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A Cognitive Approach to Commercial Brand Names of Basic and Luxury Products

Abstract

While the global branding industry increasingly relies on sophisticated naming strategies, the underlying cognitive mechanisms remain under-researched from a linguistic perspective. This study addresses this gap by investigating the pervasiveness and productivity of conceptual operations and conceptual interaction patterns — specifically metaphors, metonymies, metaphtonymies, and metonymic chains — in the branding of basic versus luxury products. Utilizing a corpus of 200 brand names (100 basic/utilitarian and 100 luxury products), the research employs a Cognitive Linguistics framework to determine how the nature of a product influences its naming strategy. Quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal a predominant reliance on metonymy (79.84%) over metaphor (20.16%) across both categories. This preference is attributed to the cognitive efficiency of metonymic operations, which maximize communicative effects with minimal cognitive cost. However, significant asymmetries emerge when comparing product types. Basic products (namely, water and milk) primarily utilize simpler metonymic chains and domain reduction operations to emphasize origin and naturalness while maintaining a low cognitive load. Conversely, luxury products (namely, wine and chocolate) exhibit higher conceptual complexity, showing a significantly greater frequency of metaphtonymies and comparison-based metaphors. These complex patterns serve to imbue luxury items with additional emotional and evaluative attributes that justify their premium status and price. The findings demonstrate that brand naming is not a random creative process but is systematically grounded in cognitive operations tailored to the product’s market category. This research contributes to both cognitive onomastics and marketing theory by providing empirical evidence of how specific conceptual interaction patterns are strategically deployed to steer consumer interpretation and brand differentiation.

Keywords

commercial onomastics; cognitive semantics; brand names; naming; conceptual operations; conceptual interaction

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Коммерческие наименования товаров повседневного спроса и класса люкс: когнитивный подход

Аннотация

Данное исследование посвящено продуктивности концептуальных операций и схем взаимодействия когнитивных структур — в частности, метафор, метонимий, метафтонимий и метонимических цепочек — в нейминге товаров повседневного спроса и товаров класса люкс. В статье на основе анализа корпуса из 200 наименований брендов (сто — базовых / утилитарных и сто — класса люкс) с опорой на методологию когнитивной лингвистики изучается, как сегмент рынка, для которого предназначен продукт, влияет на стратегию его именования. Количественный и качественный анализ выявил преобладание метонимии (79,84 %) по сравнению с метафорой (20,16 %) в обеих категориях. Это предпочтение объясняется когнитивной эффективностью метонимических операций, которые максимизируют коммуникативный эффект при минимальных когнитивных затратах. Однако при сравнении типов продуктов обнаруживаются значимые различия. Для именования базовых продуктов (в частности, воды и молока) в основном используются более простые метонимические цепочки и операции сужения семантической области, что помогает подчеркнуть происхождение и натуральность продукта, при этом минимизируя когнитивную нагрузку. Напротив, для названий товаров класса люкс (а именно, вина и шоколада) характерна более высокая концептуальная сложность, проявляющаяся в значительно большей частоте использования метафтонимий и метафор, основанных на сравнении. Эти сложные паттерны служат для наделения предметов роскоши дополнительными эмоциональными и оценочными атрибутами, которые оправдывают их премиальный статус и цену. Результаты показывают, что создание названий брендов — не случайный творческий процесс, а система, основанная на когнитивных операциях, адаптированных к рыночной категории продукта. Данное исследование вносит вклад как в когнитивную ономастику, так и в теорию маркетинга, демонстрируя, как конкретные паттерны концептуального взаимодействия могут использоваться для управления потребительской интерпретацией и дифференциации бренда.

Ключевые слова

коммерческая ономастика; когнитивная семантика; названия брендов; нейминг; концептуальные операции; концептуальное взаимодействие

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1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the field of branding and, especially, in the strategies used by marketing experts in the name creation process [Beverland 2005]. However, little research has been carried out from a linguistic, or much less from a Cognitive Linguistics, perspective. The general objective of this paper is to provide empirical evidence for the claim that the use of certain cognitive operations in the naming process is related to the nature of the target product. This piece of research is guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Which cognitive model — i.e., metaphor or metonymy — is more prevalent in a limited corpus of brand names? Are the aforementioned cognitive models more frequent in the brand names of basic or luxury products?

Research Question 2: Which cognitive operations underlying metaphoric and metonymic cognitive models are more productive when dealing with the brand names of essential versus luxury products?

Research Question 3: Do the brands in our corpus exhibit patterns of conceptual interaction? What is the productivity of these patterns in relation to each of the analytical categories under scrutiny?

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 offers a description of the main theoretical tools needed for the analysis of the corpus data, including a detailed description of the conceptual models under scrutiny and their corresponding cognitive operations. Section 3 offers a brief overview of the yet scarce literature on the topic. Section 4 describes the corpus of analysis. Section 5 reports on the results of the analysis based on the research questions guiding this investigation. The final section summarises the results and establishes new lines for further research.

2. Conceptual Metaphor, Conceptual Metonymy, and Conceptual in Onomastics: Theoretical Framework for Brand Names

Within Cognitive Linguistics, Lakoff [1997] defined *cognitive models* as "conventional conceptual representations of the way we perceive and organize reality (encyclopaedic knowledge)". He distinguished four types of *cognitive models* — i.e., frame-like structures, image schemas, metaphor and metonymy — considered as consistent conceptual structures that capture any aspect of reality that is relevant for cognition and for communication. Nevertheless, of these four kinds of cognitive models, metaphorical and metonymic cognitive models are of special relevance to our study. Let us, therefore, offer a characterisation of each of them, as well as of the cognitive operations underlying these models of knowledge organization.

2.1. Conceptual Metaphor

Contrary to the traditional view of metaphor as a rhetorical figure of speech used mainly for embellishment and literary purposes, Lakoff and Johnson [1980] defined conceptual metaphor as a mental mapping (a set of correspondences) from a source domain (usually a concrete and easy to understand notion) to a target domain (i.e., an abstract complex concept).

This description is illustrated in Figure 1 in relation to the LOVE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor as analysed in Lakoff & Johnson [1980].

