VISUAL METAPHTONYMY IN AUTOMOBILE FEMVERTISING

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Abstract

In a 2017 landmark reform, Saudi authorities decided to lift the ban on women driving in this conservative society. In tribute to women's newly-gained freedom to drive, major automakers turned to Twitter to launch creative femvertising campaigns that vividly articulate the female empowering motto 'driving is feminine'. Building on the eloquence of visual rhetoric, which combines the communicative force of figurative language with the expressive potential of visual imagery, automobile advertisers resorted to visual metaphtonymy to efficiently target prospective female consumers. The selection of this visual compound, which emerges from the intricate interplay between metaphor and metonymy, allows for a dynamic interaction between the highlighting function of metonymy and the mapping role of metaphoric thought to establish informed parallels between femininity and automobility. Analysis of survey data on the likeability, complexity and effectiveness of a representative sample of four digital automobile advertisements asserts the role and value of visual metaphtontonymy in automobile femvertising.

Keywords: automobile femvertising; women driving, metaphor, metonymy, visual metaphtonymy

1. Introduction

Patriarchal attitudes and cultural assumptions of male superiority strongly inform the role and status of women in Saudi Arabia. This gendered societal order finds evidence in the long-established ban on women's access to the universally-hailed automobile culture. For decades, Saudi authorities denied women the right to drive, siding blindly with religious clerics who strongly resisted social changes. In response to a female driving campaign in 1990, for instance, Saudi religious police circulated a broadside that bluntly reads 'here are the names of the sluts who advocate vice and corruption on the earth' (Doumato 1992: 31). These dangerous allegations which blame the origin of sin on driving women have

unfairly justified and motivated the ban on women's presence in the driver's seat in Saudi Arabia. Similar violent reactions have also faced the recent Women2Drive campaigns which featured several Saudi women sharing their driving skills on social media in a futile act of defiance against the ban on women's driving (Al-Mufarreh 2017). Likewise, socio-cultural resistance and government oppression strangled these gender-equality initiatives in the cradle.

In June 2017, however, King Salman lifted the ban on women's driving in Saudi Arabia, putting the kingdom on a fast track to modernization and gender equality. Activists unanimously saluted the historic decision, whilst automobile advertisers seized the momentum to, seemingly, bring positive social change. Accordingly, major automakers have axed their female-oriented marketing campaigns on exploring the patent parallels between femininity and automobility. In this pursuit, advertisers took to visual rhetoric to feminize the driving experience without, however, challenging the gendered nature of the Saudi car culture. Walking the fine line between urging women's independence and claiming womanliness, automobile marketers insisted that driving women shall pose no threat to the dominant male order and moral values. If any, the car will make a woman 'more the woman', offering her comfort, privacy and modesty. The use of visual metaphtonymy, a portemanteau term coined by Goossens (1990) to showcase the intricate interaction between metaphor and metonymy, reveals to be an essential rhetorical instrument to reconcile femininity with automobility.

2. Creative advertising and visual rhetoric

Advertising involves dreaming up divergent and relevant means to trigger positive feelings that are transferrable to the advertised brand, product or service (Ang & Low 2000). Creative advertising, in particular, aims to achieve this mental mapping process through many devices, such as rhetoric, humor, analogy, visual imagery, and language play. Each of these instruments emphasizes on particular dimensions of creativity and engages specific cognitive strategies in advertising comprehension and perception. Automobile femvertising, which refers to a new trend in the advertising culture that employs feminist language and agenda to empower women and fight gender inequality, used a combination of figurative language and visual imagery to develop creative, female-oriented marketing strategies that foster women's independence without challenging male authorship. This section will explore some cognitive and cultural prompts and constraints to creativity in advertising, and elaborate on the relevance of visual metaphtonymy in creative femvertising.

2.1. Role of creativity in advertising

The essence of advertising lies in simulating pleasurable sensations in the consumers' minds and clinging to those desirable experiences to influence their

purchasing behaviors (Mårtenson 2003). Creative advertising, which celebrates novel, fresh, unexpected, unusual and original ideas, resorts to incongruity over factual accuracy, and embraces deviation from expectations over standard reality conditions (McQuarrie and Mick 1996). Several studies have established positive correlations between creativity and effectiveness, notably with regard to advertisement attitude, brand recall and purchase intention. Yang & Smith (2009), for instance, found that creative ads exerted audiences elicit more brand-related curiosity and stronger cognitive-based intention to view the ads. Chen, et al. (2016) also evidenced that creative advertising generates a much longer-lasting effect than non-creative advertising. In the same vein, Kemp-Robertson & Barth (2018) showed that creative ads boost sales more rapidly and substantially, when compared to non-creative ads.

