaking and listening.
STAGE 4
Go back to the board and have SS compare the way the nail polish is promoted in the ad and the inventive suggestions they made in Stage 2;
Ask SS to rank from 1 to 10 the level of unexpectedness of how the nail polish was advertised in the text;
Discuss answers as a group, asking SS to justify their choices.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening.
STAGE 5
Have SS discuss why the producers of the ad decided to make such an unexpected portrayal of nails as can openers;
Ask SS to think about where they could find this advert and situations or cultures in which this text would not be properly understood;
Elicit answers and have a final group discussion about whether the ad achieves its purpose.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening.

Application 2 is a discursive, genre-based approach correlated to conceptual knowledge about how advertisements are produced. As with the previous pedagogical suggestion, it draws on learners' personal experience and background knowledge, which facilitates comprehension. Additionally, it requires that learners exercise their imagination by thinking about creative ways to promote nail polishes and reflect on how adverts are conceived, thus casting light on their production process, while at the same time practicing listening and speaking skills.

The contrast between the ad and the students' inventive ways of promoting the nail polish may well show the richness of human imagination, since it is likely that learners will come up with new, interesting ideas unique to their experiences. This stage of Application 2 taps at the creative potential of the human mind, while the subsequent discussion of the unexpectedness shown in the ad and the situations or cultures in which it would not be understood as successfully give learners the chance to consider how social and cultural factors restrict or encourage language use – verbal or not.

In line with McCarthy & Carter (2014), Cunningham (2013) and Hemais (2009), the most productive way of analyzing adverts in ELT is through discourse practice. In the Nivea ad, discourse is largely anchored in non-verbal language, with very limited linguistic expressions to be taken into account in the analysis. In fact, it is the nail polish bottle that draws reader attention, not the sentences next to it (second only to the pictorial metaphor of the fingernail being used to open the can, naturally), since the color of the bottle matches the nail polish from the fingernail, in bright red in the original picture.

This application calls for an understanding of how communication is structured, with a focus on the particularities of advertisements: it reveals the creative engineering and culturally-bound knowledge this genre entails. It may also offer teachers a space in which to debate the importance of nonverbal language in ads and, most importantly, in daily communication, and how different types of nonverbal information contribute to effective communication.

Application 3

STAGE 1
Show photos of unhealthy or weak nails: cracked, broken, split, brittle;
Ask SS how these nails could be treated, if there are any products in the market that may help and make the nails stronger.
<i>Resources:</i> photos of nails.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> vocabulary, (limited) speaking.
STAGE 2
Show the selected advertisement and have SS read it, paying close attention to all the elements displayed, particularly the use of color to highlight the product advertised and to connect the long fingernail to the nail polish bottle at the bottom right hand side of the ad;
Ask SS to explain what they understand from the ad, helping them with any vocabulary needed to describe the unlikely association made between fingernails and can openers.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking, reading, vocabulary.
STAGE 3
Draw a simplified version of Fauconnier & Turner's (2002) conceptual blending model, with two circles for the input spaces;
Label the input circles as FINGERNAILS and CAN OPENERS;
Elicit the attributes of fingernails and can openers and write them in the corresponding circles.
<i>Resources:</i> a whiteboard.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking, listening, vocabulary.

STAGE 4
Draw a larger circle for the blend, connecting it to the input circles;
Ask SS to list the attributes (from the input circles) necessary for the association between fingernails and can openers, that is, the similarities between both concepts, writing the answers in the blend circle;
Highlight that despite the differences, we easily find similarities to connect two initially very discordant concepts.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening.
STAGE 5
Ask SS to discuss the following questions in pairs: "Opening cans with your fingernails is very improbable. Why did the ad makers come up with such an unlikely association?", "Wouldn't it have been easier to explain that this particular nail polish makes nails extremely strong, without making the connection between long and strong fingernails and can openers?"
Elicit answers and have a group discussion about the reasons why such unlikely associations are made in advertising;
Finalize the discussion by asking SS whether they think the ad achieves its purpose.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening.