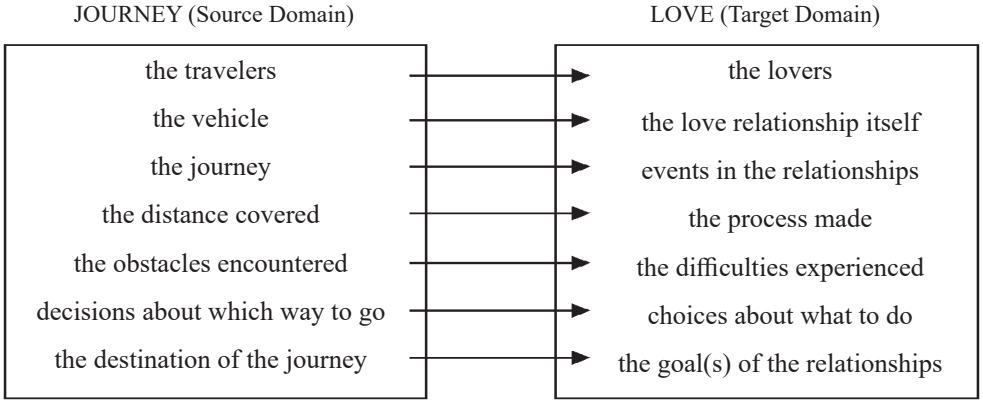

Figure 1. Set of correspondences for LOVE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor

An abstract domain — i.e., an emotion — is conceptualised in terms of a physical experience — i.e., a journey. From previous experiences in our

interaction with the real world, a series of internal projections have been established between the domains of LOVE RELATIONSHIPS and the domain of JOURNEYS. The ontological correspondences between those domains (see Figure 1) enable us to talk, and most importantly, to reason about the abstract notion of love.

Based on this approach, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa [2014] highlighted the idea that conceptual metaphor has been used as a cover term for two types of metaphorical operations: (1) Resemblance Metaphors and (2) Correlation Metaphors. Let us explain each of them in detail.

Resemblance metaphor has been defined in terms of perceptual similarity. Characterised by a contrastive nature, its source and target domains possess a series of common traits — either physical or conceptual. In linguistic expressions such as "Achilles is a lion", *Achilles* and *lion* are individual entities that share a series of traits (aggressiveness, ferocity or instinct), which are clustered together under the umbrella of the notion of "courage" [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa 2014: 41]. This cognitive process enables the mapping of attributed behavioural features of lions onto corresponding features of Achilles as a warrior.

On the contrary, *correlation metaphors*, which correspond to Grady's [1997] *Primary Metaphors*, are characterised by the fact that their source domains are bodily grounded in sensory-motor experiences; which gives rise to metaphorical expressions such as "I was feeling low but he knew how to cheer me up", which is based on the primary metaphor HAPPY IS UP. Grady [1997] describes primary metaphors as the pairing of different concepts during childhood because of their tendency to occur together in reiterated experiences. Consequently, metaphors of this kind are acquired automatically and unconsciously. In his 1997 foundational work, Grady offered a comprehensive list of primary metaphors. However, recent studies [Pérez-Hérnandez & Huguet Varea 2022] have elaborated on this initial list of primary metaphors, adding further primary mappings such as IMPORTANT IS BRIGHT, which is based on a recurring experiential correlation between the things that are bright and their cognitive salience.

2.2. Conceptual Metonymy

Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa define conceptual metonymy as a "cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same conceptual domain" [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa 2014: 13]. Additionally, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez [2000] revealed the existence of two possible kinds of metonymic operations that can be established between a matrix domain and subdomain: source-in-target and target-in-source metonymies.

On the one hand, source-in-target metonymies are based on a domain expansion operation. It consists in "broadening the amount of conceptual material that we associate with the initial point of access to a concept, which is intrinsically prominent" [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa 2014: 92]. As Figure 2 shows, the source domain in the metonymy is more specific than the target domain, thus offering an increasing amount of relevant conceptual material.

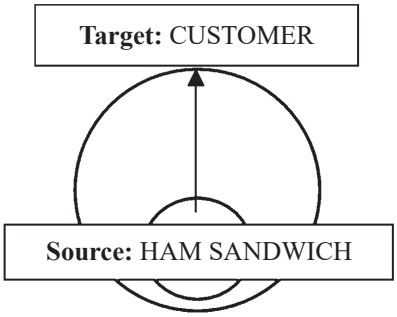

Figure 2. Domain expansion operations
based on Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez's [2003: 114]
example "The ham sandwich is waiting for his check"

On the other hand, target-in-source metonymies are based on a domain reduction operation, which involve "cutting down the amount of conceptual material used to construct the meaning interpretation" [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2011: 106]. See Figure 3:

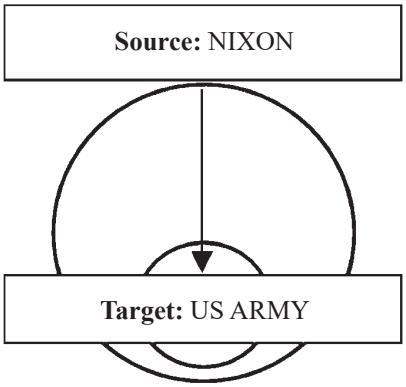

Figure 3. Domain reduction operation
based on Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez's [2003: 114]
example "Nixon bombed Hanoi"

2.3. Patterns of Conceptual Interaction

The productivity of patterns of conceptual interaction has received much less attention. The first attempt to analyse metaphor-metonymy interactional patterns was carried out by Goossens [1990], setting the basis for subsequent studies [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 1997; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Diez Velasco 2002; Galera Masegosa 2010; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa 2011; 2012; 2014; Herrero 2009; Pérez-Sobrino 2017]. The following patterns included in [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegora 2014: 110] are of special relevance to the present study:

(1) Metonymic expansion of the metaphoric source. This pattern of interaction is characterised by an expansion of the conceptual material of the metaphoric source by means of a metonymy. The metonymic expansion provides access to the whole scenario, "used as the source domain for a metaphoric mapping onto another domain that denotes the situation that speaker wants to reason about" [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegora 2014: 108].

