

*“Tú que te mereces un príncipe, un dentista”*: The use of metaphors of love, desire, and gender in personal ads on the Internet to perform heterosexuality. Creating and supporting ideologies of heteronormativity and sexuality in Spanish

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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December 2009

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## Acknowledgements

There are many people who contributed to the completion of this project; without them I would not have had the professional and emotional strength to finish this long journey. All of them deserve recognition and my genuine gratitude.

First, I would like to thank my advisors Dr. Carol Klee and Dr. Francisco Ocampo. They deserve a special thank for their patience and the time they expended helping me finish this project. Dr. Klee has taught me how to be a better professional and her guidance and patience were invaluable in the completion of this dissertation. She encouraged me to work harder than I ever thought I could. I have to thank Dr. Ocampo for always believing that I could finish even when I thought it was not possible. His support and precious guidance not only helped me with my intellectual work, but helped me see hope in the hardest times of this process. I feel fortunate that I had Dr. Klee and Dr. Ocampo as advisors, and I will be eternally grateful to them.

Second, I would like to specially thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Fernando Arenas and Dr. David Valentine. Their participation in my committee, their guidance and support were intellectually invaluable, as well as their encouragement and friendship.

Third, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues from the Spanish and Portuguese Department. Having you by my side made this experience more enjoyable, or less painful; I am grateful of having you in my life. Even though you all deserve to be here, I would like to mention and thank some of you. I would like to thank Adriana for being the best cheerleader that anybody can have; Liz and Naomi for not only supporting me emotionally but also helping me with my writing; Luisa for doing this journey with me; and Matt and Vanesa for many, many reasons, but principally for being the best roommates that anybody can ask for. Matt, I have to thank you for always loving me even

when I got on your nerves. The same goes for you, Vane, but I also have to thank you for listening to my ideas about my project and for reminding of the song that ended up in the title of my dissertation. Vane, *¡tú te mereces un príncipe o un dentista!* For everybody else in the department – my apologies for not mentioning all of you – thank you!

I also would like to mention and thank some people in my life who have become part of my family. My friends Julie and Alex: thank you for supporting me and believing in me. You accepted me as part of your family and gave me the opportunity of being close to your dear kids, Alejo and Javi. I will never have enough words to say how happy having you in my life has made me, and how grateful I am for being close to you. I also have to thank my sisters Ana Belén and Yelitza. They have been part of my life for more than 20 years; they have always supported me and believed that I could finish. Thank you for that and for letting me be part of your families.

Last but not least, I have to thank my parents, Douglas and Nely, and my dear brother, Douglas. They are essential parts of my life and this attempt to acknowledge them will come up short. I had the fortune of having them by my side during this journey; they were the main reason that this project was completed. Papá: thank you for loving me, accepting me, and for being such a proud father. Mamá: thank you for your love and for being a role model and an inspiration in my life. Thank you both for being there every time I needed you. Douglas, *mi hermanito lindo*, thank you for always supporting me, helping me, and loving me, even during the days I did not deserve it. I do not have sufficient words to express how important you are in my life, and you know I could not have done it without you.

*¡Gracias a todos!* Thank you!

## Abstract

This study investigates how heterosexuality is performed and achieved in everyday language use, specifically in personal ads from the Internet. Within personal ads, it focuses on the metaphors used by ad posters to articulate concepts of love, desire, gender and sexuality. The aim was to determine how the use of certain metaphors reflects ad posters' ideologies and models of heterosexuality and how they contribute to the preservation of heteronormativity. Analyzing the language used in personal ads contributes to determining the ideologies shared by the ad posters since it is very structured, formulaic and shared in the majority of the ads, creating a genre where similar linguistic and semantic features are constantly repeated. This iterability allows an examination of how posters express individual desires in a manner determined by social rules. These rules are established by the ideologies shared by their community, and analyzing their language use allows the uncovering of the ideologies behind it.

The personal ads analyzed originated from a dating website that serves Spanish speakers. The selection used in this study came from five different countries: USA, Venezuela, Spain, Mexico, and Argentina. The data analyzed included a total of 2000 ads, 400 hundred ads from each country, and from this selection 200 were of women looking for men and 200 hundred of men looking for women. Using a Critical Metaphor Analysis approach, five hundred and seventy five metaphors were identified, classified and analyzed. These metaphors were related to love, relationships, desire and gender and were classified in twelve conceptual metaphors, as well as a category called "label metaphors."

The results of this study show that most ad posters use traditional metaphors of love and relationships to circulate ideologies that contribute to the maintenance of traditional gender roles and heterosexual hegemony. At the same time, some metaphors used by posters attempted to challenge and reinvent the system. Posters attempted to reinvent the system when they used innovative metaphors to oppose traditional values and portray themselves as not abiding by traditional heterosexual norms. In addition, the results of this research indicate that ad posters use metaphors to articulate the notion of gender as a performance showing that they are aware, up to a certain point, of this performativity.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	1
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	9
2.1 Language and Gender: different approaches. The performance of gender and the articulation of desire through language	9
2.2 Using language to perform heteronormativity	22
2.3 Ideologies, power and gender in language	37
2.4 Metaphors and ideologies of gender and sexuality	51
2.5 Personal advertisements as linguistic gendered practices	67
2.6 Research questions	83
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>	84
3.1 Theoretical frame. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA)	84
3.2 Source of Data. The corpus	88
3.3 Data selection. Metaphor identification. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA)	91
3.4 Metaphor Interpretation. Critical Metaphors Analysis (CMA)	96
3.5 Metaphor Explanation. Critical Metaphors Analysis (CMA)	97
<b>Chapter 4: Data Analysis. Metaphor interpretation and explanation</b>	98
4.1 Sources	100
4.1.1 The source of field	101
4.1.2 The source of space	102
4.1.3 The source of skill	105
4.1.4 The source of chemical reaction	106
4.1.5 The source of war	107
4.1.6 The source of unity	109
4.1.7 The source of valuable objects	110

4.1.8	The source of performance	112
4.1.9	The source of popular culture	114
4.2	Conceptual metaphors.	116
4.2.1	THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A FIELD	119
<b>4.2.2</b>	<b>THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT</b>	122
4.2.3	LIFE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT	126
4.2.4	PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS	132
4.2.5	THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS	139
4.2.6	LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT	144
4.2.7	LOVE IS A SKILL	152
4.2.8	LOVE IS WAR	155
4.2.9	LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS	160
4.2.10	ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION	165
4.2.11	RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS	168
4.2.12	GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE	172
4.2.13	LABEL METAPHORS	183
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	197
5.1	Conceptual metaphors, label metaphors, and sources of metaphors used in personal ads.	200
5.2	Ideologies about love, relationships, desire, and gender produced and supported by metaphors	204
5.3	Limitations and future research	211
<b>Bibliography</b>		212
<b>Appendix 1</b>		217
<b>Appendix 2</b>		218

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

After reading a large number of personal ads on the Internet written by heterosexuals one can notice that people's desires and expectations have more elements in common than differences. These common desires are expressed similarly when they articulate their interest in finding a partner and in being perceived in a certain way. Given that all these supposedly individual characteristics and expectations in romance are common among a group of speakers, or posters, one can infer that there is a model for the ideal heterosexual partner that is shared and supported by the group. The posters are well aware of this model when they write their personal information and what kind of expectations they have for a partner. Underlying this common model for the ideal heterosexual partner is the question of what ideologies are structuring and determining these common elements, what this ideal model entails, and what role language plays in articulating posters' desires and in reinforcing and circulating their ideologies about heterosexuality.

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to consider the nature of the genre, but more importantly, the nature of people's conceptions of gender and sexuality. Commonly, gender and sexuality are assumed as natural categories that divide the world and that clearly separate women from men as different and opposite to each other. Most men and women are considered preferably to be heterosexuals, and when they are not, they are homosexuals, the other. The divisions are assumed to be clear and natural, and the behaviors that accompany these categories are also seen as natural. Heterosexual

linguistic behavior belongs to this group of natural elements of heterosexuality, therefore it is assumed as unmarked, enjoying a certain level of invisibility (Cameron, 2006).

The main purpose of my study is to contribute to the understanding of how heterosexual linguistic behavior is neither unmarked nor natural. This study assumes that “normative heterosexuality must be studied as a phenomenon that is socially produced and not naturally occurring” (Ingraham, 2006, p. 315). For this purpose, I analyze personal ads for potential partners on the Internet. These personal ads offer a window to how individual desires are shaped by social structures; they also offer the opportunity to explore the performance of gender through language. What follows is a preface to the theories underlying my research, and how the presentation of this research is organized.

The approach to gender and sexuality followed in this research is highly influenced by Butler’s (1990) gender performativity theory. In Butler’s conception, gender is not a natural consequence of one’s sexual organs; gender is defined as a series of practices or acts that through repetition become natural and part of the culture, something that one does and not something one is. Gender is considered as “the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a ‘natural’ kind of being” (Butler, 1990, p. 33). This natural kind of being is often heterosexual, since people’s conceptions about gender are usually associated with heterosexuality, which establishes certain models of femininity and masculinity, and a division between women and men that is considered “natural.”

The social idea of heterosexuality as naturally given has been identified as heteronormativity; this concept is “defined as those structures, institutions, relations, actions that promote heterosexuality as natural, self-desirable, privileged and necessary” (Cameron & Kulick, 2003, p. 55). One way of challenging the idea of a natural gender division involves analyzing the role of the language used by heterosexuals in their performance of gender.

From this perspective, language is seen as a one of the behaviors that contribute to a person’s performance of gender. Consequently, the question to be addressed is not how men and women’s language use differs, since the differences among women and men are not inherent, but how language is used to construct gender, and reaffirm or challenge traditional gender norms. Within this framework, “it becomes not only possible but arguably necessary to pose the question, how is that done?” (Cameron, 2006, p.168). This question challenges the “normal” and “unmarked” status of heterosexuality. Challenging the status of heterosexuality implies challenging the status of gender itself, and the validity of the gender category, as stated by Ingraham (2006):

Gender is a central feature of heteronormativity, but it is institutionalized heterosexuality that is served by dominant or conventional constructions of gender, not the other way around. To critique the operation of gender as imbricated in racial, class, and sexual relations to the exclusion of institutionalized heterosexuality is to bracket off the ends served by prevailing and dominant gender constructions and practices. We need to revisit this question: Would gender exist were it not for its organizing relationship to institutionalized heterosexuality? (Ingraham, 2006, p.309)

The institution of heterosexuality is necessary to maintain the construct of gender, and to maintain social structures of power, since heteronormativity

contributes to the legitimization of certain social behaviors, and to the exclusion of others. In doing so, it partially legitimizes the members of certain social groups, and excludes others, in view of the fact that “heteronormativity ensures that the organization of heterosexuality in everything from gender to weddings to marital status is held up both as a model and as ‘normal’ ” (Ingraham, 2006, p. 315). Those who are part of the norm are better members of a social group than those who are not.

Gender is accomplished through linguistic behavior, as well as other factors such as physical appearance and sexual preferences, and it is affected and shaped by one’s race and social class. For this reason, the study of the relationship between gender and language analysis should “think practically and look locally” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992 p.462). As a consequence, linguistic analysis related to gender benefits from adopting the notion of “communities of practice”, which is “an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 464). Since membership in these communities depends on the practices these groups engage in, focusing on communities of practice allows researchers to comprehend better how gender and language are interacting, and how these interactions affect and/or reflect the social values and ideologies of a community. In this study, the Spanish speaking Internet community that writes personal ads to find potential partners is considered a community of practice, since the media is considered a space in which the people involved have a

common endeavor and engage in a non-traditional electronic, language interaction.

Taking into account that every gender manifestation is a performance, and a considerable part of this performativity is accomplished through language, the aim of this research is to explore how a regulated model of gender and heteronormativity are articulated in the language used by heterosexuals in personal ads on the Internet. Personal ads offer good examples of the way in which different forms of desire are articulated and circulated in society; they are a very structured genre, with specific semantic and linguistic characteristics. Even though people's individual characteristics are shown in the ads, personal ads are "textbook examples of how people's most intimate desires for connection to others are highly structured along readily observable lines of power" (Cameron & Kulick, 2003, p. 114). As previously mentioned, they iterate expressions of desire and constructions of love and gender that are common to the group.

Within the personal ads, I focus on posters' use of metaphors to create a model of heterosexuality and circulate ideologies of heteronormativity. Metaphor is considered as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.5). Usually a more concrete concept is used to express an abstract one; the object that is the focus of the metaphor is known as the *target*, and the entity that the object is compared to is known as the *source*. Speakers usually assume that metaphors belong to the literary world, overlooking the fact that numerous expressions used in everyday language come from metaphors. In everyday language people's way of conceiving, talking about and experiencing a situation are metaphorically structured.

Therefore, metaphors play a major role in people's conception of gender and sexuality. Gender and sexuality can be the source or the target of a metaphor, and such metaphors carry the ideologies of the community where they are used. In general, metaphors that exploit differences between women and men are used frequently, and they contribute to the maintenance of a "natural" binary order. In the genre of personal ads, metaphors are useful tools to transmit the poster's message, connect with readers, and create an identity (Marley, 2007).

The analysis of metaphors in personal ads carried out in my study was guided by Critical Metaphors Analysis theory (CMA) (Charteris-Black, 2004). CMA is a theoretical approach to the study of metaphors, shaped by Critical Discourse Analysis' notions of how the study of language should mainly be "concerned with increasing our awareness of the social relations that are forged, maintained and reinforced by language use in order to change them" (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 29). Metaphor use is central to this process since metaphors, especially conventionalized ones, are a powerful tool in the creation and maintenance of ideologies. In order to accomplish the objective of my study, I followed CMA's three-stage methodology: metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation.

The personal ads analyzed in my study came from [www.cybercupido.com](http://www.cybercupido.com). This web page offers its services to posters from different countries, who are Latinos or Spanish speakers, and it is free of charge. I collected personal ads written in Spanish from five different countries: United States, Venezuela, Spain, Mexico and Argentina. From each country, I collected 400 ads, 200 from women looking to date men, and 200 from

men looking to date women. The overall corpus came from 2,000 personal ads; from these ads I identified the metaphors used to conceptualize love, relationships, desire, gender, and sexuality. These metaphors were interpreted and explained in order to answer my research questions about what metaphors are created by ad posters, and what ideologies about heterosexuality and heteronormativity were supported in these ads. I decided to collect data and focus on five different countries to explore the possible differences and similarities among these different cultures and groups of posters.

The main aim was to determine how using certain metaphors reflects ad posters' ideologies and models of heterosexuality. Furthermore, the conventionalized metaphors used in personal ads not only reflect the way people think about love, desire, sexuality and gender, but they also “tend to determine our ways of thinking/consciousness and acting/practice in these social spheres” (Goatly, 2007, p.4). As a result, it is central to the study of language in society to understand the ideologies transmitted by metaphors to create awareness of their potential harm or impact on people's everyday lives.

The presentation of this research is organized as follows: chapter two includes the literature review of my research. This review is divided into five different sections. The first one discusses the different theories and approaches to the study of gender and sexuality in relation to language. The second section explores different studies that have analyzed how heterosexuality is articulated in language. The third section explores how ideologies are circulated through language use. The fourth section explores the concept of metaphor and how it is used to disseminate ideologies. The fifth section reviews

linguistic studies about personal ads and gender. The review of these linguistic studies and theories is followed by the research questions of this study.

Chapter three explains CMA theory and its methodology, which I followed to answer my research questions. It includes a presentation of the data source, and the corpus used, and the first stage of CMA's methodology, metaphor identification.

Chapter four includes the analysis of the personal ads. The first half presents the second stage of the methodology, metaphor interpretation. The metaphor interpretation stage contributed to determining what conceptual metaphors and label metaphors were used and created in these personal ads, and the sources of these metaphors. The second half of chapter four discusses the third stage of the analysis, the metaphor explanation stage.

This stage contributed to determining the ideologies behind the use of certain metaphors and how these metaphors transmit the messages of ad posters. Chapter five presents the conclusions of my research, the limitations of the study, and possible future research that could be conducted on the study of language use and ideologies of gender and sexuality.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature review**

This chapter reviews previous literature that provides the theoretical framework for this research and explores issues concerning the topics of gender, sexuality, desire, metaphors, and personal ads. The first section reviews different approaches to gender and sexuality, and how the study of desire might contribute to a better understanding of gendered linguistic practices. The second section explores different linguistic studies that have focused on heterosexuality and the way it is performed linguistically. The third section describes the relationship between language and ideologies, and how ideologies are circulated and maintained through sometimes subtle linguistic practices, one of these being metaphors. The fourth section reviews different approaches to the concept and study of metaphors, as well as different studies that examine metaphors in relation to gender, sexuality, and desire. The fifth section explores previous studies about personal ads for dating in newspapers and the Internet, and how they contribute to the performance of gender. This chapter concludes with the research questions of my project, which issue partially from the inquiries generated by the entire group of studies reviewed here.

#### **2.1 Language and Gender: different approaches. The performance of gender and the articulation of desire through language**

This section contains an overview of the different approaches that have prevailed in the field of language and gender, starting with the way feminism first affected the way linguists thought about differences between how women and men use language.

Furthermore, it explores how changes in the concept of gender and sexuality have affected researchers' interests, and finally it describes more recent trends that explore how to study and analyze the relationship between language and sexuality through the study of articulations of desire.

The initial attempts to study the connection between language and gender, from a feminist perspective, examined differences between the way women and men spoke. This was hardly a new topic of interest since references to how women's language was different -- meaning inferior -- to men's can be found as early as 1777. Women were considered to talk too much, their vocabulary was poorer than men's, and therefore they needed to make up new words to express themselves (Cameron, 2007). Through the years, different stereotypes have been associated with women's speech; some of them radically opposed to each other. However, they all have something in common: they were always negative and proclaimed women's inferiority.

Beyond stereotypes and common assumptions about language, these linguistic studies (Lakoff, 1975; Fishman, 1983), greatly influenced by feminist notions, attempted to show and explain the differences between women's and men's language based on actual conversational data. In this early feminist work on language and gender, women were considered different than men, they spoke differently, and their nature was defined in opposition to men's. In a society ideologically dominated by men, women were constructed as a category of "not-men," the Other. Issues such as sexuality, race and social class were ignored. Early feminist work did not claim that every woman was heterosexual, white and middle class; however the idea of femininity in this field (which

has been extensively criticized) was connected to the heterosexual model of a specific group.

One of the most notable works about “women’s language” was published by Robin Lakoff in 1975. Lakoff’s monograph *Language and Woman’s Place* (1975) illustrated the characteristics that, according to her, distinguish women’s language. These characteristics included the high frequency use of hedges, such as *I don’t really know*, *maybe*, and a high degree of extremely polite forms. She asserted, furthermore, that women’s intonation displays more variability than men’s and their phonetic pitches are softer than men’s; that women use more diminutives and adjectives in descriptions and avoid “strong” words, such as swear words; and that women use rising intonation in declarative sentences, and end them with tag questions, e.g., *It’s a nice day, isn’t it?* All these linguistic features play a similar function in conversation: they reduce the utterance force and cause the speaker to appear less certain, thereby diminishing her authority. This finding implied that women use these features to place themselves in a subordinate position. Women’s language, as opposed to some sort of neutral language, not to men’s language, was not necessarily used by every woman. Lakoff suggested that women should avoid this language in professional and academic settings, but acknowledged that avoidance of this style may result in being seen as non-feminine. Later studies showed that the features associated with women’s language were present in other contexts where speakers were in powerless positions, e.g., defendants in courtrooms. The idea behind this analysis is that women’s language reflected their position in society. While Lakoff’s

analysis provided useful insight into women's language, her discussion of women's talk represents the speech of white, middle class, heterosexual women.

Another early study that reviews women's and men's linguistic interactions was conducted by Fishman (1983). Her study analyzed interaction among heterosexual couples. Fishman described how women interact in conversations with their partners. Her findings showed that women carry out most of the interactional work; women ask questions and offer comments about typically male topics. Since this interactional work was not carried out by men in the same quantity, the results of the conversations were long monologues in which women were simply encouraging and supporting men's narratives. Fishman made an analogy between these responsibilities in conversations and women's responsibility in keeping house. These interactions had a certain "surprising" nature since the couples who participated in Fishman's study were linked to the academic world and considered themselves, women as well as men, feminists or sympathetic to the feminist movement. The inequality shown in their conversations reflected the inequality of the heterosexual world. Even though Fishman's analysis of these language interactions was critical, her work has been used by popular culture articles to "justify" and "explain" why men speak differently than women. Fishman has been cited in magazines like *Cosmopolitan* in articles that try to teach women how to deal with men's lack of attention in conversations. According to them, her analysis shows how men "naturally" interact differently in conversations. These articles assume that her results showed the "natural" order of things in female-male conversations, without considering how Fishman's findings illustrate the power struggle and complex interactions behind linguistic behavior

that allows speakers to construct gender. The relationship between language use and gender has also been approached as an issue of cultural difference. According to this view, differences between women and men's linguistic behavior are an outcome of their socialization in homosocial groups. This approach known as the cultural approach to the study of language and gender was followed by Tannen in her book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1991), probably the only linguistic bestseller that addresses the problem of miscommunication between men and women. According to Tannen, men and women do not communicate efficiently because they grow up socializing in different groups; therefore they are part of different subcultures.<sup>1</sup> Boys and girls play different games in sex-segregated groups and most of their conversations in the early years occur in this homosocial context; as a consequence of being members of different subcultures, interactions in conversation are different. Women value solidarity in conversation; they engage in conversations to show empathy and support for each other. On the other hand, men value competition; their objectives in conversations are to impose or establish their opinions. Consequently, miscommunications and misunderstanding between men and women are a consequence of a lack of knowledge of one group's norm by the other one.

Even though Tannen does not consider that men and women are in identical positions of power, the idea of subcultures ignores the reasons why women might have to show solidarity in conversations while men can be competitive. Tannen's approach fails to acknowledge the position of women in a male-dominated society. It is not clear

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<sup>1</sup> A "light version" of this approach is what is behind of best sellers like *Women are from Venus and Men are from Mars* by Gray (1992).

whether it is women's choice to behave in a certain way, for example, to show solidarity, or whether it is the way to fit in a predetermined social role, to "reflect social expectations and arrangements which oblige women to do more facilitating whether they like it or not" (Cameron, 2007, p. 49). Even if the idea of different subcultures has some real support, speakers of different cultures may also experience inequality observable via language, and their communication is marked by these power struggles. Furthermore, speakers of two different cultures do not grow up thinking about their differences unless they are in continuous contact. They usually do not define themselves in opposition to the other group. On the contrary, women and men in most cultures define themselves in opposition to each other (Cameron, 2007), showing that they are fully aware of the other's norm. Women and men grow up constantly thinking or being told, how different they are from the other group and how this distinction is desirable and "normal".

Tannen's approach has been soundly criticized because it ignores the problem of hierarchies and power struggle, and in some ways supports heteronormativity by assuming that "men" and "women" are natural categories that complement each other and also that both groups are homogeneous. This ignores the substantial amount of variation inside each group. Naturalization of terms like men and women contributes to the stabilization of traditional gender values and the hegemony of heterosexuality. It becomes clear that "the act of differentiating the two oppositional moments of the binary results in a consolidation of each term, the respective internal coherence of sex, gender, and desire" (Butler, 1990, p. 31). The generalizations made about language use according to a

speaker's gender in the aforementioned studies reinforce traditional gender models in a male-dominated society.

One of the most problematic issues with the previous analyses is that they considered the existence of two purportedly homogeneous groups, men and women, and looked for differences between them, attempting to propose universal models of linguistic behavior based on overgeneralizations of social models. There are two main problems with this approach: first, gender does not explain linguistic behavior by itself; second, the categories of women and men vary across social and cultural groups. Considering characteristics of the groups studied (mostly white middle class) as generalizations about either women or men ignores the complexity of these categories, and the multiple elements that play a role in the construction of people's identities as women or men. It also ignores the complexity of the categories of gender and sexuality themselves, commonly used but not always carefully defined.

Sexuality and gender are categories that are imposed by society and that are present in any form of cultural production. Categorization as a woman or a man allows an individual to have recognition in a society organized by these binary categories. It is part of a basic recognition of an individual as a human being. Therefore, gender and sexuality do not depend on an individual's agency exclusively; they are shaped by the ideologies and cultural practices of specific groups. They intersect with race, class, historical contexts and regional practices, and exploring how these gendered practices might be repeated or/and contested by different groups allows us to fully understand the complexities of different cultural identities.

Early feminist accounts considered that gender was the social construction of sex, as opposed to a natural consequence of it. As expressed by Simone de Beauvoir, “one is not born a woman but rather becomes one.” Butler (1990) went beyond this constructionism theory and re-conceptualized gender with performativity theory. In her conception, gender is not a natural consequence of one’s sex; gender is defined as a series of practices or acts that through repetition become natural and part of the culture. Gender is something one does and not something one is. “Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a ‘natural’ kind of being” (Butler, 1990. p.33). Gender is socially constructed but this construction is never fully acquired; one’s performance of gender takes place every day and it is in constant negotiation. Gender identity is constituted by the manifestations of gender, which are usually considered the natural outcomes of gender. Butler indicates how this performativity is regulated by social norms and practices, however, individuals have a certain level of agency that allows them to support or challenge and subvert gender norms. Butler also claims that the distinction between gender and sex is no longer relevant, since sex is a gendered category discursively produced.

One basic characteristic of performativity is its reiteration of practices established by regulatory sexual regimes. Individual agency is conditioned by these sexual regimes and the individual is not a “choosing subject.” This regulation maintains and materializes heterosexual hegemony, naturalizing its practices and norms. Butler (1993b) considers that these regulations create boundaries and legitimize (or delegitimize) certain

bodies, therefore “it will be as important to think how and to what end bodies are constructed as is it will be to think about how and to what end bodies are *not* constructed, and, further, to ask after how bodies which fail to materialize provide the necessary ‘outside’, if not the necessary support, for the bodies which, in materializing the norm, qualify as bodies that matter” (p.16). Heterosexual hegemony needs the other who is not part of this group, who fails to accomplish this more accepted way of being, because gender is also the outcome of discourses that remain outside of it that are usually seen as possible disturbances or fissures. Gender becomes a product of this representation and is also the result of the process of individuals creating a self-representation of that representation. It can be asserted that all discourses and everyday practices are modeling gender constructions (De Lauretis, 1987). Those who are not part of the norm might be difficult to categorize, and/or it might be difficult to establish differences among them, the others, the ones who are not part of the heterosexual hegemony. These others might challenge not only the heterosexual norm, but also common definitions of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. Also, this theory is concerned with the availability of practices for certain groups, and what the consequences are for those who cannot have access to certain practices. As stated by Kulick (2006), “what is expressed or performed in any social context is importantly linked to that which is not expressed or cannot be performed. Hence, analysis of action and identity must take into account what is not and cannot be enacted.” (p.286)

The performance and construction of gender are in constant negotiation and variation. According to Butler (2004), gender is a historical category since it is a cultural

way to configure the body that can always be remade. Gender is not only regulated by social power but it is also a norm in itself. This norm seeks to impose social practices that would stand as normal or regular gender practices. Gender is “the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with the interstitial form of the hormonal, chromosomal, physic, and performative that gender assumes ” (Butler, 2004, p. 42). Within this frame, this norm constitutes a social power that institutes binary gender. In order to represent this concept of gender, an idealization is established and it is embodied, produced, and reproduced by individuals who try to approximate to the ideal. Considering all the elements that constitute the performance of gender, it is easy to see how language would play a major role in the creation and maintenance of this ideal whose highest representation is the performance of heterosexuality. It is also possible to see how this theory affects how linguistic studies approach the study of the relationship between language and gender.

Linguistic studies that consider gender as performance focus their attention on the cultural frame of particular groups, since their gender idealizations will be constructed according to specific societal values related to race, social class, ethnicity, etc. They suggest that there is an infinite number of ways to perform the group’s ideal of gender. These performances will be affected by other dimensions of an individual’s social position. Every group produces a way to create and recreate its gender through linguistic behavior. In this approach the study of intragroup similarities and intragroup differences becomes essential; these intragroup characteristics are as important as differences and similarities with other groups. Membership in a group, being categorized as part of a

group and being recognized as one who is part the system, also has essential political implications. The repercussion of categorization raises the question of legitimacy because “to the extent that desire is implicated in social norms, it is bound up with the question of power and with the problem of who qualifies as the recognizable human and who does not” (Butler, 2004, p.2). Bearing this in mind, linguistic studies look for local explanations of masculinities and femininities since they are produced in specific linguistic communities of practices. These communities recognize these semiotic practices because they are repeatable; this iterability makes them recognizable by other members of the community. As a result, the questions become how are sexuality and desire linguistically performed, how does one place and perform one’s gender in public spaces, and how is heteronormativity accomplished through language performance, and not so much in defining one group in opposition to another.

