

**Revista de Filología y Lingüística de la Universidad de Costa Rica**

Publicación Semestral, EISSN: 2215-2628

Volumen 48 - 1

Enero 2022 - Junio 2022

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García Carreño, A. (2022). A Cognitive-Axiological Analysis of Gymshark's Adverts. *Revista de Filología y Lingüística de la Universidad de Costa Rica*, 48(1), e48358. doi: <https://doi.org/10.15517/rfl.v48i1.48358>



Doi: <https://doi.org/10.15517/rfl.v48i1.48358>

URL: <https://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/filyling/index>



Revista de Filología y Lingüística de la Universidad  
de Costa Rica  
ISSN: 0377-628X  
ISSN: 2215-2628  
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Universidad de Costa Rica  
Costa Rica

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Revista de Filología y Lingüística de la Universidad de Costa Rica, vol. 48, núm. 1, e48358, 2022

Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica

**Disponible en:** <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=33268016007>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.15517/rfl.v48i1.48358>



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## A Cognitive-Axiological Analysis of Gymshark's Adverts

Análisis cognitivo axiológico de la publicidad de Gymshark

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15517/rfl.v48i1.48358>

Redalyc: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=33268016007>

Recepción: 12 Abril 2021  
Aprobación: 28 Mayo 2021

### ABSTRACT:

Gymshark is a British fitness clothing company that, in less than 10 years, has become a multi-million dollar company. This company's success is linked to its promotion through an advertising discourse which emphasizes an ethical system that significantly differentiates it from other active-wear companies on the market. To do this, Gymshark relies on a digital advertising discourse, presented through social networks such as Instagram or YouTube to reach a young audience more immediately. Thus, this paper aims to analyze the persuasive techniques used in eight Gymshark ads to promote clothing collections and fitness challenges, especially the use of cognitive and axiological tools: conceptual metaphors and metonymies, image schemas and colour. Consequently, this analysis relies on Cognitive Linguistics theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002; Evans & Green, 2006), its application to advertising discourse (Forceville, 1996; 2008; 2009), the axiological notions proposed by Krzeszowski (1990) and some considerations on the use of colour. The results show that Gymshark's advertising discourse prioritizes the use of cognitive tools to associate the products and the brand with positive axiological values beyond those strictly linked to fitness; therefore, this constitutes a key factor in the development of the consumer's attraction to the brand.

**KEYWORDS:** Gymshark, advertising discourse, cognitive-axiological analysis, persuasive techniques, axiological values.

### RESUMEN:

Gymshark es una compañía británica de ropa deportiva que, en menos de 10 años, se ha convertido en una empresa multimillonaria. Este éxito está ligado a su promoción mediante un discurso publicitario que enfatiza un sistema ético que la diferencia significativamente de otras empresas de ropa deportiva del mercado. Así, Gymshark emplea un discurso publicitario digital en redes sociales como Instagram o YouTube para llegar al público joven más inmediatamente. Este trabajo pretende analizar las técnicas persuasivas utilizadas en ocho anuncios de Gymshark sobre ropa y retos deportivos, especialmente el uso de herramientas cognitivas y axiológicas: metáforas y metonimias conceptuales, esquemas de imagen y uso del color. En consecuencia, este análisis sigue la teoría de la lingüística cognitiva (Lakoff y Johnson, 1980; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002; Evans y Green, 2006), su aplicación al discurso publicitario (Forceville, 1996; 2008; 2009), las nociones axiológicas propuestas por Krzeszowski (1990) y ciertas consideraciones sobre el uso del color. Los resultados demuestran que la publicidad de Gymshark prioriza el uso de herramientas cognitivas para asociar los productos y la marca a valores axiológicos positivos más allá de los estrictamente ligados al *fitness*; así, estas constituyen un factor clave para atraer al consumidor hacia la marca.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Gymshark, discurso publicitario, análisis cognitivo-axiológico, técnicas persuasivas, valores axiológicos.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Juhlin & Soini (2018, p. 8) have highlighted the decline in popularity that traditional types of advertising such as television or newspaper-based are currently experiencing as compared to the persuasive effectiveness of the digital or online advertising medium. While traditional advertising discourses perform a “one-way communication”<sup>1</sup> (p. 8) with customers, the new digital advertising manages to attract the attention of the consumer sectors through forms never used before, such as social networks. This is the case of Gymshark, a fitness clothing company founded by a young British entrepreneur, Ben Francis, in 2012. This recent company has generated revenues of \$1.3 billion (Cook, 2020, par. 1), through an active presence on social

media such as Instagram or YouTube. Through fitness “influencers” (Juhlin & Soini, 2018, p. 8; Telišman, 2020, pp. 25-29), the company addresses in a more pervasive way their specific target consumer sector, consisting of young people in the 18-25 age range (Cook, 2020, par. 5). Gymshark has attempted to set itself apart from other brands by identifying the brand's *ethos* as one of positive thinking and a belief in effort and self-improvement, aspects that present the brand as more than just fitness clothing, but rather as “a visionary” (Gymshark, 2021).

Researchers (Forceville, 1996; 2008; 2009; Pérez Sobrino, 2017; Cortés de los Ríos, 2008; 2010, among others) have stressed the importance of cognitive tools in advertising discourse. Consequently, this paper aims to apply a cognitive-axiological approach to analyze the persuasive techniques employed by Gymshark in its advertising discourse. Thus, we aim to demonstrate the brand's conscious use of cognitive tools such as metaphors, metonymies and image schemas, as well as of a predominant chromatic selection, to endow its products with value-based meaning and, as a result, encourage consumers to purchase its fitness clothing products. The structure of this paper is divided into four sections: Section 2 is devoted to explaining the basic concepts of the theoretical framework we followed to carry out the analysis; Section 3 includes the corpus of the eight advertisements that make up the analysis material, as well as the methodology followed in the analysis process; Section 4 focuses on the cognitive-axiological analysis of the adverts; finally, Section 5 provides the final results and conclusions drawn from the analysis.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Conceptual metaphors and metonymies

Felices Lago & Cortés de los Ríos (2009, p. 60) point out the crucial role played by cognitive semantics in the consideration of cognitive tools such as metaphors and metonymies as powerful persuasive techniques in advertising discourse. Indeed, this was firstly shown in the studies by Lakoff (1987) and Lakoff & Johnson (1980), who argued for the essentially cognitive nature in which human beings conceptualize reality in order to manifest it in the linguistic milieu.

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 3), conceptual metaphor is regarded as a pervasive phenomenon in everyday life. This statement implies that metaphor should not be understood, from a traditional rhetorical perspective, as a resource of literary embellishment but as a “conceptual system” (1980, p. 4). Therefore, this cognitive tool, apart from language, is inherently present in human thought and action patterns, which are “metaphorical in nature” (1980, p. 4). Humans understand a large number of the elements that shape the surrounding reality through metaphorical conceptualizations. Lakoff & Johnson illustrate this aspect by the common understanding of the concept ARGUMENT through the characteristics of the concept WAR:

We can actually win or lose arguments. We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. We attack his positions and we defend our own. We gain and lose ground. We plan and use strategies. If we find a position indefensible, we can abandon it and take a new line of attack [...] It is in this sense that the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor is one that we live by in this culture; it structures the actions we perform in arguing (1980, p. 4).

The scholars define *metaphor* as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). This has allowed human beings to be able to conceptualize abstract notions that make up our life experience by interacting with the surrounding world through the association of the features of another more tangible concept. In other words, this is what constitutes a metaphor: a conceptual domain, the target, can be understood through the mapping of the characteristics of another conceptual domain, the source. Hence, the metaphorical structuring of a given concept always responds to a principle of unidirectionality: the source projects its features onto the target domain. If we take the example of

ARGUMENT IS WAR, we observe how the features that characterize the more tangible source domain WAR are mapped onto the more abstract target domain ARGUMENT.

As a result, we can confirm that conceptual metaphor is not an exclusively linguistic phenomenon as “[m]etaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person’s conceptual system” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 6). On the contrary, this means that human conceptual systems rely “primarily on the basis of linguistic evidence” (1980, p. 4). In the mapping between the different conceptual domains that form a metaphor, the cultural component is essential, as exemplified by Lakoff & Johnson when talking about the concept TIME: Western society conceptualizes TIME through the domain MONEY (1980, pp. 7-8).