(2) Metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target. The present interaction pattern is also intended to strike a balance between meaning effects and conceptual effort. This combination is displayed in expressions such as "to zip his lip", in which the metonymy in the target domain develops partial conceptual material for a proper meaning decoding. Therefore, the metonymic expansion facilitates the reasoning process based on the previous metaphor.

(3) Metonymic reduction of a metaphoric source. In this case, the metaphor-metonymy interaction is based on an operation of metonymic reduction of the source domain of the metaphor. If we take the idiomatic expression *to have a nose for something*, we will observe that the nose of a person used as the source domain of the metaphor under scrutiny, stands for the ability to smell, directly associated to the sense. In this connection, a metonymic reduction is being applied to highlight this ability from all the possibilities associated to the instrument — i.e., the nose. As a consequence of this metonymic process, a metaphoric connection is developed between the sense of smelling and a person's intuition — i.e., the target domain.

(4) Metonymic reduction of one of the correspondences of the metaphoric target. This interaction pattern "involves the highlighting of a relevant aspect of the metonymic matrix domain within the metaphorical target domain" [Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegora 2014: 115].

2.4. Brand Names in Onomastics

While conceptual metaphor and metonymy have been widely explored within Cognitive Linguistics, their implications for onomastics, particularly in the context

of brand names, have been less systematically addressed. The remainder of this section aims to outline why the nature of brand names as a peripheral yet functionally significant onomastic category demands a closer look into the particularities of their metaphorical and metonymic grounding.

From an onomastic perspective, proper names — especially anthroponyms and toponyms — are a distinct conceptual and functional category. They primarily serve a referential function, anchoring unique individuals or places in discourse. Unlike common nouns, which denote categories or general concepts, proper names typically lack internal compositional semantics, and their meaning is often context-dependent, relying heavily on shared cultural knowledge or social indexing [Coates 2006; Van Langendonck 2007]. Brand names are often positioned between proper and common nouns, functioning as quasi-proper names. In the onomastics field, they are usually treated as non-prototypical proper names [Van Langendonck & Van de Velde 2016], given that they both refer to individual entities (e.g., Nike, Evian) and carry descriptive or emotional content, especially in advertising contexts.

In this hybrid position, metonymy becomes the dominant cognitive operation [Pérez-Sobrino 2016a; 2016b; 2017]. Many brand names exploit place-for-product, producer-for-product, or ingredient-for-product mappings (e.g., *Monte Cantabria* = wine from the Monte Cantabria area in La Rioja-Spain), which aligns with how proper names can encode indexical or associative meaning.

Conceptual metaphor also plays a relevant role in brand names where the evaluative or evocative function of the name becomes central. As Pérez-Hernández [2011; 2013] has shown, such metaphorical operations found in brand names tend to be strategically deployed to increase affective and emotional impact [Pérez-Hernández 2019]. However, they are also often anchored in metonymic base structures, confirming the productive interaction (e.g., metaphtonymy) between the two processes in commercial naming. While metonymy has been shown to be relevant for brand name design regardless of the nature of the target product or service, the type and role of metaphors involved in brand names may be sensitive to the need of highlighting descriptive, evaluative or emotional aspects of the target product. These needs, in turn, may vary depending on the nature of the latter, e.g., utilitarian *vs*. luxury products. This paper seeks to shed some light into this matter.

3. State of the Art

Specific research on naming from a cognitive linguistics perspective is not extensive. Several authors, however, have focused their attention on the role

of cognitive operations in connection with brand names design [Felices Lago 1999; Coulter et al. 2001; Gontijo & Zhang 2007; Kraljevic Mujic 2009; Hidalgo-Downing & Kraljevic Mujic 2011; Pérez-Hernández 2011; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2019; Pérez-Hernández & Huguet 2022].

Pérez-Hernández [2011: 369] explained that "a finite set of cognitive operations <…> can account for the drawing of inferences on the basis of the cue provided by the brand name", yet professional naming experts fail to identify them. In this regard, in her paper she highlights the importance of cognitive operations and their role within the process of brand name creation. In fact, her results were, later, corroborated by Kim and Ko's [2012] analysis of the role of conceptual metaphors in brand names.

Pérez-Hernández [2013] also brought awareness on the relationship between cognitive operations and the naming process; and its importance in explaining how consumers understand, interpret and respond to certain stimuli. In the same vein, authors such as Kraljevic Mujic and Hidalgo-Downing [2013] have analysed multimodal metaphors in ICT advertisements.

More recent studies include [Pérez-Hérnandez 2015], which focuses on two specific cognitive operations: strengthening and mitigation in a corpus of Spanish and English brand wine names; and [Azzahraa El Yamlahi & Cortés de los Ríos 2022] which examined the metonymic grounding of several Moroccan cosmetics brand names.

Finally, it is worth highlighting specific research in the conceptual interaction of cognitive models. For instance, Pérez-Hernández [2019] observed the existence of metaphor-metonymy interactions in the context of fast food advertisements. Along the same lines, Pérez-Sobrino [2016] studied new meaning-making practices based on cognitive models and their conceptual interaction in multimodal contexts.

Most of these studies, however, are of a generic nature. To the best of our knowledge, the cognitive operations and conceptual interactions underlying brand names in relation to different product categories has not been the object of investigation to date.

4. Corpus of Study

The data used in this study consists of 200 brand names, which include those of basic and luxury products. To guarantee the diversity of our corpus of study, we have compiled 100 brand names for each of the aforementioned product categories, selecting two representative samples to synthesise the significant list of products that make up each category. The category of basic (utilitarian) products

includes brand names for water and milk companies. The luxury products chosen for analysis are chocolate and wine. Brand names for water, milk, and chocolate products were extracted from simple searches carried out on the Google website. Wine brands were taken from *Lavinia*, an Internet site that compiles national and international wines and wineries. Yet, in all cases, their legitimacy was consulted on the OEPM, a search engine that contain a complete list of national and international registered brands.

As concerns the corpus selection, the initial list of brands for each of the four categories was first manually analysed in search of those brands involving at least one of the cognitive operations listed in Section 2. After this initial stage, the first 50 brand names for each of the categories under scrutiny — i.e., milk, water, chocolate and wine — were selected, in the exact order in which they were retrieved from our web searches.