Linguistic manifestations are used to express group membership; they contribute to the creation of an identity. Language use helps to establish one as a heterosexual, homosexual, or any other aspect of one’s identity that people want to reaffirm in a particular moment. However, Cameron and Kulick (2003) suggest that the study of language and sexuality should move from an identity paradigm that focuses on linguistic manifestations as mostly identity acts, to a paradigm that includes the study of erotic desire that examines how desire is articulated in language. Studies should not only focus on how linguistic manifestations are used to express membership in a group but they should also include other linguistic genres where people express desire: “research is impelled to problematize both the subject and the object of desire, and investigate how

the relationships between the two are materialized through language” (Cameron & Kulick, 2003, p. 107).

Analyzing articulations of desire does not imply ignoring identity performance or identity manifestations, or ignoring the political implications of studying gender, it implies enlarging the object of study to areas where people might have less conscious control of their language use. Studying desiring also recognizes the leading role of desire in the construction of identity; it recognizes that “identities on all scales shape and are shaped by desires and fears rooted in human embodiedness and its subsistence needs, affordances for pleasure, and vulnerability to pain” (Lemke, 2008, p.18).

Desires and fears could be considered basic emotions of every human being; however, a number of them are determined by social constraints and acquired through linguistic practices as people acquire language. As expressed by Lemke (2008) “our desires begin with the needs of the body, our fears begin with the vulnerability of our bodies. And our identities are built in response to these primordial desires and fears, as well as to those additional desires and fear which our cultural worlds elaborate on their foundation” (Lemke, 2008, p.26-7).

Desire is elaborated by our cultural worlds, and “social norms that constitute our existence carry desires that do not originate with our individual personhood. This matter is made more complex by the fact that the viability of our individual personhood is fundamentally dependent on these social norms” (Butler, 2004, p.2). Because of this studying desire does not ignore issues of power and ideologies. Desire is always influenced and structured by relations of power (Cameron & Kulick, 2003). Thus

analyzing how articulations of desire are emitted, fabricated, and circulated contributes to elucidating these relations of power in a particular group.

The way in which people express desire offers a broader vision of the linguistic construction of sexual meanings than an identity-based model, a model that focuses on determining the language characteristics of a group based solely on sexual identity. Since individuals are not always in control of the meanings and consequences of what they do, language may communicate more than speakers intend or it may even express something different than their original intention. Therefore, “the idea of language as a resource speakers use to construct a coherent self or perform a certain kind of identity, while not invalid, is not the whole story either; language can also disrupt or undermine its user’s efforts to present themselves in particular ways,” (Cameron & Kulick, 2006, p.242).

Focusing on desire provides the opportunity to explore what is said about sexual meaning but also what is left out of the conversation, what is avoided and hidden during conversations. The particular ways that desire is expressed are culturally codified; the signs used to convey desire may not be conscious but are recognizable by others because “they are iterable signs that continually get recirculated in social life. The iterability of codes is what allows us to recognize desire as desire” (Kulick, 2000, p. 273). Studying the semiotic codes that speakers recirculate to express desire allows one to analyze the subjects and also their objects of desire.

Following this review of the theory that focuses on how gender, sexuality, and desire are articulated in language, the next section reviews previous studies that have explored how this occurs in actual data in everyday language use. More specifically, the

studies analyzed here focused specifically on how heterosexuality can be performed through language, and how these practices contribute to sustaining heteronormativity.

## **2.2 Using language to perform heteronormativity**

Once linguistic studies started considering the role of language in the performance of gender, and vice versa, they began focusing mostly on groups whose gender performance and/or sexual behavior places them outside the main norm. These groups' linguistic behavior has been labeled queer language, gay and lesbian speech. These studies explored the possibility of the existence of a gay language, how these minority groups used language to create an identity, and how they might have used language to oppose hegemonic heterosexuality. This field was partially motivated for political reasons. As mentioned by Cameron and Kulick (2003), all these studies were “an important contribution to the ‘visibility politics’ whose project was to affirm the presence and the value of gay men and lesbians, both inside and outside the academy” (p.152).

On the other hand, heterosexual language use did not receive the same amount of attention, since heterosexuals were always considered to have been a default category and the focus of interest in linguistics. This has changed in recent years, as researchers have realized that “although heterosexuality, because of its normative and naturalized status, can be thought of as ‘unmarked’ or ‘default’ sexual identity, it does not necessarily go unmarked in discourse. Language-users in various contexts may be actively engaged in constructing heterosexual identities, both for themselves and for one another,” (Cameron & Kulick, 2003, p. 59). This implies that heterosexual speakers, despite belonging to the

normative group, articulate and express their sexuality through the use of language. This articulation is not exclusive to minority groups, since every person is performing his or her sexuality.

The invisibility of the heterosexual norm allows this group to ignore the fact that they also do gender. Therefore, it is also easy to ignore the fact that there are general ideas on how people should talk, either women or men, and about what is normal or not in the use of language. These are stereotypes created and supported by the repetition of practices that we later assume as “common sense.” As part of supporting these ideologies, most members of a community or cultural group fail to realize that “what cultural stereotypes insist are ‘packages’ of traits that must, ‘by nature,’ go together, are in social fact and in principle relatively independent dimensions of behavior and disposition that are correlated in a population only because of the social pressures to conform to the stereotypes” (Lemke, 2008, p.19). These packages are created by the majority who hold power, in this case the heterosexual population. This social idea of heterosexuality as naturally given has been identified as heteronormativity. According to Cameron and Kulick (2003) “heteronormativity is defined as those structures, institutions, relations, actions that promote heterosexuality as natural, self desirable, privileged and necessary” (p.55).

The assumption that heterosexuality is normal and unmarked manifests itself in multiple ways. In a study of three talk-back radio shows in Australia, Rendle-Short (2005) explores how heterosexual callers index sexuality. Due to the fact that this group is considered unmarked they did not make specific references to their sexuality. Instead,

“one obvious way in which sexuality is directly indexed in talk is via reference to non-present persons (husbands, wives, girlfriends or boyfriends)” (Rendle-Short, 2005, p. 561).

There were three possible ways that heterosexual callers made reference to non-present persons to index their sexuality: first, by indicating they were married, which in Australia indicates heterosexuality since gay marriage is not legal; second, they mentioned their boyfriend, girlfriend, wives or husbands; and finally, they mentioned a partner and proceeded to mention their partner’s gender using specific pronouns. On the other hand, the few gay callers in the study’s data had to “come out” about their sexuality. Two callers directly mentioned being a gay and a lesbian. According to Rendle-Short (2005), the fact that gay people had to have “coming out” stories shows how heterosexuality is unmarked, assumed normal and common, and homosexuality is marked and the exception. These two different ways to communicate their sexuality shows that heteronormativity operates on multiple levels and is “not only present at a macrolevel, in terms of society’s expectations or beliefs, but is also present at a microlevel, in terms of how talk-in-interaction unfolds” (Rendle-Short, 2005, p. 575).

Another example on how performing heterosexuality unfolds in a microlevel can be found in Kitzinger’s (2006) analysis. Her study uses “data sets collected and analyzed by the founders of CA (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson) and by other leading conversation analysts (notably Drew, Goodwin, Heritage, Lerner, Maynard, Pomerantz and Zimmerman) to show how co-conversationalists routinely produce themselves (and each other) as heterosexual” (p.170). This data is composed of audio recordings, most of

which were phone conversations. Kitzinger's selection from this data was limited to conversations where participants' partners were not present. In this way, it was certain that during the conversation there were not visual clues of the speakers' sexuality.

During the conversations analyzed by Kitzinger (2006), there were occasions when the display of heterosexuality was explicit. This display occurred in the form of sexual jokes, mockery and in conversations about heterosexual relationships, and marriage related topics. However, Kitzinger was more interested in those parts of the conversations that were not explicitly about sexuality or marriage topics, in which heterosexuality, always taken for granted, shaped talk about other topics. Kitzinger (2006) suggests that "it is in and through *this* talk, far more than in talk 'about' (hetero)sex and (hetero)relations, that we can gain an analytic purchase on the mundane ways through which heteronormativity is produced and reproduced in ordinary talk-in-interaction" [emphasis in the original] (p.173). She concludes, contrary to some common beliefs, that not only 'deviant' groups display their sexuality, but also heterosexuals show off their sexual identity but do so in a 'naturalized' and 'casual' way, which assigns a level of invisibility to heterosexuality.

The fact that heterosexuals enjoy a certain invisibility that allows them to express their sexuality as "normal" does not mean that there is not a model, or a script to be followed in heterosexuality as a performance. As mentioned before, this script is used constantly by speakers and reflects the reigning gender ideologies of a particular group. However, there is not an original script since performativity has been always involved. There is not an original or natural way of being one's gender; one performs gender

according to the reigning ideologies in one's group, which determined the script (Butler, 2004). Performing heterosexuality may be necessary to become part of a particular group, even if the group is not necessarily directly related to gender. A person who fails to display heterosexuality may be at risk of losing their position. In a study carried out in an American high school, Eckert (1994) found that the display of heterosexuality was essential to membership in the adolescent age group. During her fieldwork, Eckert observed groups of pre-adolescents in their process of becoming teenagers. An important part of this process was to engage in the heterosexual market. What Eckert means by "engaging in the heterosexual market" is that even though the pre-adolescents in her study were not expressing sexual desires at this point, part of the process of growing up was to perform heterosexuality and reinforce heteronormativity.

The girls in the study explained to Eckert how they were more mature now, because instead of playing during their time off they would sit around and talk with other girls. The topics of their conversations were usually boys and their relationships with them, although these relationships usually did not involve any talking with their boyfriends. On the other hand, boys also changed their attitude, participating with girls' in these relationships, but they took a passive role in all the "negotiations" of the heterosexual market.

The girls' display of interest in boys was part of performing heterosexuality to be more accepted by their group. Talking about boys was a way to show that they were not little girls anymore. The rejection of heteronormativity is out of the question; in order to fit in their world, middle school or high school, they need to fit into an environment that

inserts people in the “natural” heterosexual world. Furthermore, this “natural” heterosexual world contains an ideology of female subordination and objectification (Eckert, 2006), despite the fact that “both boys and girls come to view themselves as commodities on the heterosexual market. [B]ut while boys’ value on the market is tied to the kinds of accomplishment that they have been cultivating throughout childhood, girls’ value is tied to the abandonment of boys’ accomplishment, and the production of style and interpersonal drama” (Eckert, 2006, p. 190). At this early stage in life, girls know they are defined by how they look and boys are defined by what they do.

The institution of heterosexuality continues to be supported and promoted later, in middle school and high school, “in the US, gender differences and heterosexuality are deeply embedded (and intertwined) in the institution of adolescence and in the formal institution of the high school that houses the age group” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 27). High school traditions support heteronormativity through the institutionalization of heterosexual couples in activities such as the prom queen and king. These activities clearly establish and reinforce traditional gender values, and those who do not follow these traditional values, or do not wish to follow them, are not considered successful members of the institution.

The power of this institutionalized or hegemonic heterosexuality is very evident in cases where it is used to create counteracting discourses. Dalley and Campbell (2006) found this kind of discourse in their analysis of a group of students in a Francophone high-school in Ontario, Canada. Their data is part of a three year study of language and identity in this high school, and it is a segment of a larger project that included

conversations with students, class observations as well as observations of students in other school events.

Dalley and Campbell (2006) observe that heterosexual hegemony is primarily reproduced “in schools through two silencing processes: systematic exclusion [...] and systematic inclusion” (p. 12). Systematic exclusion consists of ignoring or denying gay, lesbian and transsexual people, while systematic inclusion consists of mentioning homosexuality in negative contexts. Despite the fact that heterosexual hegemony was prevalent among most of the students; this hegemony also created a space where a group of female students, who were straight, play-act lesbianism as a way to counteract hegemonic discourse.

Their analysis focuses on three groups: the general school population, a group of five female friends, who were marginalized and called themselves “the Nerds”, and two gay male students. The general school population supported and encouraged hegemonic heterosexuality in traditional activities such as school dances, as well as in other not so traditional activities like a fashion show. These different events were framed as heterosexual spaces, and, in the case of the fashion show, reinforced very traditional concepts of beauty. During class discussions the study found several examples that show how hegemonic discourse was maintained among the school general population. For example, in an English class the possibility that one of the characters in their reading was gay provoked a very negative response from several male students. In a different class discussion, feminist and gay groups were referred to as “special interest groups” which created a division among students and the general population, since this discourse

negated the possibility of the existence of gay people among the students. Also, researchers observed “a remarkably consistent discursive pattern among the students at this school: the subject of homosexuality was repeatedly silence through exclusions” (Dalley and Campbell, 2006, p. 17).

In their analysis of the female friends group, the study found that they performed acts of rebellion that consisted of the use of sexually aggressive discourse among them, which insinuated lesbianism. Using this type of discourse “they not only played on and accentuated their own marginalization, but also contested taken-for-granted norms associated with heterosexuality and femaleness” (Dalley and Campbell, 2006, p.18).

In addition, during class time this group of students would discuss homosexuality as a serious matter or possibility, separating themselves from the majority that considered homosexuality a laughing matter or a source of jokes. It seems that their counteracting performance empowered them and offered them a free space to better express their opinion. As stated by Dalley and Campbell (2006) “queering their sexual identities seemed to make it possible to bellow out comments in class and fully express and defend their opinions” (p. 19).

A third part of the study included conversations with two gay male students. In both cases, the students felt that they had to be able to “pass” as heterosexuals in school due to the consequences that not being part of the majority could bring. Later during the course of the study, one student came out to his school peers. At the beginning he was rejected and verbally attacked, but after a while students started to look at him as unusual, and it became “cool” to hang out with him. However, as expressed by the researchers,

“the notion gained from ‘hanging out with a guy gay’ points to the construction of an exotic Other rather than to acceptance of difference or positive inclusion” (p.23). This lack of inclusion was obvious when he was asked to not bring a male date to a school dance. The structure of heterosexual hegemony was not changed or disturbed; on the contrary, it seems that the majority created an exotic Other who needed to be controlled and silenced at times.

The struggle of fitting in the heterosexual norm continues after individuals leave high school. Universities and colleges are places where the social norm attempts to be gender neutral; however, certain expectations about binary fixed gender roles continue and may affect students’ academic success. According to Bergvall (1996), this conflict is especially evident in technological colleges, since these places have traditionally been male dominated. Analyzing the discourse of female engineering students during classes, Bergvall examines how gender roles are negotiated in their discourses, since women who are studying to be engineers “must either accommodate or resist the gender roles and discourse of this andocentric profession” (p. 174). Her observations indicate that these women sometimes expressed their opinions in assertive ways, usually associated with masculine speech, while at other times they worked as facilitators of others’ ideas and were hesitant after expressing assertive opinions, characteristics traditionally attributed to female speech. This variation in women’s linguistic behavior shows how they negotiate their identities in everyday interactions in the academic setting.

After analyzing a class interaction and a plant-design working group interaction of engineering students, male and female, Bergvall (1996) found that in the class women

held the conversational floor for approximately the same amount of time as men, but women's participation was not equally distributed. One of the female students in the class participated more actively than other women and men. However, her active participation received negative evaluation from other students in the class, expressed through laughter and constant interruptions. Bergvall (1996) considers that since she failed to show traditional supportive female roles and instead showed assertive male behavior, the apparently gender neutral class turned into a forum for "the complex performance of resistance to, and enforcement of, gendered roles," (p. 186). In the analysis of the plant-design working group, Bergvall's observations show that the only woman in the group tended to downplay her own contributions and demonstrated a supportive role in others' people contributions. The lack of confidence of this student was perceived by her peers and appeared to compromise her future success. Both examples show how women might be confronting a no-win situation; their assertiveness is resisted by their peers, and their cooperativeness might cause their own work to go unacknowledged. This situation reflects the conflict between traditional and non-traditional female roles faced by these women in their academic life. Similar results were found by Remlinger (2005). Her analysis explored college students' notions of gender and sexuality in their communities in two Midwestern colleges. Her study shows that students constantly negotiate these notions, supporting traditional ones and/or contesting them. Different conversational strategies were used by students to negotiate these concepts; they would reinforce the dominant ideology through interruptions and topic control, and challenge normative belief through silencing and domination. Remlinger (2005) concludes that there are

limitations for those students not meeting ideal gender standards, sometimes because of their practices but also due to their beliefs; therefore “access to the same education is not available to all students.” (p.135)

Another study that explored the performance of heterosexuality among college students was carried out by Cameron (1997). Cameron analyzed a conversation of five members of a fraternity while they watched a basketball game on TV. She obtained her data from one of the students in her class. This student, a man, originally analyzed the conversation as an interaction among “buddies,” who talk about women and alcohol, like “normal” heterosexual men do. The extract of the whole conversation that Cameron was interested in did not involve women or alcohol. On the contrary, four of the five fraternity members engaged in a discussion about a “*really gay guy*” in one of their classes. Their comments about this person were not intended to state simply his sexual orientation. They commented on his physical appearance, the way he dressed and his lack of masculinity. This person did not fit their standards of how a “real man” should look or behave. What seems like a contradiction is that while questioning another person’s masculinity, the fraternity brothers are engaged in an activity associated with “femininity”, namely gossiping. (Cameron, 1997)

Gossiping has been traditionally considered part of women’s talk; comments about physical appearance and other people’s behaviors are supposed to be made by women. Furthermore, the linguistic features used in the fraternity member’s conversations are identified with women’s talk. For example, collaborative talk is shown through features such as overlapping, simultaneous speech, latching (starting a sentence

right after the other interlocutor's sentence) and the use of rapport words (like the expression "*you know*") (Cameron, 1997). So, what are fraternity members accomplishing through this conversation? Cameron concludes that through this interaction, the fraternity members perform heterosexuality and reaffirm their masculinity in opposition to somebody's lack thereof.

As pointed out by Butler (1993a), the fact that "heterosexuality is always in the act of elaborating itself is evidence that it is perpetually at risk, that is, that it 'knows' its own possibility of becoming undone: hence, its compulsion to repeat which is at once a foreclosure of that which threatens its coherence" (p. 314). The fraternity brothers need to reaffirm their heterosexuality in this private homosocial situation in order to separate from the other group, the homosexuals, and to create social connections within heteronormativity. The performance of heterosexuality in this case, as well as in the girls' group analyzed by Eckert, established a social connection necessary for each group to function in society. Performing gender becomes an essential part of oneself in order to become part of a social institution or social group. The performance of gender is not always related to sexuality or in relation to one's object of desire. It works as a creation of an individual who is part of a homosocial community. Performing gender can involve the affirmation of somebody's heterosexuality as well as her/his own differentiation from homosexuals, the creation of one's identity in opposition to the other's identity.

Performing gender can work as a way to construct various heterosexual identities. This fluidity in performing heterosexuality can become a way of marketing sexuality. The evidence of how the performance of heterosexuality can be flexible and malleable

can be seen in the study of telephone sex worker's languages done by Kira Hall (1995). Fantasy lines emerged at the beginning of the 1980s as a consequence of the deregulation of the telephone industry and advances in technology. These lines offer an alternative way of selling sex through the voices of women; the main goal is to satisfy the client's fantasies. Hall argued that part of the success of telephone sex is linked to the AIDS crisis during the eighties. For her study, Hall interviewed several telephone sex workers as well as managers of companies that provide this service. Her findings are valuable evidence of the performative character of gender.

People who work for telephone sex lines create fantasies using language to please their clients' desires. They construct a character, a narrative and a setting with language features usually associated with femininity. The phone sex workers interviewed by Hall were 11 women and one man residing in the San Francisco area. Six were heterosexual, three bisexuals and three lesbians. The majority were European American, two were Latino, one was African American and one was Asian American. These people did not perceive themselves as victims of their jobs; their perception of fantasy lines was positive and they saw the phone-sex industry as a creative medium. Furthermore, their access to men's minds empowered them. Some of them had chosen this profession as way to avoid oppression by corporate companies. They acknowledged the freedom and respect they received from their bosses, especially in companies owned by women. Even though the images that these workers sold were those of women dominated by men, their choice to work in the phone sex industry was a conscious one. Indeed, this industry works based on the exploitation of other's emotions as well as sexual desires. One of the workers

explained to Hall that her job was a “kind of three-conversation trinity-one part prostitute, one part priest, and one part therapist” (Hall, 1995, p.185).

Some of the scenarios created by sex-phone workers represent an unbalanced power relation between women and men. Men are portrayed as dominant and women as submissive. They make frequent use of feminine lexical items, clothing, colors, materials, etc. They also used intensifiers and give supportive comments to men’s narrative. The linguistic features that they reported using while they work are ones traditionally associated with women’s language; these features construct an identity of a unique woman for each particular caller. This unique woman, however, actually has a set of characteristics associated with a universal concept of an ideal woman.<sup>2</sup> In order to create an effective fantasy, phone sex workers have to be able to use language to perform as the stereotypical woman, using elements that reflect the popular conception that men have about women’s language.

Most of the sex-phone workers have to be able to perform different characters to fulfill their clients’ fantasies. These characters represent several stereotypes: the “beach bunny”, the Asian, the dominating “older woman”, etc. The linguistic features used to perform these characters on the phone do not necessarily reflect the reality of someone’s language, but the stereotypical features that clients associate with them. This situation is most obvious with some workers who are able to represent women from different ethnicities with their voices. The majority of clients are European Americans who have

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<sup>2</sup> This idea of an ideal woman is so commonly accepted by some men that Hall mentioned how when talking with her next-door neighbor about her research topic, he was disappointed to find out that “all the sexy women” he had seen in the advertisement of sex-phone lines were hired just for their voices. It seems some men may easily buy the fantasy of these “perfect women”.

fantasies about “exotic women,” meaning women who are not white. One of them recognized the racism behind these stereotypical assumptions: “we’d have women who were actually Black and we’d hook them up; and they wouldn’t believe the woman, that she was Black, because she didn’t sound like the stereotype” [emphasis in the original] (Hall, 1995, p. 201). Workers must vocalize racial stereotypes following clues provided by clients’ racist assumptions. Every race can be represented with these stereotypes: Caucasian women workers performed Black women better than actual Black women did, but Black women could be very successful impersonating a white woman. These workers are capable of satisfying their clients’ fantasies using certain linguistic forms that articulate and reiterate desire that most people recognize as such. Hall acknowledged how these performances not only show that the role of stereotypes is very strong in the construction of fantasies, but also how race and gender are inseparable in the creation of identity and the articulation of desire.

All the performativity involved in the phone-sex creation of fantasies is evidence that language is able to help in the construction of identities that are not “authentic.” It shows how the construction of identity is not just what one “originally” is. It stems from the ideas that others have about a specific identity. To be able to sound like a heterosexual woman requires something else besides being one -- it requires the ability to perform the features associated with this gender category. These features are not established by the individual; s/he can choose whether to use the features or not, but the meanings of the forms are already determined. The shared knowledge of the forms is what makes communication possible. However, that does not mean that the system

cannot suffer alterations. Since language is a series of conventions that one can choose to perform or not, one can follow or ignore certain norms, one can fake or recreate an identity like the sex-phone workers do.

Additionally, linguistic norms associated with a particular group carried a series of ideologies. These ideologies express the beliefs and expectations that a certain community has about gender roles and sexuality. Considering heterosexuality as not natural and not unmarked, it is possible to see how certain ideologies would be attached to an ideal model of a heterosexual person in certain communities, and certain behaviors would be necessary to be a “good” representation of heterosexuality. How these ideologies are articulated in language will be explored in the next section, specifically ideologies of gender and sexuality.

### **2.3 Ideologies, power and gender in language.**

Language ideology establishes a link between social structures and linguistic manifestations. The study of ideologies of language is significant not only for understanding how language works, but it is also significant for the analysis of social institutions. Language ideology often supports these institutions and their inequalities, and as a consequence, certain language uses support social inequalities, discrimination, etc. in a specific community of practice. As Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) state, applying William’s (1977) concept, a definition of language always includes a definition of what a human being is, implicitly or explicitly. Therefore, the study of language contributes to a greater understanding of social institutions and their members.

Linguistic ideology has received several definitions. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) mention how it has been conceived as a group of beliefs about language use and structure that speakers have. It has also been conceived as the ideas that a group has concerning the role of language in their social experience as members of a group, and/or a group of common sense ideas about the nature of language. The significance of adding ideology to a language analysis is “to address the relevance of power relations to the nature of cultural forms and ask how essential meanings about language are socially produced as effective and powerful” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p.58).

Ideologies are present in language because language use is the most common form of social behavior, and in this form of behavior, people rely mostly on common sense assumptions (Fairclough, 1989). In modern societies, power is achieved through ideologies, specifically through the “ideological working of language” (p.2). For Fairclough (1989) power is not just a matter of language; there is a distinction between the exercise of power through coercion, i.e. physical violence, and the exercise of power through the construction of accepting it. Nonetheless language helps to create this construction and as a consequence “contributes to the domination of some people by others” (p.4). One of these social structures that is shaped by power relations and needs to be maintained is gender. Ideologies and social practices related to gender are also institutionalized through discourse practices to preserve power relations in society and gender order. How ideologies of gender manifest themselves in language goes beyond the differences or similarities between women and men’s speech. The relationship between

the use of language and gender manifests itself in everyday linguistic practices in which both women and men engage to maintain heterosexual hegemony or heteronormativity.

Thus, the exercise of power in society through ideology does not occur, according to Fairclough, by coercion but by consent. Social institutions impose their ideologies on people to the point where they feel part of the institution. To spread ideologies, social institutions use discourse, understood as a social practice determined by social conventions associated with social institutions. Therefore, social institutions that control discourses achieve social control. A good example is the 'news media' that most people receive every day. 'News' accounts for a significant section of a person's involvement in discourse, since it is the most important or the only source of information for some people; consequently 'news' plays an essential role in social control. Fairclough (1989) affirms that one of the main features of contemporary discourse in modern society, more specifically in Britain, is "the tendency of the discourse of social control towards simulated egalitarianism, and the removal of surface markers of authority and power" (p.37).

One example of the use of public discourses by social institutions to impose their ideologies of simulated egalitarianism can be found in Lazar's (2002) research about Singaporean society. This research explores what being a woman means within the heterosexual order in this society. Lazar's article analyzes a multimedia advertising campaign, newspapers' ads as well as TV commercials that encourage people in Singapore to get married and have children. The campaign targeted women as well as men, and Lazar's analysis focuses on the way ads recreate female identity. According to

the author, heterosexual femininity is based on “the principle of *other-centredness*” (Lazar, 2002, p.112). This concept implies a constant promotion of an intense devotion for women to men and children as a requirement to achieve a woman’s self identity. Women’s energies must be “channeled towards seeking fulfillment almost entirely in and through others” (p.112). Despite these aspects of the campaign, it has some elements that promote egalitarian gender relations, such as the promotion of women’s professional achievement. At the same time, the ads’ promotion of other-centeredness femininity also evidences a discourse of conservative gender relations. This coexistence of these two different discourses is important to achieve the ads’ purposes, since they target professional women. These ads combine an egalitarian discourse with an image of women deeply emotionally dependent on their relationship with men and children. They construct a self-centered masculinity as opposed to a heterosexual femininity that is naturally other-centered.

The ads achieve their purpose presenting three different life stages: courtship, marriage and parenthood. In the courtship stage ads, the other centeredness is accomplished by showing women investing deeply in romance. At the beginning of the ads, the use of the plural first person personal pronoun ‘we’ implies that both participants in the romance are equally involved. Upon a closer look, the ads show that they target women more and reproduce an asymmetrical relationship. To accomplish this, the ads use elements such as a female voice singing most of the time during the commercial, and/or putting the woman’s face and body posture in a more prominent position, as in a close up shot where she has a dreamy expression while the man’s expression is not clear in the

angle of the shoot. Women are also represented as being sheltered and protected by men. In some TV commercials, the shot shows women while the narrative voice talks about how everybody needs somebody else to be more complete. According to the author, these apparently innocuous romantic gestures are “ideologically invested ways of ‘doing’ couplehood” (Lazar, 2002, p.116), a couplehood that accepts and naturalizes gender asymmetry.

The same mechanisms work at the later stage of marriage. In the ads that target women, marriage is represented in romantic terms, as opposed to the ads for men, which represent marriage in pragmatic terms, focusing on professional development. In the ads for women, the use of the word ‘love’ is at center stage and is constantly repeated. Another important element of these ads is that they encourage women to be more assertive and seek romance, which can be seen as an egalitarian move. However, at the same time, they encourage women to be loving, understanding and to not challenge men. As expressed by Lazar (2002), “the active participation of women is encouraged for the maintenance of gender asymmetry” (p.118). The ads encourage women to tolerate men’s shortcomings. In fact, these shortcomings are represented as appealing.<sup>3</sup> They are treated as a superficial matter; therefore women’s intolerance would be a lack of practicality and sensibility.

The construction of femininity that is other-centeredness is present in the nuclear family ads too. Motherhood is represented as a way to satisfy the man’s desire of fatherhood. Later, women are also encouraged to have siblings for their children,

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<sup>3</sup> One of the ad’s soundtrack is taken from a popular hit ‘Let’s hear it for the Boy’, one of the lines says: “[My baby may not be rich. /he watches] every dime. But he loves me, loves me, moves me” (Lazar, 2002, p.118)

emphasizing the “obligation women have as good mothers to keep their child happy by *giving* him/her a sibling” (p.122). These ads encourage women to become mothers; however, at the same time, they portray women as secondary characters in the parental role, showing a supportive role rather than one as a protagonist raising their children.