The pervasiveness of metaphor in our lives proposed by Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 3) is adopted by Forceville (1996; 2008; 2009) to be further applied to the analysis of advertising discourse. This scholar distinguishes between several types of metaphor taking into account the different layers of meaning that make up advertisements: verbal (slogan, headline, body copy) and visual message (picture). Forceville thus considers monomodal metaphors (where the metaphor operates on either the visual or the verbal level) and multimodal metaphors, where the metaphor operates on both levels at the same time. These will be verbo-pictorial (if the verbal message determines the meaning of the visual message, thus borrowing Barthes’ (1964) concept of “anchorage”<sup>2</sup>) or pictorio-verbal, if it occurs the other way round.

In fact, multimodality is further applied to communication itself by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001). Just as Forceville considers two interactive layers of meaning in multimodal metaphors, these scholars argue that “within a given socio-cultural domain, the ‘same’ meanings can often be expressed in different semiotic modes” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 1), such as visual, verbal or musical, among others. Multimodal discourse has thus acquired greater relevance nowadays, given the technological development that has been achieved. “Digitisation” (2001, p. 10) offers a wide variety of “multiple articulations” of meaning, present “in any and every sign, at every level, and in any mode” (2001, p. 12). Gymshark’s adverts illustrate this: by means of online advertising, the meaning that the brand wants to communicate to the consumer sector is articulated through varied modes such as verbal or visual (not only through the image of the athletes but also through the use of colour). In this way, Gymshark’s advertising becomes an example of “multimodal communication” (2001, p. 2).

As metaphor, the cognitive tool of metonymy is also systematic. However, while conceptualization was carried out through two different domains in metaphor, following the A IS B schema, metonymy operates in a single domain by establishing a referential relation between two entities. Thus, in metonymy a “stand for” relation operates and, as a result, the schema that represents it is A (STANDS) FOR B. Lakoff & Johnson (1980, pp. 38-39) provide a list of the most usual types of metonymies, such as PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, OBJECT USED FOR USER, PLACE FOR INSTITUTION, among others. However, as we will see in the analysis of this paper, THE PART FOR THE WHOLE is one of the most common. Forceville (1996; 2009) also applies his multimodal and monomodal distinction to the characterization of metonymies present in advertising discourse.

Given their cognitive nature and omnipresence in the conceptualization of reality, metaphor and metonymy can interact with each other. Goossens (1990) proposed a classification of metaphor/metonymy interactions that distinguished between source-in-target or target-in-source. Ruiz de Mendoza (2002, pp. 133-137) simplified Goossens’ study by highlighting an inherent relationship between metaphor and metonymy that could be conceived in terms of which one proposes the source for the creation of the conceptual relation, whether metaphor gives rise to metonymy or the other way around.

Metaphors can also interact, as shown in the concept of “metaphorical chain” in the studies by Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera (2011, pp. 21-23), and further applied to advertisement analysis by Pérez Sobrino (2017, pp. 60-62). A metaphorical chain involves a connection between two metaphors in which the target domain of the first metaphor becomes the source domain of the second metaphor. In Figure 1 we can observe an

example of metaphorical chain through the representation of the conceptualization of the phrasal verb *break away*, according to Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera (2011, p. 21):

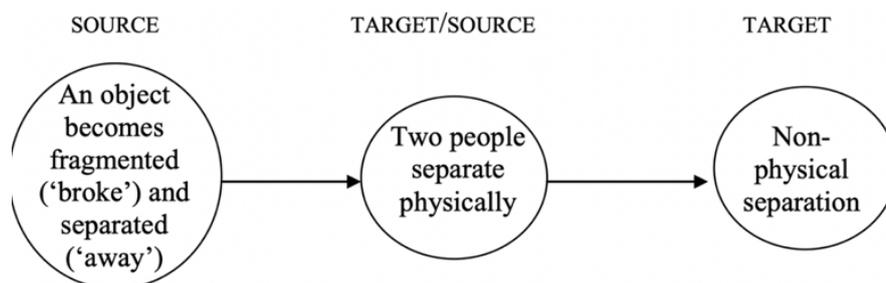


FIGURE 1.

Representation of the metaphorical chain operating in *break away* in the sentence *When they broke away from our church, I stuck on my own* (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera, 2011, p. 21)

## 2.2 Image schemas

The conceptual metaphors discussed above are usually based on image schemas. Evans & Green (2006), following Lakoff (1987), define image schemas as “relatively abstract conceptual representations that arise directly from our everyday interaction with and observation of the world around us” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 176). This means that the most basic conceptualizations that human beings make about the elements of reality respond to previous experiences perceived through the body. In this sense, the “sensory experience” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 178) that we obtain by interacting with reality using our body as a means provides basic conceptual categories. Evans & Green illustrate this cognitive tool through the example of the image schema UP/DOWN, arguing that the natural human “vertical axis, which interacts with gravity, gives rise to meaning as a result of how we interact with our environment” (2006, p. 178). Thus, image schemas provide the basis for the creation of the most complex and elaborate conceptual mappings operating in metaphors. Following the example of the UP/DOWN image schema, Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 16) conceive a conceptual category GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN. Evans & Green (2006, p. 90) put forward a concise list of all types of image schema, summarizing what Lakoff & Johnson propose: they acknowledge image schemas of space (UP/DOWN, FRONT/BACK, etc.), containment (CONTAINER, IN/OUT, etc.), locomotion (MOMENTUM, SOURCE/PATH/GOAL, etc.), among others.

This evidence is further applied to advertising by Cortés de los Ríos (2008; 2010) and Cortés de los Ríos & Azzahara (2014). The first and second poles that form image schemas carry a positive and negative load respectively, which are used in advertisements to persuade the consumer sector more effectively. For example, considering the previously mentioned conceptual category GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 16), the image schema UP/DOWN has a first pole UP which is positively valued and a second pole DOWN which is negatively valued. As will be seen in Section 4, apart from the image schema UP/DOWN, other image schemas also carry positive/negative loads in their first/second poles respectively. For example, in a bodybuilding and fitness-related context such as the one addressed by Gymshark’s advertising discourse, image schemas of attribute such as STRONG/WEAK also have a positive first pole –in this case STRONG– and a negative second pole –in this case WEAK–. However, certain advertising discourses carry out a reversal of the loads, implying an “axiological clash” (Cortés de los Ríos, 2010, p. 91); as a result, the most positively loaded pole turns out to be the second one, not the first one as the general rule dictates. For example, the conceptual metaphors used in adverts on slimming products –addressed to people who are overweight– are based on an image schema of attribute HEAVY/LIGHT, in

which the first pole HEAVY is negatively valued, and the second pole LIGHT is positively valued (Velasco & Cortés de los Ríos, 2009, p. 249).

## 2.3 Axiological load

Krzeszowski (1990, pp. 135-136) highlights how the axiological values which “perform a dominant function in the structure of concepts” have only been considered outside the theoretical framework of the “structuralist-generativist tradition” and only “in connection with connotation”. The generativist tradition agreed that an emotional component played a part in the human conception of meaning, but it was not until the advent of Cognitive Linguistics in the 1970s that the fuzzy boundaries between connotative and denotative meaning were determined (1990, p. 137), especially after Lakoff's study of Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs). ICMs are structures of human cognition through which we can organize and order our knowledge of reality (Lakoff, 1987, pp. 68-69). Lakoff exemplifies ICMs through the word *bachelor*:

[B]*achelor* is defined with respect to an ICM in which there is a human society with (typically monogamous) marriage, and a typical marriageable age. The idealized model says nothing about the existence of priests, “long-term unmarried couplings,” homosexuality [...] With respect to this idealized cognitive model, a *bachelor* is simply an unmarried adult man (Lakoff, 1987, p. 70).

Following Lakoff's study of ICMs, Krzeszowski further states that ICMs also contain hierarchies of values that are dependent on how “people evaluate situations framed in terms of ICMs” (1990, p. 138).

Thus, Krzeszowski determines that every lexical item has an “axiological load” which can be described by a two-pole scale. The axiological load of each pole is generally described as either 'good' or 'bad', which in human growth develops even before the 'true/false' and 'beautiful/ugly' scale (1990, p. 138). This scale of positive or negative axiological loads manifests itself in the same way in advertising discourse because the advertised products are associated with certain values that are interpreted as positive by the consumer and thus become a persuasive technique, as shown by Cortés de los Ríos (2002).

## 2.4 Use of colour

Recent evidence highlights the use of colour as a persuasive technique in advertising discourse as, according to Vatal (2018, p. 8), “colour is a powerful, omnipresent source of information”. The human sensory stimulus is mostly visual (Petrovici, 2014, p. 720; Vatal, 2018, p. 8) and copywriters, aware of this, appeal to it through a persuasive use of colour. Petrovici (2014) relates the symbolic function of colours in advertising to values that the human psyche inevitably associates with the product; thus, in addition to bright colours as a way of attracting the consumer's attention, this scholar highlights the aesthetic function of “non-colours” (grey, black and white) which, apart from achieving graphic neutrality, evoke “refinement, elegance and slenderness” (Petrovici, 2014, p. 722).