The selected brands were then examined to determine the cognitive operations and patterns of conceptual interaction at work.

Tables 1 and 2 summarise the brand names selected for each of the categories (basic *vs*. luxury products) and corresponding products (water, milk *vs*. chocolate and wine).

Table 1

Basic products: categories and brand names

Category	Brand names
Water	*Abbey Well*, *Agua Mineral Natural Tipperary*, *Vida*, *Aqcua Santa María*, *Aqua Panna*, *Aquabona*, *Aquafina*, *Bezoya*, *Cabreiroa*, *Crystal Clear*, *Crystal Geyser*, *Callawey Blue*, *Clean Alaskan Glacial*, *Deer Park*, *Dasani*, *Deep River Rock*, *Déjà Blue*, *Ethos Water*, *Evian*, *Font D'Or*, *FJORD*, *FIJI*, *Glaceau Smartwater*, *Gallowey Blue*, *Hint*, *Ice Mountain*, *Icelandic Glacial*, *Mountain Valley Spring Water*, *Jermuk*, *Lauretana*, *Lurisa Water*, *Lanjaron*, *Malvem Water*, *Ozarka*, *Oasis*, *Pump*, *Sant Aniol*, *San Pellegrino*, *Selters*, *Solán de Cabras*, *Solares*, *Spa*, *Volvic*, *Vichy Catalan*, *Vidago*, *Viladrau*, *Vittel*, *Voss*, *Zephyrhills*
Milk	*Alteza*, *Beyena*, *Blensir*, *Bomilk*, *Borden Milk*, *Califia*, *Campobueno*, *Central Lechera Asturiana*, *Clover*, *Cornish Moo*, *COVAP*, *Cowhead*, *Cravendale*, *Cremosita*, *Dairyland*, *Darigold*, *Deleite*, *El Buen Pastor*, *El Castillo*, *El Cubillo*, *Fairlife*, *Feiraco*, *Gandy's*, *Gippy La Vaquera*, *Lacpur*, *Lacturale*, *Leche Celta*, *Llet Nostra*, *Lucerne*, *Maple Hill*, *Mayfield Dairy Farms*, *Meadow Fresh*, *Muu*, *Moo*, *Notrel*, *Oat Yeah*, *Oatly*, *Organic Valley*, *Pascual*, *Puleva*, *Ram*, *Rude Health*, *Shamrock farms*, *Snapea*, *Thirsty Cow*, *Tierra de Sabor*, *Trader Joe's*, *Vaqueros del Sur*, *Vega Oro*

Table 2

Luxury products: categories and brand names

Category	Brand names
Chocolate	*Almond Joy*, *Aphrodite chocolates*, *Aztec*, *Baixas*, *Bounty*, *Cadbury*, *Caffarel*, *Camilla Bloch*, *Charbonnel and Walker*, *Chiradelli*, *Côte d'Or*, *Delaviuda*, *Double Decker*, *Duffy's*, *Ferrero*, *Galaxy*, *Godiva*, *House of Dorchester*, *Hershey's*, *La Joya*, *Lacasa*, *Land*, *Leonidas*, *Lindt*, *MAHALI*, *M&M's*, *Maychoco*, *Mendaro Saint-Gerons*, *Milka*, *Monper chocolate*, *Montezuma's*, *Natrul*, *Neuhaus*, *Nestlé*, *Nicks*, *Oriol Balaguer*, *Reese's*, *Sal de Ibiza*, *Simon Coll*, *The Chocolatier*, *Thorntons*, *Toblerone*, *Tony's Chocolate*, *Trapa*, *Twirl*, *Valor*, *Valrhona*, *Venchi*, *Whitakers*, *Willie's Cacao*
Wine	*Abel Mendoza*, *Alto Moncayo*, *Alonso y Pedrajo*, *Amancio*, *Azabache*, *Bajoz*, *Baynos*, *Bienvenido Muñoz*, *Blanco y en Botella*, *Chaval*, *Confesor*, *Loco*, *Cucú cantaba la rana*, *Dominio de Eguren*, *El Rayo*, *El Grillo*, *El Hombre Vala*, *El Marciano*, *El Nido*, *El Pacto*, *Imperial*, *La Charla*, *La Escucha*, *La Gresca*, *La Pelea*, *Lola*, *Luis Cañas*, *Luna Lunera*, *Macho Man*, *Macán*, *Malbec*, *Marlo*, *Mencía y Godello*, *Miguel Merino*, *Mirto*, *Muga*, *Múrice*, *Ontañón*, *Paco*, *Pata Negra*, *Peleón*, *Plácet*, *Predicador*, *Que bonito cacareaba*, *Ramón Bilbao*, *Rias Baixas*, *Ribera del Duero*, *San Vicente*, *Sierra Cantabria*, *Viñas de Monte*

5. Results and Discussion

This section offers the results of our analysis of the brand names in the corpus by following the organization of our specific research questions listed in Section 1.

5.1. Distribution of Cognitive Models

The first line of enquiry of this study (Research Question 1) concerns the identification and prevalence of conceptual metonymy, metaphor, and their patterns of interactions, within the scrutinized corpus. We would expect a higher level of conceptual complexity in the case of luxury products, since conceptual complexity has often been shown to correlate with an increase in consumers' attraction to the products.

Figure 4 shows the frequency of occurrence (in percentages) of a total of 243 cognitive models identified in the corpus. As can be observed, metonymy is more abundant than metaphor in the brand names under scrutiny. A total of 79.84% of all the brand names in our corpus have been annotated as cases of metonymy or related complexes — i.e., metonymic chains — whereas the 20.16% of the names have been classified as cases of metaphor. As previous studies have demonstrated,

"this is probably due to the conceptually basic nature of metonymy as a reference point" [Pérez-Sobrino 2016a: 78].