This positive impact of creativity on advertising effectiveness stems from cognitive and affective motivations. Decoding creative advertisements is a walk into a labyrinth that would reward consumers with felicity and pleasure when the puzzle is finally solved (Meyers-Levy and Malaviya 1999). Feelings of satisfaction or cognitive relief tend, indeed, to soar as the advertisement's meaning and value unfold. This positive affect would eventually transfer to the advertising content, resulting in the formation of favorable attitude toward the brand and/or product (McStay 2013). Conversely, failure to solve the riddle would generate feelings of frustration and confusion that may culminate in indifference or even rejection of the advertised product and/or brand (Smith, et al. 2008). Therefore, a trade-off between cognitive effort and advertising effect proves to be a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for optimal effectiveness of creative advertising ideas.

Parallel to this cognitive bias, advertisers need to account for socio-cultural differences and constraints. Brand values that consumers can relate to are highly desirable and favorably received, whilst ad content that conflicts with strongly held social norms or deviates from firmly established cultural preferences is unlikely to be appreciated or accepted. A case in point pertains to the pervasiveness of sexual imagery in advertising, which has increased significantly both in frequency and intensity. In print advertising, for instance, the proportion of sex-related ads hiked from less than one-third in 1964 to more than two-thirds in 2003 (Reichert and Lambiase 2003). With the advent of the internet, the use of nudity and sexual imagery in digital advertising has also showed a significant increase to nearly reach a counter-productive tipping point (Lambiase 2003; Lombardot 2007).

Equally important is the existence of cultural and gender biases which constrain such sexualized advertising tendency and challenge the veracity and relevance of the 'sex sells' maxim. Reporting on the results of a study on cultural filtering of advertising, Sawang (2010) showed that Asian male customers are more reticent to the use of sexual imagery in advertising than their North American counterparts. Scholars working from a gender perspective have also found women to be more offended by nudity and unnecessarily explicit sex appeals in advertising compared to male viewers (Reichert and Lambiase 2006; Sengupta and Dahl 2008). This resistance is even more pronounced among

conservative Arab societies where female viewers expressed strong rejection of sexualized ads that overtly contradict their socio-cultural morals and values (Maalej 2001).

The imperative to account for these cultural and gender constraints is even more pressing when it comes to targeting female consumers in hard-line conservative societies such as Saudi Arabia where nudity is a felony. In this context, creative advertising comes to the rescue, exhorting marketers to artfully invoke the aesthetic of femininity rather than project a sexualized, masculine-biased narrative. Automobile advertising, in particular, which has often hailed a gendered approach that commonly asserts the masculine dominance of car culture, needs to revoke this biased image against women in favor of a feminized vision of the automobile culture. To embrace this movement, major automakers have creatively resorted to visual rhetoric to frame automobility within the contours of femininity, and without appealing to sexuality. In this perspective, the use of visual metaphtonymy, a rhetorical tool that creatively instantiates the dynamic interplay between metonymy and metaphor in the visual realm, offers the advantage of combining the argumentative force of figurative language with the aesthetic value of visual imagery to better appeal to female consumers and, concomitantly, promote positive societal change. Based on a thorough literature review of the role and status of visual metaphotonmy in advertising, the next section will elaborate on these theoretical insights to inform our rigorous analysis of most effective femvertising strategies adopted by major automakers to feminize the Saudi car culture following the recent ban-lift on women's driving.

