



COGNITIVE GENDER ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND FRAMES IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH ADVERTISEMENTS

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19642650>

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the cognitive mechanisms underlying gender-oriented advertising in Uzbek and English languages through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory and frame semantics. A corpus of 200 advertisements (100 Uzbek, 100 English) targeting male and female audiences was analyzed using cognitive linguistic methodology. The findings reveal systematic differences in conceptual metaphors and frame structures employed in gender-targeted advertising across both languages. Female-oriented advertisements predominantly utilize BEAUTY IS A JOURNEY and SELF-CARE IS TRANSFORMATION metaphors, while male-oriented advertisements favor ACHIEVEMENT IS CONQUEST and SUCCESS IS POWER frames. Cross-linguistic analysis demonstrates both universal cognitive patterns and culture-specific variations in gender representation strategies.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, gender, advertising discourse, conceptual metaphor, frame semantics, Uzbek, English.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising discourse represents a strategically crafted form of communication designed to influence consumer behavior through linguistic and visual persuasion mechanisms. The intersection of gender and advertising has attracted significant scholarly attention, particularly within cognitive linguistics, which provides theoretical tools for analyzing how advertisers construct and manipulate conceptual structures to appeal to gendered audiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Fillmore, 1982).

The cognitive approach to advertising language analysis enables researchers to uncover the underlying mental representations that advertisers exploit when targeting specific demographic groups. Conceptual metaphors, as systematic mappings between source and target domains, and frames, as structured knowledge representations, serve as powerful analytical instruments for understanding how gender stereotypes are linguistically encoded and perpetuated in commercial discourse (Forceville, 1996; Kovecses, 2010).

Despite extensive research on gender in advertising within Western contexts, comparative studies examining non-Western languages remain limited. Uzbek advertising discourse, situated at the crossroads of traditional Central Asian culture and globalized marketing practices, presents a unique case for cognitive linguistic analysis. This study addresses this gap by conducting a systematic comparison of cognitive structures in gender-oriented Uzbek and English advertisements.

The research objectives are threefold: (1) to identify dominant conceptual metaphors in male- and female-targeted advertisements in both languages; (2) to analyze frame structures that organize gender-related advertising content; and (3) to determine cross-linguistic similarities and differences in cognitive gender representation strategies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Corpus Description

The research corpus comprises 200 advertisements collected between 2022-2024: 100 Uzbek-language advertisements from national television channels, print media, and digital platforms, and 100 English-language advertisements from comparable sources in the United States and United Kingdom. The selection criteria included: (1) explicit gender targeting through visual and/or linguistic markers; (2) product categories with established gender associations (cosmetics, fashion, automobiles, technology); and (3) minimum text length of 15 words to ensure sufficient linguistic material for analysis.

Table 1. Corpus Distribution by Language, Gender Target, and Product Category

Category	UZ-F	UZ-M	EN-F	EN-M
Cosmetics/Beauty	18	4	20	3
Fashion/Apparel	15	12	14	11
Technology	6	16	5	18
Automobiles	3	14	4	15
Healthcare	8	4	7	3
Total	50	50	50	50

Note: UZ-F = Uzbek Female-targeted; UZ-M = Uzbek Male-targeted; EN-F = English Female-targeted; EN-M = English Male-targeted

2.2 Analytical Framework

The study employs a tripartite analytical framework integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), Frame Semantics (Fillmore, 1982), and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995). Metaphor identification followed the MIPVU procedure (Steen et al., 2010), adapted for advertising discourse. Frame analysis utilized FrameNet categories supplemented by domain-specific advertising frames identified through iterative coding.

2.3 Coding Procedure

Each advertisement was coded by two independent analysts for: (1) metaphorical expressions with source-target domain mappings; (2) activated frames with constituent frame elements; and (3) gender-indexical linguistic features. Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa, yielding satisfactory agreement ($k = 0.84$ for metaphor identification; $k = 0.79$ for frame classification).

RESULTS

3.1 Conceptual Metaphors in Gender-Targeted Advertising

Analysis revealed distinct metaphorical profiles for male- and female-targeted advertisements across both languages. Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of dominant conceptual metaphors.