Lazar points out how, even though contemporary consumer culture is focused on self-satisfaction and pleasing oneself instead of others, there is an opposite perspective sold nationally to Singaporean women: the other-centeredness idea. These ads accomplish their other-centeredness message by constructing a discourse that starts by selling the idea of romantic love during courtship (as opposed to selling economical stability that is not needed by professional women), then moves to a more realistic vision of love during marriage (accepting men’s shortcomings) and ends with an idea of motherhood where there is a “development of self-effacing, self-sacrificial love” (Lazar, 2002, p.124). According to Lazar, selling women an ideology of the idealization of self-centeredness in a national campaign is a powerful strategy to silence their dissatisfaction. If women experience social-political discontent, it would be very difficult for them to articulate this feeling because, at the same time, they feel deeply attached to others in a labor of love.

The publicity campaign for marriage in Singapore shows how linguistic elements, and linguistic assumptions of certain practices, such as romantic relationships, can diffuse a specific ideology naturalizing these practices. Power holders are selling, or imposing, an identity on women, creating an idea of a natural order, and certain views of common sense. However, “the degree of convergence among these views of a particular identity is

not simply a function of some miraculous invisible hand of shared or common Culture. It is the product of interests and the domination of some interests over others. It is governed by ideology that serves interest, [...] much of the convergence is a product of the interests of those who dominate the dominant field of money-and-power” (Lemke, 2008, p.32).

The central mechanism of power holders to maintain their power, as pointed out by Fairclough (1989), is to naturalize discourse practices. When people use these discourses and assume them to be commonsense, social institutions impose and maintain their ideologies. Everyday language encodes many of these kinds of discourses and linguistic resources that impose ideologies without people’s awareness. Language has different resources to establish a concept of gender in which binary divisions are natural and “normal.” These are powerful resources to maintain gender inequalities such as the power of heterosexuality and heterosexism in a community.

Within this framework, language is not only determined by reality, but it is also one of the main factors that shapes it. As sustained by Fairclough (1989), in order to better understand the power of discourse practices, it is necessary to consider not only the “social determination of language, but also the linguistic determination of society” (p.19). Discourse is determined by social structure. It also has an effect on social structure and it helps to achieve the maintenance of social structures or bring about social change. Social institutions set up a series of public discourses. When people passively reproduce these discourses, they sustain the social relationship that determined the discourses in the first place. On the contrary, when people resist or contest dominant conventions, their language use can produce changes in social relationships.

One example of change in discourses that brings social change is explored by Cameron (1990). In her analysis of non-sexist language, Cameron describes how the establishment of non sexist language policies was seen as unnecessary by several linguists. At the beginning, these policies were perceived by some linguists as unnecessary because once changes were made in society, i.e. the end of sex-based inequalities, language would adopt these changes as a reflection of society. The end of sex inequalities has not been completely achieved; however, linguistic reforms by feminists have been very successful. Therefore, without the public debate about sexism in language, language would not have experienced considerable changes. Observing this case, it is possible to see that “language-using is a social practice in its own right” (Cameron, 1990, p.90). Changes in language are not only a reflection of a social change; they become a social change itself. Changing the repertoire available to speakers changes the repertoire of social meanings available to social actors.

Discourse determines and reproduces social structure. Within this structure, the discourse practices of social subjects are constrained by their social positions. In this sense, they may be seen as passive; however, Fairclough (1989) affirms that this constraint also enables speakers as social agents. This is possible because discourse can be conservative, maintaining the system, or can be innovative and produce changes. Nonetheless, the discourse of power holders also innovates in order to preserve their ideologies. Fairclough believes that when power is not “over marked”, as in the case currently, discourses seem to be more egalitarian. This suggests that power holders have only made concessions, but they have not lost their power. These concessions are caused

by the relatively increased power of the powerless groups, but it does not mean that power holders have renounced their status. One good example was previously mentioned in relation to Cameron's (1990) analysis. The institutionalization of non-sexist language did not bring the end of sexual inequalities. While this linguistic change produced a certain level of social change; at the same time, it can be used by male hegemony to close the discussion about gender inequalities.

An analysis of the discourses in men's magazines by Benwell (2002) is a good example of discourse changes that allow power maintenance, in this case male hegemony. According to Benwell, during the 1980's, British male magazines portrayed a masculinity that was unmarked and invisible. This masculinity was more openly focused on narcissistic pleasures in style and appearance. This change was considered as the founding of the construction of a 'new man'. However, when magazines that promoted this masculinity became culturally dominant, a more traditional masculinity reappeared to challenge the new trend. Benwell (2002) sustains that "this challenge to the 'new man' was embodied in the figure of the 'new lad'" (p.150). Publications that promoted the 'new lad' image claimed to offer a real version of masculinity as opposed to the commercial and media created image of the 'new man'. The image of the new lad is associated with working and middle class men and promotes conservative models of masculinity, promoting values that include homophobia and misogyny.

Benwell's (2002) analysis addresses the strategies used by new lad's magazines to promote the values of traditional masculinity. More specifically, this article analyses "the way in which modern men's lifestyle magazines simultaneously celebrate and evade what

some discourse would call ‘political incorrectness’”(p.152). This strategy is part of a plan where hegemonic masculinity finds stability showing flexibility; while male hegemony finds ways to incorporate and participate in current political and historical situations, the incorporation allows hegemony to remain stable. These magazines target a youth market that is anxious to promote a hegemonic masculinity. According to Benwell, men’s lifestyle magazines use discursive strategies, as well as visual tactics, to promote and define a particular ‘new lad’ masculinity that has a “desire to remain ambiguous and consequently elusive or inscrutable” (p.153). These manifestations of masculinity are related to the flexibility of male power as a maintenance and survival strategy.

The magazines that addressed the ‘new man’ suffered a tension between the objectified image of men in ads that promote grooming products for men and unambiguous heterosexuality. The ‘new lad’ ideology seems to resolve this tension by selling and promoting these products with irony in their articles. Another strategy is showing ads of attractive men always being admired by a woman or focusing only on the product. The images sold in magazines are offered from the traditional heterosexual male perspective. When targeting men, images show their object of desire; and when they target women they show the female body-image “ambitioned” by women. In both cases, magazine images are pleasing the male gaze. This objectification of the female body does not have a male version. Several strategies are used by male magazines to avoid the objectification of the male body. The men in the images are presented as active and nonsexual, and when they are in a protagonist position, their gaze is hostile and unsmiling. The main motivation for both representations is the avoidance of homoerotic

implications. New lad's magazines have a conflict between the masculinity they sell and their economical interests. These magazines have to promote products for men. However, "the need to promote anxieties in men about appearance and image sits uneasily with a dominant masculinity and all its phobias about sexuality" (p.162).

As previously mentioned, two other defenses of these magazines against sexual and gender ambiguity are humor and irony. Irony can be defined as a disjunction or contradiction between the meaning of a form and its underlying meaning. Thus it is "a very useful strategy for disclaiming responsibility for politically unpalatable sentiments" (Benwell, 2002, p.163). When these magazines use language that supports traditional masculinity, they theoretically expect readers to interpret these opinions as objects of ridicule; however, the average reader would not read it in this way. Benwell notes how it seems that average readers are staying at the literal level, a level that empowers traditional values of masculinity and endorses discrimination narratives.

The other role of irony and humor is to protect the magazine's masculinity from the possibility of being confused with the 'other' (women or gay men). In an article about facials and massages, analyzed by Benwell, the writer uses humor to show that there is nothing unmanly in a men-only beauty salon. His description of the place is plagued with highly masculine adjectives and allusions to 'normal guys' who are looking to relax, not to be better looking.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned before, this strategy shows how the stability of hegemonic masculinity depends on its flexibility, since "it may incorporate elements of an oppositional discourse (e.g. the notion that men care about their bodies), but leave

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<sup>4</sup> The opening description of the beauty salon says "A men-only grooming shop for normal, everyday, nothing-funny-about-my-testosterone-levels-thank-you-blokes..." (Benwell, 2002,p.165)

intact more traditional assumptions about gender identity (i.e. they are not explicitly narcissistic)” (Benwel, 2002, p.166).

Another mechanism to defend hegemonic masculinity is stressing the difference with the contrasting feminine identity. In these male magazines, women are portrayed in two ways: as objects of desire, and as threatening people who are a source of problems. Within this discourse, women’s qualities that are valued in feminist discourses (i.e. assertiveness) are qualified in negative terms and considered threatening. At the same time, other traditional values associated with femininity are more appreciated; they are part of the object of desire.

The discourse strategies used by male magazines, along with their visual aids, work for the consolidation of a single, relatively stable version of masculinity. Heterosexual male magazines do not support any new version of masculinity. Their strategies such as humor, irony and double voicing preserve traditional male values while they avoid public disapproval. Benwell (2002) concludes that all these strategies and discourses are ways in which hegemonic masculinity adapts to social change in order to preserve its status.

Ideologies of power and gender identities can also be adapted, negotiated and sometimes modified at the level of the community, and through their use of discourse. Speakers tend to use their resources as members of a community to interpret and produce discourses. These resources are socially generated, and they are determined by the social relations and struggles where they were generated. Therefore speakers internalize and use what is socially available to them, and with these resources they might preserve

ideologies or transform them. Examples of both possibilities, preservation and transformation, are found in Pujolar's (2001) analysis of two communities of practices in Barcelona, Spain.

In his analysis of two groups of young Catalonians, Pujolar observes that in one of the groups, which he denominated *The Ramblers*, young men performed a type of masculinity that he denominates "simplified masculinity". The members of this group claimed that they had a simple personality, uncomplicated and that they followed their "natural" and spontaneous drives. *The Ramblers* group had particular discourse interactions that contained specific topics, set of roles, genres, and components of identities that individuals should perform in order to be considered a man in the group. Some of these characteristics were the exploitation of sexual topics, creative swearing and friendly threats among themselves. On the other hand, female members of the group showed a type of femininity that displayed care and intimacy. The discourse practices of this group sustained traditional gender identities, and those who were not satisfied with this arrangement were victims of teasing and insults by the other members; Pujolar (2001) points out "how important gender identity can be in the peer-group context and also how subtly a particular gender "order" can be created and sustained" (p.82).

In contrast, the second group analyzed by Pujolar, *The Trepas*, renegotiated masculinity and femininity in different ways and different discourse practices. They considered themselves to be more politicized than the general young population of Barcelona; and their political stands make them play less traditional gender roles within the group. However, Pujolar (2001) indicates how these transformations were a constant

source of conflict and struggle among group members: “as people have to renegotiate the value of their practices to ensure that they are taken up or interpreted correctly” (p.106).

Pujolar concludes that in *The Ramblers* group, masculinity and femininity were defined as opposites. The dominant stereotypes or patterns of both identities worked as a background that individuals either accepted or rejected. The adoption of the behavioral patterns associated with the other sex-group was used to produce humorous or dramatic effects. On the contrary, *The Trepas*, a more politicized group not only developed original identities, but also promoted their new principles, creating an alternative “normality” among the group.

The studies mentioned previously allow us to see how power does not impose its ideologies by coercion, at least in the communities analyzed. Ideologies are imposed through the use of discourse practices that become naturalized in everyday language. These practices are usually determined by the institutions that hold power; speakers integrate these discourses to a point where they feel part of the social institution. Gender and sexuality are controlled by these institutions and even people’s most intimate desires are shaped by power. The imposition of ideologies can occur in national campaigns controlled by governments (as in the case of the Singaporean ads), in magazines that target a specific group (the case of lad magazines), or at the level of the community, where speakers reproduce, or not, power ideologies about gender (the case of youth communities in Barcelona).

Ideologies of gender imposed by those who retain power are not fixed; individuals can try to change and reshape these ideologies. However, in order to do that, it is

necessary to determine the way these ideologies are imposed upon us. Also, it is necessary to realize that individuals might work with whatever is given to them to produce change, but their power is limited by those who are in control. As stated by Butler (2004), individuals have to realize “that fantasy of godlike power only refuses the ways we are constituted, invariably and from the start, by what is before us and outside of us. My agency does not consist in denying this condition of my constitution. If I have any agency, it is opened up by the fact that I am constituted by a social world I never chose,” (p.3). This fact is what makes it necessary to establish the linguistic practices used to impose ideologies of gender in order to open the possibility of modifying them.

One of these linguistic practices is metaphors. Metaphors are very common in everyday language; the ideologies contained in them are perceived as natural experiences. This level of commonality or naturalness makes metaphors an efficient way to promote ideologies of gender and sexuality. The next section reviews the literature in order to explore the different concepts of metaphors, how they shape our perception of the world, and how they spread ideologies of gender and sexuality.

## **2.4 Metaphors and ideologies of gender and sexuality**

As previously mentioned, everyday discourse practices are ideal ways to spread and support ideologies. Those who have more access to institutions of power are responsible for creating and maintaining these ideologies as part of a community’s common sense or naturalized discourses. One of these discourse practices is metaphor; a metaphor is considered here as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in

terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.5). From a cognitive perspective, this implies “thinking of thing (A) as though it were another thing (B), and linguistically this will result in an item of vocabulary or larger stretch of text being applied in an unusual or new way” (Goatly, 2007, p. 11). The process of linking A and B is known as Mapping; the thing that one talks about in the metaphor (A) is the Target, and the entity that one is comparing it to (B) is the Source.

Many people are under the impression that metaphors belong to the literary world, ignoring the fact that numerous expressions that we use in everyday language come from metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) called attention to how one’s way of conceiving, talking about and experiencing a situation is metaphorically structured, because one understands a specific experience in terms of another (e.g. ARGUMENT IS WAR). This process of understanding implies that one uses a relatively more concrete concept, such as a journey, to explain a more abstract one, life. In this way “metaphors work by projecting one relatively well-understood set of ideas onto a domain that is problematic, rather than by simply expressing a pre-existing and objective similarity” (Chilton, 1996, p106). In the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, there are not necessarily objective similarities but rather a possibility of associating life with ideas such as time, moving forward, moving to different places, and so forth.

The fact that these expressions are fixed in the lexicon of a language does not make them dead metaphors; they are reflections of “systematic metaphorical concepts that structure our actions and thoughts” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.55). The repetition of these metaphorical expressions affects the way people perceive certain experiences, even

if they are not aware of the origin of the expressions. Furthermore, the fact that metaphors are frequently common expressions, part of everyday language, makes them more effective in discourse: “it is precisely because they are conventionalized that they may achieve the power to subconsciously affect our thinking, without our being aware of it” (Goatly, 2007, p. 22).

Metaphors, or domains of experience, are perceived as a whole. This perception gives us the idea that these domains are natural kinds of experiences. They are natural in the sense that they come from our bodies, our interaction with our physical environment, and our interaction with other people in our culture. These natural experiences “are products of human nature”. Some can be universal, but others will vary among different cultures. Concepts for apparently natural experiences in our culture have to be understood in terms of metaphors, i.e. love, happiness, health, morality, etc. (i.e. LOVE IS MADNESS, LIFE IS A JOURNEY). Our cultural assumptions shape the way that we experience events. There is no such thing as “direct physical experience” because this perception will be filtered by our cultural background which is already present (Lakoff & Johnson, 1986).

Concepts such as LOVE IS MADNESS, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and ARGUMENT IS WAR are considered conceptual metaphors. A conceptual metaphor “represents the conceptual basis, idea or image that underlies a set of metaphors. It does not mean that metaphors can *only* take this form [...] or *predict* forms that will occur.” (Charteris-Black (2004, p. 9). However, it implies that people will, most likely, talk about certain experiences in terms of common metaphors used in their culture.

However, the idea that metaphors, or domains of experience, are perceived as a whole has been questioned. McGlone (2007) argues that his analysis of people's perception of the metaphor THREE COURSE MEAL referring to an academic lecture showed that people better remembered or associated the metaphor, THREE-COURSE MEAL, with one of the abstract attributes, large quantity, than with the source, FOOD. Some studies previously carried out by him showed similar results; according to McGlone (2007) "these findings cast serious doubt on the claim that conceptual metaphors underlie people's comprehension of nominal metaphors in discourse. Instead, people appear to infer, articulate, and remember the attributive categories these metaphors imply" (p. 117). In addition to this, these findings suggest that when people use metaphors they are filling gaps in their discourse. This process of extending the meaning of certain words or expressions, this process of creating novel metaphors is "active and contemplative [...], not passive and unconscious"(McGlone, 2007, p. 123)

Regardless of how metaphors are perceived, either as a whole experience or as a series of attributes, people's use of metaphors in everyday discourse carries certain ideologies. The ideologies that lie behind some metaphors encourage speakers to make certain associations and downplay other elements that influence their perception of an experience. One example can be found in the way modern society conceives and accepts the conceptual metaphor: "LABOR AS A SOURCE." This metaphor downplays the agentive role of human beings. This concept makes it easier to explain the presence of unfair jobs, exploitation, and modern slavery (Lee, 1992). In understanding metaphors, it

is possible to observe how human beings get a hold of a concept, and how they understand and function in terms of it.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out how speakers can create new metaphors (i.e. LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART), and these metaphors help make sense of their world in the same way that the old ones do. New metaphors make available new organizations of one's conceptual system; these new metaphors may highlight some elements of experience and hide others. This process of highlighting certain elements involves different aspects of these concepts, changing our way of perceiving a particular situation and living certain experiences. When people give new meaning to experiences, they can recreate the way they perceive the world, i.e. creating new metaphors associated with love, as in LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART. These new metaphors' meanings will be determined both by past experiences and culture.

From this perspective, metaphors contribute to creating a reality rather than just providing a new way of understanding a preexisting reality. This is possible because metaphors structure people's conceptual system, as well as their everyday activities. "It is reasonable enough to assume words alone don't change reality. But changes in our conceptual system do change what is real for us and affect how we perceive the world and act upon those perceptions" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 146). One's conception of physical reality is affected by one's social reality, which is determined by one's culture.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that metaphors perform a very significant role in determining what is real for a group of speakers given that much of our social reality is understood in metaphorical terms, and our conception of the physical world is partly

metaphorical. Because our perception of the world occurs through metaphors, we highlight some elements of our experiences and hide others. The acceptance of a metaphor forces us to focus on only some aspects of the experience, and view the boundaries and consequences of the metaphors as true. However, “what is at issue is not the truth or falsity of a metaphor but the perceptions and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 158).

Lakoff and Johnson’s initial approach to metaphors greatly opened our perception of discourse practices that are assumed as common, therefore almost meaningless. However, their cognitive approach has been criticized because it confines the use of metaphor to a cognitive and semantic role. Charteris-Black (2004) argues that “the role can be a semantic one that is concerned with stretching the resources of the linguistic system to accommodate change in the conceptual system but it can also serve as a stylistic resource for conveying authorial evaluation. This is a pragmatic role because it reflects the linguistic choices that realize particular rhetorical intentions within a particular context” (p. 8)

Accordingly, the study of metaphor would strongly benefit from a pragmatic approach. Metaphor is commonly used in discourse because it has the potential to persuade hearers, a common goal among speakers. The information provided in metaphors has the possibility of influencing others since “it represents a novel way of viewing the world that offers some fresh insight” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 7). In the contexts where metaphors might appear, they have a specific role. To consider only their cognitive characteristics is to miss their role in a particular discourse. Therefore, “their

cognitive characteristics cannot be treated in isolation from their persuasive function in discourse” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.9).

One of Lakoff’s claims about metaphors is that they have their source in our bodily infant experiences. Within this frame, metaphor use is a highly unconscious and automatic process. This is one of the disadvantages of analyzing metaphors only from a cognitive perspective, since the “only explanation of metaphor motivation is with reference to an underlying experiential basis. This assumes that metaphor use is an unconscious reflex, whereas a pragmatic view argues that speakers use metaphor to persuade by combining the cognitive and linguistic resources at their disposal” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 11).

According to Charteris-Black (2004), a pragmatic approach to the analysis of metaphors allows the researcher to see that the choice of a particular metaphor is in fact influenced by individual resources, such as thoughts, feelings and bodily experience, but also by social resources such as ideological outlook (primarily political or religious viewpoint), and historical and cultural knowledge. All these resources play a role in people’s choices of metaphors, because they are “chosen by speakers to achieve particular communication goals within particular contexts rather than being predetermined by bodily experience” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 247).

One of the rhetorical aims of metaphors in discourse is persuasion; this pragmatic role of metaphors is related to the capacity that they have to transmit ideologies. Metaphor is a powerful tool to reinforce views that are broadly accepted in a community, and it makes these views part of a naturalized discourse. The role they play in everyday

discourses reveals how “increased awareness of metaphors through critical metaphor analysis is necessary for individual empowerment and offers alternative ways of understanding the world we live in” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.243)

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to the study of metaphors differs with the Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) approach since they have a different focus of attention. CMT is not concerned with specific examples of metaphors from a particular discourse, CMT is more concerned with the relationship between two semantic domains. As a consequence, “the data CMT presents as evidence for conventionalised conceptual metaphors are often not attested but rather appeal to native speaker intuition. This is in contrast to CDA, where the focus is on microlevel analysis of concrete examples of discourse, which is to say, on actual instances of talk or text in different genres.” (Hart, 2008, p. 93). Focusing on microlevel analysis of discourse allows an understanding of how notions of heterosexism and other social inequalities are transmitted and preserved.

Within a CDA approach, ideologies are as important as bodily experiences in the creation and transmission of metaphor themes (Goatly, 2006). From a cognitive perspective, the way one uses metaphors, and other linguistic representations, is determined by one’s conceptual representation, “this view, however, is inconsonant with CDA, which would maintain the inverse – that linguistic representation in discourse can determine, to some extent, conceptual representation” (Hart, 2008, p. 94). From a CDA perspective, the particular language one speaks predisposes the way one might act and think, at least partially.

Metaphors of gender and relationships, the focus of this study, reinforce binary divisions which appear to be natural and “normal”. Therefore, these common metaphors could contribute to preserving the traditional values of a community, and to preserving the power of heterosexuality and heterosexism.

Metaphors have a major role in people’s conception of gender and sexuality. Gender and sexuality can be the source or the target of a metaphor. In either case, these metaphors carry the ideologies of the community where they are used. One example is when nature is conceived as a mother. This metaphor associates a “natural” characteristic of women, nurturing, with nature. Gender can also be the topic of metaphors, such as the use of baseball terminology to talk about (hetero) sexual relationships, such as when two men have this conversation: “ ‘*Did you score with her?*’ ‘*No, I struck out completely and didn’t even get to first base.*’ Or: ‘*Yeah – a home run!*’” (my italics) (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 213).

Additionally, English has a series of words used metaphorically to refer to sexual intercourse such as *screw*, *bang*, and *hump*. Originally these metaphors had an implication of employing violence and hurting something or someone, usually by men toward women. However, these meanings have shifted in time, losing some of the violent implications and their asymmetry value, making phrases such as “we screwed each other” more accepted by speakers (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). These examples illustrate how metaphors contribute to shaping the perception not only at the level of social actions, but also at the level of individual ones. Metaphors can reinforce beliefs about gender and

relationships that people conceive as “natural”, and as they circulate they can be shifted by a group of speakers.

Even sexual desire, considered by individuals as a basic instinct, is shaped and partially determined by metaphors. In her study about metaphors of sexual desire in British English, Deignan (1997) observes how desire is conceived of in terms of an external force: DESIRE IS FALLING, DESIRE IS PHYSICAL WEAKNESS, and DESIRE IS AN APPETITE and AN ANIMAL. All these metaphors used to represent desire contribute to establishing which desires are appropriate and which ones are not. Deignan found examples in which the metaphorical use of health to evaluate desire included references to homosexual and teenager desire as unhealthy, in the same category in which damaging desires such as pedophilia were found. These references reflect how speakers use language to group distinct phenomena in order to condemn them all. All these metaphors are powerful resources to maintain social structures that support gender inequalities such as male hegemony and heterosexism in a community, and contribute to excluding those who are not ideal members of the community in a subtle manner.

One of the central tools used to reinforce common beliefs about gender, which contributes to maintaining gender inequality and the traditional gender system, is the “sexual metaphor”. This metaphor uses the widespread tendency to use conceptions of female-male difference to construct thinking and the description of numerous contrasts and oppositions (i.e. body vs. spirit, arts vs. sciences, emotion vs. reason, etc.). (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Metaphors that exploit differences between women and men contribute to the maintenance of a “natural” binary order. Another central argument about

metaphors and gender is that women are frequently the source of metaphors used by men in order to “construct their sense of a distinct self, their relation to the world, and their relations to one another” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 217). On the other hand, women do not use men as a source of metaphors in the same way. The reason for this seems to be that men need women to create this concept of the Other, a being completely different from them who makes their existence possible. These metaphors “assume a male-centered worldview, from which perspective women are the Other, perhaps even the quintessential Other, yet it also assumes a particular conception of that Otherness as desirable but also dangerous and in need of control” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 219).

The metaphors of otherness contribute to constructing men’s identity in everyday language; however, other metaphors can be used in construction of identity and gender. This is the case of the Pakistani women studied by Zubair (2007). Her study explores how these women used metaphors to construct an identity while they were being interviewed about their experiences in literacy programs, and how this access to education had transformed their perception of themselves. The data used for her research was collected for three different studies on women’s literacy practices and identities. Participants in the study were from rural and urban Multan in Southern Punjab. Pakistani women’s narratives contained metaphors of traditional constraints, negotiation of multiple identities, and individual aspirations and the subversion of identity(ies) (Zubair, 2007).

Metaphors of traditional constraints were used mostly by older women when talking about the way they were raised by their families. During their conversations, “the older women talked about their roles within the traditional constraints by using images and metaphors like domesticated, caged birds and silent birds” (Zubair, 2007, p. 773). These images of domesticated animals and birds appeared together with images of buildings, blocks and bondage. In traditional Pakistani culture, women are confined to their houses and later to their spouses’ houses. Therefore, “imagery of buildings such as homes, houses, four walls of houses, next home, parental home, way out, roads, paths and retreats was used by women belonging to all ages, groups and educational backgrounds (Zubair, 2007, p. 774-5). All these expressions illustrate how women’s worlds are constrained and segregated from men and outsiders.

Metaphors were also used when the women were talking about the negotiation of multiple identities. The reconciliation of their traditional values and the new possibilities they were acquiring with their recent access to education were in conflict. Education was metaphorized as a way out and the giver of a bright way, since “education and literacy were linked to brightness, light, which show women how to go through the labyrinth of life – how to overcome obstacles, hardships and resist the dominant discourses of patriarchy” (Zubair, 2007, p.777), and their traditional ignorance and illiteracy was a shadow, something that kept them in darkness. Furthermore, education was personified by them as a confidante, as a comrade, a companion, a soul mate and a lover. Their expectations and dreams were of the possibilities they could have through education. Education is the path to obtain autonomy and more agency in their lives. Finally, they

believed that “if everyone else leaves, their literacy and education will stand by their side and will be a great support” (Zubair, 2007, p.777-8).

Other metaphors used to describe education, especially education in English, included the use of clusters in which education was metaphorized as MY LOVE, MY PASSION, MY RETREAT. These expressions show how important and close to their hearts education was, as well as the possibilities obtained from it. The use of the word RETREAT refers to a personal space “associated with reading and studying English – some forms and kinds of literacy are thus tied in to women’s deepest identities and concepts of selfhood” (Zubair, 2007, p 779). It also contrasted their private identity with their public identity, dictated by the dominant cultural discourses.

The third set of metaphors found in the Pakistani women’s narratives were those that referred to individual aspirations and the subversion of identity(ies). The speakers expressed how traditional values made them feel oppressed, and feeling as they had little agency over their lives. Their access to education offered them the possibility of asserting themselves, the opportunity to decide their own future choices, instead of being overshadowed by their parents and families. However, according to Zubair (2007), these women’s assertion of an individual identity does not seem to have an ideological plan and/or a commitment to collective action for social transformation.

An additional study of metaphors used in everyday language was carried out by Kyratzis (2007). Her data came from two conversations and her aim was to show how metaphor was used “as a tool for attaining meaning, especially in defining sexual desire and sexuality” (p. 98). These two conversations were among young Greeks. The first one

was a conversation among five people (between 22 and 36 years old) about celibacy. The second one was among four students, between 24 and 26 years old, about love, sex, and relationships.

During the conversation about celibacy, speakers discussed the validity of the concept contrasting it with the idea of sex being really a “necessity” or just an obsession in peoples’ lives. In order to argue their position against celibacy and persuade their interlocutors, some speakers used metaphors in which the body was conceived of as a field. Kyratzis (2007) argues that this metaphor is directly related to Greek culture, where the agricultural world is still an important source of sustenance, in contrast with, for example, British culture, where the body is commonly conceived of as food. Their metaphor of the body as a field was used in concert with one in which sex was conceived of as water; therefore, as fields need water, the human body needs sex to survive. They also conceived the idea that a body without sex is atypical and going against nature, similar to a field that is uncultivated. Using these metaphors, they attempted to argue against the validity of celibacy, equaling it with the “unnaturalness” of keeping fields without water or without being cultivated.