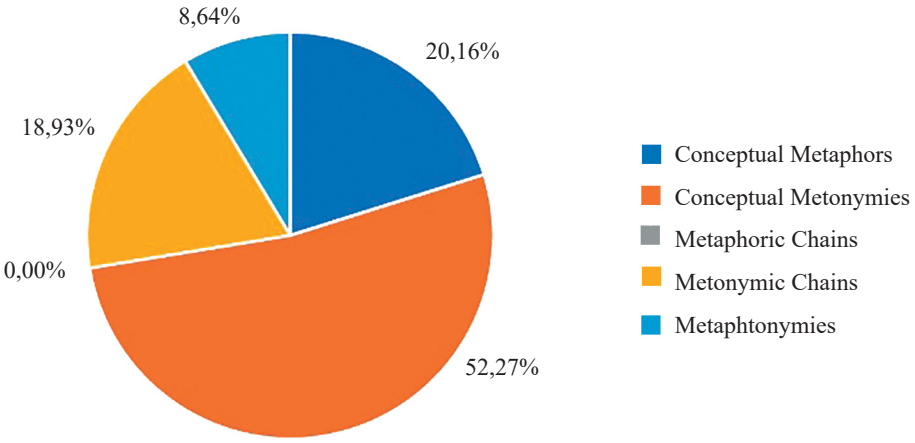

Figure 4. Distribution of cognitive models in the corpus

Metonymic chains are almost as frequent (18.93%) as conceptual metaphors (20.16%) within the corpus. This preference for the combination of metonymies could be based on the ability to supply a point of access to the product to which the brand name designates.

Finally, it is worth noting that the number of *metaphtonymies* is the lowest among the cognitive operations identified in the corpus of analysis, reaching just an 8.64% of the total amount of cognitive models found in our corpus.

Even though the frequency of occurrence varies in relation to the category under study, as illustrated in Figure 5, this output shows that the use of metonymies is more extended in the corpus of analysis, thus highlighting its relevance for the field of naming [cf. Pérez-Sobrino 2016a].

Although it comes as no surprise, the frequency of occurrence of conceptual metaphors and metonymies for each of the categories under scrutiny — i.e., basic and luxury products — shows some slight variations as can be observed in Figure 5.

As evidenced above, although the use of conceptual metaphor is lower than that of conceptual metonymy in all categories, luxury products make a slightly more extensive use of this conceptual model than basic products. The use of metaphtonomies is also slightly more frequent in the case of brand names belonging to the category of luxury products.

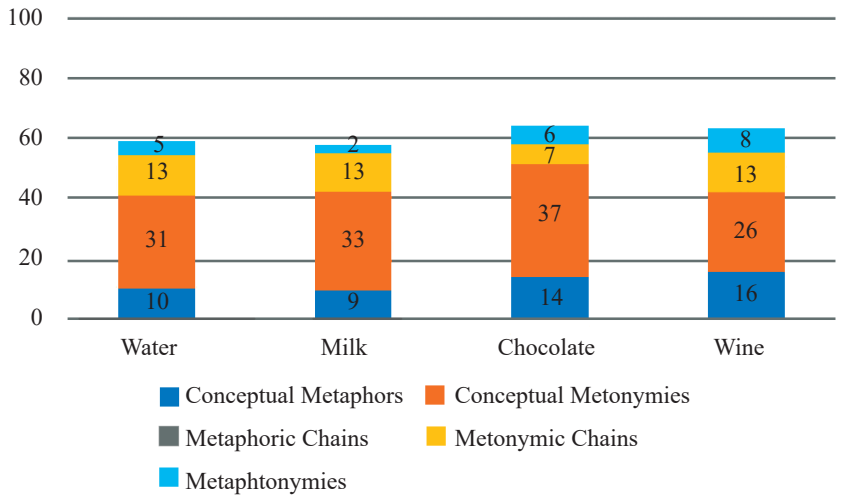

Figure 5. Graphic overview of the distribution of cognitive models for each category under analysis

5.2. Cognitive Operations in Brand Names Design

The second research question guiding this study is related to the quantification and discussion of those cognitive operations that underlie the conceptual fabric of water, milk, chocolate and wine brands. In this connection, essential and luxury brands yield the results displayed in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively.

For reasons that shall be made apparent in the subsequent sections (Sections 5.2.1 to 5.2.4), domain reduction and domain expansion operations have been found to be more abundant in the brand names of basic products. These cognitive operations are involved in the design of more than 85% of the total amount of basic brands under analysis, while only 74% of luxury products brand names make use of them. In contrast with these results, comparison and correlation operations are more productive in the brand names of luxury products. Over 25% of luxury brands are grounded on these cognitive operations against less than 15% of basic brands.

However, it is worth highlighting that the most abundant cognitive operation in both cases still is that of domain reduction, with over a 50% share in both categories. This abundance of domain reduction operations as naming strategies may find a justification in the fact that conceptual operations of this kind "are closely connected with the conceptualisation of reality and can, thus, fulfil a representational and referential function" [Pérez-Hernández 2015: 140]. In the context of naming, the lack of complexity — i.e., conceptual effort — involved in domain reduction operations helps to easily understand the *raison*

d'être behind the brand names and, therefore, those positive features associated to the product itself [Pérez-Hernandez 2013].

Table 3

Frequency of occurrence of conceptual operations in the brand names of basic products

Cognitive operations	Number	Percentage
Domain Reduction	84	60.4
Domain Expansion	35	25.2
Correlation	5	3.6
Comparison	15	10.8
Total	139	100.0

Table 4

Frequency of occurrence of conceptual operations in the brand names of luxury products

Cognitive operations	Number	Percentage
Domain Reduction	70	51.9
Domain Expansion	30	22.2
Correlation	7	5.2
Comparison	28	20.7
Total	135	100.0

The remainder of this section offer a discussion of the results for each of the aforementioned cognitive operations.

5.2.1. Domain Reduction Operations

Domain reduction has been proved to be the most productive mechanism underlying the brand names of both basic products and luxury products.

Results come to confirm Pérez-Hernandez's [2013: 36] contributions as concerns the presence of *eponymies*[1] in most of the examples that have been annotated as cases of domain reduction. Source domains of eponymic brand names include owners or founders (e.g., *Baynos*, *Bienvenido Muñoz*, *Borden Milk*), geographical

[1] Eponymy has been defined as a "special subclass of metonymic mappings, in which a proper name stands for a place, a thing, or an institution" [Pérez-Hernandez 2013: 36].

area/origins (*Lanjarón*, *Mayfield Dairy Farms*, *Ozarka*, *Valrhona*), vineyards (e.g., *Viñas de Monte*) or the winery/dairy company (e.g., *C.O.V.A.P.*, *Ontañón*).