Precisely its close relationship with the values associated with the advertised product leads Vatal (2018) to reflect on the connection between colours and gender in advertising discourse. The author determines how, although in the last 70 years there has been less and less gender distinction in the socio-cultural spheres that shape the Western context, marketing techniques do not seem to be advancing with this evolution towards gender equality. Thus, even in the “evolving socially conscious world” in which we live, there is a “strong correlation between colour and gender” (Vatal, 2018, p. 16). However, an important part of this researcher's analysis will reveal that the colours traditionally associated with each gender (such as grey for men, and pink for women) are transgressed. New companies such as, in this case, Gymshark, include this aspect in the use of colour in their advertising.

### 3. CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Corpus

The data which has been analyzed in this paper is constituted by eight adverts from the fitness clothing company Gymshark. All the selected adverts are in digital form; in other words, the adverts are published on online platforms, mainly the official Gymshark website, the official Gymshark YouTube channel and the official Gymshark Instagram account. The selection criteria for this analysis material are based on the determination of a notable use of cognitive tools in the ads, as well as the connection of these tools with values in order to ascertain the axiological perspective that Gymshark intends to associate with the company itself and its products.

The analysis of these digital adverts will show how the online advertising discourse shares similarities with the print advertisement in their use of the cognitive tools of metaphor, metonymy and image schema as methods of persuading the target consumer sector.

#### 3.2 Methodology

The cognitive analysis of the ads has been carried out, firstly, by identifying the three main cognitive structures (metaphor, metonymy and image schema) following the theoretical frameworks provided by different scholars and linguists. The identification of metaphors has been conducted considering the studies of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and their further application to the advertising discourse proposed by Forceville (1996; 2008; 2009). Thus, we have determined the modality of the metaphors, classifying them as monomodal (and, thus, pictorial or verbal) or multimodal (and, thus, pictorial-verbal or verbo-pictorial). Furthermore, we have also considered the notion of “metaphorical chain” discussed by Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera (2011), further applied to advertising by Pérez Sobrino (2017).

The identification of metonymies also follows Lakoff and Johnson (1980), whose classification of types of metonymy we adopt, especially of the type of THE PART FOR THE WHOLE. Given the proximity between the two cognitive structures, we have taken into account the evidence on metaphor/metonymy interaction proposed by Goossens (1990) and simplified by Ruiz de Mendoza (2002).

The identification of image schemas has been carried out by considering the summary table provided by Evans & Green (2006, p. 190), who identify mainly image schemas of space, containment, locomotion, balance, force, identity, unity/multiplicity and existence. The axiological values associated to the products, following Krzeszowski (1990), have been discussed in relation to the cognitive tools employed in each advert (conceptual metaphors, metonymies and image schemas).

The analysis has been presented through, first, a table which collects the data related to a) cognitive structures (metaphors and metonymies), b) modalities and c) image schemas from each advert; these follow the tables employed by Cortés de los Ríos & Azzahara (2014) for the analysis of footwear advertisement. Secondly, a further explanation of the collected data has been provided after each table, in which a brief commentary on the use of colour is presented. Finally, we need to remark that the adverts have been presented in four sections depending on the Gymshark product they promote.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE ADVERTS

4.1 Adverts for promoting Gymshark's Vital Seamless Collection

4.1.1 Advert 1: Gymshark's Vital Seamless Collection for women



FIGURE 2.  
Advert of Gymshark's Vital Seamless Collection for women

TABLE 1.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 2

Cognitive structures	metaphor: GYMSHARK IS A FAST-RUNNING ATHLETE metonymy: THE SHAPE OF THE ATHLETE'S LEGS FOR THE BRAND'S LOGO
Metaphor modality	multimodal pictorio-verbal
Metonymy modality	monomodal pictorial
Image schemas	space: UP/DOWN force: COMPULSION movement: POINT OF EQUILIBRIUM attribute: HEAVY/LIGHT

This first advert aims to promote Gymshark's new Vital Seamless clothing line for women. To achieve the customer's persuasion, different cognitive tools are used. As shown in Table 1, first, we can identify a multimodal pictorio-verbal metaphor GYMSHARK IS A FAST-RUNNING ATHLETE, in which the visual message of the ad "anchors" (Forceville, 1996, p. 2) the meaning of the verbal message constituted by the slogan "PUSH YOURSELF"; the visualization of an athlete training determines that the meaning of the slogan statement refers to making an effort specifically in the field of physical exercise. Furthermore, the verbal message appeals directly to the customer given its presentation as an order, thus establishing a one-to-

one communication brand/customer. The conceptual metaphor is based on the image schemas of space (UP/DOWN, as the athlete seems to be floating while running), force (COMPULSION, as the athlete seems to have just released explosive force to start running), movement (POINT OF EQUILIBRIUM, as although the athlete is running, there are no imbalances in the vertical axis constituted by her straight upper body or in the horizontal axis constituted by her legs) and attribute (HEAVY/LIGHT, as the athlete is so skinny that we can infer that this is the reason why she runs so fast). In fact, while in the first image schema it is the first pole (UP) which is positively evaluated, the last image schema of attribute implies an “axiological clash” (Cortés de los Ríos, 2010, p. 91). It is the second pole LIGHT –which evokes the athlete’s slimness– which is positively evaluated in this ad, instead of the first pole HEAVY, which is normally associated to a positive conceptual value by customers (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 217).

As a result, the features defining the source domain (FAST-RUNNING ATHLETE), such as dynamism, beauty, speed, and physical fitness are mapped onto the target domain (GYMSHARK/THE BRAND). In this case, the metaphor can be considered a variation of the conceptual metaphor IDEAS ARE PEOPLE postulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 48): the target domain is constituted by the brand itself instead of the product to be promoted (the vital seamless clothing line), which means that the Gymshark company wants to be conceived by customers as a set of values or ideas, rather than just a fitness enterprise.

Then, Figure 2 also displays a monomodal pictorial metonymy THE SHAPE OF THE ATHLETE’S LEGS FOR THE BRAND’S LOGO because the athlete’s legs are arranged in such a way that they draw the shape of the Gymshark logo turned backwards. Furthermore, the metonymic relationship is reinforced by the fact that both parts of the domain share the same black colour (the leggings and the logo). This metonymy corresponds to the most frequent type of metonymy A PART FOR THE WHOLE, as stated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 36).

Therefore, from the axiological perspective (Krzyszowski, 1990), these cognitive tools help us associate the brand Gymshark with values such as speed, effort, and quality. This last value is reinforced by the well-known fitness influencer who appears in the visual message of the advert; the fact that this influencer wears Gymshark clothes makes the consumer think about the quality of the product.

4.1.2 Advert 2: *Gymshark's Vital Seamless Collection for men*

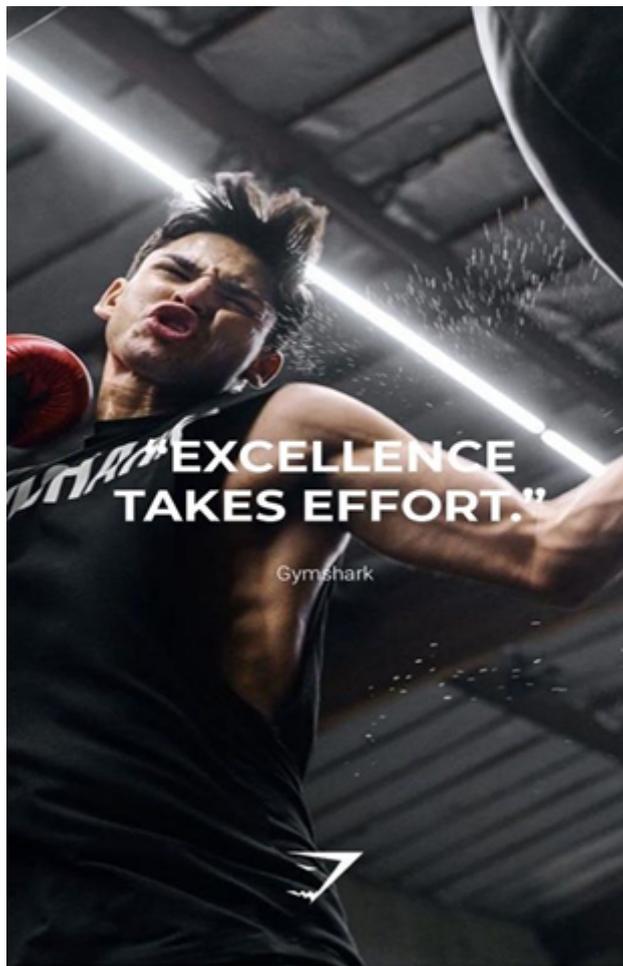


FIGURE 3.  
Advert of Gymshark's Vital Seamless Collection for men

TABLE 2.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 3

Cognitive structures	metaphor 1: GYMSHARK IS A BOXER TRAINING HARD metaphor 2: EXCELLENCE IS TRAINING HARD
Metaphor 1 modality	multimodal pictorio-verbal
Metaphor 2 modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Image schemas	space: UP/DOWN force: COMPULSION attribute: STRONG/WEAK