2.2. Emergence of visual metaphtonymy in advertising

The value of metaphor for advertising lies in its genuine potential to trigger curiosity and attention, facilitate the comprehension of complex and abstract information, and elicit positive feelings when intricate metaphoric meaning is deciphered. Building on these properties, advertisers have resorted to metaphor to frame selling messages that have the propensity to be holistically processed without consumers attending to the details of its entailment (Hines 2000). With communication taking a non-verbal turn, considerable research has recently been devoted to the role of visual and multimodal metaphor in advertising. The reasoning is plainly deductive: if metaphor is a property of the mind, it should be cued in various modes, other than the verbal mode (Forceville 1996). This extension of metaphor cueing to the visual and multimodal realms finds evidence in the elaboration of a unified, transmodal account of verbal and nonverbal metaphoric expressions. Invariably, the processing of verbal, visual or multimodal metaphor involves a cross-domain mapping whereby properties of the source domain are mapped onto the target domain (El Refaie 2003; Hidalgo and Kralievic 2011; Goatly 2007; Kövecses 2010; Negro 2013; Pérez-Sobrino 2013; 2016; Urios-Aparisi 2009; Villacañas and White 2013; Yus 2009).

The same reasoning applies to the various modes of metonymic mapping as well. Indeed, the cognitive conception of metonymy as mode of thought rather

than language paves the way to nonverbal manifestations of metonymic thinking. Irrespective of its mode of occurrence, therefore, metonymy is commonly processed in terms of a domain-internal mapping between the source and target entities (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Turner 1989). Taking it one step further, Kövecses and Radden (1998) elaborated a definition of metonymy in terms of an intra-domain mapping process whereby a source-entity provides a mental access to a target-entity, within the same cognitive domain. This conception of metonymic processing endorses a continuum view of metaphor and metonymy, which reduces their difference to the nature of the relationship between the domains involved in the mapping, in that metaphor entails a mapping across different domains, which contrasts with the domain-internal nature of metonymic mapping (Barcelona 2000; Ruiz de Mendoza 2000; Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal 2002).

Several typologies inform the classification of visual metaphors and metonymies. Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal (2002), for instance, distinguish between (i) source-in-target metonymies in which the source domain is a subdomain of the target domain, and (ii) target-in-source metonymies in which the target is a subdomain of the source. This binary typology entails different processing strategies regarding the scope of metonymic projection. Unlike source-in-target metonymies which involve a domain expansion process whereby the mention of part of a domain invokes the whole domain, target-in-source metonymies engage a domain reduction process which foregrounds only part of the domain, backgrounding, consequently, the other parts of the domain (Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal 2002). To illustrate this distinction, a typical example for source-in-target metonymies is given in the sentence '*the fur coat has left without paying*' (Pëna and de Mendoza 2009: 596) in which the fur coat (which is a source) metonymically activates the image of the person (which is a target). In this case, the piece of clothing, which constitutes only a part of the overall characteristics of such a person, expands to become the dominant property of the customer. Target-in-source metonymies, on the other hand, are evidenced in the sentence '*Renault filed safety recall on airbags flow*'. In this particular example, the metonymy involves domain reduction since the target (that is the people in charge of filling safety recall) is understood to be part of a broader domain (which is the Renault company). Evidently, this highlighting function of a single entity of the domain matrix proves to be a distinctive feature of metonymy use in advertising discourse, since metonymic thinking tends to shift focus on a relevant aspect of a concept to mentally access the concept as a whole (Croft 2002; Littlemore 2015). When combined with metaphor, metonymy would therefore offer privileged points of access to generate the cross-domain metaphoric mapping.

As for metaphors, scholars referred to the visual distribution of the source and target domains to elaborate several clear-cut typologies. Forceville (1996), for instance, suggested a triple distinction between similes, hybrids, and contextual metaphors. Unlike similes which juxtapose the source and target domains with no further manipulation, hybrid metaphors merge the two domains into a single, made-up entity. Contextual metaphors, on the other hand, picture one domain

(either the source or the target) at the exclusion of the other, which has to be implicitly inferred. In the same vein, Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) sketched a similar taxonomy along the interaction lines of visual structure and meaning operation. On the structure axis, three categories are identified: juxtaposition, fusion, and replacement; whilst the meaning operation axis distinguishes between connection, similarity and opposition. In all, the authors identify nine distinct types of visual metaphors, generated by the crossing of these two dimensions.

Though informative, these closed typologies fail to exhaustively account for the open-ended creativeness of visual rhetoric. This limitation motivates van Mulken and Le Pair (2012)'s suggestion to explore the visual manifestations of metaphoric expressions along a complexity continuum. Placing these typologies along this continuum yields a progression from juxtaposition/similes as the least complex to replacement/contextual metaphor as the most complex type of visual metaphors. In between, the fusion/hybrid type of metaphors shows moderate processing complexity. Unsurprisingly, this visual configuration prevails in advertising campaigns for it offers optimal tradeoff between processing effort and persuasive effect (Forceville 1996; Phillips and McQuarrie 2004).