In the second conversation, the Greek students attempted to define love and sexual desire, and the conception of sexuality. When talking about love and sexual desire, a significant part of the conversation was about the “differentiation between *eros* and *agape* (two concepts that do not have direct equivalents in English). *Eros* refers to sexual love and passion, whereas *agape* is a deeper and more lasting love” (Kyratzis, 2007, p. 104). In their attempt to define *eros* speakers listed a series of characteristics that are part

of the concept. Once the conversation turned to the point where they wanted to differentiate *eros* from love, *eros* was considered the initial force necessary to set off an evolution that ends with love. *Eros* was metaphorized as fire, while love was considered a clay object, the product of this fire. This illustrates how *eros*, sexual desire, is intense but also ephemeral like fire, and love is meant to be a lasting object, although fragile since it can be broken like any object made of clay (Kyratzis, 2007).

Sexual desire was also used in metaphors where it was conceptualized as a STRUGGLE, and also a series of terms associated with it, such as: HUNT, DRUG, RAGE, and ANIMAL were used to explain the complexity of sexual desire in human relationships. These concepts illustrate an association of love with hardship, hunting, animal behavior and rage that bestows sexual desire with a level of irrationality and loss of control. The chain of metaphors triggered by the metaphor of struggle, presents “sexual desires [as] non-human and irrational, echoing again [...] more traditional moral views that prefer desire to be suppressed if disastrous consequences are to be avoided” (Kyratzis, 2007, p. 111)

On the other hand, a novel metaphor was introduced when speakers discussed the concepts of sexual identity. In the conversation somebody introduced the metaphor that sexuality is a two-sided object, where “sexuality is defined on the basis of the strength of presence of the homosexual and heterosexual elements in a person” (p.112). However, this is presented as being not distributed equally in percentage terms; the idea of people having different percentage distributions of each was not broadly accepted by participants in the conversation. To contest this metaphor and the absolutism of introducing

percentages, one speaker equates sexuality to a cake, that according to its ingredients would turn into a heterosexual or homosexual cake: “absoluteness has been replaced by predominance and exact percentages that might raise brows need not be introduced” (p. 113). The creation of the cake metaphor illustrates how new metaphors can be introduced to contest traditional ones. Kyratzis (2007) argues that despite the fact that these young people still have conceptions of love, sexual desire and sexuality associated with traditional values, the introduction of a metaphors opposing celibacy (CELIBACY IS A FALLOW FIELD), and the fluidity of sexuality (SEXUALITY IS CAKE), illustrates first that metaphor creation can be a dynamic and collaborative process, and secondly that when speakers oppose established metaphors and their concepts, they look for new ones that represent their views more accurately (Kyratzis, 2007).

The metaphors used by Pakistani women and the ones created by the young Greeks show that “we can invoke metaphors as a means of cognitive/representational subversion. By applying language in new or unusual ways or structuring concepts differently metaphors have a potential for challenging the commonsense categories of knowledge” (Goatly, 2007, p. 28). These examples illustrate the benefit of analyzing metaphors in a particular kind of discourse because they allow access to the ideologies that underlie speakers’ conception of their world, while at the same time, may contest and oppose these reigning ideologies. In the case of this study, I will explore how metaphors are used in personal advertisements on the Internet. The next section discusses previous approaches to this kind of discourse, how they illustrate gendered practices, and how they might preserve and/or oppose the ideologies of a particular community.

## **2.5 Personal advertisements as linguistic gendered practices.**

Personal ads or dating advertisements in newspapers or magazines are a well established genre where people search for potential partners. Personal ads are one of the ways that can be used to search for romantic partners or mates. These ads begin with the description of the self, followed by a description of the desired other, and a description of the kind of relationship sought (Baker, 2005). This genre seeks to individualize mass communication; personal ads attempt to communicate with that special someone, despite the fact that an essential part of personal ads requires users to bring private matters to a public space. As public representations, these advertisements hardly represent ‘real’ people; they represent what people think they are expected to be, and the ideas that people have about their potential partners. For that reason, personal ads are an excellent resource for determining a group’s beliefs and their ideologies related to gender, heteronormativity, the heterosexual market, gender roles, and so forth.

According to Cameron and Kulick (2003), personal ads can be a good source to study how sexual identity and sexuality are enacted linguistically. They argue that linguistic studies related to gender should question not only how people do sexuality but also how they represent it, because “representations are a resource that people draw on — arguably, indeed, are compelled to draw on— in constructing their own identities and ways of doing things” (p. 12). Posters of personal ads represent themselves with the resources available to them from this genre and from their community to create ideal identities for themselves and their objects of desire.

Besides being a source of how sexuality is linguistically articulated, personal ads also show how desire gets articulated in a society. They work as sociological maps that show how people's most intimate desires are highly structured by power (Cameron & Kulick, 2003). This can be observed in the way that most ads share many similar features and make similar claims. In addition, ad posters often claim to be looking for the same things that everybody else is looking for, or being somebody that might be appealing to any "normal" person. Closer inspection of personal ads allows us to see how people have fairly clear ideas about not only their own desires but also those of others. Essentially, ad posters express not only the characteristics desired in other people, but also their desire of being liked and being part of the desirable group. As a consequence, all personal ads present a certain level of tension; posters want to be seen as "normal" or part of the community, while at the same time they want to show characteristics that separate them from the rest, make them special, and worthy of being chosen.

The genre of personal ads is fairly structured. Usually, ads have a structure given by the media that publish them (e.g. newspapers, magazines, web pages), but even so, the way people use this resource may vary according to different factors, such as gender, sexuality, and sexual desire, among others. The structure of personal ads in newspapers and magazines has elements derived from other forms of advertisements, for example ads that sell cars and pets (Coupland, 1996). Most of the texts tend to be organized in the following six sequential elements: 1. Advertiser, 2. Seeks, 3. Target, 4. Goals, 5. Comment, and 6. Reference.

All of these sections do not necessarily appear in every personal ad. However, components 1, 2 and 3 are the required ones to complete a successful ad. The following example illustrates how these sections function in a newspaper ad (taken from Marley, 2000):

Camomile seeks Earl Grey, I am NW, 30's, prof. woman. UR caring, intell. prof. RU my cup of tea? ML20625<sup>5</sup>

The sections in this ad are the following:

1. Advertiser: Camomille,. I am NW, 30's, prof. woman.
2. Seeks: seeks
3. Target: Earl Grey. UR caring, intell. prof.
4. Goals: ....
5. Comment: RU my cup of tea?
6. Reference: ML20625

The previous example illustrates how posters of personal ads try to express individuality, as shown in the use of the tea metaphor, while at the same time their characterizations are fairly predictable. To please the market, the text conforms to the discursive norms of marketing genres. Dating advertisements reduce the first stages of dating, labeling and constructing the self and the potential partner, as catalog products in the dating-market (Coupland, 1996).

The identities created in personal ads offer an excellent space to analyze the constructive function of linguistic labeling and categorization. The categories and labels created in personal ads reveal women's and men's desires, as well as the ideologies of a given time period. A large number of studies on personal ads have focused on the categories created through the use of different adjectives. Among the findings is that people who post personal ads confirm the matching hypothesis; they offer as their main

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<sup>5</sup> The example here is transcribed as it appears in the original article.

qualities what they find most desirable in other people. For example, people who offer social desirability seek the same, and people who seek attractiveness are more likely to offer the same. Other studies have found that stereotyped sex roles work as commodities in personal ads. The descriptions in the personal ads follow very traditional conceptions of the roles that women and men have in their relationships. The analysis of ads posted by heterosexuals showed that, in general, women offered physical attractiveness and men offered financial status and security (Deaux & Hanna, 1984). Similar results were found in the analysis of American personal ads from the east and west coasts, which included heterosexual as well as gay posters. Ads posted by straight women and gay men reflected a similar emphasis on physical appearance, while gay women and straight men downplayed this attribute. (Deaux & Hanna, 1984).

Equivalent results were found by Gonzalez, Hope and Myers (1993). Their study examines the strategies used in personal ads by heterosexual and homosexual men and women to create their identities and the identities of their potential partners. Their analysis allowed them to determine the characteristics that are appealing to the person who posts the ad as well as the way this person presents him/herself to the dating market. For the study the words used in the ads analyzed were coded in several categories: description of physical appearance or attractiveness, including the offered and the solicited characteristics, financial security, expressiveness, instrumentality, sincerity and sexual activities. The category *attractiveness* included expressions like *petite*, *cute*, *slender* and specific descriptions of the person wanted. *Financial security* included words as *accomplished*, *generous* and *professional*. *Expressiveness* was coded by words like

*caring, affectionate* and *sensitive*. *Instrumentality* included characteristics that imply being goal or success oriented (i.e. *aggressive, ambitious, and intelligent*). The category *sincerity* referred to traits such as *monogamous* and *committed behavior*. The last category, *sexual references*, included any mention of physical contact and explicit fantasies and sexual behavior. Each ad was analyzed according to the frequency of words in each category.

Despite the differences among the results for each group, the study found that differences between men and women, and differences between heterosexual and homosexuals are interrelated, meaning that the content of the ads is associated not only with gender but also with sexual orientation. Heterosexual women and men mentioned more practical issues such as financial security and occupational stability; among them, heterosexual women were more likely to mention seeking a partner who is financially secure. Homosexual women seemed to have a lack of concern for physical and social attractiveness, while homosexual men seemed unique in their concern regarding sexual matters. Gonzalez, Hope, and Myers' (1993) research found that heterosexual women and men did not differ in their concern about physical appearance. This result was not expected, since stereotypes appear to indicate that men would be more likely to focus on this aspect. It seems that currently both groups put the same amount of emphasis on attractiveness when searching for a partner.

Researchers concerned with personal ads have approached them not only as spaces for labeling and categorization, but also as spaces where writers use different communicative strategies to interact and establish a dialogue with potential readers. In

this sense, personal ads share elements with commercial advertisements. Thompson and Thetela (1995) analyze how interaction in written commercial advertisement is managed. Typically, this discourse imitates speech in writing offering an opportunity to observe interaction. According to the authors, interaction is not only accomplished through turn taking, but also in the exchange of meaning or the transmission of knowledge. The failure of this transmission would be an indication of an absence of interaction.

Commercial ads project roles for the readers that may be accepted or not, but the projection made works as an interpersonal exchange. These roles can appear with different degrees of visibility and they are projected according to the way speakers/writers represent themselves or address the potential reader. Readers are encouraged to interact as equals or from a position of superiority. Some texts demand a response or an initiation from the reader. Another technique is the interactional metaphor in written discourse where the text includes the question and the answer. The intention of this technique is to persuade readers to accept the writer's voice as their own (Thompson & Thetela, 1995). The use of these commands encourages the readers to accept the projection as real for them. In commercial advertisements, the language used implies that the reader already wants the product.

As can be seen, interaction in written advertisement is modeled on a type of spoken interaction, but it is not identical; it has some underlying elements of spoken interactions that attempt to establish a dialogue with the readers (Thompson & Thetela, 1995). In the case of personal ads, some elements of this spoken interaction can be observed; personal ads project roles to potential readers when ad posters address a

potential reader directly, individualizing this person and offering them a “role” or space in their lives.

The potential of establishing interaction in dating advertisements was the object analyzed by Marley (2000). Her study attempts to show how dating advertisements create interactional roles using questions and commands, and how spoken discourse is exploited in order to open a dialogue with potential partners. For Marley, personal ads are considered an opening move or initiation. This initiation can be accomplished through questions, commands, statements or offers. Personal ads have a higher chance of failing in their intention or they may not grab the attention of potential partners, if they are presented as pure statements that give information to the readers. Using questions and commands may lead to potential answers or actions by readers; these strategies imitate spoken language and offer the possibility of an interaction (Marley, 2000), and also the possibility of individualizing a message with a question (i.e.: posters may say: *are you the person I'm looking for?*), albeit a massive and public message.

All these strategies attempt to fill the gap created by the lack of face to face interaction. Marley's analysis of the questions used by ads' posters shows how they cast the reader in the role of the answerer, the person who continues the interaction. Another resource is the use of commands; when they are presented at the end of the ads, their function is to hand the reader the responsibility of continuing the interaction. They also cast the reader in the role of somebody considering replying who only needs some encouragement. Another strategy is called 'serial exchanges', in which different exchanges are combined to transmit the message, for example combining questions and

commands. This research also analyzed the role of the responses. This kind of interaction increases the active involvement of the reader, when the writer answers what appears to be a reader's question.

The last resource analyzed was the use of exclamations. These exclamations, which were not necessarily syntactically represented, attempt to reconstruct a face to face interaction. This analysis shows that despite the written mode of personal or dating advertisements, commands, questions, and exclamations are used to recreate spoken language in an attempt to encourage readers to participate in a dialogue. This can be done by offering responses as well. These strategies are found in commercial advertisements, but they present some differences because questions in personal ads allow greater variety of responses, and they do not answer for their potential readers (Marley, 2000).

Personal ads relate to commercial ones, since they are part of the metaphorical marketplace for relationships; posters are sellers and buyers in this market. In writing an ad, the ad poster creates discourses of self-commodification. Personal ads are a form of self-presentation and a description of an ideal partner; therefore it is a genre that gives "insight into cultural mediation of identity construction" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.184). In general, personal ads promote a commodification of the self that is highly focused on physical appearance. However, there are certain linguistic features that allow users to personalize the ads and differ from the homogeneous structure of the genre. These linguistic strategies work as a resistance to the dominant values of a consumer culture. Posters might use humor, unconventionalities and advertise negative values in an

attempt to create, in Bourdieu's terms, alternative forms of 'cultural capital' (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006).

From this perspective, personal ads are considered a discourse practice where the self is a possession that might be sold and exchanged as somebody's goods (Coupland, 1996). These commodified selves are modeled by the media and the images that they sell; as a consequence, these commodified selves are culturally specific. Most of the time, personal ads reproduce traditional gender roles for women and men, or those expected by their social group.

In the personal ads market place, women are presented as the seller and men as the buyer. Women engage more in descriptions that make them more desirable to potential buyers, while men present what they desire, their requirements. These are general tendencies, but this does not mean that personal ads cannot combine both visions, seller and buyer. These ads reproduce social stereotypes where women are expected to show their goods to be picked in the heterosexual market, while men have the power to pick and establish the terms of exchange. Personal ads are a very formulaic genre, and highly structured. They invite the writer to engage in an interaction where both buyers and sellers have to fit in previously established models (Marley, 2000).

Personal ads can be threatening for posters because posters need to sell themselves and express their qualities, while being polite. With different levels of aggressiveness or assertiveness, posters of personal ads are active investors in the commodified market and sustain its ideology. These commodified selves create

confusion between the real and the marketable self; however, this marketable self might be “what market players consensually want to deal with” (Coupland, 1996, p.203).

According to Thorne and Coupland (1998), the genre of personal ads is reductionist and promotional and depends on people’s awareness of the genre’s codes. In their study of ads posted by gay people, these ads followed the same pattern as those posted by heterosexuals. They had predictable use of language, and were rhetorically structured, for example using color codes to indicate sexual roles or practices. Thorne and Coupland’s research also considered personal ads as acts of commodification since “they offer personal traits and qualities designed to attract consumers with specific characteristics and priorities” (Thorne & Coupland, 1998, p. 234).

Their findings showed that some of the ads written by women seeking women formulated the discourse in a traditional way, using metaphors from popular culture referring to heterosexual couples (i.e., one woman called herself a Fred Astaire looking for her Ginger Rogers), or repeating discourses from a traditional heterosexual market shown in the use of phrase like “the right lady” (Thorne & Coupland, 1998).

Violations of conventions achieved through the use of poetic and unconventional demographic features were found in the personal ads of gay people. These unconventionalities can be seen as a way to resist heterosexism and create a discourse practice associated with gay style. According to Thorne and Coupland (1998), some gay women’s discourse attempted to resist the subordination and restriction of female sexual desires as well as heterosexism against female-female desire.

Personal ads that followed the heterosexual norm and some that challenged the norm were also found in Livia's (2004) analysis of personal ads posted in *Lesbia Magazine*, one of the most popular gay women's magazines in France. In this magazine, the personal ads section occupies a large portion and works as a forum of discussion of community values, since it includes the *notes de la claviste*, meaning notes from the magazine's editor. The personal ads are structured in three small sections, a) a self-description, b) a description of characteristics that are desirable or a description of the partner sought, c) and in the end a description of the undesirable characteristics or persons who should refrain from answering.

The analysis of these ads allowed consideration of the characteristics that are most appealing to this community as well as the stereotypes or characteristics that are objectionable. In general, stereotypes associated with traditional masculinity were highly undesirable; activities associated with working class men were often grounds for exclusion. On the other hand, values or stereotypes associated with femininity were highly appreciated, and ad writers usually described themselves as preferring typically feminine activities. Another important aspect noticed in this analysis is the appreciation of activities associated with high culture and the rejection of working-class values, showing a tendency toward discrimination based on social class.

The role of the *notes de la claviste* seems crucial in the community; they work as a "social conscious" or as a "censor" because they criticize the stereotypes or derogatory terms that the ads may have. As pointed out by Livia, the women who write the ads are describing what they reject in their personal lives as well as what they reject in their

community. Their representations of their partner seek to embody the aspects that they value or reject in their lesbian community (Livia, 2002)

According to Baker (2005) personal ads are a powerful tool in the gay community. Some people might feel ambivalent about using personal ads, since they bring to the public sphere people's private matters. However, this ambiguity does not appear among gay men whose minority status has forced them to use alternative ways to connect with potential partners.

Baker (2005) analyzed a large sample of personal ads in order to determine how gay men construct their identity in the ads and how these identities have changed over a period of time. Baker focuses on how the advertisers "negotiated gendered gay identities, both for themselves and in the sort of person they desire to meet" (Baker, 2005, p. 134). Personal ads are continually evolving and changing; one reason could be that when people engage in writing ads they emulate formulas they have found appealing in other ads. Therefore, certain words and acronyms become popular as others fall out of fashion.

Baker's data showed that gay men highly appreciated and sought values associated with traditional masculinity and the straight world. The concept of masculinity was linked to the word "active", suggesting that sexual behavior or roles shape the gender identity of advertisers. Even though the community analyzed by Baker was not homogeneous, they chose similar ways to represent themselves; their representations were part of a narrow set of ideas associated with a particular model of masculinity. Personal ads in this gay community support heteronormativity, or its values, reproducing a traditional model of masculinity. Baker's (2005) research shows how minority groups

are negatively affected by the rejection of mainstream society, up to the point that they seek to reproduce norms that would make them more accepted in society.

As stated by Baker (2005), personal ads are not to be taken as the complete truth about a community. Personal ads tell us the way people choose to present their identities and the identities of their potential partners. The identities constructed represent the ideals and fantasies of a particular group. Thus, by analyzing these constructions it is possible to determine a community's ideologies of gender. These constructed identities are not homogenous, but they reveal a general pattern of how people construct their gendered identity in a given period of time.

In the genre of personal ads, another useful tool to create an identity is metaphors. Marley (2007) explores how ad posters use certain metaphors to create, in a few words, an identity, and also the pragmatic role of these metaphors in discourse. These metaphors are frequently references to popular culture characters, for example *Snow White* or *Old Tom*. These resources at first might look like common expressions that do not characterize or describe a person. However, when ad posters decide to use these expressions, "they return to even institutionalized metaphors a small measure of their original complexity, and revive at least an element of creativity" (Marley, 2007, p.62). These identity metaphors are considered intertextual metaphors, since they are formed from experiences related to cultural experiences, i.e. literature and movies, rather than from early life experiences, like the case of conceptual metaphors whose origins are connected to more abstract domains.

The metaphors are functioning in a process of interaction, where one needs certain cultural experiences to understand their messages, and they usually appear in tandem with another metaphorical expression to complete their communicative aim. This is the case of the following example:

Old Tom, prowling West Yorks., seeks kitten for beer & skittles & mountain pathways (Marley, 2007, p.58)

In this example, readers need to be familiar with the character *Old Tom* and also with the characteristics associated with a *kitten* in order to grasp the poster's communicative intentions. Also, *kitten* is necessary to complete the metaphorical sense use of *Old Tom*. Lack of this knowledge by the reader of the ad would make the metaphor infelicitous.

According to Marley (2007), the process of understanding metaphors occurs in three stages. This process was originally described by Searle (1979), and involves a first stage in which people perceive that an expression malfunctions if taken literally. Once this is recognized, in the second stage, people bring the non-literal meaning associated with the expression, and finally people restrict these features to the context in which the expression is being used. In the case of the example previously shown, the ad poster would expect readers to infer mostly the positive qualities of an *Old Tom*, which could be appealing to a kitten.

In personal ads, these metaphors are very effective communicative tools. First, they offer the possibility of including a large amount of information with one expression, and second, they narrow the pool of potential interlocutors, since only those who are familiar with the characters evoked will grasp the whole message of the ad. Examples of this were found in a later study by Marley (2008), where she considers that these

metaphors involved a large extent of interaction between readers and writers since “the cleverness of the word play that is involved in constructing these metaphorical intertextual identities seems calculated to display a certain level of linguistic sophistication and wit, as part of the writer’s identity” (Marley, 2008, p. 567), which would be lost in the case that the reader is unaware of the reference.

Understanding these metaphors is a more obvious process when the metaphors come from fictional genres, such as fairy tales, or they belong to individual fictional worlds, the case of Snow White, Mr. Darcy and so forth. However, Marley (2008) explains that the use of metaphorical identities is not that simple. This case is better illustrated with the following example:

Pumpkin (dark, attract., creative) seeks honey bunny for passionate romance & restaurant holdups. Essex. (Marley, 2008, p. 564)

At first the metaphorical expression *Pumpkin* and *honey bunny* here look quite straightforward: the first one belongs to the conceptual metaphor in which the object of desire is food, and the second one to the object of desire is a small animal. Besides that, *Honey bunny* seems to be a common way to address a loved one in Britain, and *Pumpkin* is more common in the United States, but is not completely unknown to British speakers (Marley, 2008). However, a closer look to this ad, and to the other references in it, specially the “restaurant hold up”, makes us understand that the writer is using very specific metaphors. *Pumpkin* and *honey bunny* are the terms of affection used by a couple who carries out a restaurant holdup in the opening scene of Pulp Fiction. This specific reference triggers a decoding process that targets a very specific audience; not only does the reader need to be familiar with the movie, but she also needs to, up to a certain level,

approve (or at least find amusing) the couple's behavior in the movie. All these elements create a communication in which "the amount of deciphering that they require of the reader might be seen as a way of filtering out potential respondents who are not equally sophisticated and skilful in their decoding of the metaphor" (Marley, 2008, p. 567). For that reason, it could be considered that similar ideologies and experiences are shared by writers and readers, since the latter not only recognizes the reference but also accepts its ideological source.

The moment of recognition by readers indicates that the metaphors have been successful, felicitous acts, and have created a connection between readers, and in the specific case of personal ads, between potential partners (Marley, 2008). The potential of metaphors as linguistic resources which could create stronger bonds between hearers and the speaker was also pointed out by Charteris-Black (2004). One of the reason for this is that "like many other features of language— such as a shared regional accent, shared access to a genre or other involvement in a discourse community— metaphor bonds people in a joint act of meaning creation" (Charteris-Black, 2004,p. 12)

Considering that metaphors contribute to the creation of connections among different discourses, and considering that these metaphors carry the ideologies of the community, this study will analyze metaphors used in personal ads from the Internet. The personal ads come from five different countries: USA, Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, and Argentina, and they were written in Spanish. Using the data obtained from those ads and the information about gender, sexuality, heteronormativity, ideologies, metaphors, and

personal ads previously reviewed, this study will answer the research questions stated in the next section.

## **2.6 Research questions**

1. What metaphors are used by Internet ad posters to talk about desire, love and relationships in Spanish?
2. What metaphors are used by ad posters to label themselves and to construct their or their potential partners' images?
3. What are the sources of the metaphors used by ad posters?
4. What conceptual metaphors did ad posters create in their announcements?
5. What ideologies are supported or produced by the use of these metaphors?
6. What do these ideologies reveal about ad posters' performance of heterosexuality?
7. How are these metaphors creating and supporting ideologies of heteronormativity?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter explains the methodological process followed to answer the research questions stated at the end of the previous chapter. Here, I will explain the theoretical framework followed in the analysis, the process of creating a corpus for this study, the procedures followed to select the object of analysis, and the resources used to interpret and analyze them. The first section describes the theoretical framework used, which is Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), and his three-stage methodology followed in this analysis: metaphor identification, interpretation, and explanation. The second section explains how personal ads were collected from the website chosen to create the corpus of this study. The third section explains how after collecting 2,000 personal ads, metaphors were selected and identified from these ads, and how the first stage, identification, was used to select the metaphors. The next two sections explain how stages two and three, interpretation and explanation, respectively, were used to carry out the analysis presented in chapter four.

#### **3.1 Theoretical frame. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA)**

Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) is a theoretical approach to the study of metaphors, shaped by Critical Discourse Analysis' notions of how the study of language should mainly be "concerned with increasing our awareness of the social relations that are forged, maintained and reinforced by language use in order to change them" (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 29). Metaphor use is central to this process since metaphors,

especially conventionalized ones, are a powerful tool in the creation and maintenance of ideologies. CMA is concerned not only with the cognitive level of metaphors, and how they shape people's conceptual world, but also with how through the use of certain metaphors, in specific contexts, one can create a predisposition to one interpretation over another. This predisposition is essential to the transmission of a specific ideology, consequently CMA "aims to reveal the covert (and possibly unconscious) intentions of language users" (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 34).

As mentioned before, CMA's methodology of metaphor analysis includes three stages: identification, interpretation and explanation. Metaphor identification is concerned with establishing if there is a tension between the literal meaning of the metaphoric source and the meaning in the metaphoric target. Metaphor interpretation identifies the type of relations constructed by metaphors, and metaphor explanation is concerned with the meaning that metaphors have in the specific context they occur.

According to Charteris-Black (2004), identifying metaphors in a corpus can be problematic, since any word can be used metaphorically in a specific context if that is the speaker's intention. This problem intensifies when identifying conventional metaphors, metaphors that are fixed in the lexicon, since the levels of conventionalization vary among individual speakers. This issue can be solved using corpora available to the public, so that the classifications made in the research can be tested by readers and researchers, since they can review the sources of data and/or repeat the analysis.

CMA's metaphor identification stage is divided into two steps: first, one must do a close reading of the corpus to identify candidate metaphors. Candidate metaphors are

those that show “the presence of incongruity or semantic tension— either at linguistic, pragmatic or cognitive levels—resulting from a shift in domain use —even if this shift occurred some time before and has since become conventionalized” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 35). From these candidate metaphors one should identify the metaphor keywords; these are the words commonly used in a metaphorical sense. The idea behind this is that one can track and count the occurrence of keywords, and they can facilitate the process of finding metaphors in a corpus. The second step is examining if the keywords are being used in a metaphorical or a literal sense in order to confirm metaphorical use. This process is necessary since keywords are “words that have a tendency to be used as conventional metaphors; rather than words that will always be used as metaphors. This is because if they were used as conventional metaphors in every instance this would erode the semantic tension that is a required criterion for the classification of metaphor in the first place” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 37). After these two steps, identifying the keywords, and checking they are being used metaphorically considering the context of appearance in the corpus; one can identify the metaphorical lexical units present in the corpus.

The second stage, metaphor interpretation, involves “the identification of conceptual metaphors [...]. At the stage of interpretation, it is possible to consider how far metaphor choices are pro-active in constructing a socially important representation,” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 37). In order to claim the existence of a conceptual metaphor it is necessary to find more than one lexical unit that contains the same idea or theme. For instance, to claim that there is a conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY in English, it is

necessary to find several lexical units that represent this concept, such as “*wasting time*,” “*saving time*,” “*it is not worth my time*,” and so on. Charteris-Black (2004) does not specify the number of linguistic forms necessary; he claims that one needs “other linguistic forms that are motivated by [the] same idea” (p.38). In a different fashion, in Goatly’s (2007) study of English and Chinese metaphors each theme needed to be in at least six different linguistic forms, in order to confirm that it is a conceptual metaphor. In any case, it is clear that one needs more than one lexical unit to confirm the existence of a conceptual metaphor.

The third stage of CMA’ methodology is metaphor explanation. This stage implicates determining what the roles of the identified and interpreted metaphors are in the particular discourse they appeared in, especially in the creation and transmission of ideologies. For this process, conceptual metaphors and sources are analyzed to explain how and why these metaphors contribute to establishing ideologies. Metaphor explanation is defined as “identifying the discourse function of metaphors that permit us to establish their ideological and rhetorical motivation” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 37). This explanation must be supported by evidence from the corpus analyzed and not solely by the intuitions of the researcher. It is also important to consider the contexts of appearance since “critical analysis of the contexts of metaphors in large corpora may reveal the underlying intentions of the text producer and therefore serves to identify the nature of particular ideologies” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 28). The explanation stage is crucial to understanding the role of metaphors in discourse and in the transmission of ideologies, and the two previous stages, identification and analysis, are tools that

facilitate this understanding. For this reason CMA's methodology was selected for my study.

### **3.2 Source of Data. The corpus**

In order to create the corpus, I collected 2,000 personal ads from an Internet Web site ([www.CyberCupido.com](http://www.CyberCupido.com)). A corpus is defined in this research as a "large collection of texts that arise from natural language use; in a linguistic context, it is in contrast to other types of text that were invented specifically for illustrating a point about language" (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.31). The latter type of texts, invented data, were commonly used in earlier studies about metaphors.