Table 2. Distribution of Conceptual Metaphors by Gender Target (%)

Conceptual Metaphor	UZ-F	UZ-M	EN-F	EN-M
BEAUTY IS A JOURNEY	34%	6%	38%	4%
SELF-CARE IS TRANSFORMATION	28%	8%	24%	6%
ACHIEVEMENT IS CONQUEST	4%	32%	6%	36%
SUCCESS IS POWER	8%	26%	10%	28%
PRODUCT IS COMPANION	18%	12%	14%	10%
Other	8%	16%	8%	16%

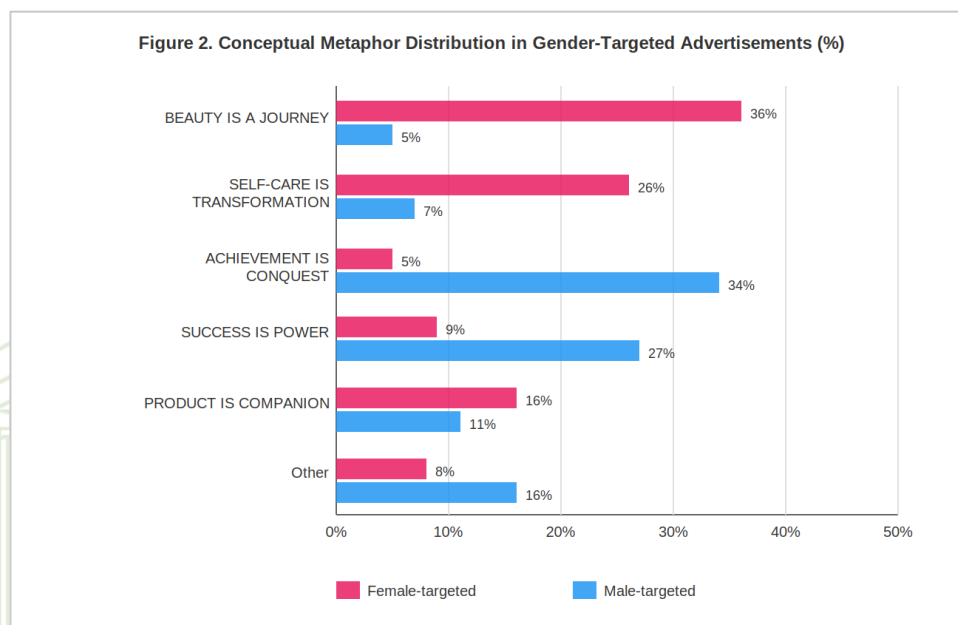


Figure 2. Conceptual Metaphor Distribution in Gender-Targeted Advertisements

Female-targeted advertisements in both languages exhibited strong preference for journey and transformation metaphors. Uzbek examples include "Go'zallik yo'lingizda hamroh" (Your companion on the beauty path) and "O'zingizni kashf eting" (Discover yourself), while English counterparts featured expressions such as "Begin your transformation today" and "Your journey to radiant skin."

Male-targeted advertisements predominantly employed conquest and power metaphors. Representative Uzbek expressions included "G'alabaga erishish" (Achieve victory) and "Kuchingizni namoyish qiling" (Demonstrate your power), paralleled by English formulations like "Conquer your day" and "Unleash your potential."

3.2 Frame Analysis

Frame semantic analysis identified five primary frames activated in gender-oriented advertising: SELF-ENHANCEMENT, COMPETITION, CARE, ACHIEVEMENT, and RELATIONSHIP. Table 3 displays the distribution of frame activation across gender categories.

Table 3. Frame Activation Frequency by Gender and Language

Frame	UZ-F	UZ-M	EN-F	EN-M
SELF-ENHANCEMENT	42	18	45	14
COMPETITION	8	38	6	42

CARE	32	12	28	8
ACHIEVEMENT	12	24	14	28
RELATIONSHIP	6	8	7	8

Note: Values represent raw frequencies; multiple frames may be activated within a single advertisement.

3.3 Cross-Linguistic Comparison

Chi-square analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between Uzbek and English advertisements in metaphor distribution for female-targeted content ($X^2 = 3.42, p > 0.05$) or male-targeted content ($X^2 = 2.87, p > 0.05$). This suggests universal cognitive patterns in gender representation across these linguistically and culturally distinct advertising traditions.