Further complexity may arise when visual metaphor and metonymy are combined within the same advertisement, allowing for a dynamic interplay between images and words. Several visual and multimodal figurative configurations are commonly used in advertising discourse, including metaphtonymy, a complex that involves the interaction between metaphor and metonymy; metaphoric amalgams, a complex that consists in the integration of two or more metaphors resulting in a unified conceptual package; and metonymic chains, whereby the metonymic target of one metonymy becomes the source domain for a subsequent metonymic projection. Interestingly enough, a corpus study of 210 advertisements has showed that metaphtonymy holds the highest frequency of appearance, followed closely by metonymic chaining, whilst metaphoric amalgams were the least frequent figurative complexes (Pérez-Sobrino 2016). The prevalence of metaphtonymy in advertising stems from its combination of both the advantages of metonymy (highlighting function) with the characteristics of metaphor (mapping function). More specifically, metonymy offers privileged points of access to generate the metaphoric mapping which ascribes desirable features from a positively-connoted source domain onto the target domain (Pérez-Sobrino 2016; Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal 2002).

This conceptual complementarity between metonymy and metaphor could only facilitate advertisement comprehension, enhancing, therefore, its appreciation and effectiveness. Studies have, indeed, showed that advertisements which use metaphtonymy – whether verbal, visual or multimodal – are processed faster and perceived as more appealing and more effective, compared to those which use metaphor and metonymy in isolation (Pérez-Sobrino, et al. 2018). Such cognitive processing affordance might explain the use of visual metaphtonymy in automobile femvertising campaigns in Saudi Arabia.

3. Analysis of visual metaphtonymy in automobile femvertising:

Since its inception, car advertising has depicted automobility as synonym of freedom and fulfillment (Parkin 2017). Though with different rhetorical texture, this very same narrative has been invoked to advertise female driving in Saudi Arabia. Using a combination of visual metaphor and metonymy, advertisers featured the automobile experience as a dreamful escape from the grips of male guardianship, and a powerful gauge of female fulfillment. To illustrate the role and value of visual metaphtonymy in enhancing advertisement appreciation and increasing femvertising effectiveness, we will analyze four digital advertisements created by major automakers, namely Ford, Kia, Jaguar, and Volkswagen, and launched online via their respective Middle East Twitter accounts in the wake of the ban-lift on women driving in Saudi Arabia.

Images were first selected on the basis of their perceptual metonymic and metaphoric potentials, which means that literal or non-figurative advertisements were not considered in this study. The VisMip procedure (Šorm and Steen 2018) was then applied to detect elements of visual incongruence that violate an expected or literal scenario. Unlike metaphor identification which relies on the existence of cross-domain comparison between the visual units, visual metonymy identification builds on the presence of intra-domain contiguity to establish metonymic relations. For the purpose of this study, the VisMip procedure has been adapted to accommodate cases of visual metonymy. Namely, the procedure for visual metonymy identification could be sketched as follows:

1. Establish general understanding of the image;
2. Identify the conceptual roles of the visual units;
3. Determine whether the connection between these visual units is one of contiguity;
4. Verify that contiguity is intra-domain;
5. If 4 and 5 are true, then mark visual metonymy.

The brand's logo and name placed on top of the automaker's twitter page prompts and constrains brand recognition, whilst the substitution of words for images enhances advertisement appreciation and effectiveness, as evidenced by the results of an empirical survey conducted on 57 female undergraduate students at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia, to evaluate the likeability, complexity and effectiveness of these automobile advertisements.

3.1. The Ford Ad

To salute Saudi women's right to drive, advertisers at Ford Motors Company created a culturally-colored digital advertisement that celebrates Arabian beauty and modesty. The ad features a pair of stunning brown eyes, centrally positioned

over a black background, reflecting dazzlingly on a rectangular-shaped rearview mirror (Fig. 1). The reflection of the brushed eyelashes on the interior mirror indicates the presence of a woman at the driver's seat, whilst the veiling-like background points to the Saudi origin of this female driver.