As Figure 6 illustrates, in all the examples, the conceptual fabric of the matrix domain includes a rich amount of information that provides the consumer with an ample number of traits that will be associated to the product or target subdomain.

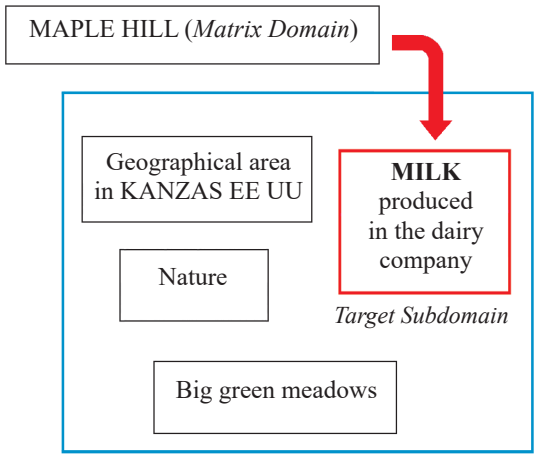

Figure 6. Domain Reduction Operation:
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA FOR PRODUCT

In the case under scrutiny, the name of a geographical area (i.e., *Maple Hill*) functions as an access point to additional conceptual frames which include information about the specific location, the landscape that surrounds the area, the dairy tradition, and of course, the milk produced in it. Of these subdomains, the last one is chosen as the target concept of the metonymic mapping, acting as the reference point for the product that it designates (i.e., milk).

Naming a brand by using metonymic operations such as domain reduction has obvious advantages in terms of distinctiveness. The brand name inherits a collection of connotations derived from the semantic fabric of the matrix domain. In the case under scrutiny the geographical area not only designates and identifies the product (i.e., milk), but it also makes use of the semantic connotations that remain inactive in the background such as his "natural/organic origin" or the "traditional atmosphere that surrounds the product". The latter concerns conceptual effort. Metonymic mappings imply a straightforward conceptual connection between the matrix domain and the resulting subdomain. Therefore, the cognitive cost involved in these

cases is low. Nevertheless, "the inferences generated by the brand name are limited by the semantic scope of the matrix domain" [Pérez-Hernandez 2013: 37].

5.2.2. Domain Expansion Operations

In sharp contrast with domain reduction operations, domain expansion operations are described as the kind of metonymy in which one of the subdomains is made to stand for the whole domain. Thus, limited information is being provided under the assumption that the consumer will develop it into the relevant conceptual representation (i.e., the matrix target domain). Figure 7 illustrates a brand name based on a domain expansion operation.

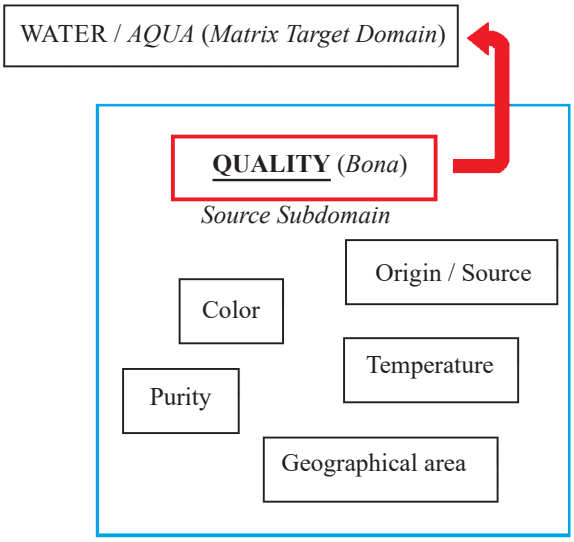

Figure 7. Domain Expansion Operation:
QUALITY FOR PRODUCT

Consider the brand name *Aquabona*. As Figure 7 illustrates, in the case under analysis one of the subdomains (i.e., quality) has become the source domain of the metonymy. By using *bona*, meaning 'good', all the relevant semantic content of the qualifying adjective will thus be inherited by the product (i.e., water). In this connection, positive connotations such as 'healthy', 'good', 'light', and 'pure', will be inherited by the target product. In fact, the nature of the target product (i.e., water) emphasizes the connection and facilitates the inference-deriving process.

Together with quality-based notions, another productive source domain in domain expansion-based brand names is that of (1) the ingredients or variety

of grape — in the case of wines — and (2) the composition of the product they designate. In this regard, chocolate brand names such as *Milka* and wine brands including *Mencía y Godello* or *Marló* belong to this category. In all these examples, some of the ingredients that form the product are being used as the source domain of the metonymy, thus presenting the product as something desirable. In fact, presenting the consumer with the composition and ingredients of the product enables the brand to stand out from the rest of the products being advertised by highlighting its uniqueness.

Domain expansion operations are a productive tool for the creation of new brand names. They can help to differentiate the product from its competitors through a careful selection of the most relevant and/or salient subdomains of the product.

5.2.3. Comparison Operations

Let us now deal with comparison operations, those mappings that involve a resemblance between the attributes of the source and target domains.

Out of the 43 instances of comparison operations found in our corpus, one metaphorical mapping stands out as more productive in both basic and luxury products: NON-LIVING ENTITIES ARE LIVING ENTITIES. This high-level metaphor is based on a projection of attributes from animate entities to inanimate entities (i.e., the product), thus attributing the specific traits, processes and behaviours of the former to the latter. In this connection, more specific low-level metaphors comprised by the aforementioned generic mapping, such as PRODUCTS ARE PEOPLE, PRODUCTS ARE GODS and PRODUCTS ARE ANIMALS, have appeared repetitively in our sub-corpus of comparison operations.

Metaphors of this kind are illustrated in milk brands such as *Ethos Water*. As Figure 8 shows, the noun *Ethos* activates the domain of ‘ethics’, a moral discipline associated to human beings (i.e., living entities). For this reason, a comparison process is conceptually prompted between the source domain (i.e., humans) and the target domain (i.e., water). In this process, some of the most significant attributes of human ethos are borrowed to enrich the concept of the labelled water and, thus, its brand. However, in order to parametrize the selection process and prevent the transfer of negative features, two techniques are additionally implemented. The first one is the question mark [?]. An allusion to the consumer is inherent in this approach, by questioning them about their ethos — i.e., *Are you ethic?* The second technique is the use of a slogan. In this case, “helping children get clean water”. In this connection, the consumer conceptually selects those positive features associated to human ethos.