This advert, like the previous one, also aims to promote Gymshark's new Vital Seamless clothing line but, in this case, focused on a male consumer sector. As in Figure 2, the first cognitive tool employed to achieve the customers' persuasion is a multimodal pictorio-verbal metaphor GYMSHARK IS A BOXER TRAINING

HARD. Just as the precedent case, the visual message “anchors” (Forceville, 1996, p. 2) the meaning of the verbal message constituted by the slogan “EXCELLENCE TAKES EFFORT”; the display of an athlete punching a boxing bag really hard specifies the type of “effort” the slogan refers to, in this case, related to sports and physical exercise. The verbal message strongly persuades the consumer by being presented almost as an apodictic judgement, or in other words, as a categorical truth. This conceptual metaphor is based on image schemas of space (UP/DOWN, as the photograph is taken from a low angle), of force (COMPULSION, as shown in the moving arms to punch the boxing bag), and of attribute (STRONG/WEAK, as the athlete punches the boxing bag hard); the first poles of all these image schemas (UP, COMPULSION, and STRONG) are positively valued by customers.

As we see, the characteristics present in the source domain (A BOXER TRAINING HARD), that is, energy, dynamism, effort, strength, youth, and physical fitness are mapped onto the source domain (GYMSHARK/BRAND). Consequently, the metaphor can be also considered a variation of the conceptual metaphor IDEAS ARE PEOPLE proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 48), as portrayed in the previous advert: the target domain is constituted by the brand itself instead of the product to be promoted (the Vital Seamless clothing line), which means that the Gymshark company wants to be conceived by customers as a set of values or ideas, rather than just a fitness enterprise.

However, Figure 3 illustrates another conceptual metaphor, this time multimodal verbo-pictorial according to what the slogan (“EXCELLENCE TAKES EFFORT”) states: EXCELLENCE IS TRAINING HARD. In that sense, the features of the source domain (TRAINING HARD), such as effort, dedication, energy, and dynamism, are mapped onto the target domain (EXCELLENCE). Precisely because of that specific source domain, in Table 2 we can see that an image schema of force (COMPULSION) is operating within this metaphor. The presence of an image schema of force implies that this particular conceptual metaphor can be considered as a variation of the conceptual system discussed by Peña Cervel (1999, p. 190) “EMOTIONS ARE PHYSICAL FORCES”, in this case, VIRTUES (such as EXCELLENCE) ARE PHYSICAL FORCES.

Therefore, from the axiological perspective (Krzyszowski, 1990), these cognitive tools help us associate the brand Gymshark with the values of speed, effort, and quality.

In the same line, the use of colour in Gymshark’s advertising discourse is manifested here through a basic chromatic selection composed of black and grey colours, which evoke different values eventually attributed to both product and brand. On the one hand, these two colours add neutrality and seriousness to the brand; however, on the other hand, the use of colour goes a step further: as both colours are present in both adverts regardless of the athlete’s gender, we can argue that it evokes a value of gender inclusivity.

## 4.2 Adverts for promoting Gymshark's Challenge 66

### 4.2.1 Advert 3: Gymshark 66 Challenge



FIGURE 4.  
Advert of Gymshark 66 Challenge

TABLE 3.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 4

Cognitive structures	metaphor: GYMSHARK IS A DISABLED ATHLETE WITH A LEG PROSTHESIS metaphorical chain: BEING A DISABLED ATHLETE IS A BURDEN IS A HEAVILY LOADED BARBELL metonymy: ATHLETE WITH A LEG PROSTHESIS FOR THE GROUP OF DISABLED ATHLETES
Metaphor modality	monomodal pictorial
Metaphorical chain modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Metonymy modality	monomodal pictorial
Image schemas	space: UP/DOWN force: COMPULSION attribute: STRONG/WEAK, HEAVY/LIGHT

This advert aims to promote Gymshark's proposal of a challenge addressed to its customers, named Gymshark 66. This consisted in motivating Gymshark's customers to subscribe to a 66-day workout plan. Table 3 shows that, among the cognitive tools used to persuade consumers, we can firstly identify a monomodal pictorial metaphor GYMSHARK IS A DISABLED ATHLETE WITH A LEG PROSTHESIS, in which the features of the source domain DISABLED ATHLETE WITH A LEG PROSTHESIS (such as effort, dedication, self-improvement or motivation) are mapped onto the target

domain GYMSHARK, that is, the brand itself. This constitutes what Forceville (1996, p. 126) calls a metaphor “with two pictorially present terms”, as both the target domain (GYMSHARK, manifested in the brand’s logo) and the source domain (A DISABLED ATHLETE WITH A LEG PROSTHESIS) are present in the ad’s visual message. However, Figure 4 also portrays another conceptual metaphor, this time multimodal verbo-pictorial, as the verbal message constituted by the slogan “WEIGHT OF THE WORLD” “anchors” (Forceville, 1996, p. 2) the meaning of the visual message. In fact, this cognitive tool is actually integrated by two different metaphors which are intertwined: BEING A DISABLED ATHLETE IS A BURDEN IS A HEAVILY LOADED BARBELL. As shown in Figure 5, this involves a “metaphorical chain” (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera, 2011, pp. 21-23): the target domain of the first metaphor A BURDEN IS A HEAVY LOADED BARBELL provides the source domain for the second metaphor BEING A DISABLED ATHLETE IS A BURDEN.



FIGURE 5.

Representation of the metaphorical chain operating in advert 3: BEING A DISABLED ATHLETE IS A BURDEN IS A HEAVY LOADED BARBELL

The metaphorical chain is thus based on image schemas of space (UP/DOWN, because, as in the previous ad, the photo is taken from a low angle), of force (COMPULSION) and of attribute (STRONG/WEAK, HEAVY/LIGHT, as the athlete is strong enough to lift the heavy barbell off the ground). Although the first poles of the image schemas of space (UP) and of attribute (STRONG) are positively loaded in the advert, the image schema of attribute HEAVY/LIGHT implies an “axiological clash” (Cortés de los Ríos, 2010, p. 91): the negative value attributed to the barbell’s heavy weight in the advert is evoked by the first HEAVY pole of this image schema and, as a result, the second LIGHT pole acquires a positive load. As we see, both the verbal and the visual message include an evident emotive component that seeks to appeal to the consumer sector’s feelings to incite them to purchase the product. From the axiological perspective, these image schemas are the cognitive tool responsible for evoking the values which are attributed to the Gymshark brand: the image schema of space UP/DOWN evokes a value of disability inclusion, as –following Lakoff & Johnson’s conception of the orientational metaphor “GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN” (1980, p. 17)– the positive content of the first pole UP is thus associated to the disabled athlete; on the other hand, the image schemas of force (COMPULSION) and of attribute (HEAVY/LIGHT, STRONG/WEAK) evoke values of strength, self-improvement, and personal growth.

This advert also displays a monomodal pictorial metonymy ATHLETE WITH A LEG PROSTHESIS FOR THE GROUP OF DISABLED ATHLETES, which is represented in Figure 6. The output of the mapping of this classical example of THE PART FOR THE WHOLE type of metonymy (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 36) “provides the source for a metaphor” (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002, pp. 133-134), in this case, the metaphorical chain.

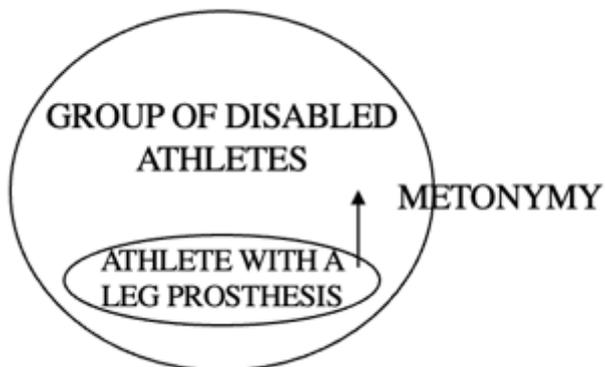


FIGURE 6.

