What makes a multimodal metaphor? Rethinking an identification protocol of multimodal metaphor and metonymy in advertising

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Despite the importance of multimodal metaphor in advertising (Bolognesi and Strik-Lievers 2018; Forceville and Uriós Aparisi 2009, and references therein; Pérez-Sobrino 2017), so far little effort has been devoted to establishing a step-by-step protocol for the identification of multimodal metaphors and metonymies in multimodal contexts. Inspired by the work and reflections of the proponents of existing protocols for verbal metaphors (MIP, Pragglejaz 2007; and MIPVU, Steen et al., 2010), we have formulated a stepwise set of instructions to identify multimodal metaphor and metonymy and tested it against a corpus of 35 generic adverts and 15 genre-specific adverts (mobile phone advertising).

The main goal of our study is to offer a set of considerations for metaphor researchers to replicate a similar consistence in their coding of metaphor and metonymy in terms of inter-rater reliability results. Our protocol features four steps: (1) we formulate the main message of the advertisement; (2) we code the product advertised or the salient attributes of the message, as this tends to coincide with the target domain (Forceville, 1996: 121); (3) we decode what is being said about this product or its related attributes (that is, the source domain); (4) we consider whether the relationship between the target and the source identified in steps 2 and 3 is metaphoric or metonymic to best describe the interpretation verbalised in step 1.

In this presentation, we illustrate the different steps of the protocol with examples from our corpora of authentic advertisements, and discuss the main challenges encountered in the identification and characterization of multimodal figurative language. We discuss critical aspects of the nature of multimodal metaphor and metonymy, such as (a) the gradability of metaphor as a phenomenon or "metaphoricity" (Dunn, 2015; Hanks, 2006; Müller, 2009), (b) the dual interpretation of personification as a metaphor or potential metonymy (Dorst, 2011), (c) the role of background knowledge the individual coder has on a topic to perceive a given metaphor as figurative or not (Julich, 2018), and (d) the stylistic ways by which similarity is cued in non-verbal contexts, where there is no "is" or "is like" text to flag the metaphoric mapping (Forceville 2009: 31). In connection with the evolution of agreement between coders over seven rounds of annotations, we illustrate the practical decisions taken to overcome disagreement in individual annotation through subsequent joint discussion.

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