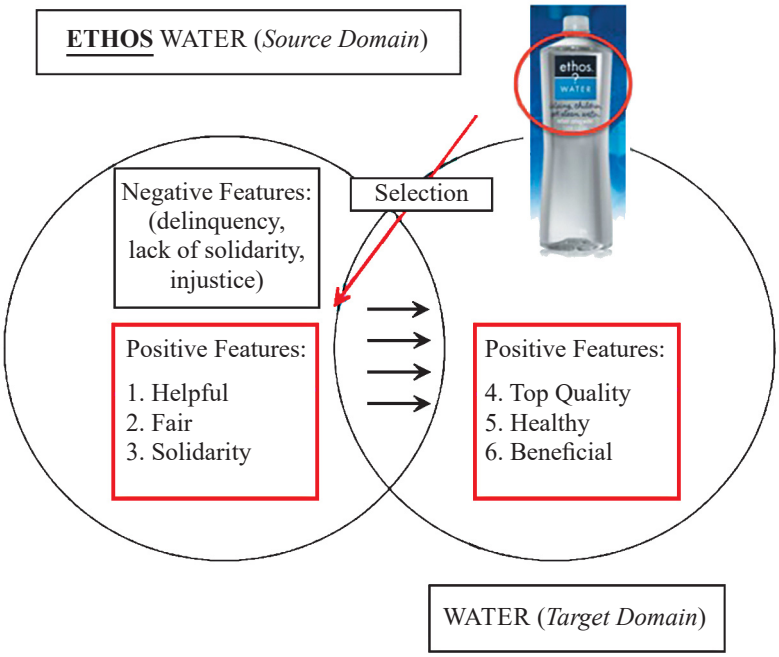

Figure 8. Comparison Operation: PRODUCTS ARE PEOPLE

Other brand names that exploit the NON-LIVING ENTITIES ARE LIVING ENTITIES metaphor focus on animals, e.g., *El Grillo*, *El Nido*, *Pata Negra* — these wine brands activate a mental image of an animal which prompts the consumer to find similarities between the attributes of the animal and the nature of the wine. Thus, the product is endowed with those positive features attributed to the animal. *Pata negra*, for instance, refers to a high-quality pork ham. The wine thus named inherits this sense of quality. Finally, as in the previous example, a selection of those useful attributes is carried out, thus enriching the semantics of the brand. Comparison operations are less productive due to the complex reasoning schema that operations of this kind involve.

5.2.4. Correlation Operations

Finally, brands like *Darigold*, *Galaxy*, *Rayo*, *Viñas de Monte* or *Voss* seem to hold correlation operations, which are based on co-occurrences between different dimensions of experience. A brand such as *Voss* is a proper name that triggers the activation of an image of the Voss Mountain Lodge, including relevant parts of the consumers' long-termed knowledge about it, namely their knowledge about its height. This further activates the notion of verticality. As shown in [Grady 1997],

the upper and lower parts of the so-called image schema of verticality have corresponding axiological values: the upper part is associated with positive notions and the lower part with negative ones. This correlation is based on our bodily experience in real-life situations. High positions are usually vantage points associated with protection and control. Therefore, since a brand like *Voss* is associated with an upper position, through its connection with the corresponding mountain, the aforementioned axiologically positive connotations are inherited by the brand, conveying a sense of quality, superiority and excellence.

Correlation operations have some characteristics that make them especially suitable for the creation of brand names. Since correlation operations are based on bodily experience, they are shared by members of different cultures to a large extent. Therefore, this turns them into an apt marketing and branding strategy in terms of efficiency, economy and global reach.

5.3. Patterns of Conceptual Interaction

The last research question sought to determine the productivity of patterns of conceptual interaction underlying the brand names under analysis. Results have shown the presence of two main interaction patterns within the corpus of analysis (1) metonymic chains and (2) metaphtonymies. Out of the 67 instances annotated as cases of conceptual interactions, 46 (68.6%) of them have been classified as cases of metonymic complexes — i.e., cases of metonymic interactions — and 21 (31.4%) as examples of metaphor-metonymy interactions (i.e., metaphtonymies).

Having explored each of the categories individually, we have observed that metonymic chains are more frequent in relation to basic brands, reaching a total amount of 26 instances, in contrast to the 20 instances compiled from the category of luxury brand names. Metaphtonymies, on the contrary, are more pervasive in relation to luxury brands (14 instances) than basic products (7 instances).

The overall assessment of the results gives pride of place to metonymic chains as a suitable mechanism to connect the product with the brand name. Naming experts tend to recur to branding strategies that provide a cost-effect balance, and allow them to achieve the maximum effect with the minimum conceptual effort. The pervasive use of metaphtonymies, however, responds to a different objective. Luxury products, such as chocolate and wine, seem to use conceptual operations that provide the product with additional attributes that justify both their price and differentiation.

5.3.1. Metonymic Chains

Metonymic chains constitute a combination of cognitive operations by which the target domain of the first metonymy provides simultaneous access to the source domain of the following one [Pérez-Sobrino, 2016a].

The wine brand *Macán* combines two different metonymies that interact to reach the final target domain: the wine. On the one hand, a domain expansion operation is carried out: one of the subdomains — the demonym used to identify the inhabitants of *San Vicente de La Sonsierra* — becomes the source domain of the metonymy in which all the relevant semantic content associated to the gentilic is inherited by the location — i.e., PEOPLE FOR LOCATION. At this point, a second metonymy is activated: by means of a domain reduction operation the target matrix domain of metonymy 1 (i.e., *San Vicente de La Sonsierra*) functions as an access point to additional conceptual frames which include information about the specific location, the landscape that surrounds the area, the tradition, and of course, the wine produced in it. Of these subdomains, the last one is chosen as the target concept of the metonymic mapping, acting as the reference for the product — wine. As a matter of fact, all the positive connotations such as 'tradition', 'quality', 'diversity' and 'the prestige of the specific location' (namely, the wine region of La Rioja), will characterise the target product.