However, qualitative analysis uncovered notable culture-specific variations. Uzbek female-targeted advertisements more frequently invoked family-related frame elements (oila, farzand, ona) within the CARE frame, while English counterparts emphasized individual self-expression. Similarly, Uzbek male-targeted advertisements incorporated traditional masculine virtues (mardlik, g'ayrat) alongside Western competitive metaphors.

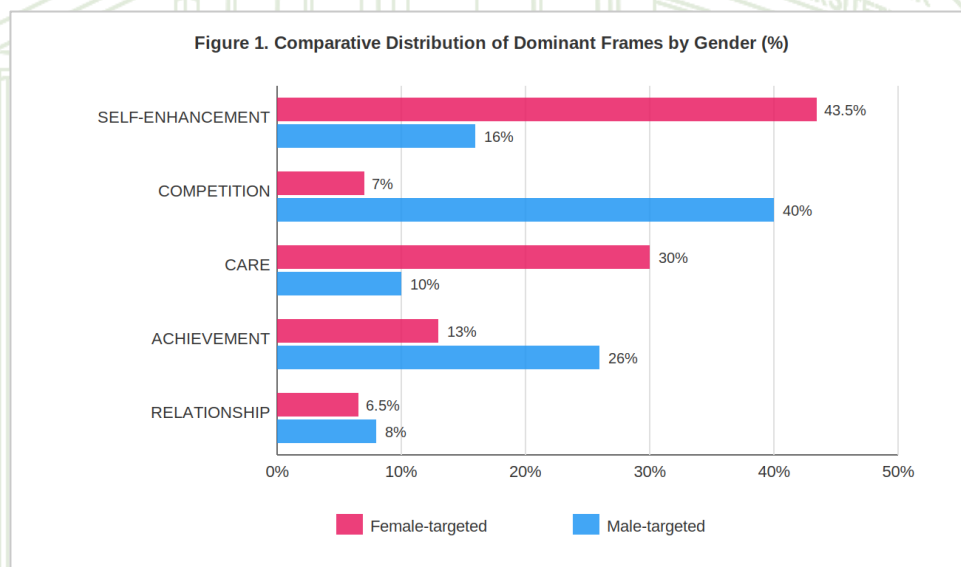


Figure 1. Comparative Distribution of Dominant Frames by Gender

DISCUSSION

The findings corroborate previous research on gender stereotyping in advertising while extending the analysis to cross-linguistic cognitive structures. The predominance of journey and transformation metaphors in female-targeted advertising aligns with Lakoff's (1987) observations on the conceptualization of feminine identity as processual rather than static. Conversely, the conquest and power metaphors prevalent in male-targeted content reflect culturally entrenched associations between masculinity and dominance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

The cross-linguistic stability of these patterns suggests that cognitive gender schemas operate at a relatively universal level, transcending specific cultural contexts. This finding supports Kovecses's (2005) hypothesis regarding the universality of certain conceptual metaphors grounded in shared embodied experience. However, the culture-specific frame elements identified in Uzbek

advertisements indicate that universal cognitive structures are locally instantiated through culturally salient concepts.

From a critical perspective, the systematic deployment of distinct metaphorical and frame structures for male and female audiences contributes to the perpetuation of gender binaries. Advertisers strategically exploit existing cognitive schemas, reinforcing rather than challenging stereotypical gender representations. This has implications for both advertising ethics and consumer literacy education.

Limitations of this study include the focus on explicit gender targeting, which may not capture more subtle gender-indexical features, and the relatively small corpus size. Future research should expand the corpus, incorporate multimodal analysis, and examine audience reception of gendered cognitive structures.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the utility of cognitive linguistic methodology for analyzing gender representation in advertising across languages. The identification of systematic metaphor and frame patterns in Uzbek and English advertisements reveals both universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific adaptations in gender-oriented marketing communication. These findings contribute to theoretical understanding of the language-cognition interface in commercial discourse and have practical implications for advertising practitioners and media literacy education.

Future research directions include longitudinal analysis of shifting gender representations, multimodal cognitive analysis integrating visual and verbal elements, and experimental studies examining consumer processing of gendered conceptual structures.

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