The above application is an attempt to discuss the advert without making use of realia such as nail polish bottles and can openers, as required in Applications 2 and 4 (shown below). It is also a way of adaptively integrating Fauconnier & Turner's (2002) blend model into the teaching practice through a simplified version – already adopted in Ungerer & Schmid (2006), for instance, who have simplified Fauconnier & Turner's (2002) model by not including the generic space phase, rendered unnecessary for the blend in these authors' perspective: the conceptual structure from the input spaces is projected directly onto the blend.

In addition to practicing speaking and listening in a highly contextualized and interesting way, teachers may use this application to review or practice comparison in English by eliciting sentences based on the input circles drawn on the whiteboard, for instance: "the fingernail in the ad is as strong as a can opener" or "can openers are sharper than fingernails", among other possibilities.

In this application learners are also invited to think about how advertisements make use of high effect images and unlikely conceptual associations for maximum impact. Should the teacher want, s/he may point out the role of emotions and how they are used in advertising, a discussion that may include other ads or elicitation of ads the students find memorable (for the use of image for high impact, naturally).

Application 4

STAGE 1
Show SS photos of different types of nails: long and strong, cracked, short, decorated.
Elicit words that can be used to describe these nails. Write words in a circle on the board. Label the circle as NAILS. Have SS consult a dictionary, should they need to.
<i>Resources:</i> photos of nails, a whiteboard.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> vocabulary, (limited) speaking.
STAGE 2
Ask SS "why do we have nails?" and "what are nails for?" and discuss answers;
Pair SS up and hand out a text with explanations of the reasons why we have fingernails. Have SS read the text and report the answers to the class;
Provide photos of useful things we do with our nails, encompassing information from the text;
Ask SS to think about unusual ways in which we can use our nails. Write answers on the board;
Draw a line and number it from 1 to 10. Ask SS to number actions from least to most typical.]
<i>Resources:</i> photos of nails, text about fingernails, a whiteboard.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening, reading.

STAGE 3
Ask SS if they have ever tried to open a can with their fingers and nails. Bring cans of soda and condensed milk (or other product) and have SS open them with their fingers and nails, or do it yourself – the cans need to have a can ring;
Bring a can (of any product) that does not contain a can ring. Ask SS how they could open it;
SS will answer “can opener” – or the equivalent in their L1, in which case teach them the name of the object.
<i>Resources:</i> cans with can rings, cans without can rings.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking, vocabulary.
STAGE 4
Show SS photos of typical can openers or bring can openers to the classroom;
Ask SS to remain paired and discuss the color and the material the can openers are made of;
Elicit words that can be used to describe can openers. Write words in a circle on the board. Label the circle CAN OPENER. Have SS consult a dictionary, should they need to;
Ask SS to think about other ways and objects that can be used to open cans which have no can ring. Write answers on the board;
Draw a line and number it from 1 to 10. Ask SS to number the ways and objects that can be used to open cans from least to most typical.
<i>Resources:</i> can openers or photos of can openers.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> speaking and listening, vocabulary.
STAGE 5
Hand SS the ad and ask them to read it and discuss what it is about in pairs;
Elicit answers from each pair and ask them to place <i>use of nails as can openers</i> in the two typicality lines from Stages 2 and 4;
Have SS discuss the connection between nails and can openers in the ad;
Elicit answers and have a group discussion about the reasons why such an association was made in the advertisement;
Finalize the discussion by asking SS whether the ad achieves its purpose.
<i>Resources:</i> the pre-selected advert.
<i>Skills practiced:</i> reading, speaking and listening.

As with Application 1, the above application explores the main concepts activated for meaning construction in a deconstructed way and highlights the typicality factor associated to the creation of frames and ICMs. Differently from Application 2 and 3, however, Application 4 does not initially rely on the advertisement and focuses on the learners' background knowledge of nails and can openers, making use of physical objects and kinesthetic relations to draw attention to the typical features of such concepts, thus aiding knowledge organization for successfully processing the connection portrayed in the advert.

The labeled circles (nails and can openers) refer to Fauconnier & Turner's (2002) input spaces, drawn for meaning construction. By asking students the purpose of nails and to think about how cans could be opened without a can opener, information on the unexpected connection between can openers and fingernails is anticipated, in a highly indirect way that does not ruin the metaphor – since it is virtually impossible to open cans with one's nails (no matter how strong those nails are), learners will most likely not try to open the cans with their fingernails.