Representation of the output of the mapping of the monomodal pictorial metonymy operating in advert 3: ATHLETE WITH A LEG PROSTHESIS FOR THE GROUP OF DISABLED ATHLETES

#### 4.2.2 Advert 4: *Gymshark 66 Challenge*

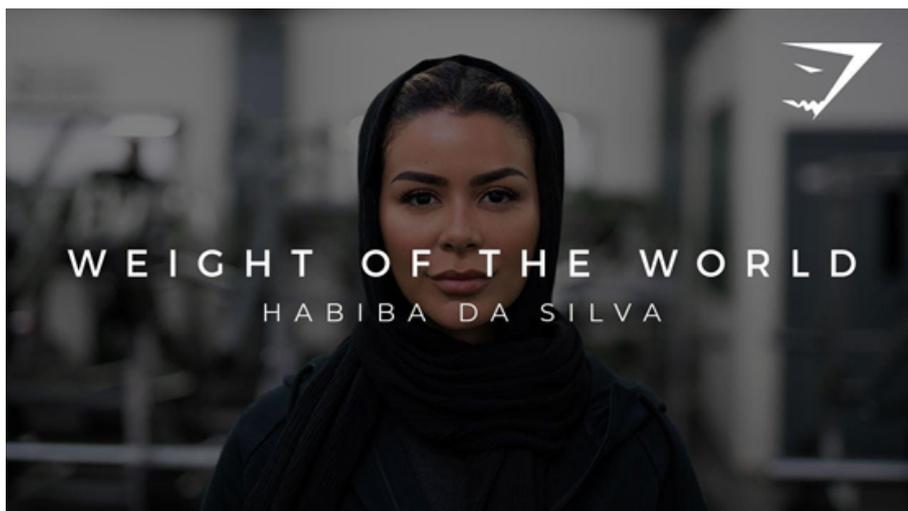


FIGURE 7.

Advert of Gymshark 66 Challenge

TABLE 4.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 7

Cognitive structures	metaphor 1: GYMSHARK IS A MUSLIM FEMALE ATHLETE metaphor 2: BEING A FEMALE MUSLIM ATHLETE IS A BURDEN metonymy: MUSLIM FEMALE ATHLETE FOR THE WHOLE GROUP OF ATHLETES PROFESSING DIFFERENT RELIGIONS
Metaphor 1 modality	monomodal pictorial
Metaphor 2 modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Metonymy modality	monomodal pictorial
Image schemas	space: NEAR/FAR, CENTRE/PERIPHERY attribute: HEAVY/LIGHT

This advert aims to promote the same product as the previous ad, the Gymshark 66 challenge. In fact, the cognitive tools employed in Figure 7 are similar to the ones presented in the precedent advert. As shown in Table 4, we can firstly identify a monomodal pictorial metaphor GYMSHARK IS A MUSLIM FEMALE ATHLETE. It corresponds to the metaphorical pattern “with two pictorially present terms” (Forceville, 1996, p. 126), as both the target domain GYMSHARK (manifested in the brand’s logo) and the source domain A MUSLIM FEMALE ATHLETE are explicitly present in the ad’s visual message. This conceptual metaphor is based on image schemas of space (NEAR/FAR, as everything in the picture’s background is blurred except for the athlete; CENTRE/PERIPHERY, as the disposition of the athlete in the picture is central), being the first poles (NEAR, CENTRE) positively loaded.

The aforementioned metaphor interacts with THE PART FOR THE WHOLE monomodal pictorial metonymy also displayed in the ad: MUSLIM FEMALE ATHLETE FOR THE GROUP OF ATHLETES PROFESSING DIFFERENT RELIGIONS. This means that, as in the ad above, the metonymy provides the source for metaphor 1 (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002, pp. 133-134): by focusing the metonymy’s domain on Muslim athletes, the features of the source domain in metaphor 1 (such as religious discrimination in some Western countries or repression of women) are mapped onto the target domain GYMSHARK, as we see represented in Figure 8.

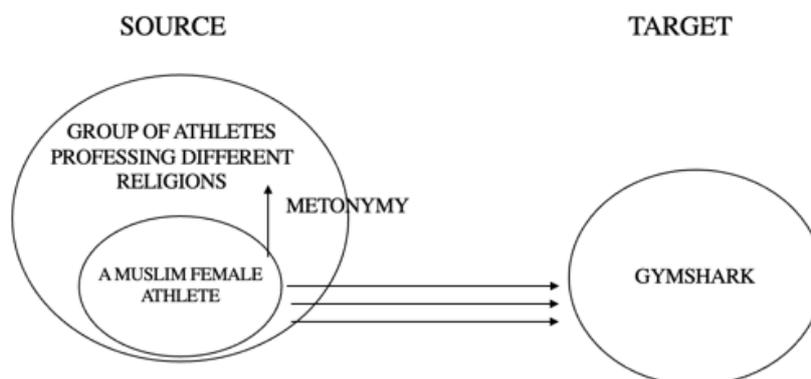


FIGURE 8.

Representation of the metonymic mapping providing the source of metaphor 1 in advert 4: GYMSHARK IS A MUSLIM FEMALE ATHLETE

As a result, the ad persuades the customer to associate this brand with values of inclusion, whether of religious minorities in European countries (or particular human groups repressed within those religious communities, such as Muslim women, who are not even allowed to do any sport in their countries) as shown in this ad, of people with disabilities as shown in ad 3, or of gender, as shown in ads 1 and 2.

However, we can also identify another conceptual metaphor in this advert: BEING A FEMALE MUSLIM ATHLETE IS A BURDEN. This is multimodal verbo-pictorial, as the verbal message “anchors” (Forceville, 1996, p. 2) the meaning of the ad’s visual message. In addition, just as in Figure 6, the verbal and visual messages contain an emotive component used as a persuasive technique. The metaphor is based on the image schema of attribute HEAVY/LIGHT, hinting at an “axiological clash” (Cortés de los Ríos, 2010, p. 91) as the first pole of the schema is negatively loaded in this particular ad. The features of the tangible source domain A BURDEN (such as heavy, overwhelming weight) are mapped onto the target domain BEING A MUSLIM FEMALE ATHLETE; thus, this cognitive tool implies an upgrade of Gymshark’s status to, apart from a simple fitness clothing brand, a resource for people who, like this Muslim athlete, have to undergo discrimination or oppression.

From the axiological perspective, these cognitive tools persuade customers to associate the Gymshark brand with positive values not only related to the main features of the fitness community (such as strength, endurance and energy) but also, as shown in the previous ad, a value of religious inclusion, as well as personal growth.

Regarding the use of colour displayed in adverts 3 and 4, the predominant colours in both adverts are black and grey, as also presented in ads 1 and 2. Although the most evident aim of these colours is to add seriousness and neutrality to the brand, their most powerful persuasive objective is to evoke a value of gender inclusion as both adverts share the same chromatic selection regardless of the athletes’ gender (Vatral, 2018, p. 11).

