

M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

Project Title				
The creativity of figurative messaging in advertising: a collaborative investigation into its application and measurement of success in real-world advertising campaigns				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution	University of Birmingham			
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation	Big Cat Marketing & Communications Agency			
Website URL	http://bigcatgroup.co.uk/			
THE RESEARCH PROJECT				
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>				
<p>Are you a linguist with an interest in investigating how your advanced knowledge and expertise can be applied in the real world? This project provides an exciting opportunity to undertake collaborative research with Big Cat advertising agency to investigate the creative use of figurative messaging in advertising specific product categories to improve the effectiveness of campaigns.</p> <p><i>Big Cat</i> is a marketing communications agency specialising in brand, design, PR, and digital advertising for charities and trusts (incl. Umbrella, Breast Cancer Haven, Aspire, and YMCA), businesses (incl. Grand Central Birmingham and Absolutely Leisure), and institutions (incl. Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, Aston Business School, and University College Birmingham). Their <i>creative clarity</i> philosophy is that the best ideas in their simplest form are often the most effective. The concept closely relates to current scholarly interest in linguistics that considers how advertisements communicate messages to consumers through inferred, indirect claims using figurative phenomena such as metaphor and metonymy, known as <i>figurative messaging</i>.</p> <p>Figurative phenomena such as metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, and irony are frequently used in advertising to convey indirect, figurative messages to consumers about products (Burgers, Konijin, & Steen, 2016; Pérez Sobrino, 2017). Figurative messages can vary considerably in their creativity. How figurative messages are conveyed can influence how consumers comprehend and evaluate a product (McQuarrie & Philips, 2005; van Mulken, Pair, & Forceville, 2010; Littlemore & Pérez-Sobrino, 2017).</p> <p>Whilst studies have investigated the creative use of metaphor, the creative potential of metonymy, hyperbole, and irony has been under-explored (Littlemore, 2015; Pérez-Sobrino, Littlemore, & Houghton, in press). Moreover, despite growing research into the effectiveness of these phenomena in advertising across multiple product genres, more attention needs to be paid to the creative use of figurative messaging in advertising specific product categories.</p> <p>In academic studies, the reasons for implementing figurative phenomena are speculated and inferred post hoc based on the financial success of campaigns. This innovative collaboration will make of advanced techniques to enable a real-time exploration of figurative phenomena during the creation, development and production stages of new campaigns.</p> <p>Overall, the project aims to investigate the role figurative messaging plays in the creativity, effectiveness, and success of new advertisements and campaigns, which provides two-way benefits:</p>				

(1) advancing academic theory through real-world knowledge and improving the feasibility of experimentation for figurative messaging and consumer behaviour; and (2) maximising impact for business through insights into how figurative phenomena may improve campaign creativeness and success. With the combination of academic and practitioner expertise, fresh campaign advertisements can be tested with consumers in a series of experiments that aim to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways is figurative messaging conventionally used and how can these conventions best be broken in order to produce eye-catching and effective advertisements for a set of defined product categories?
2. How do customers and clients respond to advertisements with varying degrees of figurative creativity?
3. To what extent do the creative applications of figurative messaging facilitate the resonance of Big Cat campaigns with consumers?

The researcher will work at Big Cat in the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, for 6 hours per week for the data collection phase of the project (months 1-24). The project will involve forming a database of circa 30 Big Cat campaigns, analysing campaign advertisements for the creative application of figurative phenomena, from conventional and novel representations, and observing Big Cat creative meetings and client relations. In agreement with Big Cat, some sessions will be recorded and analysed to: (1) investigate how practitioners and clients navigate the creative process deploying and considering figurative phenomena; and (2) provide a contextual, business perspective to inform analyses and establish intended messages. Experiments will present circa 300 participants with advertisements varying in degrees of creativity and types of figurative phenomena to test their effect on consumer responses. Eye-tracking technology, response times, appeal ratings, and qualitative interviews will be employed to define the effects creative figurative messaging has on consumers. Consumer interviews will be recorded and analysed using specialist software. Finally, consumers will be asked to recall details about the advertisements observed to test whether creative figurative messaging resonates in consumers' long-term memory, indicating campaign success.

The researcher will be fully trained in the use of eye-tracking technology, statistical analysis and programming, the use of software for annotating multimodal data and research methods e.g. focus group research. He or she will also have a strong interest in figurative language and communication.

If you are a linguist with an interest in investigating how your knowledge can be applied to real-life situations please get in touch.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Lead HEI Supervisor:	Professor Jeanette Littlemore
Lead HEI Supervisor Email:	j.m.littlemore@bham.ac.uk