Once more, metaphor is never dealt with on a name basis: although this cognitive device is central to understanding the advert, which is built on the metaphorical association between long, strong nails and can openers, there is no need to name it or to technically explain it to the learners, as would be the case in a more traditional approach, such as when metaphors are regarded as figures of speech, substitution etc. It is precisely because metaphors are such a conventional cognitive device in communication that they can be handled in ELT just as organically.

6. CONCLUSION

Assuming that meaning is active, dynamic, and contextually shaped, this paper has shown that several elements play an essential role in meaning construction, from linguistic expressions to non-verbal signs that trigger conventional, background knowledge acquired through (bodily) experiences in the world, which are at the basis of new conceptual structures prompted for the interpretation of metaphorical advertisements. In the text analyzed here, the association between core non-verbal language and peripheral linguistic information generated a blend from input and generic spaces in which conceptual information from different domains was selected and integrated, with the final aim of persuading the reader to view the product advertised under a new light, thus maximizing its appeal.

This paper has also demonstrated that CL principles and theoretical frameworks can be used to guide meaning construction, text comprehension, and conversation practice in the English classroom, as seen in the applications, which offer uncomplicated and intuitive alternatives for analyzing authentic advertisements through a cognitive and discursive way while practicing language abilities and critical thinking skills. By deconstructing the metaphor and its constitutive elements and by examining the communicative purpose of the text, learners tap into the hidden complexity and persuasive richness of the advert, as they touch upon the creative and elaborate techniques and strategies it employs.

REFERENCES

- Barcelona, Antonio 1997. Cognitive Linguistics: a usable approach. *Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa*, 6(2), p. 7-32.
- Cervetti, Gina, Pardales, Michael J., & Damico, James S. 2001. A tale of differences: comparing the traditions, perspectives and educational goals of critical reading and critical literacy. *Reading Online*, 4(9).
- Chiavegatto, Valeria Coelho. 2002a. Signos entrelaçados: contexto e construção dos sentidos na linguagem. In: Henriques, Cláudio Cezar & Pereira, Maria Teresa G. (orgs.). *Língua e transdisciplinaridade: rumos, conexões, sentidos*. São Paulo: Contexto. p. 113-135.
- _____. 2002b. *O processo cognitivo de mesclagem de vozes na interação lingüística em português*. available at: <http://www.geocities.ws/ail_br/oprocessocognitivodemesclagem.htm>. Accessed on: 26 June 2017.
- Cook, Guy 2008. *The Language of Advertising*. Digital Printing. Routledge.
- _____. 2003. *The Discourse of Advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Corbett, John. 2003. *An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Croft, William & Cruse, Alan D. 2004. *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cunningham, Joyce. 2013. Challenging EFL Learners Through TV Advertising and Student-Produced Multimedia Projects. In: Jia Li, Nicolas Gromik & Nicholas Edwards (eds.). *ESL and Digital Video Integration: Case Studies*. TESOL International Association. p. 101-115.
- Davis, Randall. 1997. TV Commercial Messages: An Untapped Video Resource for Content-based Classes. *Language Teacher*, 21(3), p. 13-15.