### 4.3 Adverts for promoting Gymshark’s Seamless Stealth Collection

#### 4.3.1 Advert 5: Gymshark’s Seamless Stealth Collection

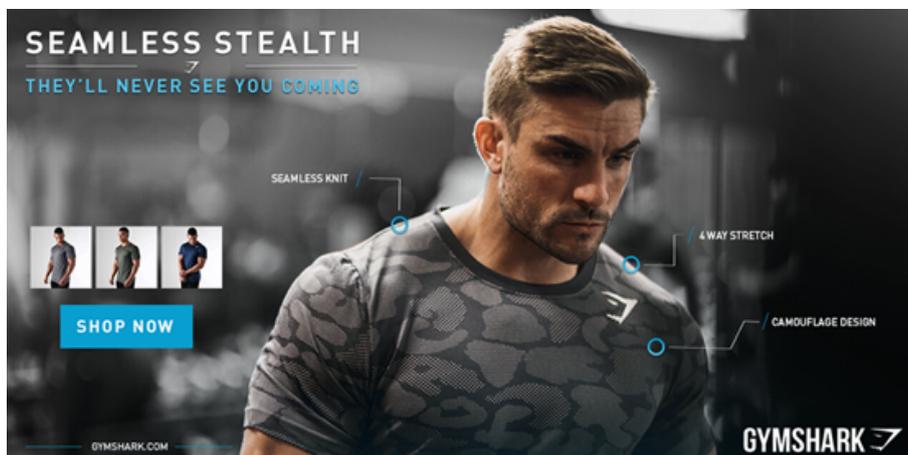


FIGURE 9.  
Advert of Gymshark’s Seamless Stealth Collection

TABLE 5.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 9

Cognitive structures	metaphor: THE SEAMLESS STEALTH COLLECTION IS A MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT metonymy: THE CAMOUFLAGE T-SHIRT FOR THE MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT
Metaphor modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Metonymy modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Image schemas	space: NEAR/FAR, CENTRE/PERIPHERY

This advert aims to promote Gymshark’s Seamless Stealth clothing collection and thus the cognitive tools employed pursue this goal. As shown in Table 5, we can firstly identify a multimodal verbo-pictorial metaphor THE SEAMLESS STEALTH COLLECTION IS A MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT in which the verbal message, constituted by the slogan “THEY’LL NEVER SEE YOU COMING”, “anchors” (Forceville, 1996, p. 2) the meaning of the ad’s visual message: the product makes the customer stealthy. The meaning of the noun *stealth* present in the slogan determines the particular message of the ad, which indeed presents the product as a tool for the customer to be more accurate and precise. In fact, the metaphor’s persuasive force is reinforced by the almost apodictic presentation of the verbal message. That is why the features of the source domain A MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT (such as discretion, concealment and stealth) fit the verbal anchorage operating in this metaphor and, as a result, are mapped onto the target domain THE SEAMLESS STEALTH COLLECTION. Therefore, from the axiological perspective,

the mapping provided by this conceptual metaphor evokes the values of sharpness, quality, stealth and accurateness. The association of these values with the product is even reinforced by the athlete's focused facial expression, centred on his goal. The metaphor is based on image schemas of space (NEAR/FAR, as all the background of the picture is blurred except for the athlete, and CENTRE/PERIPHERY, as the disposition of the athlete is central in the visual component of the ad). Consequently, the first poles (NEAR, CENTRE) are positively loaded in the ad.

The mapping of this metaphor's output provides the source for the metonymy displayed in Figure 9, THE CAMOUFLAGE T-SHIRT FOR THE MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT. As we observe in Figure 10, this metonymy is, as in the previous adverts, an illustration of Lakoff & Johnson's THE PART FOR THE WHOLE metonymy type (1980, p. 36).

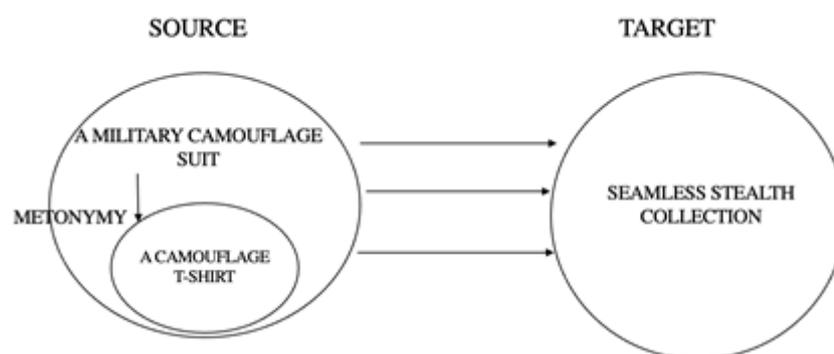


FIGURE 10.

Representation of the metaphoric mapping providing the source for the metonymy in advert 5: THE CAMOUFLAGE T-SHIRT FOR THE MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT

Regarding the use of colour, this ad presents a basic black and grey chromatic selection, with predominant obscure tones. The main purpose of these colours is to add neutrality to the ad's graphic composition in order to make it more appealing for customers (Petrovici, 2014, p. 722).

#### 4. 4 Adverts for promoting Gymshark’s Legacy Collection

##### 4.4.1 Advert 6: Gymshark’s Legacy Collection

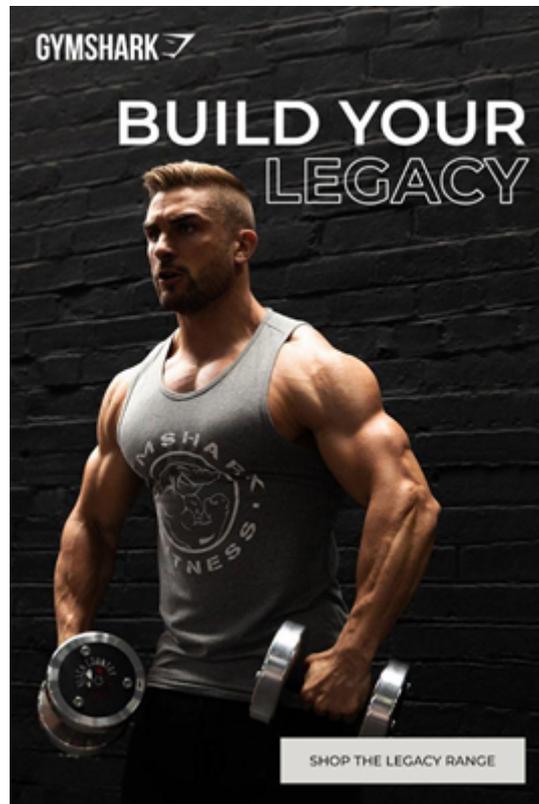


FIGURE 11.  
Advert of Gymshark’s Legacy Collection

TABLE 6.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 11

Cognitive structures	metaphor 1: LEGACY COLLECTION IS A BRICK metaphor 2: A LEGACY IS A BUILDING metonymy: A WALL FOR A BUILDING
Metaphor 1 modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Metaphor 2 modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Metonymy modality	multimodal verbo-pictorial
Image schemas	space: UP/DOWN attribute: STRONG/WEAK

This advert aims to promote Gymshark’s Legacy clothing collection. The first cognitive tool portrayed in Figure 11 is a multimodal verbo-pictorial metaphor LEGACY COLLECTION IS A BRICK, in which

the slogan “BUILD YOUR LEGACY” “anchors” (Forceville, 1996, p. 2) the meaning of the ad’s visual message. Moreover, the verbal message appeals directly to the customer given its presentation as an order, thus establishing a one-to-one communication brand/customer. The metaphor is based on image schemas of space (UP/DOWN, as the photograph of the clothing sample –the T-shirt worn by the athlete– seems to have been taken from a low angle) and of attribute (STRONG/WEAK, as the athlete wearing the Legacy clothing sample presents a muscular physique). In these, the first poles (UP, STRONG) are positively loaded in the advert. As a result, the features of the source domain BRICK (such as hardness, resistance and durability) are mapped onto the target domain LEGACY COLLECTION; therefore, from the axiological perspective, this conceptual metaphor evokes values of strength, long-term durability and quality, which are associated with the product.

However, these values are further reinforced by the second multimodal verbo-pictorial metaphor operating in the ad, as shown in Table 6: A LEGACY IS A BUILDING. Therefore, the features of the source domain A BUILDING (such as the idea of being something created with effort) are mapped onto the target domain A LEGACY. In fact, Figure 12 illustrates how the mapping of this metaphor’s output provides the source for the multimodal verbo-pictorial metonymy operating in the ad A WALL FOR A BUILDING, of THE PART FOR THE WHOLE type (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 36). Consequently, the advert suggests the idea of the product as a building tool with which any customer can create a “legacy” or, in other words, a set of strong physical outcomes.

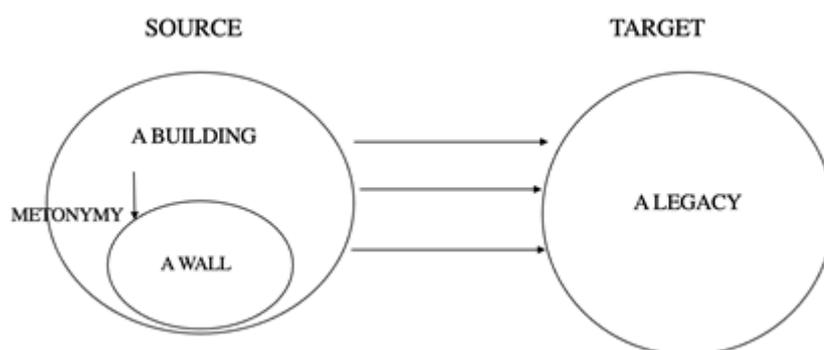


FIGURE 12.