Figure 1: The Ford Ad (Ford Middle East 2017)

By means of visual fusion, the Ford ad creates a Mona Lisa-like portrait that draws on metonymy to generate multiple part-for-whole correspondences between the eyelashes entity and the woman entity, on the one hand, and the rearview mirror entity and the automobile entity, on the other. Serving a highlighting function, these parallel source-in-target metonymic mappings single out prominent attributes of both the woman source and the automobile target to trigger cross-domain metaphoric mapping between femininity and automobility. The saliency of eyelashes for female beauty and the importance of the rearview mirror for automobile driving are metonymically highlighted to invoke the whole domains of woman and cars, respectively. With these elements brought to the fore, visual metaphoric mapping between the source domain of woman and the target domain of automobile occurs in order to allow the conceptual projection of the attractiveness attribute of woman onto the automobile product and/or brand. The combination of these two figurative compounds generates the visual metaphtonymy (REARVIEW MIRROR FOR) CAR IS (EYELASHES FOR) WOMAN, which conflates automobility with femininity and establishes the vehicle body as an extension of the female body to assert women's identity and independence (Fig. 2).
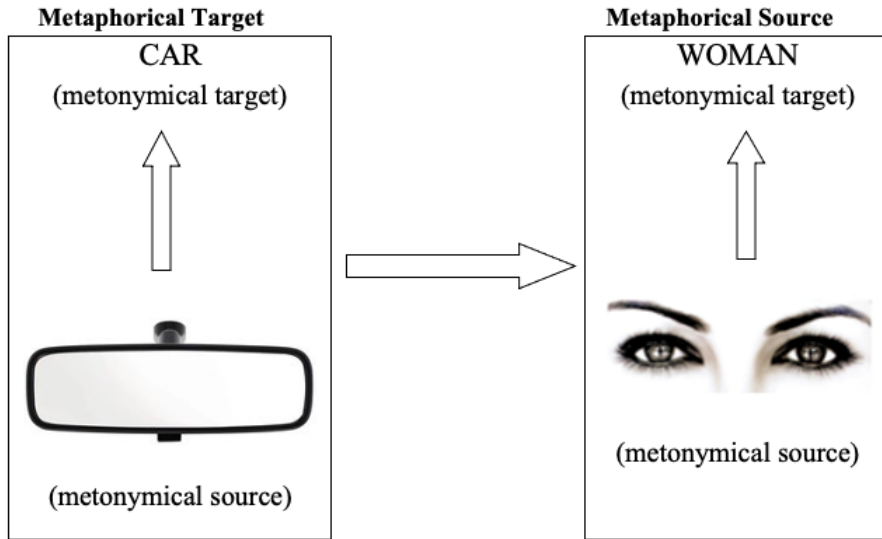
Figure 2: (REARVIEW MIRROR FOR) CAR IS (EYELASHES FOR) WOMAN

Empirical results of a survey study rank the Ford ad higher on the likeability scale, with a mean score of six on a scale of seven. This appreciation for the ad correlates with a moderate complexity rate (mean score of 4 on a 7 points scale) which seems to enhance the automobile brand image, as nearly half of the people surveyed expressed an interest in buying a Ford car. This positive correlation between ad likeability, complexity and effectiveness ensures the relevance of visual metaphtonymy in automobile femvertising.

3.2. The Kia Ad

In similar vein, advertisers at Kia Motors took to visual metaphtonymy to launch a female-oriented advertisement that capitalizes on the attractiveness of cosmetics to project positive, female-friendly brand image. Featuring a manicure session, the visual ad brings together a vast array of symbols and signs to paint a colorful scene that celebrates femininity as synonym of beauty and prosperity. Particularly popular among upper and middle-class Saudi young women, the shiny manicure adds a touch of glamour to the automobile brand for stronger appeal to female customers and closer adherence to social norms which are deemed desirable in women. Drawing on color symbolism and animal representation, the selected fingernails pictures, elegantly displayed on a woman's left-hand, create a festive scene that welcomes Saudi women to the driver's seat. Images of a red heart, a red

Kia car, together with the brand's red and white logo on the thumbnail evoke feelings of love, power and desire, which transfer to the advertised brand. Furthermore, the ad includes a panda face on the ring finger to communicate positive values of peace, strength and good fortune, in addition to a V for victory sign, prominently displayed on the index fingernail, to announce the triumph of female freedom in Saudi Arabia (Fig. 3). Unmistakably, these images resemble emojis – visual pictograms used in social media platforms and digital communication to add emotional content and enrich the structure of a message – suggesting, in filigree, a more youth-oriented, female-focused marketing strategy.