The purpose of the Web site [CyberCupido.com](http://CyberCupido.com) is to advertise personal ads so that posters can find potential partners. These ads have a particular structure that is determined by the web-page administrators. The service is anonymous, private, and free. It also offers the possibility of being a "Gold Member" for a monthly fee, which allows these members the privilege of looking at, writing, and answering a larger number of other people's ads. In order to register for this service people must fulfill the following requirements: they must be Latinos or speak Spanish, they should be between 18 and 99 years old and they must have an e-mail address. The Web site regulates the kind of language used in the ads, and stipulates that ads cannot be used for commercial, political, or illegal activities. The Web page administrators also monitor the kind of pictures users can post; each user is permitted to post one picture.

The site layout allows users to provide their sex, age, profession or occupation, Zodiac sign, height, weight, hair color, eye color, and their place of residence. It also requests information about their potential partner (man or woman) and the kind of relationship they are looking for (i.e. friendship, long-term relationship, etc.). Every personal ad is assigned a code by the site as identification; users' personal names or nicknames are not included in this section of their profiles. (See example in Appendix 1.)

After providing basic personal information, users are asked to provide a definition of themselves (*Así se define*), their favorite leisure activities (*Sus gustos*), and a description of the kind of person they expect to meet (*Lo que busca*). The quantity of information provided in this section varies to a great extent among different ads. People may describe themselves with only one word (i.e. *Simpático*) or in a few paragraphs. In the same way, the amount of information provided in the other two sections varies to a great extent.

The Web site provides a search system that allows the user to choose, first, the sex and dating preference of the person they want to meet (i.e.: *Hombre buscando mujer*); second, the age range of the ad posters (which can be from 18 to 99 years old); and third, the city and country where these posters claim to live. The Web page also offers the possibility of searching for women looking to date women, and men looking to date men. Web site users can save their searches, save their favorite ads, as well as block any profile that they do not wish to see in future searches.

As mentioned before, the data used in this study came from 2,000 personal ads collected from this Web site. The corpus includes personal ads from five different

countries: United States, Venezuela, Spain, Argentina and Mexico. Since the study focuses on the performance of heterosexuality, I collected only ads of women looking to date men, and men looking to date women. I collected 200 ads for both women and men (i.e. 400 ads from each of the 5 countries previously mentioned), for a total of 2000 ads.

During the collection process, I established a small number of criteria for the inclusion of a particular personal ad in the corpus: the ads had to be from a claimed heterosexual poster, in Spanish, all the sections needed to be complete, and the posters had to be between 20 and 45 years old. The reason for limiting the age range was that I considered that this age group would include the majority of users who were most active in the search process.

Once I generated a search, establishing the group (i.e. women who are looking for men), the age range, and the country of residence, I manually selected each personal ad. The reasons for discarding an ad included that the ad was not written in Spanish, the Spanish used in an ad was clearly not from a native speaker, and not all the sections of the ads were completed. If all the sections were not completed an ad could not be analyzed in the same way as the others, and for this reason was eliminated. Also, even if all the parts were completed, some ads were eliminated since some posters did not write their own descriptions but rather left the descriptions offered by the Web site's template. The web site offers examples of how one can fill out the information, and some ad posters included their personal information (age, gender, etc.) but did not write their own description leaving the web site's sample descriptions. Once a personal ad was collected, I assigned a number to it, erased the picture on it to respect the user's privacy, and

standardized the spelling in the descriptions. This standardization was made to facilitate the analysis process, since standardization helped to identify keywords in the text.

### **3.3 Data selection. Metaphor identification. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA).**

After collecting the corpus, 2,000 personal ads from posters from the United States, Venezuela, Spain, Argentina and Mexico, I read every personal ad and identified the metaphorical phrases used by ad posters, as well as the metaphorical labels used to identify themselves or their potential partners. I only selected metaphors from two sections: *Así se define* (How you define yourself) and *Lo que busca* (What you are looking for). The reason for using only two of the three sections of the ads is that the third section *Sus gustos* (their favorite leisure activities) generally comprised a list of leisure activities (i.e. movies, playing sports, traveling, etc). Most of the time, this section did not include long explanations, or complete sentences to explain their favorite activities. In contrast, in the other two sections, speakers described themselves and their potential partners in a more extensive manner. Therefore, I decided to concentrate on the sections where posters provided more information and elaborated their opinions, beliefs, and desires.

After a metaphorical phrase was identified, it was labeled according to the following criteria:

- A) Ad posters' sex: W = woman, M = man.
- B) Section in the ad where it was found: D= definition (*Así se define*), S = search (*Lo que busca*).

C) Country of origin: VEZ = Venezuela, SPA = Spain, USA = United States of America, MX = Mexico, and ARG = Argentina.

These labels were assigned at the end of each example with the purpose of organizing each metaphor and keeping track of their location in case further contextual information was needed during the analysis process.

The process of identifying candidate metaphors was guided first by my native-speaker intuition, and second by applying CMA's metaphor identification stage, which has two steps, as stated in section 3.1. In the first one I identified candidate metaphors, following the concepts mentioned in section 3.1. In the second one, after identifying candidate metaphors, I selected the metaphor keywords, i.e. the words used in a metaphorical sense.

Once I determined the metaphorical keywords, in some cases, I confirmed their selection by using a simplified version of the "metaphor identification procedure" (MIP) established by the Pragglejaz Group (2007)<sup>6</sup>. The MIP is a procedure that includes four different steps in which every lexical unit is considered to determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in contexts different from the ones in the data. In the Pragglejaz Group's criteria, "basic meanings tend to be: more concrete [what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste]; related to bodily action; more precise (as opposed to vague); (and) historically older, basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit" (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p.3). I used this criterion to determine if the keywords were being used in a metaphorical sense or not. In order to determine their basic meaning I looked up their definitions in the dictionary and

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<sup>6</sup> The complete explanation of this procedure is in Appendix 2

compared them to the meaning they had in their context of appearance. For a number of words, the dictionary included the metaphorical meaning of the word. In these cases I considered the basic meaning as defined by the MIP. The dictionary used for this purpose was the online version of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (RAE). If the basic meaning in the source differed from the meaning in the specific context of the ad, the phrase where this word appeared was considered a metaphor. The following examples illustrate how this identification procedure was carried out; the metaphorical keywords are indicated in italics:

(1) Busco un *terreno* fértil donde dejar *huellas* (M.S. USA)  
I am looking for a fertile ground where I can leave my footprints<sup>7</sup>

*Terreno:*

L. M (literal meaning): place or piece of land. (RAE, 2001)

M.U (metaphorical use): object of love or desire

*Huellas:*

L. M: A sign left by men's or animal's foot in the ground where they walk. (RAE, 2001)

M.U: Offspring or memories that the loved will not forget

(2) Soy amante a la buena comida y a las pesas y por supuesto a la mujer que  
llegue a *ocupar* mi *corazón* (M.D. USA)  
I love good food and weight lifting, and of course, the woman who can occupy  
my heart

*Corazón:*

L.M: organ that pumps blood.

M.U: the seat of emotions (Kövecses, 1986)

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<sup>7</sup> All the English translations are mine. Spanish versions have the original punctuation used by ad posters, but the spelling was standardized.

*Ocupar*:

L.M: to fill a space or place

M.U: to be loved by somebody

In example 1, the poster creates a metaphor that uses a place, ground, as the source to metaphorize his object of desire, the target, in this case a woman, and completes it with a second metaphor, footprints. The word *fértil* (fertile) was not considered to be used in a metaphorical sense since it refers to the source of the metaphor, ground or land; therefore, it modifies the metaphorical noun but it was not considered a metaphor itself, because it is incrustrated in the metaphor of land. On the other hand, *huellas* (footprints) is considered to be used in a metaphorical sense because it adds a new metaphor to the whole metaphorical phrase. The word *huellas* is the source of the metaphor that refers to the intention of having offspring or descendants with the object of desire, and/or the intention of leaving unforgettable “marks or memories” in the loved one’s mind, the target.

In example 2, the use of *corazón* (heart) is considered metaphorical because it characterizes the heart as place that can be occupied by a person. This metaphor is a part of a larger metaphor in which the body is considered a container (Kövecses, 1986). The source of these metaphors is space whose targets could be the heart, the mind, and the body. *Ocupar* is also used in a metaphorical sense, since once the heart is considered a space it can be occupied. Occupying somebody’s heart means to be loved by that person.

Expressions that use the heart as the place of emotion are fixed in the lexicon; therefore they are considered conventional metaphors. However, the fact that these

expressions are fixed in the lexicon of a language does not make them irrelevant to the transmission of ideologies; on the contrary “it is precisely because they are conventionalized that they may achieve the power to subconsciously affect our thinking, without our being aware of it” (Goatly, 2007, p. 22). Therefore they are essential for the construction and reproduction of ideologies.

The other kind of metaphors collected was label metaphors. Label metaphors are those in which people assigned an identity label to themselves or their objects of desire. These metaphors might come from fictional genres, such as fairy tales (*Príncipe Azul*), individual fictional worlds (*Barbie*), common labels assigned to a group of people (*Rockera*), or public figures (*Brad Pitt*). Marley (2007, 2008) (discussed in chapter 2, section 2.5) considered these items *identity metaphors*, since they are used to create an identity in a few words and also target a more specific group of people. However, for the purpose of my study I preferred to use the term label metaphors, since I considered that these metaphors labeled people or added a set of characteristics rather than creating an identity. This is because, in contrast with newspapers’ ads where there is a limitation on the number of words posters can use, in my data these metaphors added characteristics to the general description rather than creating an identity. The next example illustrates a label metaphor:

(3) Sigo buscando a mi *príncipe azul* y no me conformo con otro color.  
¡Abstenerse ranas!!!. (W. S. VZLA)  
I am still looking for my *Blue Prince*<sup>8</sup> and I will not settle for a different color.  
Frogs need not apply!

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<sup>8</sup> This expression is the Spanish version of Prince Charming.

The metaphor in the last sentence is the poster's description of her ideal partner and the source of the metaphor comes from the evocation of a fairy tale reference, this particular reference contributes to completing her message rather than assigning an identity to her object of desire, the target of her metaphor. This use will be further discussed in the data analysis chapter. The next two sections explain what the metaphor analysis and metaphor explanation imply, and how they contribute to the data analysis of this study.

### **3.4 Metaphor Interpretation. Critical Metaphors Analysis (CMA).**

Using metaphor identification, I was able to obtain 575 metaphors from the 2,000 ads. Following the identification procedure, the second stage of this methodology was metaphor interpretation. In this stage I established the conceptual metaphors and the sources of these metaphors. As explained before, in order to identify a conceptual metaphor it is necessary to find more than one lexical unit with the same notion. For the purpose of this study, since my data set is not as large as Goatly's (2007), I specified that at least three different metaphorical lexical units were needed to claim the existence of a conceptual metaphor. Following this criteria, I classified the metaphorical lexical units in 13 conceptual metaphors, which shared nine sources. The results of this interpretation stage are discussed in Chapter Four. The metaphor interpretation stage of the analysis will provide the answers for the following research questions of my study:

1. What metaphors are used by internet ad posters to talk about desire, love and relationships in Spanish?

2. What metaphors are used by ad posters to label themselves and to construct their or their potential partners' images?
3. What are the sources of the metaphors used by ad posters?
4. What conceptual metaphors did ad posters create in their announcements?

### **3.5 Metaphor Explanation. Critical Metaphors Analysis (CMA).**

The metaphor explanation stage involves determining the discourse functions of metaphors in the transmission of ideologies. The notions claimed in the metaphor explanation stage are supported by the results of the metaphor analysis stage. For the purpose of this study, the discussion of the explanation stage was organized around conceptual metaphors. The discussion of the ideologies about gender, sexuality and heterosexuality in the metaphors used in personal ads, the explanation stage, is presented in Chapter Four, along with the metaphor interpretation stage. This stage provides the information necessary to answer the following research questions:

5. What ideologies are supported or produced by the use of these metaphors?
6. What do these ideologies reveal about ad posters' performance of heterosexuality?
7. How are these metaphors creating and supporting ideologies of heteronormativity?

The following chapter includes the data analysis of my research, in which the metaphor interpretation and explanation stages are carried out and supported with multiple examples from the corpus.

## Chapter 4

### Data Analysis

#### Metaphor interpretation and explanation

This chapter will present the analysis of the metaphors selected from the identification process. This process allowed the identification of five hundred seventy five metaphorical lexical units. This number only includes the metaphors that are the object of analysis, i.e. only those that refer to the following concepts or topics related to the research questions: love, desire, relationships, the object of desire or love, gender, and sexuality. These topics included most of the metaphors identified in the personal ads considered. The metaphors discarded included lexical units belonging to the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY, THE MIND IS A CONTAINER, and TIME IS A COMMODITY.<sup>9</sup>

The data analysis includes the metaphor interpretation stage and the metaphor explanation stage. The first section includes the presentation and analysis of the sources of the conceptual metaphors used by ad posters in my data. The sources found were:

1. Field
2. Space
3. Skill
4. Chemical Reaction
5. War
6. Unity

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<sup>9</sup> Conceptual metaphors are capitalized following Lakoff's format.

7. Valuable Objects
8. Performance
9. Popular Culture

The second section presents the classification of the metaphorical units in conceptual metaphors, and the label metaphors identified in my data. This includes the interpretation of the conceptual metaphors ad posters created in their announcements to refer to desire, love and relationships in Spanish, and the metaphors used by ad posters to label themselves and to construct their or their potential partners' images. Along with the metaphor interpretation stage, this section includes the metaphor explanation stage. In this stage the ideologies behind each conceptual metaphor will be described, explained, and illustrated with examples from the data. This section also includes an analysis of how these metaphors establish and circulate posters' ideologies relating to love, relationships, desire, gender and sexuality. The conceptual metaphors established are:

1. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A FIELD
2. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT
3. LIFE IS A COMMODITY
4. PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS
5. THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS
6. LOVE IS A COMMODITY
7. LOVE IS A SKILL
8. LOVE IS WAR
9. LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS

10. ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION

11. RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS

12. GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE, and

13. LABEL METAPHORS.

#### **4.1 Sources**

This section reviews the sources used in the conceptual metaphors that appear in personal ads. Source is commonly defined as the object, concept or entity with which the target is being compared. These concepts or entities are usually less abstract and more concrete than the target, and they originate in our early bodily experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1986; Goatly, 2007); however, the proliferation of metaphors and their sources can be also influenced by ideologies of those who hold power (Goatly, 2006). In general, metaphors and their sources mold the way people conceive of certain concepts and talk about them. In addition, many abstract concepts, such as love, are often the target of metaphors. As a consequence, the same target can be metaphorized with different sources, sources that might belong to quite different semantic domains. Examples include LOVE IS A COMMODITY, or LOVE IS A CHEMICAL REACTION. This possibility is known as diversification. Furthermore, the opposite is possible as well; the same source can be used for several targets. For example, the source valuable object can be used for love: LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, or for people: THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT (Goatly, 2007).

In the case of the data from personal ads, the metaphors selected for the analysis were grouped into thirteen conceptual metaphors. These metaphors share nine different sources, listed above, which are *field*, *space*, *skill*, *chemical reactions*, *war*, *unity*, *valuable objects*, *performance*, and *popular culture*. Next, I will explain which conceptual metaphors are included in each of these nine sources and lexical units that represent the conceptual metaphors, and how a specific source contributes to shape the perception of the target of the metaphor.

#### 4.1.1 The source of field

Within the source domain of *field* there is one conceptual metaphor: THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A FIELD. This metaphor is represented by three lexical units. The source *field* creates representations where women are fertile soil, and men are represented as seeds. The following example illustrates this:

(1) te busco a ti *tierra fértil* para *darte mi semilla*, y junto a ti ser (M. S. MEX)  
I am looking for you, fertile soil, to give you my seed, and next to you come into being

In example number 1, the object of desire is represented as soil, *tierra*, which is fertile, *fértil*. Also, the poster uses the word seed, *semilla*, to represent his semen, and notes that the union with his object of desire would allow him to come into being. The representation of the object of desire as soil allows the poster to talk about reproduction, or future plans, in a subtle manner. In general, all the metaphors contained in this source represent a reproductive process and future plans with the potential partner. The representation of women as soil to be cultivated is not unforeseen in the metaphorization

of the reproduction process; women are usually represented as passive receivers, while men are represented as agents who implant, give or take action to place their semen. Women are represented as a place waiting to be used and exploited as a fertile entity. In addition, the use of field as a source in this metaphor also establishes that the posters' objects of desire, the target of their metaphors, have to be in a position or age in which they are physically able and interested in having children.

#### **4.1.2 The source of space**

The source of space refers to metaphors that represent their targets with elements that occupy physical spaces, can be contained in certain spaces, or can be containers themselves. The conceptual metaphors with this source are PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS, THE HEART IS THE CONTAINER OF LOVE, and RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS. The metaphor PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS includes the idea that people have an inside space with an external side that is visible. The metaphor implies that people's inside space might be empty and needs to be filled, generally by love. This metaphor also implies that people's inside space is where the essence of a person resides, and it is more genuine than the external side, which is visible to other people, as illustrated in the following example:

(2) *atractiva por dentro y por fuera*, aunque lo de afuera se desaparece con el tiempo, entonces que sus pensamientos, corazón y espíritu sean bellos (M.S. USA)

Attractive on the inside and on the outside, even though outside beauty disappears with time, her thoughts, heart and spirit must be beautiful.

In example number 2, the poster expresses his desire to meet a woman who is beautiful inside as well as outside. This woman needs to be beautiful “spiritually” as well as physically. The poster justifies his requirements in the fact that physical beauty fades with time. This metaphor is connected with the metaphor THE BODY IS A CONTAINER, in which people are filled with feelings and emotions, such as rage, fear, love, and hate. A subcategory of this metaphor is THE HEART IS THE CONTAINER OF LOVE. This metaphor represents the heart as a receptacle where love is stored. Therefore, it might need to be filled with love, it might be full of love to give, or it might be empty if somebody’s love is not reciprocal. An example of this metaphor can be seen in the following cases:

(3) soy un hombre que le gusta escuchar y dar cariño al 100% para *llenar muchos vacíos en el corazón* de una buena amiga o de mi pareja. (M. D. VZLA)  
I am a man who likes to listen and give love 100% to fill those empty spaces in the heart of a good friend or a partner

In example number 3, the poster expresses his willingness to give love in order to fill up the empty spaces in his partner’s heart. Since the heart is described as a container, it can be given, it can be inhabited by somebody, and it can also be opened, as in the following example:

(4) que esté *dispuesta de abrir su corazón* para dejar llegar al amor. (M. S. USA)  
somebody who is willing to open her heart to give access to love

In example number 4, the man is looking for somebody who is willing to open the container – the heart – to allow love to get inside. This metaphor implies that once a person allows somebody else’s love in her/his heart, it will be safe; the same will occur if they put their love in somebody else’s sealed container – the heart. The fact that the heart

is the seat of love is related to the idea that the heart is at the center of humans' lives, and love is located in this place because it is essential to human life.

The third conceptual metaphor included in this group is RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS. This metaphor connects relationships to the process of construction, establishing strong foundations, and constructing different kinds of buildings, i.e. castles. An essential part of this process of construction is the collaborative aspect of it, as seen in example (5):

(5) pues pienso que los dos podemos *formar un castillo con bases muy fuertes y podremos sobrepasar todas las adversidades que nos pone la vida, el destino* (W. S. USA)

I think we can construct a castle with strong foundations, this way we could overcome all the adversities that life destiny brings on us.

The poster in example number 5 believes that, together with her partner, the two of them can build a castle with strong foundations that would protect them from the adversities in life. The target of her metaphors is relationships; the source is space. She conceives of relationships as a kind of building, a castle; buildings occupy spaces and have spaces that can be occupied. Also, the castle metaphor is completed by a second one, when the poster expresses her desire of a castle with strong foundations. (The poster's metaphorical unit also includes the metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE, which suggests that the challenges in life are easier to cope with when one is in a relationship with another person). Their particular relationship is a building that can be constructed, and this structure has an indoor space that offers protection. Indoor spaces are safer since they protect people from natural events, such as rain, storms, etc.; a castle would offer metaphorical protection for

life's adversities. In this metaphor, the space of a castle with a strong foundation represents protection and stability, both crucial elements in relationships.

The building metaphor contains the conceptual metaphor **INSIDE SPACES ARE SAFER THAN OUTSIDE**. The use of an inside space to portray relationships indicates that people think of them as stable, safe, durable, and immobile.

All these metaphors use physical spaces as their sources, even though they have different targets. The source of space helps to explain in more concrete terms concepts like relationships, people's feelings, and love. It contributes to setting limits that confine these concepts to a controlled area, where one can place valuable things, such as feelings, to keep them safe.

#### **4.1.3 The source of skill**

The source *skill* is used in the conceptual metaphor **LOVE IS A SKILL**. Skill is defined as "the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily" (Merriam-Webster dictionary, 2009). In the case of this metaphor, love is represented as knowledge that needs to be learned, or that someone might have already learned or not, as shown in the following examples:

(6) Busco a un hombre que *sepa amar y se deje amar* (W. S. ARG)  
I am looking for a man who knows how to love and let himself be loved

In example number 6, the use of the verb to know, *saber*, indicates that having the feeling of love is not a natural process; it is not only necessary to feel, it is necessary to have a skill that one might need to learn. Letting oneself be loved seems to be a part of the skill; this last is a different lexical unit that belongs to same conceptual metaphor.

Once a person has learned the skill, there are different levels of mastery, as shown in example number 7:

(7) Un hombre que *tenga la facultad de poder amar* (W. S. ARG)  
A man who has the ability of being able to love

In example 7, the poster's use of the words *facultad*, ability, and *poder*, to be able to, shows that she believes that loving is not an innate capacity. It is a capacity that one might have or not, and, as shown in example 7, having the ability does not necessarily involve knowing how to do it correctly. With the metaphorical use of these verbs, i.e. *saber* (to know) in (6), and expressions such as *tener la facultad* (to have the ability) in (7), love is represented as knowledge or a skill which must be mastered. In order to be mastered, it needs to be learned, it is not exclusively a natural innate capacity. Love as a skill seems to have two parts: one in which one knows how to love, and the other in which one knows how to be loved. In addition, if love is a skill, therefore something that needs to be learned, one can teach other people how to love too; therefore, one can help them become skilled in the subject and "fix" their abilities.

#### **4.1.4 The source of chemical reaction**

Chemical reaction as source for metaphors implies motion and change. A common understanding of chemical reactions, not necessarily a scientific one, implies that an element reacts in the presence or in combination with a different one. This source is used in the metaphors ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION. This metaphor implies that somebody's presence makes another person react and feel attracted to them. It indicates that attraction is an uncontrollable force that does not always involve a

rational process; it occurs rapidly as chemical reactions do, and it can only occur when one sees the other person, when two elements encounter each other or combine. An example of this metaphor is:

(8) Busco una mujer sincera inteligente que quiera ser amada sin pedir nada a cambio lo demás viene sólo *si hay química* (M. S. SPAIN)

I am looking for a sincere and smart woman who wants to be loved, and I am not asking for anything in return; everything else will only come if there is chemistry.

In example number 8, the poster is looking for a woman and he expresses how the relationship will develop and grow if there is chemistry between them. The interaction between two people can generate a so-called “chemical reaction,” a feeling of attraction commonly referred to as “chemistry” felt between two individuals. This chemistry seems to be a necessary condition to start a relationship and eventually love somebody. It also suggests a level of uncontrollable feeling or behavior in being physically attracted to somebody; a person’s own will and self-control do not intervene in the process of being attracted to somebody.

#### **4.1.5 The source of war**

War as a source of metaphors involves the idea that there is a conflict in which one side will win over the other, that a person will do everything that is necessary to achieve victory. War is a common source of metaphors; there are metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS WAR (I *demolished* his arguments), POLITICS IS WAR (The government will *defend* its citizen rights), SPORTS IS WAR (He won’t *surrender* his crown without a fight), among others (Charteris-Black, 2004). This source offers the

opportunity of conceiving other concepts in the context of a confrontation in which opponents need to be crushed, people need to defend themselves, and a person might or might not need to surrender. In the case of the metaphor LOVE IS WAR, there are several expressions that indicate what might happen when love is seen in the context of a battle: one might lose in a relationship, one might need to surrender to love, and one might be conquered by the object of love or by love itself. The metaphor LOVE IS WAR is also commonly found in English in expression such as, “Eventually he *surrendered* to his love” (Kövecses, 1986). In my data from personal ads, some examples are:

(9) Simplemente un ser que *me conquiste* (W. S. ARG)  
Simply (I am looking for) a person to conquer me

(10) cuando me enamoro *me entrego* por completo al amor (M. D. VZLA)  
When I fall in love I surrender completely to love

In example 9, the woman is looking for a person who can conquer her, while in example 10 the poster is willing to surrender himself to love. The idea of being conquered by somebody, or the fact that one might need to surrender oneself to another person, implies that love is a battle in which one has to lose or give up something in order to be in a relationship with somebody. Other ideas associated with LOVE IS WAR are that one has to let somebody else have everything one has when one falls in love. The examples found in the conceptual metaphor that uses war as a source metaphor of love suggests that there are external events that are out of one’s control, and people become “victims” if a love relationship turns out to be a failure. Similarly to a war situation, when one side wins the conflict, the other loses its right to its own decisions; in a relationship, a

person who loves somebody else loses his/her own will. It basically expresses the idea “I surrendered” in a love relationship.

#### 4.1.6 The source of unity

Unity can be defined as “the quality or state of being made one, (or) a totality of related parts,” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2009). As a source of metaphors, it implies that in order to be a complete entity it is necessary to combine two complementary elements. This is the case of the metaphor LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS. This metaphor implies that being in love is finding a part of oneself that is missing. People are incomplete beings and need to be completed by another person – their other half. This other half can be metaphorized in different ways, as can be seen in the following examples:

(11) Busco *mi complemento, mi otra mitad* porque a veces me siento sola. (W. S. USA)

I am looking for my complement, my other half, because sometimes I feel lonely.

(12) Cada quien tiene su *media naranja*, yo espero conseguir la mía... (M. S. VZLA)

Everybody has their half orange,<sup>10</sup> I hope to find mine.

In the case of example 11, the poster uses the words *half* and *complement* to represent her object of desire; her metaphor implies that she is somehow not a complete human being, therefore she feels lonely. In example 12, the object of desire is represented as half of a fruit, an orange. In this case, a “better half” exists out there and she only needs to find it. The poster in example 12 wants to find her other half just as everybody

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<sup>10</sup> This is the Spanish equivalent of the expression “my better half”

else wants to. In this example, there is a metaphor inside the LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS: this metaphor is PEOPLE ARE FOOD/ FRUITS. The common expression “*media naranja*” involves the idea that human beings are just half of an edible item without a partner; the partner is the other part that complements them. This idea connects with a common metaphor THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS APPETIZING FOOD, which includes expressions such as *pumpkin*, *honey*, and *sweetie-pie* in English. In Spanish, there are a few metaphorical expressions that relate food to the object of desire: *mango* is used to refer to good-looking men in Venezuela, and *queso*, cheese, is also used to talk about attractive men in Spain. The use of unity as a source for a metaphor about love and relationships attaches a value of vital necessity to partners, relationships, and marriage, which is the official societal institution that represents unity.

#### 4.1.7 The source of valuable objects

The source of valuable objects includes three different conceptual metaphors: THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, LIFE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, and LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT. Valuable objects are goods that can be exchanged, bought, and/or sold; they have a monetary value, and very importantly, they can be possessed. In the case of the metaphor THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, potential partners are described as possessions and valuable goods, as illustrated in example (13):

- (13) Busco *un hombre* sincero cariñoso respetuoso romántico leal y *de una sola mujer* (W. S. SPAIN)  
 I am looking for man who is honest, respectful, romantic, loyal and (who is interested in being with) only one woman

In example (13), the poster wants to meet somebody who, besides being honest, and romantic, is only interested in being with one woman. Her object of desire is conceived as a valuable object that can be possessed, preferably by only one person, the poster.

The second metaphor in this group, LIFE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, includes lexical units that portray life, or moments in life, as an object that can be given completely to somebody, or shared with somebody, as shown in example 14:

- (14) Que esté dispuesta a *recibir amor* y mi amistad incondicional, que *quiera compartir* su vida (M. S. VZLA)  
(A woman who is) willing to receive unconditional love and friendship, who wants to share her life

In example 14, the poster wants somebody to give his love, and this person has to be willing to share her life with him. The woman's life and that of her potential partner are portrayed as objects that can be given and shared.

The third metaphor in this group is LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT. Love is conceived of as an object that can be exchanged, given, shared, and/or traded for somebody else's love. In addition, a person might be full of love to give, to those who deserve it, or in need of being filled by love, as shown in the following example:

- (15) sencillo y lleno de amor para *todo el que se lo merezca* (M. D. VZLA)  
(I am) simple and full of love for all those who deserve it.