In the case of the brand names of basic products, the metonymic activation follows a similar procedure, yet the semantic load seems to be reduced. In this regard, brand names such as *Moo*, *Icelandic Water*, *Glaceau SmartWater*, *Gippy* or *Madow Fresh* seem to highlight attributes to emphasize the source of the product — i.e., the natural spring or the animal, — magnifying the quality of the product.

Given that consumers count on more than one point of access to the product, metonymic chains offer naming experts a much safer way to steer consumers in the interpretation of the brand name, attributing the brand with ample amounts of positive connotations.

5.3.2. Metaphtonymies

Finally, the role of metaphtonymies in brand names such as *La Gresca*, *La Palea*, *La Escucha*, *Confesor* or *Almond Joy* is also worth highlighting. As we have previously explained, luxury products need to stand out from similar brands to (a) legitimise their difference in term of price and value and (b) persuade the consumer to buy them. In this regard, operations of this kind seem to be effective as a marketing technique. Let us examine the case of the wine brand name *La Charla* which refers to the act of chatting or talking with someone.

As shown in Figure 9, through a domain reduction operation, the term *charlar* ("chat or talk") metonymically stands for the person doing the action. Subsequently, the source domain 'people' is projected onto the target domain 'wine'. This is an instance of the WINES ARE PEOPLE metaphor, which is based on the high-level metaphor NON-LIVING ENTITIES ARE LIVING ENTITIES. In this connection, the product is endowed with all the attributes — i.e., comfort,

confidence, serenity or friendly attitude — that are associated with the action of "charlar" (to chat).[2]

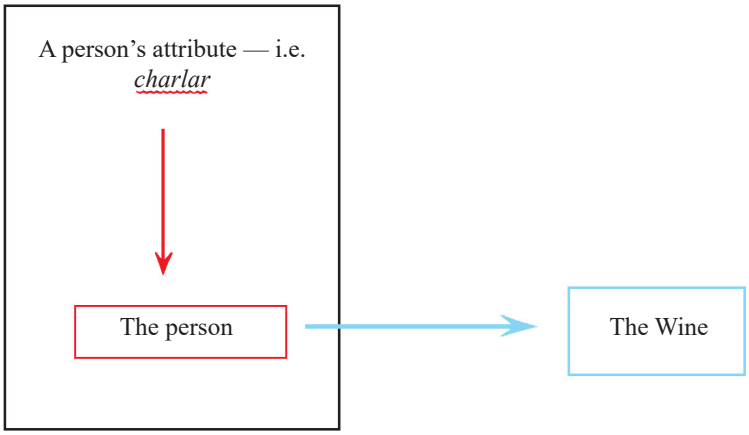

Figure 9. Metaphtonymy: Metonymic reduction of metaphoric Source

On the basis of the above discussion, it can be argued that the brand names of basic and luxury products can both make use of metaphtonymies as a branding strategy. However, the conceptual complexity involved explains the absence of this pattern of conceptual interaction in the brand names of basic categories.

6. Conclusion

The present investigation analyses the occurrences of two idealised cognitive models (conceptual metaphors and conceptual metonymy), their related conceptual operations (domain reduction, domain expansion, correlation, and comparison), and two patterns of conceptual interaction (metonymic chains and metaphtonymies) in a finite collection of luxury and basic brand names.

The quantitative analysis of the corpora has revealed that conceptual metonymies are the most productive naming strategy, adding up to over 50%

[2] While this brand name could also be interpreted as a situational part-for-part metonymy (chatting as part of the drinking event standing for the wine that is being drunk), we contend that the branding strategy relies on metaphtonymy. The term charlar first undergoes a metonymic reduction (Action for Agent), identifying a 'chatter'. This 'chatter' is then metaphorically mapped onto the wine. While wines do not 'chat', they are endowed with the social persona of a conversationalist — serene, friendly, and approachable. This goes beyond mere situational association; it personifies the product to justify a premium brand personality.

of the items in our corpus of analysis. Our study also corroborates Pérez-Sobrino's [2016a] findings about the role and effects of metaphtonymies in advertising.

The qualitative analysis of the data has offered a detailed description of the formal configurations and the correspondent functions carried out by each of the conceptual operations under analysis, as well as the productivity of interaction patterns such as metonymic chains and metaphtonymies.

Finally, the study of idealised cognitive models and conceptual operations of our corpus of commercial brand names has also raised some quantitative and qualitative implications regarding their frequency of occurrence in relation to different product categories — basic *vs*. luxury products. The results obtained show that:

(1) Metaphoric instances are scarce in the brand names of basic products. Due to their essential and functional nature, basic products tend to resort to simple conceptual strategies that maintain a balance between cognitive effort ("cost") and conceptual effect ("benefit"). In this connection, it has been attested that:

a. Domain reduction operations are a powerful naming tool: the use of one word (i.e., the brand name) activates realms of conceptual domains and corresponding semantic associations, which provides the target product with a vast collection of inferences.

b. Domain expansion operations are a productive tool for the creation of new brand names. A careful selection of the most salient subdomains increases the semantic efficiency of the resulting brand name.

(2) On the other hand, metaphoric operations have been found to be more productive in the category of luxury products. In comparison operations, the independent nature of their domains allows the generation of a wealth of new conceptual material that enhances the semantic load of the brand. Along the same lines, since correlation operations are based on experiential basis, they are shared by speakers of different cultures. This turns them into an apt marketing and branding strategy in terms of efficiency and economy.

(3) Finally, metonymic clusters seem to be a safer way to steer consumers in the interpretation of the brand name, adding positive connotations to the brand name.

(4) Metaphtonymies, which have also been found to be more productive in the category of luxury products, use domain reduction and expansion operations to guarantee the interpretation of the metaphoric expression with a larger semantic effect.

The use of conceptual operations in the naming process plays a productive role in the creation of a suitable commercial brand name. However, further studies along the lines of the present investigation could help assess the advantages and disadvantages of using different types of cognitive operations and patterns of conceptual interaction with different product categories.

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