Figure 3: The Kia ad (Kia aljabr 2017)

Parallel part-for-whole metonymic mappings between 'fingernails' and 'woman', on the one hand, and 'logo' and 'car', on the other, offer privileged points of access to decipher the metaphoric transfer of salient features of the manicuring practice onto the motoring experience. The source-in-target visual metonymies – FINGERNAILS FOR WOMAN and LOGO FOR CAR – generate relevant domain-internal correspondences which serve as reference points to prompt the metaphoric association between the woman source domain and the automobile target domain. In the same fashion as fingernails are part of the female body, the driving experience constitutes part of the female identity. The resulting visual

metaphtonymy – (LOGO FOR) CAR IS (FINGERNAILS FOR) WOMAN – builds on the highlighting function of visual metonymy and the mapping function of visual metaphor to establish the conceptual connection between femininity and automobility (Fig. 4).

<div align="center">
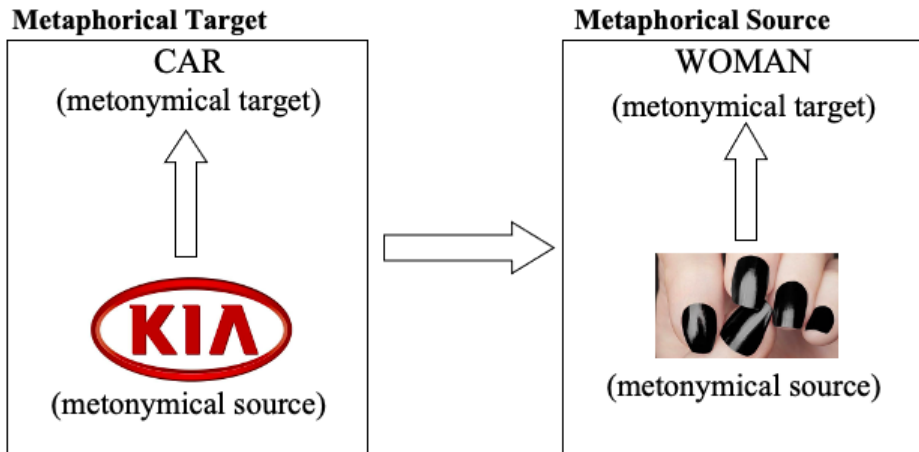
Figure 4: (LOGO FOR) CAR IS (FINGERNAILS FOR) WOMAN

</div>

Adopting the same marketing narrative and rhetorical strategy, the Kia ad showed, however, a less than average complexity with a mean score of 2 on a scale of 7. Failure to challenge the viewers seems to negatively impact the likeability metric which also scored below the average rate (mean score 3 on a 7 points scale). Consequently, most surveyed people showed little interest in the brand, with less than 5% expressing an intention to buy a Kia car, evidencing, therefore, the intricate correlation between advertising likeability, complexity and effectiveness.

3.3. The Jaguar Ad

Capitalizing on the univeral reverence for British elegance, advertisers at the luxurious Jaguar brand created a colorful ad that gives an iconic touch to women's purse. Through visual fusion, the ad adds a new jewel to female beauty accessories. Casually displayed within an assortment of fahion items and cosmetics products, including a pair of sunglasses, a perfume, a bracelet, a cell phone, a watch, a foundation cream, a makeup brush and a lipstick tube, the Jaguar car key ornament elevates the glamour girl ideal to higher dimensions (Fig. 5). By extending the domain of cosmetics to integrate the remote car key item, the Jaguar

ad redefines the contours of female beauty to establish a fashionable association between femininity and automobility.