In a definition of himself, this poster expresses how he has a lot of love to give, but this love has to be earned by a worthy person. Love is considered an object that has a lot of exchange value; therefore, it can be given only to those who deserve it. This metaphor of love is working in tandem with another one, HEART IS THE PLACE OF EMOTIONS,

since the use of the word heart is a metaphor that stands for feelings, i.e. love, as illustrated in example 16:

(16) Busco alguien que simplemente *quiera dar su corazón* (M.S. USA)  
I am looking for somebody who wants to give her heart.

In example 16, the poster is looking for somebody willing to give her heart away; the petition for a person's heart is a petition for love. Heart and love are objects that possess value in the dating market. Many common metaphors use commodity, or similar concepts such as money and wealth, as a source of metaphors, for example TIME IS A COMMODITY, and QUALITY IS WEALTH. The reason behind this is that modern capitalist societies naturally associate money and possessions with well-being. Members of these societies structure their thoughts about things that matter to a large extent to them, like time, loved ones, love, and so on, in term of objects with actual material value.

#### **4.1.8 The source of performance**

The source of performance refers to a series of actions that people might do, exhibit, or perform for others to represent a certain character. As a source, the metaphor GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE implies that people need something more than simply having female or male genitalia to be either a woman or a man. Several metaphors in the personal ads demonstrate this notion; posters expressed how women or men need to be a “real”, or a “complete” woman or a man. Performing one's gender is conceived of as an activity that one might like or not, as shown in example 17:

(16) *Que guste de ser mujer, o sea me refiero que sea seductora* (M. S. VZLA)  
(I am looking for a woman who) likes being a woman, I mean she needs to be seductive.

In example 17, the man posting the ad is looking for a woman who likes to be one. This reference indicates that being a real woman is not only looking like one, or considering yourself one, but it is an active process in which the woman needs to be engaged in doing things associated with women, for example acting seductive, a traditional characteristic associated with a certain concept of women.

The following example illustrates how posters also consider that some people are “complete” men or women:

(17) sólo busco a *un hombre en todo el sentido de la palabra* (W. S. VZLA)  
I am looking for a man in the whole sense of the word

In example 17, the poster’s request shows that the model of men she desires is one where all the elements of being a man are present. This metaphorical expression works in conjunction with the metaphor WORDS CONTAIN THE MEANING. This idea shows that a word by itself contains all the elements of the concept that it stands for, and therefore the sole mention of the word explains the concept entirely. According to this metaphor, a word has the same meaning in every context of appearance. In the poster’s metaphor the word “man” stands for a series of characteristics or features that a real man needs to have or perform, and not every man is capable or is willing to perform that role. The use of performance as source for a metaphor about gender shows that, at some level, people are aware of the concept of gender as performance. However, their idea of a good performance of gender is assumed as natural and part of common knowledge, ignoring that the elements that determine a good model of a woman or a man differ greatly among different groups. This variability among the different models of women and men shows

that these categories are prototypical; therefore they have different levels of membership. This prototypicality shows that gender is a performance that can be done with different levels of effectiveness, rather than a natural and/or innate characteristic.

#### **4.1.9 The source of popular culture**

The source popular culture includes a series of concepts, terms, popular figures, figures from literature, and famous characters that people might use to evoke a group of images or values associated with the character mentioned. These characters might be mythological characters or be characters from classic literature. What they all have in common is the capacity to be easily recognized by most people from a community, therefore they attribute a set of features to the person who receives the label. Popular culture is the source of the category LABEL METAPHORS. The source of popular culture works in a different manner than the other sources previously analyzed. This source includes exceptionally distinct elements and it should be noted that label metaphors are not conceptual metaphors. This category includes the use of characters or concepts from popular culture as metaphors that help to construct people's self images or their partners' images. This category includes different kinds of metaphors but they can be grouped as sharing the same source, since they represent concepts that are part of people's common knowledge even though their original references are very diverse. They are reference shared by a community, which can be used to suggest a series of attributes. Some examples of these metaphors include:

(18) *la mujer perfecta sólo existe en los cuentos de hadas y en las telenovelas mexicanas...* (M.S. USA)

The perfect woman only exists in fairy tales and Mexican soap operas

In example 18, the poster explains that he is not looking for the perfect woman, since this woman only exists in fairy tales and Mexican soap operas. Using these metaphors for the perfect woman, the poster is probably rejecting the features associated with the characters represented in those fictional stories and television shows. I considered that fairy tales and Mexican soap operas are part of popular culture, since most people are familiar with their narratives and would understand what the poster means when he mentions them.

Other metaphors come from classic literature, as illustrated in example 19:

(19) Que esté fastidiado de *jugar a Don Juan*, que quiera y esté dispuesto a jugarse el todo por el todo (W. S. USA)  
(I am looking for a man) who is tired of playing Don Juan, who wants and is willing to bet it all.

In example number 19, the poster uses a classic character *Don Juan* to metaphorize her object of desire, or what she does not want in her object of desire. *Don Juan* is a character who has a particular talent for seducing women; despite the fact that this character comes from classic literature all the elements and characteristics associated with his figure are widely known by the general population, and therefore are part of popular culture. One does not need to have read the book to understand the poster's implications; she rejects a series of values, a style of seduction, elements of polygamy and tendencies to betrayal, among others, commonly associated with *Don Juan*.

The source *popular culture* includes references to Barbie (the doll), beauty queens, Prince Charming, and Adonis, among others. All these references share the

capacity to bring to mind, in a few words, a popular image, and the values attached to it when they are mentioned in the context of personal ads.

In the next section, I will discuss the conceptual metaphors established from my data, and I will explain them using specific examples of metaphorical lexical units from personal ads. This section will contain the metaphor interpretation and explanation stages of each conceptual metaphor.

#### **4.2 Conceptual Metaphors.**

As previously mentioned, this section of the metaphor analysis examines the Conceptual Metaphors in the personal ads data in my study. As established by Conceptual Metaphor Theory, “concrete sources for abstract targets do not occur randomly but fall into patterns which we might call Conceptual Metaphor Themes or Conceptual Metaphors for short” (Goatly, 2007, p.15). Conceptual Metaphors are established by the use of several lexical metaphorical phrases or units; they are grouped together since these lexical units evoke the same concepts using the same sources. However, some lexical phrases may belong to more than one conceptual metaphor. In addition, a metaphor might contain a different metaphor as part of the lexical unit, and analyzing this as a second metaphor is necessary to understand the complete metaphorical lexical unit. For the purpose of this study, I considered that lexical metaphorical units that belonged to more than one conceptual metaphor as examples of both metaphorical categories. However, they were counted only once in one of the conceptual metaphor categories, in the conceptual metaphor that was most apparent, so that the general number

of metaphors was not unnecessarily increased. For example a lexical unit that contains a metaphor such as “*corazón de oro*” (golden heart) may belong to two conceptual metaphors: THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS, and LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT. In this case, the metaphor would be counted only in the first category, since it contains the word heart.

The metaphors obtained from the personal ads from the Internet were classified in twelve conceptual metaphors, plus the label metaphors category, which comprised nine different sources. The conceptual metaphors established are:

1. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A FIELD
2. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT
3. LIFE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT
4. PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS
5. THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS
6. LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT
7. LOVE IS A SKILL
8. LOVE IS WAR
9. LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS
10. ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION
11. RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS
12. GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE, and
13. LABEL METAPHORS.

In this section, I will explain the lexical metaphorical units that belong to each conceptual metaphor, what words or phrases were metaphorized, the connotation these metaphors had in their context of appearance, and their frequency of appearance in my data. This process, known as the metaphor interpretation stage, determined which metaphors were used by the ad posters to describe love, desire, sexuality and gender, the sources of these metaphors, and the conceptual metaphors created by the metaphorical lexical units. The analysis of the conceptual metaphors also includes the metaphor explanation stage. The explanation stage of metaphors requires determining what the roles of the metaphors are in the personal ads they appeared in, especially in the creation and transmission of ideologies. As previously explained in the methodology section in Chapter Three, metaphor explanation implies “identifying the discourse function of metaphors that permit us to establish their ideological and rhetorical motivation” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 37).

The interpretation and explanation stages in my study are supported with examples from the corpus of metaphors from personal ads and references to the contexts where these metaphors appeared. This discussion is organized by the conceptual metaphors, and its purpose is to answer the following research questions: What ideologies are supported or produced by the use of these metaphors? What do these ideologies say about ad posters’ performance of heterosexuality? And, how are these metaphors creating and supporting ideologies of heteronormativity?

#### 4.2.1 THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A FIELD

This conceptual metaphor includes only three lexical metaphorical units. These metaphors represented women as land or soil, and men as the ones who can plant seeds in these lands. The small number of units in this category may be due to the fact that most posters on this website probably come from or are living in urban areas. Therefore, references to fields, cultivation and soil are not part of their everyday language. However, these few examples show several ideologies worth mentioning.

The first example comes from a poster from the United States; he uses the field metaphor to open his statement in the section *Lo que busca*, and closes his description with a second metaphor:

(20) Un *terreno fértil* donde dejar *huellas*...Descubrir en una mujer bella aquello que es invisible a los ojos. (MS. USA)  
(I am looking for) A fertile terrain where I can live my footprints... To discover in a beautiful woman that which is invisible to the eyes

In example number 20, the object of desire, a woman, is metaphorized as a terrain expected to be fertile. A second metaphor appears when the poster expresses his desire to leave his footprints in the land he is looking for. *Huellas*, footprints, represent either his semen or probably a mark such as memories for the future; it can be a metaphor for tracks left on a road that was traveled. In this example, the idea of sexual reproduction is less clear than in the next example, example 21. However, the sources used to metaphorize the target women belong to the same semantic field, sowing and cultivating land, and men are the ones who leave their mark behind.

In example 20, the fact that the poster metaphorized women as a fertile soil, and his actions toward them – or his relationship with them – as leaving his footprints reveals several ideologies about his concept of women, or women who could be his partners. First, women are inactive places where men, the active part of the equation, leave marks or create change with their actions. This process seems to reduce the role of women in the courtship process, and more importantly in the reproduction process, to a passive one. Another aspect of this passive role is the incapacity to move, and the implication that the place of a woman, a good one, is at home. Soil is a place that does not change locations; those who use that soil are the ones who move from one place to the other. In a similar fashion, women's role in romance is immobile, while men's role is more nomadic and itinerant. A second ideology revealed by this metaphor is the idea of ownership. If somebody expresses the desire to leave marks on the soil, one can assume that this person has ownership rights. The place where one wants to use the soil cannot be owned by somebody else, who probably wants to use his own soil.

The field metaphor reveals an ideology about masculinity as a capacity to take action, move, and leave marks, such as footprints. Additionally, it considers the role of men in reproduction as more active than that of women. This notion is even clearer in the following example:

(21) te busco a ti *tierra fértil para darte mi semilla*, y junto a ti ser. Te busco a ti. (M. S. MEX)

I am looking for you, fertile soil, to give you my seed, and next to you come into being. I am looking for you

In example number 21, the poster uses the noun *tierra*, soil, as a source to represent the woman he is looking for. This can be easily inferred in the fact that he addresses this fertile soil in a direct manner with the uses of the pronouns *te* and *ti* with the verb *buscar*, to look for. Then, there is a second metaphor in which he offers to give her his *semilla*, seed; one can assume that he is referring to his semen. After giving his seed, he expects to come into being. The use of these two metaphors by the poster is a way of expressing his desire to have children with the person he finds on the Web site. Therefore this person needs to be able to bear children.

In this example, the poster uses the field metaphors at the end of his description of his potential partner. In his description, his initial statement affirms that he wants somebody who can bring joy to his life, and he ends his description using fertile soil as a metaphor for women. The use of the metaphor of the field in this example implies a level of passivity from the receiver of the seed, since there is indication that only the man has an active role, giving the seed. This notion equates female reproduction with the ideal of soil being planted. Mentioning reproduction in a dating ad shows an ideology in which people conceive of relationships primarily as a mean of reproduction. Women are better candidates to find partners if they are able to reproduce.

As mentioned before, the small number of metaphorical lexical units in this category indicates that probably most people using Internet dating live in urban areas. Therefore sowing and planting are not part of their everyday experience and are not a common source of metaphors. People represented as fields have been found in metaphors of sexual desire in the Greek language; in these metaphors the target people were

represented as needing to be “watered” with sex to survive, just like fields. According to Kiratzis (2007), the reason behind the use of this metaphor is the fact that agriculture is still a main source for making a living in Greece. In the examples considered here, the use of soil as a source to represent their object of desire does not seem to refer to sexual desire. It seems that the conceptual metaphor the OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A FIELD targets and refers to sexual encounters for reproductive purposes and planning a future with their potential partners.

The ideologies behind the field metaphor include that women are passive entities, as soil waiting to be planted with seeds. This traditional conception of women and land is clearly not the real story; women participate in the reproduction process more actively than being exclusively receptacles of men’s sperm. However, it shows that this traditional ideology is still part of people’s concepts of reproduction. It also shows that women are looked on as the immobile part of the relationship and can be owned. This metaphor also affects the way people conceive of heterosexuality since, accordingly the main purpose of heterosexual relationships must be reproduction. This notion illustrates how a metaphor not only works as a mean to reproduce traditional and often negative ideologies about femininity, but also as a powerful means to establish ideologies about the ideal heterosexual partner.

#### **4.2.2 THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT**

This conceptual metaphor targets the object of desire as a valuable possession. The object of desire is considered an object that can be owned, won, and assessed a

monetary value, using valuable objects as a source of these metaphors. Considering the object of desire or love as a valuable object is not uncommon in the language of romance. It implies that the person loved is treasured by the lover and by others. In the same way one wants to keep valuable objects, people want to keep desired ones close. In my data there were five lexical metaphorical units that expressed this conceptual metaphor.

A common way to target objects of desire as valuable objects is to assign names to loved ones such as *mi tesoro*, my treasure, and *mi todo*, my everything. A similar metaphor was found in my data; a poster in the United States describes his admiration for women in the following way:

(22) las quiero, las admiro también *son unas joyas en este mundo*, qué seríamos sin ellas, no quiero ni pensarlo (M. D. USA)

I love them, I admire them, they are also jewels in this world, what would we become of us without them, I do not want to think about it.

In example 22, the fact that this poster metaphorized women as jewels reflects the fact that a large part of people's understanding about love, its importance, and its centrality in people's lives, makes them conceive of objects of desire – and love itself – as valuable objects. Possessions and the possibility of finding a partner belong to the same category, a category that includes the fundamental necessities of human beings, and luxuries and pleasures that people desire in their lives. As expressed by the poster of example 22, *what would men do without women?* The poster explains how he highly appreciates and admires women after he describes how he enjoys nature and really appreciates traveling, and obviously women. Women belong to a list of valuables and they are indispensable for life. This metaphor carries an ideology in which people conceive of their love partners as objects they can possess and own. Therefore, they

might decide where these objects belong, they might assign value to them, they want to ensure that nobody else takes the objects from them, and they want to show their object to others. This metaphor focuses on the concept of attachment and pride. People are attached to the person they love, as they are to valuable objects, and they feel pride because they highly value their object of desire (Kövecses, 1986).

A second metaphorical lexical unit in this category portrays women as expressions of heaven on earth. The poster explains his admiration for women with the following metaphor:

(23) Adoro a las mujeres, son la mejor *expresión del cielo* y toda la pureza que en él existe sobre la tierra (M. D. VZLA)  
I adore women, they are the best expression of heaven, and the purity that there is in it, on earth.

Example number 23 not only portrays women as very valuable objects, since they are an expression of heaven, but it also contains the metaphor THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A DIVINITY. It is possible to see how all these metaphors connect to target the object of desire as being highly valuable and essential in someone's life. Therefore, possessions and objects of value are frequently found as sources to target loved ones.

Other examples show how attachment and possession are related to the valuable object metaphor. The following lexical units illustrate this notion further, the first example shows how a woman is looking for somebody who can be owned:

(23) Que sea *por y para mí* (W. S. USA)  
(I am looking for a man)<sup>11</sup> who would be for me and would belong to me

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<sup>11</sup> A large of personal ads descriptions in the section *Lo que busca* were missing a phrase that implied "I am looking for", since people were responding to the heading of the section that stated "What you are looking for..."

In example 23, the poster plays with the use of the prepositions *por* and *para* to express her desire. She is looking for somebody whose reason to exist would be her, somebody she would own. This metaphor expresses this idea in a subtle way, since it is very similar to other common phrases that use the phrase *para mi*, for me, to talk about the object of desire, and imply the use of valuable object as a source.

A second lexical metaphorical unit with the idea of ownership comes from a female poster from Spain:

(24) Busco un hombre sincero, cariñoso, respetuoso, romántico, leal y *de una sola mujer* (W. S. SPAIN)  
I am looking for an honest man, respectful, romantic, loyal and (owned by) only one woman

In example 24, the use of the phrase *de una sola mujer* indicates a metaphor of ownership. *De* is a preposition of possession, and when used in this context portrays the object of desire as a valuable good worth owning.

In this last example, the poster clearly expresses how one of the characteristics wanted in her potential partner is that he must belong to only one woman. By describing her potential partner as an object that can be possessed, she is clearly demanding exclusive ownership. The poster is possibly alluding to a desire for being in a monogamous relationship, and she expects her potential partner to be only with her and not with several women at the same time – a concern that has appeared in several ads. The notable part of it is not her desire to be in a monogamous relationship, but the fact that she frames this desire by equating her partner with a possession that cannot be shared, therefore, framing this idea in a valuable object metaphor.

In example 24, the poster ends her description of her potential partner asking for a man who would be there for her and would belong to her. It seems that this is an essential characteristic to date somebody; this person has to be willing to be owned by this poster. These lexical units indicate that at some level people associate relationships, romance, and probably marriage with ownership. This ownership gives participants in the relationship control over the other partner. This control serves well to keep traditional structures of relationships and marriages intact, the foundations of heteronormativity. Expressions of this ideology in everyday language include practices such as giving an engagement ring to a woman. Once a woman gets a ring, she is marked as out the market; she is a valuable object already possessed by a man. The OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT metaphor illustrates how these ideologies get transmitted in everyday language and accepted as natural by language speakers.

#### **4.2.3 LIFE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT**

This conceptual metaphor includes metaphorical lexical units that express the concept of people's lives being shared, given to somebody, handed over to somebody or exchanged with somebody else's. There are 32 lexical metaphorical units included in this conceptual metaphor. All these metaphors share the same concept of life being a valuable object; people's lives are expressed in terms of worthy merchandise. This concept is expressed through the use of verbs such as *to share*, *to give*, *to enjoy*, *to hand over*, and *to dedicate*. I considered that those metaphors in which posters mentioned sharing or giving moments, memories, and happy life events, even though they did not mention life

directly, belonged to this conceptual metaphor. These expressions represent the same target: life. The following lexical metaphors illustrate this:

(25) Busco a alguien con quien *compartir bellos momentos* (W. S. VZLA)  
I am looking for somebody with whom I can share beautiful moments

(26) Quiero conocer a alguien realmente especial con quien *compartir sentimientos, emociones, alegrías, momentos inolvidables* (W. S. SPAIN)  
I want to meet somebody really special with whom I can share feelings, emotions, happiness and unforgettable moments

In example 25, the poster is looking for a man with whom she can share beautiful moments. In a similar manner, in example 26, the poster is looking for somebody special to share happiness and unforgettable moments. It can be seen that the target of this metaphor, life or its moments, is conceived as an entity of value that can be shared. This sharing is what can produce happiness in people, as shown in the next example:

(27) compañera y buena persona con quien *compartir mi vida* para hacernos mutuamente felices (M.S. ARG)  
(I am looking for somebody who is a) partner and a good person to share my life with, to make each other happy.

In example number 27, sharing a life seems to be a requirement for happiness, a requirement to construct an exchange of happiness. Additionally, life can be made or it gets started once a relationship with somebody begins. The following lexical unit illustrates this:

(28) Busco a una chica soltera sin hijos *para hacer una vida fresca y sin cabos sueltos* que viva en USA (M. S. USA)  
I am looking for a single girl without kids to make a fresh life, without loose ends, who lives in the U.S.

This example uses the metaphorical *hacer una vida fresca*, to make a fresh or new life, to represent the idea of starting a new relationship with somebody. The meaning is

completed with the metaphorical phrase *cabos sueltos*, loose ends, that literally refers to the loose ends of a rope or a string, and metaphorically refers to unresolved situations from the past, unfinished business (another metaphor). Since life is a valuable object it can be made, or constructed, with somebody, but preferably this person will not have personal “baggage,” i.e. children. Life is also seen as something enjoyable. This is a requirement of many posters; they expect to find somebody capable of enjoying life, even the simple events, as shown in the following metaphor:

(29) *Que disfrute de las cosas sencillas que a diario nos ofrece la vida* (W. S. USA)  
(I am looking for somebody) who enjoys simple things that life offers us on a daily basis.

The use of the verbs *disfrutar*, to enjoy, and *ofrecer*, to offer, establishes this lexical unit as a metaphor that targets life as a possession. People can enjoy life the same way they enjoy having an object. In addition, life as a valuable object might offer people rewards. As an object, life can be handed over to your partner. The following lexical units illustrate this concept:

(30) *que entregue su vida para buscar la felicidad a mi lado.* (M. S. MEX)  
(I am looking for somebody) who hands over her life to pursue happiness by my side.

(31) *Alguien a quien sienta que entregarle mi vida es un privilegio* (M.S. ARG)  
(I am looking for) somebody to whom I can feel that handing over my life is a privilege.

In example 30, the poster’s potential partners have to be willing to hand over their life to him. In his words, this is the way his partner and he can find happiness. On the other hand, in example 31, the poster is willing to give his heart to somebody who deserves it. Worthiness and dedication seem to be concepts related to the idea of

conceiving commodity as a source to target life. Dedication is expressed in the expectation that potential partners be willing to give away their lives completely, once they enter into a relationship with the posters, as shown in the following examples:

(32) Desearía un hombre que esté dispuesto *a darlo todo*, *a compartir todo* con alguien (W. S. SPAIN)

I would like a man who is willing to give everything, to share everything with somebody else.

(33) Soy de *brindar todo*, sin barreras, y *aportando todo de mí*, esperando lo mismo de la otra parte (M.S. ARG)

I am a person who can offer everything, without boundaries, and give everything I have, expecting the same from the other person.

In example 32, the lexical unit contains two metaphors in which the poster expresses how she desires first somebody willing to give everything, and second somebody to share everything with someone. In another representation of the same source, the poster in example 33 is willing to give herself completely for love. These metaphors express the idea of life being a valuable object that needs to be offered, and later handed over, to partners in order to have a relationship and find love.

The examples mentioned show an ideology of people's lives as valuable objects: they can be offered, shared, given to somebody, or given away as a proof of love and dedication. In a relationship, one has to be willing to share and offer one's life to prove real love. This is shown in the notion of sharing life:

(34) Me gustaría encontrar un hombre trabajador, honesto y cariñoso, con el que *pueda compartir los pequeños momentos de la vida* (W.S. USA)

I would like to find a hard working man, honest, caring, with whom I can share little moments in life.

In example 34, the poster describes several characteristics that she would like to find in her potential partner, and this person has to be able to share his life with her. The notion of sharing one's life makes it a valuable object, hence it can be shared.

However, other examples better illustrate the commodity *value* assigned to life.

The following lexical units help to elaborate this idea:

(35) Que tenga fuerza, valor y coraje para luchar en la vida por lograr la felicidad cada día y *que entregue su vida* para buscar la felicidad a mi lado. (M.S. MEX)

(I am looking for a woman) who has strength, valor and courage to fight in life to make life happy everyday and who hands over her life to pursue happiness by my side.

(36) Una persona afín, con códigos, valores, humor, bella por dentro y por fuera... Alguien a quién sienta que *entregarle mi vida es un privilegio*. (M.S. ARG)

(I am looking for) a person similar to myself, with ethics, morals, humor, beautiful inside and out. Somebody to whom I can feel that handing over my life is a privilege

(37) Busco relacionarme con una mujer. *Soy de brindar todo*, sin barreras, y aportando todo de mi, esperando lo mismo de la otra parte (M.S. ARG)

I am looking to have a relationship with a woman. I am the kind of person who gives everything, without barriers, and giving everything I have, I am expecting the same from the other person.

In example 35, the poster ends his description of his potential partner expressing how she has to be willing to give away her life. This conferral of one's life seems to be a necessity in the process of finding happiness with another person. It is also a privilege to give your life to somebody, as shown in example 36, in which the poster claims that he wants to feel that way about the person he dates. The notion of handing over one's life is also conveyed in expressions like "giving everything." With this expression, as shown in example 37, people are offering their life and in many cases expecting to receive the

same. This “giving everything” might bring some advantages to the giver, as shown in the following example:

(38) Busco un hombre que me dé estabilidad económica y *yo daré a cambio todo!!* (W.S. MEX)

I am looking for a man who will give me economic stability and in exchange I will give him everything!!

In example 38, the poster’s life is offered as a reward for getting economic stability. In this case, life is obviously a valuable object if it can be exchanged for money. Lives are conceived as a means of exchange in this relationship market.

The idea of handing one’s life over to somebody else implies that, as a commodity, one’s life can be owned by somebody else. The other person can do as she/he pleases with it; she/he can keep it, destroy it, sell it, and so on, since she/he is the owner. This notion brings a risky ideology: one in which people’s lives can be traded, therefore diminishing their rights. This commercialization of human life and the human body can be found in different metaphorical expressions that are part of everyday life. Human lives, or parts of the human body, are already conceived as money in the use of such expressions as blood banks, sperm banks, and organ banks. In the same way that parts of the body are treated like money that can be saved in banks, the suppliers are donors – blood donors, sperm donors, and so on. In a similar fashion, Goatly (2007) calls attention to how the metonymy “X is worth 30 million dollars” is commonly used in the press. This expression diminishes the distinction between having and being. Another context in which life is metaphorized as a commodity is that of human reproduction and genetics. Goatly (2007) describes how the commercialization of eggs and sperm has been increasing in the last few years, with situations in which couples bet up to 10,000 dollars

on the Internet to obtain eggs and sperms produced by beautiful models. Therefore, all the metaphors used to conceive of life as a commodity have consequences in the “real world”; they add a commercial aspect that impersonalizes and obscures the fact that all these transactions involve human lives. In Goatly’s opinion they reinforce social inequality, since a large majority of the population does not have the resources to participate in the market.

In the specific context of personal ads, and how people offer their lives as a means of exchange, the consequences probably do not involve commercialization of humans, or human parts. However, it involves rendition of one’s will and agency, and the idea of conceiving relationships as giving and/or getting ownership rights over somebody else’s life, and giving up control of their own lives. Discourses that promote this ideology have a dangerous side, one in which people assume that controlling their partners’ lives is natural. This assumption can bring consequences in real life, from controlling partners to domestic violence, since ideologies of owning somebody else’s life are naturalized and considered “common sense.” This affirmation does not imply that the LIFE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT conceptual metaphor leads to domestic violence; but it implies that the more naturalized certain discourses and their ideologies become, certain practices are more likely to be perceived as “normal” and tolerable.

#### **4.2.4 PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS**

This conceptual metaphor includes metaphorical lexical units that express that human bodies have, as containers do, two sides. One side is internal, which can be filled

with feelings, values, morals, and so on, and it is frequently considered the spiritual side. The other side is external – the one that is visible to other people – and is known as the physical one. In some cases, the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS is conceived to refer exclusively to emotions (Kövecses, 2000). However, I consider that, at least in my data, the container metaphor also implies that ideas, personal characteristics, moral, and ethical values can be inside the container. These metaphors can be articulated in multiple ways, from direct references to more subtle ways, to establish the container metaphor.

In the data, there are 68 metaphors that convey this concept. Some of the words directly link people to objects in which possessions can be stored. The following examples illustrate this notion:

(39) ¿El físico? eso algo relativo por eso no juzgo las apariencias, muchas veces *es lindo el estuche pero la joya de mala calidad.* (W. S. VZLA)  
The physical part? That's something relative, I do not judge appearances, and very often the case is beautiful but contains a low quality jewel

(40) Soy alegre divertido sincero honesto atrevido servicial inteligente amable accesible *un estuche de monerías* (M.D. MEX)  
I am cheerful, fun, sincere, honest, daring, helpful, smart, nice, accessible, a case of cute things

In example 39, the poster metaphorizes people's physical appearance as a jewelry case, and a second metaphor in which inside is a jewel that is sometimes of low quality. Her notion helps to explain why, according to her, physical beauty is not important and why she does not consider the physical side when choosing a partner.

In example 40, the poster describes himself as a “case of cute things” after listing all of his qualities. The use of the word “case” clearly established the container metaphor,

and his characteristics are the equivalent of the different items that a person can have or put inside a container.

Using a jewel as a metaphor for people's internal side works jointly with metaphors that assess value to the internal side, as shown in the following example:

(41) que no sea conformista, y que *valga oro por dentro* (M.S. USA)  
She cannot be a conformist and she has to be worth gold in the inside

The poster in example 41 is looking for somebody whose internal side is “worth gold.” This notion implies that he desires to be with a person whose spiritual side is rich and valuable. The reason behind his desire relates to the notion that the internal side, the spiritual one, is the real one, as expressed directly by some metaphors in my data. The real person is not characterized by physical looks but by how the internal side manifests itself. Several metaphors illustrate this notion, as shown in the following examples:

(42) Para mí lo más importante es *la belleza interna, la belleza real está dentro de uno* (M. S. USA)  
For me, the most important thing is internal beauty; real beauty resides inside of us.