Representation of the metaphoric mapping providing the source for the metonymy in advert 6: A WALL FOR A BUILDING

As in the previously analyzed adverts, the use of colour in this ad is reduced to black and grey colour, which are employed for attaining graphic neutrality and a pleasing visual object to attract customers’ attention.

## 4.5 Adverts for promoting Gymshark’s Adapt Camo Seamless Collection

### 4.5.1 Advert 7: Gymshark’s Adapt Camo Seamless Collection



FIGURE 13.  
Advert of Gymshark’s Adapt Camo Seamless Collection

TABLE 7.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 13

Cognitive structures	metaphorical chain: GYMSHARK IS A FEMALE ATHLETE IS AN OFF-ROAD VEHICLE metaphor 1: THE ADAPT CAMO SEAMLESS COLLECTION IS A MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT metaphor 2: A WOMAN IS A WARRIOR metonymy: THE CAMOUFLAGE PATTERNED BRA AND LEGGINS FOR THE MILITARY SUIT
Metaphorical chain modality	monomodal pictorial
Metaphor 1 modality	monomodal pictorial
Metaphor 2 modality	monomodal pictorial
Metonymy modality	monomodal pictorial
Image schemas	space: CENTER/PERIPHERY, NEAR/FAR attribute: STRONG/WEAK unity: LINK

This advert aims to promote Gymshark's Adapt Camo Seamless collection, the most recently launched clothing line. As shown in Table 7, the first cognitive tool used as a persuasive technique is a monomodal pictorial metaphor GYMSHARK IS A FEMALE ATHLETE IS AN OFF-ROAD VEHICLE. As we see represented in Figure 14, this involves a "metaphorical chain" (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera, 2011, pp. 21-23) in which two different metaphors are intertwined: first, the features of the source domain AN OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (such as toughness, endurance and power) are mapped onto the target domain A FEMALE ATHLETE; second, the features of the source domain A FEMALE ATHLETE (such as energy, strength, youth and physical fitness) are mapped onto the target domain GYMSHARK, that is, the brand itself. As a result, each of the metaphors constitutes what Forceville (1996, p. 126) calls a metaphor "with two pictorially present terms", as both the target domain (A FEMALE ATHLETE, in the first metaphor; GYMSHARK, in the second one) and the source domain (AN OFF-ROAD VEHICLE, in the first metaphor; A FEMALE ATHLETE, in the second one) are present in the ad's visual component.

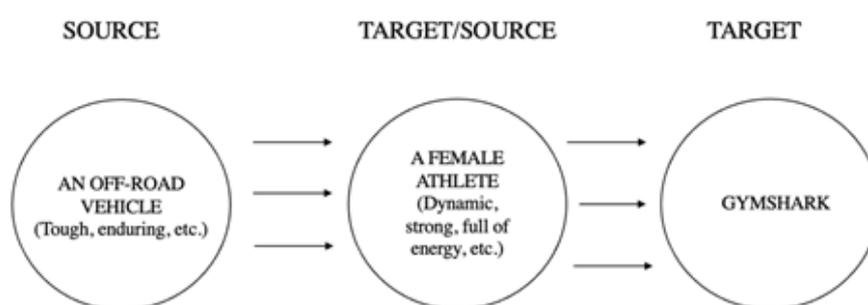


FIGURE 14.

Representation of the metaphorical chain operating in advert 7:  
GYMSHARK IS A FEMALE ATHLETE IS AN OFF-ROAD VEHICLE

The metaphorical chain is therefore based on image schemas of space (CENTER/PERIPHERY, because the pictorial elements providing the source for the conceptual metaphors are placed in the middle of the picture) and of attribute (STRONG/WEAK, because the athlete has a physically fit appearance), being the first poles (CENTER and STRONG) positively loaded in the advert. However, we can also identify a LINK image schema given the visual overlap of the pictorial elements that make up the source and target domain: the customer conceptualizes an identity relation between the athlete and the off-road vehicle. In fact, according to Lakoff (1987, p. 117), identity is normally conceptualized through "an ongoing process of linking, bonding and connecting". Therefore, from the axiological perspective, the mapping provided by this metaphorical chain and its image schemas evoke values such as strength, happiness, confidence and female empowerment. This persuades customers to conceive the Gymshark brand/company as a loyal advocate for gender equality. As a result, Gymshark's advertising discourse aligns itself with positive values beyond the prototypical ethics of any other fitness clothing company (based on values only related to the fitness community's features such as strength, energy and dynamism).

However, Figure 13 displays a second monomodal pictorial metaphor THE ADAPT CAMO SEAMLESS COLLECTION IS A MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT: the features of the source domain A MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE SUIT (such as sharpness and discretion) are mapped onto the target domain THE ADAPT CAMO SEAMLESS COLLECTION. The metaphor is based on image schemas of space (CENTER/PERIPHERY, as the product is placed in the middle of the picture, and NEAR/FAR, as the perspective of the image suggests that the product is closer to the viewer than the rest of pictorial elements). Consequently, the first poles (CENTER, NEAR) are positively loaded in the ad. From the axiological perspective, the conceptual metaphor evokes the values of quality, implacability, sharpness and determination. Through the association of these values –and considering the brand's interest in joining

nowadays women's social claim— customers are persuaded to acquire a product which has further positive social implications. In fact, this particular axiological load is also operating in the third monomodal pictorial metaphor *A WOMAN IS A WARRIOR*: the features of the source domain *A WARRIOR* (such as implacability, strength, eagerness and cunning) are mapped onto the target domain *A WOMAN*. Again, Gymshark's advertising discourse establishes the brand as a supporter of women's situation nowadays by associating with them an image of warriors, and thus of individuals empowered to stand up for themselves and fight for their rights. Moreover, as shown in Figure 15, a monomodal pictorial metonymy *THE CAMOUFLAGE PATTERNED BRA AND LEGGINS FOR THE MILITARY SUIT* provides the source for this metaphor (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002, pp. 133-134). It corresponds, in fact, to the most frequent type of metonymy *THE PART FOR THE WHOLE* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 36).

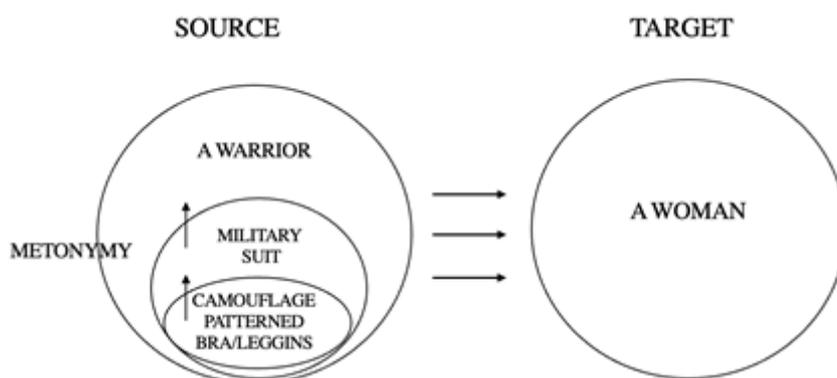


FIGURE 15.

Representation of the metonymic mapping providing the source of metaphor 2 in advert 7: *A WOMAN IS A WARRIOR*

In the same line, the fact that red colour is shared by the off-road vehicle and the athlete's clothes reinforces the conceptual mapping of the metaphorical chain. In addition, red evokes dynamism and energy, emphasizing the aforementioned values of strength and female empowerment associated with the brand. Finally, the grey background adds a graphic neutrality that aims to focus the customer's attention on the product and the brand, marked in red.

4.5.2 Advert 8: Gymshark's Adapt Camo Seamless Collection



FIGURE 16.  
Advert of Gymshark's Adapt Camo Seamless Collection

TABLE 8.  
Cognitive linguistic analysis of the advert displayed in Figure 16

Cognitive structures	metaphorical chain: GYMSHARK IS A FEMALE ATHLETE IS IRON metonymy: THE ATHLETE'S ADAPT CAMO SEAMLESS SET FOR GYMSHARK
Metaphorical chain modality	monomodal pictorial
Metonymy modality	monomodal pictorial
Image schemas	space: NEAR/FAR, CENTER/PERIPHERY attribute: STRONG/WEAK unity: LINK

This advert aims to promote the same product of the previous ad, Gymshark's Adapt Camo Seamless Collection. The first cognitive tool illustrated in Figure 16 is a monomodal pictorial metaphor GYMSHARK IS A FEMALE ATHLETE IS IRON. As displayed in Table 8, this constitutes a "metaphorical chain" (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera, 2011, pp. 21-23) in which two different metaphors are intertwined: first, the features of the source domain IRON (such as toughness and hardness) are mapped onto the target domain A FEMALE ATHLETE; second, the features of the source domain A FEMALE ATHLETE (such as physical fitness, beauty and strength) are mapped onto the target domain GYMSHARK. As previously stated, the metaphorical chain consists of two metaphors "with two pictorially present terms" (Forceville, 1996, p.