Figure 5: The Jaguar ad (Jaguar MENA 2017)

Parallel part-in-whole visual metonymies generate relevant within-domain mappings that inform the scope and nature of the metaphoric cross-domain mapping. The highlighting potential of the source-in-target visual metonymies ACCESSORIES FOR WOMAN and KEY FOR CAR prompts the cross-domain metaphorical mapping of salient attributes of the woman source domain, namely elegance and attractiveness, onto the automobile target domain. The advertisement's visual fusion, together with its complex figurative twist generate the visual metaphtonymy (KEY FOR) CAR IS (ACCESSORIES FOR) WOMAN. The relevance of this figurative compound for digital advertising lies on its capacity to highlight core features of femininity and transfer them onto the targeted domain of automobility to project a female-friendly automobile brand image (Fig. 6).
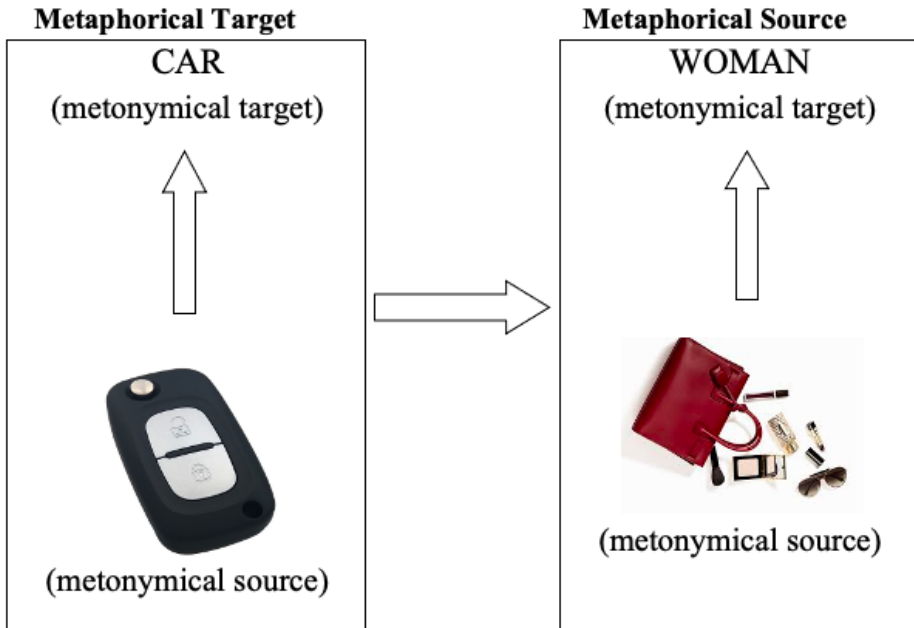
Figure 6: (KEY FOR) CAR IS (ACCESSORIES FOR) WOMAN

Particularly intriguing and appealing for Saudi young urban women, the accessories-based ad is ranked high on the likeability scale with a mean score of six out of a seven points scale. This positive evaluation of the ad, coupled with its relative complexity (rated 4 on a scale of 7) may help explain the large interest in the brand, as two-thirds of the surveyed people expressed an intention to buy a jaguar car.

3.4. The Volkswagen Ad

Using a multimodal combination of text, gesture and picture, the Volkswagen automaker launched a visually-creative, culturally-tailored advertisement to promote women driving in Saudi Arabia. The image shows two clenched fists, dyed with henna tattoos, centered within an all-black background. In between, a white-colored slogan reads in Arabic 'my turn', while the three-dimensional blue-and-silver logo, together with the legendary brand name written beneath it, are clearly visible in the lower right corner (Fig. 7). As a talisman for luck and protection, henna floral tattoos are widely used across the Arab world to decorate the bride's hands and feet during wedding celebrations. The particular choice of the lily flower tattoo, symbol of happiness and joy, casts the ban-lifting event in

festive terms; whilst the clenched fists gesture together with the affirmative motto 'my turn' verbalizes a positive and assertive state of mind.

Figure 7: The Volkswagen ad (Volkswagen Middle East 2017)

Emblematic of femininity, the henna tattoos, together with the polished thumbnails, stand – metonymically – for a female person, sitting proudly at the driver's seat. In the same vein, the brand's name and logo together with the standard steering wheel hand position visually instantiate part-for-whole metonymic connections with the targeted automobile entity. Serving a highlighting function, these source-in-target visual metonymies help expand the woman source domain and the automobile target domain to generate the cross-domain metaphoric mapping between the female status and the motoring venture. The resulting multimodal metaphtonymy (STEERING WHEEL FOR) CAR IS (TATTOED HANDS FOR) WOMAN projects salient features of femininity onto automobility, exalting, in passing, the vigorous message: driving is feminine (Fig. 9).

