

**The Perfect World of Absolut Vodka:
The Analysis of Multimodal Metaphors in American Television Commercials**

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For more than two decades metaphor, as “a mode of thought” (Lakoff, 1993, p. 210), has been investigated in its verbal manifestations in different types of discourses, including commercial promotions; however very few studies have attempted to explore its multimodal manifestations (Forceville & Urious-Aparasi, 2009). In most cases, in promotional discourse the analysis of multimodal metaphor has been case studies of only a handful of commercials, i.e., 2 to 10 commercials at most, that, in fact, are not thematically unified (Urious-Aparasi, 2009; Yu, 2009; Forceville, 2008; Forceville, 2009), except for a study on metaphors in beer commercials that considers 32 TV commercials (Lantolf & author, 2012). Examining the corpus of 14 commercials for Absolut Vodka, I undertake an empirically robust systematic analysis that approaches multimodal conceptual metaphor as a mediational social means (Scollon, 2001) indicative of sociocultural practices represented in promotional discourse. In my analysis, I indicate the conceptual complexity and rigorousness of the metaphors employed in the commercials and the ways they serve to reflect such complex social-cultural phenomena as love, economic, and public relationships. In order to make a strong appeal to emotional sensations and idealized personal perception, commercials use nine conceptual metaphors that constitute the overarching metaphor AN ABSOLUT WORLD IS A PERFECT WORLD. Employing these metaphors, the commercials for Absolut vodka create a perfect world with perfect social relationships and perfect vodka, the production of which is featured as an artistic act of creativity. In addition to showing the social aspect of that created world, the commercials for Absolut vodka reveal the natural aspect of the imagined world, in which the solar system is improved by creating a different version of the Moon that is more suitable for happy nighttime activities. Such a conceptualization of an Absolut world reflects, in fact, the interplay of the metaphorical meaning of the brand name, “free from imperfection: perfect” and its literal meaning, “free or relatively free from mixture: pure alcohol” (Merriam-Webster dictionary on line).

In my presentation, I will first briefly address the concept of multimodal metaphors and the procedure of their identification; then, I will show a sample video clip of Absolut vodka commercials; and finally, I will present my cognitive analysis of the metaphorical structure of the commercials, including entailments and mappings.