

The phenomenon of metaphor in the textual medium of advertising

Metaphors in advertisements are a powerful and compelling tool – they not only enrich an ad, but also extend the meaning of a textual or visual message, creating multi – leveled layers of interpretation. The use and the choice of metaphor for ads differ from country to country. What seems funny or smart to one reader might be strange and incomprehensible or even vulgar to a different reader living in another part of the world. Therefore, before inserting an ad in a magazine in a particular country, producers must take into consideration social, religious, historical and political circumstances of a target group, its common interests and concerns. Only if all of the factors are considered and studied can an ad be successful at creating a positive effect on the reader. The main characteristics of the textual medium in advertising can be presented in the following way.

- Manipulation of the linguistic material. This can be done on the level of words, sentence level, orthographic level, phonetic level, morphological level and lexical level.
- Foregrounding. Foregrounding is a linguistic process in which words, phrases, sentences, stressing, intonations are given prominence or made more meaningfully significant by the communicator.
- Encoding – decoding. In order for the message in an advertisement to be comprehended a reader must decode a meaning using relevant codes. Decoding includes several stages – recognition and comprehension, interpretation and evaluation.
- The reading of the text. There are three hypothetical interpretive codes or positions for the reader of a text: dominant reading, negotiated reading, and oppositional reading.
- Interpretation of the text. The interpretation of signs can be seen having three levels: syntactic, semantic, pragmatic.