- Delin, Judy. 2000. *The Language of Everyday Life*. London: Sage.
- Denham, Alison. 2000. *Metaphor and Moral Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Vyvyan & Tyler, Andrea. 2005. Applying cognitive linguistics to pedagogical grammar: the English prepositions of verticality. *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada*, 5(2), p. 11-42.
- Evans, Vyvyan, Bergen, Benjamin K., & Zinken, Jörg. 2007. The cognitive linguistics enterprise: an overview. In: Evans, Vyvyan & Zinken, Jörg (eds.). *The Cognitive Linguistics Reader*. London: Equinox. p. 263-266.
- Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie. 2006. *Cognitive Linguistics: an Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Fauconnier, Gilles & Turner, Mark. 2002. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Feltes, Heloísa Pedrosa de Moraes. 2010. Embodiment in cognitive linguistic: from experientialism to computational neuroscience. *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Linguística Aplicada*, São Paulo, 26 (n.sp.), p. 503-533.
- Forceville, Charles. 2006. *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Geeraerts, Dirk. (ed.). 2006. *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Goddard, Angela. 2006. *The Language of Advertising*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hambali, Muslih. 2010. The Use of Advertisements in Teaching English to Secondary School Learners. *Proceedings of the 6th CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching*. Available at: <<http://eprints.unsri.ac.id/2766/2/Isi.pdf>>. Accessed on: 13 Aug 2017.
- Hemais, Barbara. 2009. Genres in English Language Course Books: Teaching Words and Images. In: Gonçalves, Gláucia Renate et al. (orgs.). *New Challenges in Language and Literature*. Belo Horizonte: Faculdade de Letras da UFMG. p. 67-80.
- Jakobson, Roman. 1960. Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics. In: Sebeok, Thomas. *Style in Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press. p. 350-359.
- Johnson, Mark. 1987. *The Body in the Mind. The bodily basis of meaning, reason and imagination*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Kemmer, Suzanne E. & Shyldkrot, Hava Bat-Zeev. 1996. The semantics of 'empty' prepositions in French. In: Casad, Eugene H. (ed.). *Cognitive Linguistics in the Redwoods: the expansion of a new paradigm in linguistics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. p. 347-388.
- Kövecses, Zoltán. 2003. *Metaphor and emotion: language, culture, and body in human feeling*. Cambridge: Cambridge, University Press.
- Kramsch, Claire. 2004. *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, George. 2006. The contemporary theory of metaphor. In: Geeraerts, Dirk (ed.). *Cognitive Linguistics: basic readings*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. p. 185-238.
- _____. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh*. New York: Basic Books.
- _____. 1991. Cognitive versus Generative Linguistics: how commitments influence results. *Language & Communication*, 11(1/2), p. 53-62.
- _____. 1987. *Women, Fire and Dangerous things: what categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.
- Lakoff, George & Johnson, Mark. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- Langacker, Ronald. 1992. The symbolic nature of cognitive grammar: The meaning of 'of' and of-periphrasis. In: Pütz, Martin (ed.). *Thirty Years of Linguistic Evolution: Studies in Honour of René Dirven on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*. Philadelphia and Amsterdam: John Benjamins. p. 483-502.
- McCarthy, Michael & Carter, Ronald. 2014. *Language as Discourse: perspectives for language teaching*. New York: Routledge.
- Miranda, Neusa Salim. 1999. Domínios Conceptuais e Projeções Entre Domínios: Uma Introdução ao Modelo dos Espaços Mentais. *Revista de Estudos Linguísticos Veredas*, 4(1), p. 81-95.
- Mishan, Freda. 2005. *Designing Authenticity Into Language Learning Materials*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
- Petrovska, Irina. 2008. The role of advertising in ESP teaching. *Tourism and hospitality management*, 14(1), p. 165-169.
- Picken, Jonathan. 2000. Why Use Ads in the Foreign Language Classroom? *JALT Journal*, 22(2).
- _____. 1999. State of the ad: the role of advertisements in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal*, 53(4), p. 249-255.
- Rice, Sally. 2003. Growth of a lexical network: Nine English prepositions in acquisition. In: Hubert Cuyckens, René Dirven & Taylor, John R. (eds.). *Cognitive Approaches to Lexical Semantics*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, p. 243-280.
- Salomão, Maria Margarida M. 1999. A Questão da Construção do Sentido e a Revisão da Agenda dos Estudos da Linguagem. *Revista de Estudos Linguísticos Veredas*, 4(1), p. 61-79.
- Stamatelou, Maria. 2015. A reflection on why and how the use of advertisements can enable language learning in the EFL classroom. *The 2015 West East Institute International Academic Conference Proceedings*, p. 76-91.
- Tyler, Andrea & Evans, Vyvyan. 2003. *The Semantics of English Prepositions: Spatial Scenes, Embodied Meaning and Cognition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ungerer, Friedrich & Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2006. *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*. 2. ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Zaltman, Gerald & MacCaba, Dara. 2007. Metaphor and Advertising. In: Tellis, Gerard J. & Ambler, Tim (eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Advertising*. London: Sage Publications. p. 135-154.

Submetido: 20/04/2017

Aceito: 30/05/2017