Metaphorical Target   **Metaphorical Source**
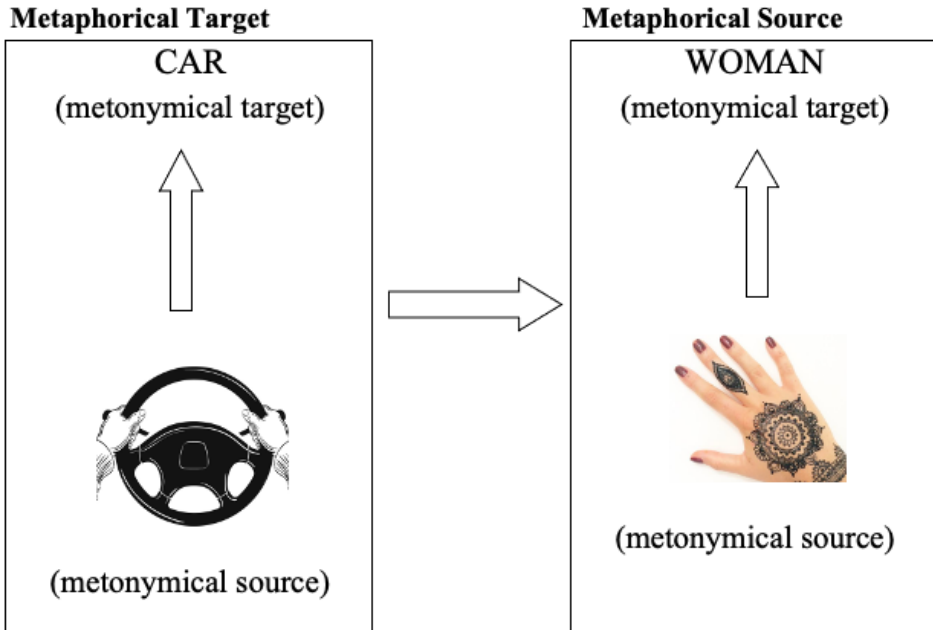
Figure 9: (STEERING WHEEL FOR) CAR IS (TATTOOED HANDS FOR) WOMAN

The female-empowering texture of this multimodal ad seems to trigger a higher likeability rate, which reached a mean score of 5 out of a 7 points scale. Combined with a moderate conceptual complexity (rated 4 on a scale of 7), this positive ad appreciation increases the purchase intention, which showed a mean score of 5 on an effectiveness scale of 7 points. Furthermore, the advertisement's combination of text, image and gesture helps, in retrospect, to debunk the misogynist narrative over women's poor driving skills, enhancing, therefore, its likeability and effectiveness. In fact, social resistance to women's freedom of mobility gave rise to the universal myth of the incompetent female driver (Clarke 2007). In the Saudi context, Sheikh Alhijri, an influential religious cleric, bluntly argued, for instance, that "*women don't deserve to drive because they only have a quarter of a brain!*" (Rannard & Shukri 2017). Such insulting disdain of women's potency has long motivated the Saudi gendered view of automobility as an exclusively male privilege.

4. Conclusion

In a gendered Saudi car culture where automobility rhymes with masculinity, male dominance has long confined women to the passenger's seat. To cater to this

promising niche market, automobile advertisers need to ascertain the compatibility between femininity and automobility without challenging the prevalent male guardianship system. *Striving to achieve this endeavor, advertisers resorted to a visual rhetoric* to articulate a female empowering message that celebrates women's emancipation and freedom to drive. Cautious, however, not to overturn the dominant male order, automakers insisted that women behind the wheel will embrace their femininity, and the 'new' social order will retain the stability of the old.

Imagery of cosmetics and fashion, realms commonly associated with women, were carefully selected as salient source domains to promote female motoring culture. References to women-centered areas of consumption such as fashion, fragrance and cosmetics are reflective though of a stereotyped femvertising approach that markets a new sector by referring to another feminized market sector. From this perspective, visual metaphtonymy proves to be a useful femvertising instrument, since it combines the advantages of both the highlighting role of visual metonymy and the mapping function of visual metaphor. Furthermore, visual metaphtonymy offers moderate complexity which enhances advertising likeability and effectiveness, as evidenced by the large interest of the surveyed people in the advertised brands and products. These results seem to corroborate findings in literature which emphasize the role and value of visual metaphtonymy in advertising.

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Bio-note

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