(43) Todos somos parte del mismo mundo, negros y blancos, latinos y no latinos, altos y bajos, gordos y delgados, bellas y feos. Lo que importa y nos diferencia es quienes somos en realidad, *lo que llevamos por dentro* (M.S. VZLA)  
We are all part of the same world, blacks and whites, Latinos or not, tall and short, chubby and skinny, beautiful and ugly. What matters and sets us apart is who we really are, what we have inside.

The metaphors used in examples 42 and 43 clearly indicate that the real essence of people – what they truly are – resides in the internal side, implying that the external side is not genuine and is only temporary, as mentioned by other posters. Other metaphors illustrate the idea that the internal side is usually more appreciated by people,

and that there is the possibility of a disconnection between both sides. The following statements are examples of the metaphors that illustrate these notions:

(44) A mí me gusta más *el interior de la persona que lo exterior* (W. S. ARG)  
I like the interior side of the person better than the exterior one

(45) De lo físico no me preocupo porque hay gente *muy hermosa por fuera pero por dentro dan asco* (M. S. VZLA)  
I don't worry about external looks because there are beautiful people on the outside, but on the inside they gross you out.

In example number 44, the poster expresses how she likes the interior side better than the external side, illustrating how she is a person who cares more for the spiritual side than the physical one. Additionally, people seem to reject those whose internal and external sides do not harmonize, as shown in example 45. The ideology behind this concept is that the internal side is the real one, and a pretty external side without a corresponding beautiful internal side is perceived as deceptive.

The fact that people are able to show their true self is metaphorized through the use of the adjective *transparente*, transparent, a word that describes people who do not have anything to hide and who show their true self. People are containers that have a real essence, the inner side, which can be seen when they are transparent. Having access to seeing or getting to know what is inside the person is necessary to really know somebody, as shown in the next two examples:

(46) No me interesa la apariencia física [...] Pero me interesan más las personas *transparentes*. De buen corazón. (W. S. SPAIN)  
I do not care about physical appearance [...] I am more interested in transparent people. With a good heart

(47) *Transparente*, en él que pueda *depositar* todos mis secretos. (W. S. SPAIN)  
Transparent, somebody in whom I can deposit all my secrets

These examples illustrate how the metaphor transparent is used to represent people who are honest and sincere since one can see what they are like inside, as one could do with a clear container. The adjective transparent represents having access to somebody's inner side. People who are honest keep their containers accessible to others' scrutiny, preventing the deception caused by the lack of correspondence between both sides. The container is transparent and it keeps emotions and ideas in plain view. Example 46 also shows that the container metaphor includes the possibility that one person can deposit items in somebody else's container, in this case secrets.

A final use of this metaphor indicates that people as containers can be filled up.

This point is illustrated by this final example:

(48) Busco esa mujercita que *me llene por completo* (M. S. USA)  
I am looking for that little woman who fills me up inside completely

In example 48, the poster expresses his desire to meet somebody who can fill him up completely; he metaphorized himself as a partially empty container. Probably, the connotation is that the container becomes full when the person is satisfied in a relationship. His use of the word *mujercita*, little woman, might be an attempt to sound caring, however, it might indicate a relationship of power in which he subordinates the person who can fill up his internal side, since the person who fills his internal side will lose her independence becoming part of him.

All the different metaphorical lexical units previously shown illustrate how the PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS conceptual metaphor is constructed by ad posters. This conceptual metaphor relates to the BODY IS A CONTAINER metaphor, as well as the more specific conceptual metaphor analyzed in the next section, THE HEART IS THE

CONTAINER OF EMOTIONS. These three metaphors use the source of space, a contained one, to explain less concrete concepts such as people's feelings and emotions.

In addition, the container metaphor is linked to the PEOPLE ARE VALUABLE OBJECTS metaphor. If people are containers, these containers can be very valuable objects of exchange. However, many posters claim that the items inside the container are more important than the external appearance of the container. The following examples illustrate this idea:

(49) Busco una persona honesta, sencilla, no necesariamente de belleza física, pero sí inteligente, culto, de *gran belleza interior* (W.S. US)  
I am looking for an honest person, simple, not necessarily beautiful physically, but intelligent, educated, with a great inner beauty.

From these affirmations, it seems that the real value of the container is inside. The container metaphor is also used to express that physical appearance is apparently not important. The following examples illustrate this point:

(50) Una buena amistad antes que nada, no me importa como sea la persona si es gorda y fea *creo que los sentimientos están dentro de uno* (M.S. USA)  
(I am looking for) a good friendship before anything else, it does not matter how the person looks, if she is chubby and ugly, I believe that feelings are inside us.

(51) Me importan las personas por su *apariencia sentimental y no por la física* (W.D. VZLA)  
I care about people's emotional appearance and not the physical one.

(52) Para mi lo más importante es la *belleza interna, la belleza real está dentro de uno* (M.S. US)  
For me, the most important thing is inner beauty, real beauty is inside us.

In the previous examples, posters clearly established that they consider the inner side of people the real one. The real beauty or value of people is in their feelings. However, it

seems that the container metaphor is used to express a desire for physical beauty in a proper, indirect, non-threatening way. The following examples illustrate this notion:

(53) *la apariencia importa, pero no es fundamental. Se valora la sinceridad y la transparencia...* (W. S. SPAIN)  
Appearance matters, but it is not essential. I value honesty and transparency.

(54) *Que tengan buen físico no una modelo pero sí que me impacte a primera vista, en resumen busco una mujer que sea bella por dentro y por fuera.* (M. S. VZLA)  
(I am looking for somebody) who has a good figure, not a model, but somebody who impacts me at first sight, in brief, I am looking for a woman who is beautiful inside and out.

In example 53, the poster accepts that physical appearance is important to her, but it is not what matters the most. In contrast, the poster in example 54 claims that he wants somebody who has a good physical appearance, and ends his description affirming that he wants to find both attributes, physical and internal beauty. It seems that the container metaphor is being used to express an ideology in which people do not focus on physical beauty to choose their partners. However, in my opinion, people are using this notion to express the contrary in a polite way. If they express that they are looking for inner and outer beauty instead of saying that they care about what their partners look like, posters are less likely to be perceived as shallow and superficial, which is a negative characteristic in the dating market. This can be a powerful strategy in this context. In addition, the container metaphors helps to support the ideology of people as objects that can have more or less value. It contributes and works in tandem with metaphors whose source is valuable object, since if people are valuable containers; they are worthy to be owned and kept close.

#### 4.2.5 THE HEART IS THE CONTAINER OF EMOTIONS

This conceptual metaphor indicates that the heart is conceived of as the place where emotions reside. This metaphor is a sub-category of the metaphor BODY IS A CONTAINER, the body contains the heart where feelings and emotions are located (Kövecses, 1986). The heart usually represents the center of the body and the center of other elements. For example, the main idea of a topic can be metaphorized as “the heart of the matter.” In the personal ads examined in my study, forty metaphorical lexical units belonging to this conceptual metaphor were found. In these metaphorical lexical units, the heart is a container that can be opened to receive love, it can be exchanged, it can be given to somebody and as a place where emotions reside, especially love, it can be assigned a value. This metaphor is central to descriptions associated with courtship and dating (Kövecses, 2000). The following metaphorical lexical units illustrate this point:

(55) Podría describir a una mujer de una utopía o sólo dejarme conquistar por una mujer que *sólo quiera abrir su corazón y dejarme entrar en él* (M. S. SPAIN)

I could describe a utopian woman or let myself be conquered by a woman who only wants to open her heart and let me enter in it

(56) Tengo la esperanza de *encontrar un corazón abierto* (W. D. SPAIN)

I have the hope of finding an open heart

In example 55, the poster expects to find a woman who lets him inside her heart, and in example 56, the poster wants to find an open heart. Both examples illustrate how the heart is considered a container, a limited space that can be closed and opened. The open heart represents somebody's willingness to give love or accept another person's love. The notion expressed in this request goes together with the one in the metaphors that represent loving somebody as having the heart occupied by that person. The heart is

conceived as a room, or building, that can be inhabited by people. Examples 57 and 58 illustrate this notion:

(57) que no tenga *el corazón ocupado por el amor* hacia otra mujer (W. S. ARG)  
(Somebody) who does not have his heart occupied by another woman's love.

(58) soy amante a la buena comida y a las pesas y por supuesto a la mujer que llegue a *ocupar mi corazón* (M. D. USA)  
I am lover of good food and weights, and of course of the woman who gets to occupy my heart.

In example 57, the poster asks for a man whose heart is not occupied by another woman's love, otherwise she herself cannot occupy his heart. In example 58, the poster shows his willingness to let a woman occupy his heart, and thus expresses his openness to loving someone.

From other metaphorical lexical units it is possible to infer the notion that in order to be a good place to store emotions, the heart needs to be large, as can be seen in the following example:

(59) me considero *de un corazón enorme* (W. D. MEX)  
I consider myself to have a huge heart.

(60) *tengo corazón para todos*, siempre y cuando sean sinceros (M. D. VZLA)  
I have a heart big enough for everybody, as long as they are honest.

In her definition of herself, the poster in example 59 lists the size of her heart as one of her assets, meaning that she has a great capacity to love somebody. Also, in example 60, the poster considers one of his assets his big heart, since a big heart implies a large amount of feelings and love, large enough to give love to more than one person if they earn it by being honest. The use of the expression *para todos*, for everybody, might indicate that this person is willing to have more than one partner, or he might be referring

to the possibility of giving love not only in the romantic sense, but also in the fraternal sense.

Another notion that might be included in this conceptual metaphor is that the heart is a container, an object, that can be shared and given to somebody, but it is also a living entity that has its own volition and it can fall in love or desire love. The following examples illustrate these notions:

(61) *soy una gran mujer a la que le corre sangre por las venitas y mi corazoncito siente que quiere enamorarse* (W. D. ARG)

I am a great woman, who has blood running through her veins, and my heart feels like it wants to fall in love.

In example 61, the poster's definition of herself includes a reference to her heart's willingness to fall in love. This metaphor is probably closer to be a metonymy, a representation of a part for a total, in which the heart represents her body, and therefore herself. The poster's mention of having blood running through her veins is also a metaphor to indicate a strong drive for life. This metaphor probably indicates that the person is passionate; however, this kind of metaphor is not part of this analysis.

Since the heart is a container, it is the place where emotions reside. It needs to be filled up with other's feelings, and it also contains emotions that can be given away and offered to somebody else as a proof of commitment and love. When the heart is empty, it needs to be filled up by another person's feelings; however, as mentioned before, in order to receive those feelings, the heart has to be open and willing to receive them. This metaphor represents willingness to engage in a romantic relationship or to accept the romantic advances of another person. The following four examples illustrate this notion:

(62) soy un hombre que le gusta escuchar y dar cariño al 100% para *llenar muchos vacíos en el corazón* de una buena amiga o de mi pareja. (M. D. VZLA)  
I am a man who likes to listen and give love 100% to fill up the empty spaces in the heart of a good friend or my partner.

(63) A una mujer con la mente clara y el *corazón dispuesto a recibir todo mi amor* sin prejuicios (M.S. ARG)  
(I am looking for) a woman with a clear mind and a heart willing to receive all my love without prejudices.

(64) que esté dispuesta de *abrir su corazón para dejar llegar al amor*. (MS. USA)  
(I am looking for a woman) who is willing to open her heart to let love get inside

(65) el *corazón abierto y las ganas de compartir*. De mente abierta y sin ganas de juzgar a nadie. (W. D. VZLA)  
(I have an) open heart and the desire to share. With an open mind and without any desire to judge anybody

The previous examples show clearly how the heart is a container, which can be filled up with emotions. The capacity to give love and fill up somebody's heart, and the willingness to receive love seem to be characteristics appreciated in relationships and romance. The heart as a container is an object, and as such it can be offered in its entirety.

The following example illustrates this:

(66) Busco alguien que simplemente *quiera dar su corazón* (M.S. USA)  
I am looking for somebody who wants to share her heart

In the previous example, willingness to give away one's heart is a desirable characteristic in potential partners. The heart as an object is a means of exchange in romance or in the dating market. It is worth mentioning that the metaphor in example 66 can be also included in the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT. Since the heart stands for feelings and love, giving one's heart to somebody means giving one's love.

The use of the verb *dar*, to give, implies that there is an exchange of a valuable object, in

this case, love. A more detailed explanation of this metaphor is presented in the next section.

In addition, when the heart is portrayed as a place that can be inhabited by somebody, this resident is the recipient of the owner's love, as shown in the following example:

(67) con las mujeres soy complaciente, atento, amable, cariñoso y caballero y con la que esté en mi corazón por seguro las hago sentir como una reina (M. D. VZLA)

With women, I am obliging, attentive, nice, loving and gentle, and with the woman who is in my heart for sure I'll make them feel like a queen

The space inside of the heart can be inhabited by a person's love, and this person can be the owner of this heart. The "heart as container" metaphor also has the metaphor "emotions are fluids or materials," and as such they can be contained. It seems that emotions need to be controlled and restrained. Furthermore, if the heart can contain emotions, one can measure the intensity of these emotions, and the quantity of love one can give. If emotions are kept in a container, a person can control them unless the heart cannot contain them and emotions get out of control. In this case, emotions can be dangerous since they are out of control. At times the container might not withstand the pressure, and it might explode allowing these emotions to be expressed freely.

It seems that there is an ideology behind this metaphor in which emotions are dangerous and disobedient, therefore one needs a container to control them. In addition, a second ideology circulated by this metaphor is that the heart is a means of exchange. It is a valuable object, such as love, life, and objects of desire, which can be possessed by somebody or offered to somebody else. The "heart as a container" metaphor contributes

to the commercialization of all aspects of emotions and relationships. As expressed by Goatly (2007), “the notion of private property relies on one of the grounds of the container schema — the notion of a dividing line between inside and outside. This makes possible the idea of exclusivity— what is mine cannot be ours, and what is yours cannot be mine” (Goatly, 2007, p. 98). The heart contains emotions, which are one’s private property, and one can use them to participate or not in the relationship market.

#### **4.2.6 LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT**

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT includes all the lexical units that portray love as a valuable entity that can be the subject of exchange transactions. This conceptual metaphor included 156 metaphorical lexical units present in the data. These metaphors express how love can be given, handed over, and assigned a value. As an object that can be exchanged, people expect to receive something back – love – when they give it away. Love can be of good quality or bad, and one can have different quantities of it to participate in love “transactions.” As previously mentioned, some metaphors in this category might also be included in a previous one, THE HEART IS THE PLACE FOR EMOTIONS, since in the category LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT it is possible to include metaphors that assess value to the heart. This value is metaphorically given to the heart and to the feelings that it contains. It also includes metaphors in which people offer their heart as a symbol of love, since this offer implies that this object – the heart – is a valuable article of trade. The following example illustrates how these two conceptual metaphors (LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT and

THE HEART IS THE PLACE FOR EMOTIONS) work in tandem to produce this

notion:

(68) Se ofrece lealtad incondicional, la posibilidad de *subirse a una montaña rusa de emociones*, y ser vos quien *posea mi corazón y mi alma* (M.S. ARG)  
I am offering unconditional loyalty, the possibility to ride a roller coaster of emotions, and you can be the one who owns my heart and my soul

In example 68, the poster offers his potential partners the possibility to own his heart, and his soul; therefore he is offering his love. His heart is a valuable object that can be possessed. Another metaphor contained by this lexical unit is EMOTION IS PHYSICAL AGITATION (Kövecses, 2000), the idea that when somebody feels a strong emotion their body is moved and agitated by this force. This is illustrated when the poster claims that being in love with him will feel like riding a roller coaster.

Love is also an object that can be owned, and the amount of love one can have to participate in the market might vary. It seems that some people have large quantities of love or will demand large quantities. The two following metaphorical lexical units illustrate this notion:

(69) Que tenga *bastante amor para entregar* (W. S. VZLA)  
He has to have plenty of love to give

(70) *Aventurera y con mucho amor para dar* me gusta viajar (W. D. ARG)  
Adventurous and with plenty of love to give, I like to travel.

In example 69, the poster wants somebody who has a large amount of love to give away, describing love as an object that can be measured in small or large quantities. This is also shown in example 70, where the poster claims to have *mucho amor*, plenty of love, to give to somebody.

However, the fact that somebody may have love “currency” is not enough to participate in this exchange process. Several metaphorical lexical units illustrate how in order to receive somebody’s love, one has to be worthy of it. The following examples illustrate this point:

(71) busco a un ser muy especial que pueda *darle* todo mi *amor* (M.S. USA)  
I am looking for somebody special to whom I can give all my love

(72) sencillo y *lleno de amor* para todo él que *se lo merezca* (M. D. VZLA)  
I am a simple person, filled with love for everyone who deserves it

(73) *Se ganará un hombre* que la va a amar por siempre y *le dará todo el amor* y respeto que *se merece* (M. S. USA)  
(This woman) will win a man who will love her forever and will give her all the love and respect she deserves.

In example 71, the poster offers her love to somebody special, and she implies that not just anybody can receive this valuable object. In the same fashion, the poster in example 72 is filled up with love, but only for those who might deserve it. Example 73 illustrates that when a person gets the love they deserve, especially the poster’s, they have won a prize, a valuable object. In this example, the prize is a man (the poster); the fact that he considers himself a prize illustrates further how everything related to a love exchange seems to be associated with wealth, prizes, and abundance, and explains why the source of commodity is broadly used. Furthermore, the poster’s statement suggests that a woman would have to be lucky enough to “win” a man.

Other ideas associated with love as a valuable object, besides deserving and winning, are the necessity to receive and the willingness to participate in the exchange. The following three examples illustrate this point:

(74) con *ganas de dar* y *necesidad de recibir* (W. S. VZLA)

(I am looking for somebody who is) eager to give and in need of receiving

(75) Que esté *dispuesta a dar amor y dejarse amar*. Físicamente que no me supere en estatura o peso. (M.S. USA)

(A woman) who is willing to give love and let herself be loved. Physically, she should not exceed me in height or weight

(76) Un hombre *dispuesto a dar y recibir mucho amor* (W. S. MEX)

(I am looking for) a man willing to give and receive plenty of love.

In example 74, the poster expresses her desire to find somebody who is willing to give love, but also with the *necesidad de recibir*, in need of receiving. Love is associated with the concept of need therefore love becomes a basic substance needed to survive.

Examples 75 and 76 show how people need to be willing to participate in order to give and receive love.

Along the same lines, one can be not only unwilling to receive love but also afraid of receiving it and giving it, too, as shown in the following example:

(77) que no *tema recibir ni entregar sentimientos sinceros* (W. S. SPAIN)

(Somebody) who is not afraid to receive and give honest feelings

In example 77, it is possible to see that since participation in the love market can be risky, one might be afraid to invest in it. People store love to use it as a mean of exchange, and in some cases the capacity to share and give the love that has accumulated or that has been saved by a person is offered as an attribute that posters have. The following example illustrates this:

(78) Busco una relación que me brinde estabilidad emocional, amor, entrega, y que me permita demostrar *el amor que yo también puedo dar*. (W. S. SPAIN)

I am looking for a relationship that offers me emotional stability, love, devotion, and that allows me to show the love that I can also give

In example 78, the poster asks to be allowed to show what she can give. This petition seems to indicate that people know they are participating in a market in which in order to get what you want you have to be willing to give something in exchange. This is further demonstrated in the following examples:

(79) *Doy tanto en una relación pero también demando lo mismo* (W. D. VZLA)  
I give a lot in a relationship but I also demand the same

Other examples further illustrate how when exchanging love as a valuable object, one must invest the same quantity of love that one expects to receive. The next metaphorical lexical units illustrate this:

(80) *trato de entregar lo mucho o poco que hay en mí para recibir justamente lo mismo.* (M. S. MEX)  
I try to give as much and as little as there is in me and I expect to receive just the same

(81) *Me gusta dar y recibir, pero si crees que sólo puedes pedir, sin dar nada a cambio, olvídate no soy para ti* (W. S. USA)  
I like to give and receive, but if you think that you can only ask, without giving anything in exchange, forget it, I am not for you

In example 80, the poster expects to receive back the quantity of love/feelings he had given. His conception of the exchange is one of equality; the idea behind it is that “you get what you pay for,” no more. In the case of example 81, the poster clearly expresses that she gives to receive. Her love transaction is not one of sacrifice and loss; she expects to get what she pays for. Therefore, it is possible to see that love as a valuable object is not inexpensive or free.

However, some metaphorical lexical units show that, some people are willing to reward other people’s investment in them. The following examples illustrate this notion:

(82) busco a una mujer que tenga visión de futuro, que tenga los pies puestos sobre la tierra, que *esté dispuesta a darlo todo por amor claro que yo le daré el doble del amor que ella me dé* (M. S. VZLA)

I am looking for a woman who has a forward looking approach, who has her feet on the ground, who is willing to renounce to everything for love, and of course I will give her double the love she gives me.

(83) que yo sea su *bebida linda* y que me mime mucho que yo le *doy el doble de amor* (W. S. USA)

(I am looking for a man) for whom I am his pretty little baby and who will spoil me a lot and I will give him double the love.

The poster in example 82 is looking for a woman who is willing to give away everything for love. This notion belongs to the metaphor LOVE IS SACRIFICE, in which falling in love entails renouncing almost everything. This renouncing might be rewarded, shown by the metaphor “I will give her double the love she gives me.” In the previous example, the person offers to double the amount of love that he will get. This can be a strategy to attract more people the same way merchants offer bargains when they are selling their goods. This example, as well as number 83, illustrates how in the love transaction one might not only get what one pays for, but also an additional or double profit. Example 82 also contains the metaphor MUNDANE REALITY IS DOWN (Lakoff & Johnson, 1986), shown in the expression “feet on the ground.” This expression starts as metonymy, the feet stand for the complete human body, and then as a metaphor implies that people are realistic, are not dreaming and believing in fantasies; they do not construct castles in the sky.

In example 83, besides the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, it is possible to find a second metaphor. The second one is THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS A SMALL CHILD; this is represented in the lexical unit *su bebida linda*, his

pretty little baby. This metaphor is common in the vocabulary associated with romance and love; English has expressions such as *baby* and *babe*, and in Spanish expressions like *bebe*, *nene*, and *nena* are used to refer to loved ones.

Since love is an object of value, it can also be lost. This loss does not imply necessarily that there was an investment that did not work, but that the object cannot be found. The following metaphorical lexical unit illustrates this notion:

(84) alguien quien me diga lo que es el amor *porque hace tiempo lo perdí y nunca lo volví a encontrar.* (MS. USA)

(I'm looking for somebody) who can tell what love is, because I lost it a while ago and I have not found it again.

In example 84, the poster expresses that he lost love; however, this problem can be solved by a potential partner who can tell him what love is. This last notion, the possibility of learning from somebody what love is, connects with the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A SKILL that will be discussed in the next section.

The last notion found within this conceptual metaphor is that somebody's love can be of low quality, or it might be simply undesirable as an object of exchange, even if it is present in large quantities. The next example illustrates this notion:

(85) *tengo mucho que ofrecer pero nadie lo quiere* (M. D. MEX)

I have a lot to offer but nobody seems to want it.

In example 85, the poster's definition of himself includes the declaration, a cry, that his love asset has not being appreciated by others. It seems that to participate in the love market one needs to have not only assets, but also marketable skills to sell, which seems to be the case of the poster in example 85, since he has not found somebody to take his love.

In the previous examples, it is possible to see that love can be given away, and that the giving and receiving of love implies a willingness by the participants to do it. This love for exchange can be also represented as giving one's heart and/or soul, as shown in the following lexical units:

(86) Estoy buscando un *hombre con un corazón de oro* (W. S. USA)  
I am looking for a man with a heart made of gold

In example 86, the poster is looking for a man whose heart is made of gold; this petition implies that a valuable heart is synonymous with a valuable person. The person with an expensive heart will have a better position in the love market. This notion is related to the metaphor WEALTH IS QUALITY, in which an item made of a valuable material, in this case the heart, has a better quality than the same item made of a cheaper material.

Behind the LOVE IS VALUABLE OBJECT metaphor, there is an ideology that love should be mutual just as in commercial transactions: the goods given should be worth the same as the goods received. Subsequently, the ideology implies not only that love should be mutual, but also balanced and given back in equal degree. As a consequence, what is valuable in a relationship is what a person can get out of it.

This conceptual metaphor, as well as LOVE IS VALUABLE OBJECT and OBJECTS OF DESIRE ARE VALUABLE OBJECTS, reveals how the concept of commercialization is ingrained in people's conceptualization of the world. In the case of love and relationships, this commercialization brings a sense of ownership, as previously mentioned, in which relationships are conceived not as situations in which people share emotions and their lives, but situations in which people own somebody or are owned by others. If people are conceived of as private property, their agency in love relationships

might be reduced and dismissed. In addition, the ideology of mutual love and equal amounts of love to share in the transactions can be used as a way to hold the other side of the relationship accountable for the love that one gives. This accountability might be a burden to a person who is the object of somebody's love, which can be prejudicial to his or her lives. This ideology might be used to justify making unreasonable demands on somebody, and when these demands are not fulfilled, one can feel entailed to use unreasonable ways to get one's wishes.

#### **4.2.7 LOVE IS A SKILL**

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A SKILL contains metaphorical lexical units that portray love as knowledge that can be acquired, a skill that can be mastered, and also the idea that feeling love is not enough to be efficient at the act of loving. This metaphor contributes to construct a concept of loving as an activity that implies a high level of agency by the participants. This concept differs from more traditional conceptions of loving that portray loving as a reaction that people cannot control and it happens without one's direct agency. My data includes four metaphorical lexical units that belong to this conceptual metaphor, in which skill is the source to the target of love. The following examples illustrate how this metaphor is created:

(87) *Una nena que sepa amar...* (M.S. ARG)  
(I am looking for) a babe who knows how to love

(88) *Busco a un hombre que sepa amar y se deje amar* (W. S. ARG)  
I am looking for a man who knows how to love and let himself to be loved

In example 87, the poster is looking for a *nená* who knows how to love. When he states this as one of his requirements for a potential partner, his use of the verb *saber*, to know, expresses that his understanding of love is one in which love is an ability more than a pure basic feeling. It is not only a feeling that one might get without taking action; a second interpretation is that the poster refers to love as an activity more than a feeling. Therefore, as in any sport, or similar activity, people need to learn how to do it so they can master the skill. Example 88 implies the same idea, and adds the notion that letting oneself be loved is part of mastering the skill. This lexical unit includes two metaphors, knowing how and letting other love you. The activity of loving that needs to be mastered occurs in a double way: the participation of the other is important, and if you know how to love you know how to let people love you. Mastering the skill includes knowing how to give and how to receive. The notion of having the ability and the faculties to love is further illustrated in the next metaphorical lexical unit:

(89) Un hombre que tenga *la facultad de poder amar* (W. S. ARG)  
A man who has the ability of being able to love

In example 89, the poster is looking for a man who has the faculty to love, who can love. Her desire to find somebody who has the capacity of loving adds more evidence that people's conception of love entails a level of agency, in which people can have the faculty, know how to do it, or learn how to. Loving somebody does not automatically provide somebody with the skill of love. This is explicitly expressed in the next example:

(90) *Que sepa amar... Porque no cualquiera sabe je je* (W. S. MEX)  
(I am looking for somebody) who knows how to love.... Because not everybody knows how ha ha

In example 90, the poster explains why she directly asked for somebody who knows how to love, because not everybody knows how. Therefore, one cannot assume that a person who is capable of feeling love is also capable of doing it right, because this person may not have mastered the skill, the source of this metaphor. These two metaphors, knowing and doing it well work in tandem to create the meaning of the metaphor. As mentioned before, this metaphor implies that love is knowledge that one can acquire, a skill that one can manage. People might know or not how to do it, and those who know how to love are good candidates on the dating market.

The notion of learning a way to love brings, to a certain extent, a novel feature to the concept of love. Usually love is conceived of as an irrational feeling that takes somebody by surprise and without warning. Some common metaphors that sustain this idea are explained by Kövecses (2000, p.26):

- a) LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE: She *swept me off my feet*.
- b) LOVE IS INSANITY: I am *crazy about you*
- c) LOVE IS RAPTURE/ A HIGH: I've been *high on love* for weeks
- d) LOVE IS PHYSICAL FORCE: I was *magnetically drawn to her*

In the previous examples, love is portrayed as knowledge that not everybody has and as faculty that people might or might not have. The conception of love as a skill seems to indicate that there is a way to learn how to do it correctly. People do not consider that loving, feeling love for somebody or falling in love are enough because there is a proper way to love your object of desire.

The skill feature would bring a new ideology to the conceptual world of love. It removes the irrational value, and the idea of loving being a feeling out of people's control. Loving is an activity, an active process that uses one's agency. If one knows how to love, one can control when and how to do it. In case of not having the skill of loving, one might be able to acquire and master the skill. It is worth observing whether this novel feature would, or could, bring an ideological change in people's conception of love, one in which love is not an irrational and uncontrollable force.