126) because both the target domain (A FEMALE ATHLETE, in the first metaphor; GYMSHARK, in the second one) and the source domain (IRON, in the first metaphor; A FEMALE ATHLETE, in the second one) are present in the ad's visual component. Figure 17 represents said metaphorical chain.

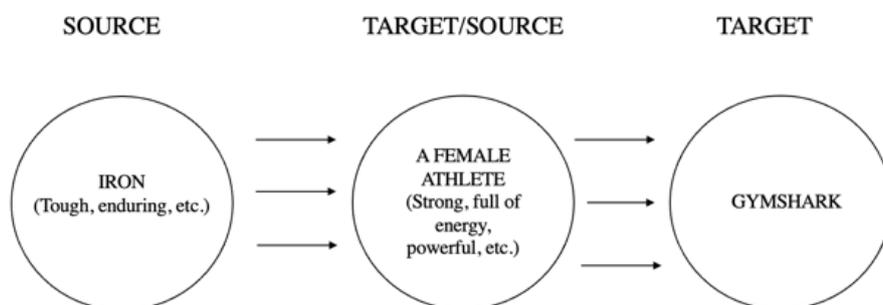


FIGURE 17.

Representation of the metaphorical chain operating in advert 8: GYMSHARK IS A FEMALE ATHLETE IS IRON

Therefore, this cognitive tool follows the same image schemas presented in Figure 13: on the one hand, image schemas of space (NEAR/FAR, as the perspective of the image suggests that the athlete is closer to the viewer than the rest of pictorial elements, and CENTER/PERIPHERY, as the athlete is placed in the middle of the picture) and of attribute (STRONG/WEAK, as the athlete has a physically fit appearance), being the first poles (NEAR, CENTER and STRONG) positively loaded in the ad; on the other hand, a LINK image schema is also operating in the metaphors given the visual overlap of the pictorial elements making up the source and target domain (an identity relation is established between iron and the athlete). As a result, the metaphorical chain is axiologically loaded with a set of values which are associated with Gymshark's brand and products: female strength, toughness and power. As we argued before, Gymshark's advertising discourse aims at promoting items which are related to positive values beyond purely sports-related ones, such as, in this case, gender equality and female empowerment.

Moreover, a monomodal pictorial metonymy THE ATHLETE'S ADAPT CAMO SEAMLESS SET FOR GYMSHARK, represented in Figure 18, provides the target domain for the aforementioned metaphorical chain because the brand's logo is not manifested in the visual message. Therefore, it corresponds to the most frequent type of metonymy A PART FOR THE WHOLE (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 36).

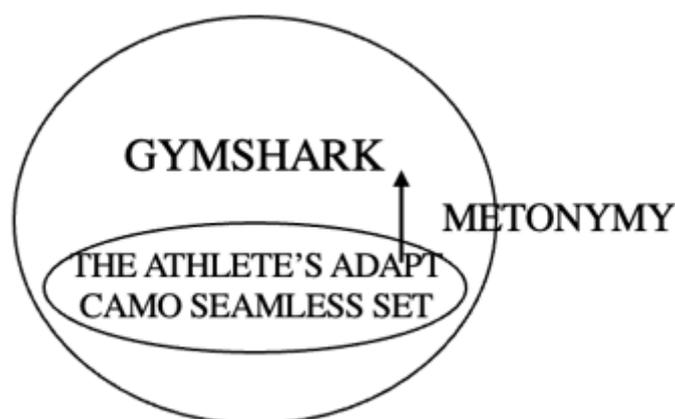


FIGURE 18.

Representation of the metonymic mapping providing the target domain of the metaphorical chain in advert 8: THE ATHLETE'S ADAPT CAMO SEAMLESS SET FOR GYMSHARK

Apart from adding neutrality to the ad's graphic composition in order to make it more appealing for customers (Petrovici, 2014, p. 722), the predominance of the grey colour also contributes to the particular axiological load focused on the values of gender inclusivity and female empowerment that Gymshark wants to be associated with as a brand.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of these adverts of the fitness clothing company Gymshark has shown that cognitive tools, namely metaphor, metonymy and image schemas, constitute a means of persuasion that convinces the consumer to purchase the promoted product in an effective and direct way. In fact, apart from the brand's evident economic growth, the effectiveness of the cognitive techniques used in Gymshark's advertising discourse can be seen in the good reception of the ads posted through social media on the part of the consumer sector. In less than two years, the number of followers on Gymshark's Instagram account has increased from 3.2 million in 2019 (Pike, 2019) to 5.3 million today. More precisely, the Instagram posts of adverts 7 and 8 (employed for the promotion of the recently launched Adapt Camo Seamless Collection) have obtained around 47 000 likes and 534 comments. This feedback reveals a widespread positive reaction to the product on the part of customers who, besides praising the product's quality, emphasize their desire to buy it: "THIRD PIC WILL BE MINE", "so excited!!", "I need it", "wow rip my savings", etc. (Gymshark Women, 2021). Similarly, the promotion carried out through Figures 4 and 7 has achieved a high number of registrations for the Gymshark 66 challenge, as shown in the 729 663 posts showing the hashtag #gymshark66 proposed by the company. The successful impact of the brand's advertising discourse is also noticeable in other social platforms such as YouTube, where Gymshark's account has 290 000 subscribers. Videos like the one from which the company extracted the image that comprises advert 2 have obtained around 243 000 likes and 910 200 views (Gymshark Company, 2019).

The case of Gymshark's ads helps us to see that, from a cognitive perspective, the advertising discourse, despite having become in recent times basically digital, online and presented through social networks, maintains the elements already presented by print advertising, such as the verbal (as shown in these ads' slogans) and visual message (as shown in these ads' use of cognitively meaningful pictures).

Regarding the cognitive structures employed, Gymshark relies heavily on the use of multimodal pictorial-verbal metaphor and metonymy. This indicates that this company places more value on having an advertisement with a powerful visual message, where metaphorical and metonymic relationships are used to associate specific values with the fitness clothing products. It is precisely to obtain that association of values with products that the action of the metaphor, metonymy and image schemas is combined with the use of colour. The colours grey and black, present in almost all the advertisements analyzed, evoke a set of axiologically positive values which, together with the cognitive tools, persuade the consumer to conceive them as "inherent" features of the fitness clothing products and of the Gymshark brand itself. The analysis has shown that these positive values respond to two natures. First, values related to physical fitness such as strength or speed; these evoke the ideal physical aesthetic characteristics to which the consumer sector targeted by the advertisements aspires as a result of physical exercise. These values are likewise evoked by the abundant use of the image schema of force (COMPULSION), also present in almost all the ads. Second, values more related to the current Western ethical system are evoked, such as inclusion and equality. In that sense, this advertising discourse is strategically designed to convince the consumer sector of the relationship between Gymshark's products and a specific system of values which the brand wants to be identified with. Therefore, beyond an ethic based only on fitness and sport, the advertising of Gymshark's products is axiologically loaded to evoke values with important social implications in today's world, such as the inclusion of religious minorities or disabled people and the fight for women's rights.

In short, a cognitive-axiological approach to Gymshark's marketing and advertising techniques is interesting given the undeniable use of cognitive tools in the brand's advertising discourse. The presence of cognitive tools in the ads of this fitness clothing company is not only established as another method of motivating the consumer to buy, but also as a provider of a value-based meaning with which the brand seeks to identify itself and thus present itself competitively in the market.

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## NOTES

- 1 New digital advertising, especially that presented through social media, allows customers to provide feedback on their reaction to ads through comments, likes, dislikes or number of views. This is not possible with traditional forms of advertising discourse such as television or newspaper adverts, as the customer has no opportunity to provide feedback.
- 2 In advertising, verbal and pictorial messages are polysemic in nature and, out of all the meanings they can have, the customer draws one. This “anchorage” technique occurs, in certain cases, when the verbal message “directs the reader through the signifieds of the image [...] to avoid some and receive others” (Barthes, 1964, p. 156). In other cases, “anchorage” happens the other way around; the visual message directs the reader to understand the correct meaning from the verbal message.