It might also signify that there is a model of how to love properly. For example, if there is a model of how to be a heterosexual, there must be a model of how to love like one. The ideal heterosexual has to know how to love in the correct way; this knowledge results in the creation a new ideal heterosexual who is capable of mastering the skill correctly. If this is the case, the skill feature does not bring a positive and novel change to the concept of love, but is just another way to structure people's feelings and may reinforce how desires are controlled and designed by institutions of power, or at least by the discourses that circulate reigning ideologies.

#### **4.2.8 LOVE IS WAR**

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS WAR includes 31 metaphorical lexical units. The lexical units include expressions in which loving or having a relationship with somebody equals having a conflict. Love is a conflict between two parties, in which participants might lose or win a battle and is represented by somebody winning another person's love, somebody losing his or her battle against love, or somebody losing

because his or her love is not reciprocated. Besides the possibility of this conflict or war might be won or lost, one might be conquered by love or by somebody, and one might need to surrender to love or to the loved one. The following lexical unit illustrates the notion of losing the war:

(91) *he contado con mala suerte en el amor, he salido perdiendo mil veces aunque no niego que de todo lo malo hay que sacar siempre lo bueno* (W. S. SPAIN)

I have had bad luck in love, I have lost a thousand times but I do not deny that from out of all the bad one must look for the positive.

In example 91, when talking about her previous experiences with love, the poster ends her story by saying “*he salido perdiendo mil veces,*” I have lost a thousand times. Her claim portrays these experiences as a conflict in which there are two sides and one of them has to lose. The poster claim of having lost in love probably refers to unsuccessful relationships. However, the poster seems to consider that these experiences are linked to luck and something positive might come in the future.

A second notion found in my data related to the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS WAR is one associated with conquering somebody or being conquered by someone. People consider that they conquer somebody when that person falls in love with them, or they are conquered by somebody else when they feel attracted to that person. The following examples illustrate this notion:

(92) *Simplemente un ser que me conquiste* (W. S. ARG)

I am looking for a person who simply conquers me

(93) *Sincero en lo que piensa y suficiente creativo para conquistar a una mujer* (W. S. MEX)

(I am looking for somebody) honest about what he thinks and creative enough to conquer a woman.

In example 92, the poster is looking for a man who conquers her. Likewise, the poster in example 93 wants to find a man who is creative enough to be able to conquer a woman; in this she is probably referring to herself. The idea of conquering somebody is part of the metaphor LOVE IS WAR. However, it is also connected with metaphors that portray the object of desire as land or places. Places and lands are conquered when one of the parts involved in the conflict wins the war. In spite of this, conquering does not seem to have a negative connotation in the context of these lexical units; the fact that the metaphor is conventionalized seems to have diluted the negative elements that can be associated with conquering in the context of a real war.

Even if some elements of the concept of war are diluted in the metaphor, the notions of rendition and surrendering are strongly associated with it. The person who is conquered has to surrender to love or to the loved one, therefore love seems to be a situation that one cannot escape or stay away from; it is a situation out of a person's control. People conceptualize falling in love as surrendering to the other person. In addition, people's willingness to love somebody or participate in a relationship is portrayed as the willingness and capacity to surrender. The following metaphorical units illustrate this notion further:

(94) cuando me enamoro *me entrego por completo al amor* (M. D. VZLA)  
When I fall in love I surrender completely to love

(95) Cuando me enamoro *me entrego totalmente* (W. D. MEX)  
When I fall in love I totally surrender

(96) Conocer chicas que sean ellas mismas sinceras y sobre todo *que sean 100% entregadas* (M. S. MEX)  
(I want to) meet girls who are themselves, honest and more important, they must surrender 100 percent

(97) busco un ser imperfecto como yo que sea mi equilibrio, [...] una mujer que tenga la *necesidad de entregarse plenamente* no exijo más de lo mismo que puedo dar (M. S. MEX)

I am looking for a flawed person like me, who can be my equilibrium, [...] a woman who has the need to completely surrender, I do not demand more than what I can give

(98) También celoso pues *me entrego totalmente* a la mujer amada. (M. D. SPAIN)

(I am) also jealous since I surrender completely to the woman I love

In examples 94 and 95 posters express how they surrender when they fall in love, surrender to love or simply surrender. The examples illustrate further the notion that loving has an element of losing control, losing a battle, and being unable to stay in command of one's reactions to love, and in the case of example 97, the poster requirement is actually a mechanism for obtaining control of the relationship. Examples 96 and 97 illustrate how having the willingness to surrender is a requirement – at least to these posters – to be somebody's object of love. Those who do not surrender 100 percent, or feel the necessity to surrender, might be not the best candidates to participate in the love exchange. Also, example 97 shows elements of the metaphor LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, since the poster claims to ask for the same quantity of sacrifice or surrendering, therefore the same amount of love, that he is willing to give. His metaphor combines the idea of surrendering with the idea of a commercial transaction; in both cases one should get what one pays for.

The idea of being willing to surrender might also be used to explain and justify a behavior (being jealous) or a demand for receiving the same amount of love that one gives away, as in example 98. It seems that the “love is war” metaphor adds to the

ideology of love being an event outside of one's control. Usually, wars are conflicts that draw people in, most of the time without their consent. The same way somebody can find herself or himself unwillingly in the middle of a conflict, a person can fall in love without being aware of how it happened or started.

The LOVE IS WAR metaphor is a common conceptual metaphor, and war is a common source of metaphors, showing that structuring different relationships among humans (arguments, politics, sports, love, and so on) in terms of war contributes to organizing these concepts easily. It is a way to simplify a complex situation by having two sides, in which one side is successful once it defeats the other. This is a central aspect of war relevant to the concept of love; love is conceived as a conflict in which one of the participants is the winner and another one is the loser. That a person loses the conflict of love and surrenders to the other has several implications. It implies, like other previously discussed metaphors do, that love and relationships are spaces in which people need to abandon their agency. This loss of one's own will suggests that one might belong to somebody, and in the opposite case, one might own somebody's will. All these metaphors contribute to the perpetuation of traditional ideologies about love, in which relationships are conceived of as places of captivity, with all the features that can be associated with this confinement. The features of captivity and confinement bring negative and dangerous aspects to the conception of relationships.

#### 4.2.9 LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS entails the notion that finding love, loving somebody, or being in a relationship is what makes a human being a complete entity. It contains the central notion that real love is the union with that better half that needs to be searched for and found in life (Kövecses, 1986). There are 41 metaphorical lexical units that represent this concept in my data. The notion of unity was represented in varied ways; the following examples illustrate the commonly used notion of my “half-orange”:

(99) en fin sólo deseo encontrar *mi media naranja* o un *ángel* que alegre y disfrute la vida conmigo (W. S. SPAIN)

After all I only wish to find my half-orange or an angel who can make my life happy and enjoy it with me

(100) Busco a mi *media naranja* creo que la hay y no me cansaré de buscarla hasta que la encuentre (M. S. SPAIN)

I am looking for my half-orange I believe that she exists and I will not rest until I find her

In example 99, the poster is looking for a *media naranja*, half-orange (better half), or an angel who can bring happiness to her life. The image of the half-orange is used to represent the part of a person that is missing and that would complete this person in an ideal way. It represents a part that was probably joined with the other one at some point. The half-orange metaphor does not only belong to the unity metaphor; it might be also part of the metaphor PEOPLE ARE FOOD/ FRUITS. In example 100, the poster uses the same lexical unit, half-orange, and goes further by giving a better illustration of the unity metaphor. By asserting that there is a better half and that he will not rest until he finds it,

his affirmation adds evidence to how the unity metaphor implies that this union of two complementary parts is a natural state for human beings.

The half-orange notion shows that people are incomplete beings without a partner. In order to find the other half or complement, people have to be convinced that this person exists and, as I mentioned before, willing to find this person, as expressed in the following example:

(101) que esté convencido que *su otra parte* existe y esté dispuesto a encontrarla, en mí (W. S. MEX)  
(I am looking for a man) who is convinced that his other part exists and he is willing to find it, in me.

The unity metaphor implies that a person is not only incomplete until he/she finds his/her other half, but also – to a certain point – undefined when they are single. This idea becomes clearer in the following example:

(102) Creo que la pareja es la que *te define* como eres (W. D. MEX)  
I think that your partner is who defines who you are

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS entails that humans are beings who are not complete unless they find a person to love. The loved one is the part that people need to be complete — somebody's true love. This notion can be represented in several ways; a common representation is to portray the loved person as somebody's other half. Expressions used by a poster to illustrate this notion are shown in the following examples:

(103) uno nunca sabe en donde puede estar *nuestra otra mitad*. (W. S. MEX)  
One never knows where our other half may be

(104) que sea mi *alma gemela*<sup>12</sup> *la mitad que me falta* (M. S. SPAIN)  
(I am looking for a woman) who can be my soul mate, the half that I am lacking

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<sup>12</sup> *Alma gemela* is the Spanish equivalent of soul mate.

(105) En si que quiera ser *esa mitad que a cada ser le hace falta*, y ser una compañera en esta *travesía que es el vivir el día a día* (M. S. SPAIN)  
Anyway, she needs to want to be that half that every person needs, and be a partner in that journey that everyday life is.

(106) que esté convencido *que su otra parte existe* y esté dispuesto a encontrarla, en mi (W. S. MEX)  
(I am looking for a man) who is convinced that his other part exists and he is willing to find it, in me.

(107) Una mujer que sea mi *ying* para yo ser su *yang* (M. S. SPAIN)  
A woman who can be my yin so I can be her yang

(108) Yo busco una chica para que *sea mi complemento en mi vida* (M. S. VZLA)  
I am looking for a girl so she can be my complement in my life

(109) Y si surge algo quizás seamos *complemento* el uno del otro (M. S. SPAIN)  
If something else arises between us, maybe we would complement each other

In example 103, the poster affirms that everybody's other half can appear any time. This affirmation adds to the idea previously mentioned: everybody is missing a part, a person to love. In example 104, the poster is looking for his soul mate and the better half he lacks. As expressed in other lexical units, and in example 105, every person is missing this part. Love and partners are portrayed as basic needs. Example 105 also contains the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, in which his potential partner needs to be with him in this journey called life. In example 106, the poster adds the idea that one has to really believe that one's other half exists in order to find it. The other half is a necessity that every human being has. Most people are aware of the need (a part of themselves that's missing) and they usually engage in an active search, as expressed in examples 106 and 108. All these lexical units illustrate how people conceive single life, or the lack of a partner, as being an incomplete person.

The person who might complete another person in the unity metaphor can be represented as one's half -orange, one's other half, and one's other part. In example 107, the poster uses the Chinese symbols of yin and yang to represent the union of two complementary parts. In the lexical unit 109, the poster uses the noun *complemento*, complement, to symbolize a partner. The other half is constructed as a complement, an individual who can perfectly harmonize with the other person. The idea of complement is also used in the verbal form; people complement or complete each other. The following lexical units illustrate that:

(110) Busco esa persona especial, capaz de *llenar ese espacio tan importante que llevamos cada uno de nosotros por dentro*, que me *complemente* como pareja (M. S. VZLA)

I am looking for that special person, capable of filling up that important space that we all have inside, who can complement me as a partner

(111) Debe compartir alguna de mis aficiones, para poder *complementarnos* mejor (M. S. SPAIN)

She must share some my hobbies, so we can complement each other better

In example 110, the poster is looking for somebody who can complete him and describes the space inside him that needs to be filled up. This metaphor belongs to PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS metaphor. After people are filled up, they get complemented by their partner. In the same fashion, in example 111, the poster affirms that this complementarity is easier if people share the same hobbies.

The unity metaphor not only promotes the idea of lovers completing each other, but also that husbands and wives complete each other. It seems that the unity metaphor's primarily purpose is to maintain monogamous relationships, the ultimate expression of

them being the institution of marriage. This notion is clearly expressed by the poster in example 112:

(112) Una esposa es la otra parte que *complementa la vida* de un hombre y viceversa (M. S. MEX)

A wife is the other part that completes the life of a man and vice versa.

It is possible to see that the unity metaphor not only supports the notion of being in a relationship as necessary in everybody's life, but also the notion that being in a marriage is also a necessity, as example 112 illustrates it.

This metaphor reinforces the belief that relationships and marriage are the ideal state in which people should live. This notion attributes to these institutions an ideology of a natural and intrinsic state of human nature. As a consequence, "the UNITY metaphor suggests perfect harmony, an idyllic state. What gives rise to this is that by virtue of their perfect fit, or match the two parts form an ideal unity in which the two parts maximally complement each other. In the biological version of unity, the two parts live in symbiosis, one part being dependent upon the other" (Kövecses, 1986, p.86). In this unity, dependency becomes an essential feature. The portrait of relationships and marriage as ideal and natural states reinforces the maintenance of these institutions. They are considered innate and natural; they come into being naturally as two elements join to become one.

This ideology promotes the idea that the creation of these institutions is a natural part of romantic love, and romantic love is also a natural part of humans. Marriage and relationships are then considered almost biologically natural institutions, which have

been around since humans were “created,” and therefore cannot be challenged and conceived of as unnatural.

It seems that the unity metaphor generally supports traditional notions about relationships. However an example found in my data shows how the metaphor can also be used to express an opposition to the traditional values associated with it. When metaphors and their ideologies get circulated, they can be restructured. People might not subscribe to traditional ideologies transmitted by certain metaphors, and they might use a version of the metaphor to mock it. The following example illustrates this possibility:

(113) No busco mi *media naranja*, sino una *completita*... (W. S. MEX)  
I am not looking for my half-orange, but for an entire one.

When this poster claims she is looking for a complete orange. In an amusing way she lets people know that in her case she does not need a complementary part. Probably her conception of relationships does not involve being completed by somebody else or feeling that she is missing a part of herself because she is single. Most likely for her, relationships are spaces where complete people share experiences and time.

#### **4.2.10 ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION**

In the data from personal ads, there are five metaphorical lexical units included in this conceptual metaphor. This conceptual metaphor implies that meeting somebody – the encounter with the person that one desires – involves a chemical reaction. When this chemical reaction occurs, one knows that there is attraction toward the other person; this moment is often described as feeling chemistry.

The conceptual metaphor ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION

establishes that the way somebody reacts when he or she is attracted to another person is similar to a chemical reaction. This reaction seems to be a feeling that is not controlled by the rational mind. The following metaphorical lexical units illustrate how the CHEMICAL REACTION metaphor is articulated:

(114) Que se sienta la *química* (M.S. USA)  
That we can feel the chemistry

(115) No tengo un gusto en particular por la mujer ideal sólo tiene que *haber una química* bien sea para una amistad o para algo más. (M. S. USA)  
I do not have a particular image for the ideal woman; there only needs to be good chemistry for a friendship or something else

In example 114, the poster needs to feel chemistry in order to start a relationship. Another expression used to represent this concept is to have chemistry, as shown in example 115.

In this statement, the poster affirms that chemistry needs to be there for a friendship or for something else to begin. However, in some cases chemistry is what indicates that there is a physical attraction, and a desire for a relationship. It seems that having chemistry with somebody might be a requirement for having a closer relationship than a friendship, as shown in the following examples:

(116) entablar una bonita amistad y de pronto si hay *química* tal vez algo más...  
(W. S. VZLA)  
(I would like to) establish a nice friendship and if there is chemistry maybe there is something else

(117) Busco una mujer sincera inteligente que quiera ser amada sin pedir nada a cambio lo demás viene sólo *si hay química* (M. S. SPAIN)  
I am looking for a sincere and smart woman, who wants to be loved, and I am not asking for anything in return; everything else only will come if there is chemistry.

In example 116, the poster considers that having chemistry with somebody is a requirement to establish a relationship beyond a friendship. In similar fashion, the poster in example 117 considers that, the relationship will come naturally if there is chemistry.

The chemical reaction metaphor seems to refer to a series of features that activate the attraction between two people. However, in some cases, the chemistry between people seems to refer exclusively to physical attraction. In this case, the only way to know if there is chemistry is seeing the person or their picture. A fundamental notion in the chemistry metaphor is being able to interact face to face with people, or at least the need to see what the other person looks like. Posters affirm that they will not really know if they like somebody until they meet them personally, or at least see the person's picture. This idea is framed as having chemistry in the following lexical unit:

(118) solamente contesto a los que tengan foto si veo *hay química* para amistad  
OK. (W. D. USA)  
I am only answer profiles with pictures, if I see there is chemistry for a  
friendship, OK

In example 118, the poster states that she will only answer people with pictures in their profile. At least at the beginning of the romance, seeing a picture is the only way to know if there is chemistry between two people. The notion of feeling chemistry for somebody adds a level of irrationality to the attraction process. The moment of attraction has different, natural elements like getting together to produce a chemical reaction. Using a chemical reaction as source for this metaphor indicates that attraction is not something that one can rationalize or control, but at the same time, this irrational chemical reaction is necessary to start a relationship with somebody. The possibility of having a relationship seems to depend on the occurrence of a chemical reaction.

If the metaphor refers to a series of features or exclusively to physical attraction is not always clear. Nevertheless, what is clear is that this metaphor contributes to a common ideology associated with love. This ideology sustains that love is a force that takes people by surprise, an accident that happens to a person. Love is an uncontrollable physical force, similar to chemical reactions; once certain elements merge, the reaction cannot be stopped. This ideology supports traditional concepts in which people's agency and will are reduced by the presence of love, or the loved person. As shown in previous metaphors analyzed here, these discourses are circulated and contribute to the justification of certain dangerous behaviors in the name of uncontrollable love.

#### **4.2.11 RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS**

The conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS includes nine metaphorical lexical units in the data from the personal ads. The lexical units use images of construction, foundations and pillars to describe relationships. This conceptual metaphor implies that relationships can be constructed, they might have foundations and pillars, and as buildings they can be solid and durable. The building metaphor also helps to create a notion of group work, as illustrated in the following examples:

(119) Si estás de acuerdo conmigo, *te invito a construir algo serio y duradero...*  
(M. S. USA)

If you agree with me, I invite you to construct something serious and long lasting

(120) lo invito *tomado de mi mano a construir una torre pero bien sólida de amor y vida en pareja. Y desde aquí le aseguro no se arrepentirá, no me importa su físico, sólo su belleza interior* (W. S. VZLA)

I invite you, holding my hand, to construct a very solid tower of love and life in a relationship. And from here I assure you, you will not regret it, the physical does not matter to me, only your internal beauty.

(121) pues pienso que los dos podemos *formar un castillo con bases muy fuertes* y podremos sobrepasar todas las adversidades que nos pone la vida, el destino (W. S. USA)

I think we can construct a castle with strong foundations, this way we can overcome all the adversities that life and destiny bring on us.

In example 119, the poster invites potential partners to construct a relationship that is strong and long lasting – just as if they were constructing buildings. His potential partner is invited to construct something serious; for him a relationship is a building that needs more than one person to construct and it is part of cooperative work. In example 120, the poster invites potential partners to construct a solid tower. The source of a tower, a kind of building, represents relationships. The metaphor implies that the relationship needs to be as strong as a tower, which is what the poster desires. In example 121, the poster also uses the source of building to represent her target, relationships, when she invites her potential partners to construct a castle. The previous examples referred to building pillars and foundations; these references to parts of the building are used to talk about the needed elements for the construction of a relationship. The building metaphor includes references to parts of the building and also metaphors that refer to specific types of buildings, such as castles and/or towers. The reference to castles and towers seem to be an allusion to fairy tales, a common reference found in these ads. This reference evokes the ideology of true and eternal love associated with fairy tales.

The previous metaphorical lexical units illustrate that the notion of relationships as buildings is highly connected with the construction of a life or relationship with a

partner. Other notions within this conceptual metaphor are that relationships need strong foundations to survive. In the case of example 121, strong foundations are necessary to confront life. This affirmation contains the metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL, hence the need to construct a castle to protect oneself and one's love. Using the source of building helps to portray relationships, the target of the metaphor, as safe places. The foundations can also be feelings and morals that support the relationship. The following lexical units illustrate this notion:

(122) Me gusta la honestidad, sinceridad creo que *son las bases de cualquier relación* (M. D. USA)  
I like honesty and sincerity I think these are the foundations of any relationships

(123) La amistad es *la base de toda relación*, es el mejor *pilar* para fortalecer los más bellos sentimientos. No me interesan personas con caretas (W. S. SPAIN)  
Friendship is the foundation of every relationship; it is the best pillar to fortify the most beautiful feelings. I am not interested in people with masks

In example 122, the poster claims that honesty and sincerity are the foundations of a relationship. Here we have the source buildings to represent the target relationships, but also the source buildings, or parts of it, used to represent the target values, since honesty and sincerity are portrayed as the buildings' foundations. In similar fashion, the poster in example 123 claims that friendship is the foundation of a relationship. This poster also introduces the notion of relationships needing pillars to be strong. This idea is illustrated in these examples:

(124) En mi concepción de la vida, la confianza, el respeto, la lealtad con una buena comunicación *son pilares fundamentales* (M. D. USA)  
In my concept of life, trust, respect, and loyalty with good communication are the fundamental pillars.

(125) Deseo que esa persona sepa que el amor es algo de dos, *que uno tiene 4 pilares en una relación*. (M. S. VZLA)

I wish to meet that person who knows that love is something between two people, that one has four pillars in a relationship.

In example 124, the poster believes trust, respect, loyalty, and good communication are the pillars of any relationship. Buildings need strong foundations, just as relationships do, and these pillars can be constructed with feelings or by the active participation of people in the relationship, as example 125 shows. In this lexical unit, the poster states that his potential partners have to know that relationships have four pillars and that love is a matter of two people. In this metaphor, one can speculate that the four pillars are either people's hands or feet, making the metaphor a consequence of a metonymy in which these body parts stand for the whole person. The lexical units in this conceptual metaphor illustrate how people use the concept of RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS to establish the collaborative process of constructing one, and probably to confer a long-lasting character to relationships. If they are constructed well, they might stand and last for a long period of time just as buildings do.

Using the building metaphor to conceptualize relationships conveys several features associated with construction and structures. One of the features is cooperation, which implies that constructing a building (a relationship) is a collaborative effort between two people. A second feature is patience, which suggests that this construction process will occur over an extended period of time and it will involve work, effort and commitment to the building process. A third feature is sacrifice, which implies that people need to make sacrifices to construct relationships and cannot expect instant

results. The product of this process -- the relationship – is expected to be stable, dependable, and reliable.

The construction of relationships as buildings offers an ideology in which these relationships will offer people strength and structure. A second ideology that this conceptual metaphor conveys is that, since relationships are buildings, they are closed spaces that have walls. These walls allow the establishment of clear boundaries that would exclude any outsiders to the relationship. This metaphor, as other metaphors analyzed previously, shows that a persistent ideology associated with relationships and love is the notion of private property. People conceive of their relationships as possessions, and therefore they create clear boundaries to keep others from trying to reach those possessions.

#### **4.2.12 GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE**

In this conceptual metaphor there are 87 metaphorical lexical units. The conceptual metaphor GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE includes metaphors that express the idea that women and men have to be good representations or models of their gender. These metaphors imply that some members are better than others, and/or that there are some performances that are more real than others. When posters use these metaphors, they show that membership in the category of gender is, either as a woman or as a man, a matter of degree; therefore some members are more central than others (Taylor, 1996). For example, one person can be a better example of a real man than another man. Posters

use these metaphors to refer to their objects of desire as well to themselves. There are several ways in which posters expressed this idea. Some examples include:

(126) Busco una *mujer con todas las letras* (M.S. ARG)  
I am looking for a woman with all the letters

(127) Busco una *mujer en todo sentido de la palabra*. (M. S. VZLA)  
I am looking for a woman in the whole sense of the word

(128) ¡Soy *una mujer en todo el sentido de la palabra y con todas sus letras!*  
¿Cómo ves? (W. D. VZLA)  
I am a woman in the whole sense of the word and with all its letters, what do you think?

(129) Un *hombre en todo lo que la palabra implica...* Porque he visto tristemente que están escasos. (W. S. MEX)  
(I am looking for) a man in the whole sense of the word, because sadly I have seen they are scarce

In example 126, the poster is looking for a woman with all the letters in the word. This metaphor implies that he wants a real woman, and it comes from another metaphor WORDS CONTAIN THE MEANING. This metaphor stands for the idea that when one sees a word, one can figure out all the meanings of the word, even out of context. This metaphor creates the concept that words and letters contain the exact meaning of what they signify. In this particular case, the word *woman* stands for what a real woman must be: having female genitalia is not enough to be a real woman, one needs to be a woman “with all the letters”. This implies that the categories of woman and man have different levels of membership; there are members who are not prototypical members. In the same fashion, examples 127 and 128 contain the same idea. In example 127, the poster looks for a woman in the whole sense of the word, and in example 128, the poster combines the two previous one, letters and word, to qualify herself as a real woman. In example 129,

the poster is looking for a man in the whole sense of the word, and this example adds to the idea that these kinds of men are in short supply. This indicates that good members of the category are not the norm. The idea that the concept of woman or man contains several features is expressed in other similar ways. The following examples express this idea:

(130) *Un hombre con todo lo que ello supone.* (W.S. SPAIN)  
(I am looking for) a man with everything that that involves

(131) *Una mujer... con todo lo que eso significa* (M.S. ARG)  
(I am looking for) a woman ... with everything that that means

Expressing that a woman or a man should be “all that this means” reveals that people have a clear idea of what gender-specific behaviors should be, and who constitutes a good representation of a gender group. Good models of a gender group are considered “real” or “not invented,” as shown in the following examples:

(132) *Que sea verdadero y no uno inventado* (W. S. ARG)  
(I want to find) an authentic man and not an invented one

(133) *que sea sobre todo un verdadero hombre!!!* (W. S. ARG)  
(I want somebody) who is, more than anything, an authentic man

(134) *Busco una mujer de verdad, no la perfección sino la mujer madre, amiga, compañera, emprendedora* (M.S. USA)  
I am looking for a real woman, not perfection, but the woman mother, friend, partner, achiever

The previous examples show how the performance category includes a notion of being real. People’s concepts of being a woman or a man include a level in which one can be a false member of the category. It seems that in the category of gender “entities are assigned membership in a category in virtue of their similarity to the prototype; the closer an entity to the prototype, the more central its status within the category” (Taylor, 1995,

60). A good member is a good performer who behaves in a way similar to the prototype of what a woman or man should be. The prototype follows performance rules very closely, as shown in the metaphorical lexical units:

(135) Una mujer sincera, agradable, valiente, *una mujer en toda regla* (M. S. SPAIN)

An honest woman, nice, courageous, a woman in the whole sense of the word

(136) En pocas palabras, busco una *mujer al cien por ciento* (M. S. MEX)

In a few words, I am looking for a woman who is a hundred percent a woman

In example 135, the poster is looking for a woman in *toda regla*, who meets all the rules. The use of this expression implies that this person obeys the rules of membership in the “woman” category. In example 136, the lexical unit shows that a percentage number would determine how much of a man or woman one could be; good members are those who perform at 100 percent.

The performance metaphor implies that a person can be a man or a woman in some senses and not others. Furthermore, it implies that there are different degrees of being a woman or a man, and one can be more or less of either of the two categories. The following example also implies this notion in a slightly different way:

(137) Soy un *hombre en todos los sentidos* (M. D. VZLA)

I am man in every sense

In example 137, the poster qualifies himself as a man in every sense. This affirmation indicates that a man can choose to act manly in some situations, or he can choose not to act this way. In this case, the poster seems to claim that he is a man who always acts like a prototypical one. Women also seem to be familiar with this notion of different levels of manly behaviors, as shown in the following example:

(138) *Un hombre plenamente completo* (W. S. VZLA)  
(I am looking for) an entirely complete man

The poster in example 138 wants a man who is complete and not partial. One can assume that the poster is referring to behavior, not body parts. The poster expects that her potential partner will perform as a good model of a man.

In some cases, the poster mentions the fact that she wants a man, as a way to imply that she wants a real one; the following example illustrates this strategy:

(139) *Primero que todo hombre, honesto, lo demás lo arreglo yo* (W. S. MEX)  
(I am looking for a man who is) first of all is a man, who is honest, everything else I will fix

Here, the poster directly expresses how her potential partner has to be a man and that she will fix whatever needs fixing in a potential partner. This expression is considered a metaphor because the poster is using the word as an adjective, meaning that having male genitalia is not enough to be a complete man.

Actually, posters directly ask to meet women or men who enjoy “performing” as such. The following example illustrates this point:

(140) *Una mujer que guste de ser mujer, o sea me refiero que sea seductora, “coqueta”* (M. S. VZLA)  
A woman who likes to be woman, I mean she has to be seductive, flirtatious

In example 140, the poster wants a woman who likes to be one. Once again, the fact that the poster uses woman as an adjective, a characteristic that one might like to have or not, illustrates how being a woman or a man is not a natural condition in this context.

Belonging to a gender means you have to behave in a certain way, and some people are better than others at acting out their gender. Therefore, a person can consider himself or

herself the best representation of his or her gender. This idea is expressed in the following lexical unit:

(141) *verdadero hombre de hombres*, la clase de hombre que otros hombres quieren ser, y con quien las mujeres quieren estar! (M.D. ARG)  
(I am) a real man's man, the kind of man that other men want to be, and the one with whom women want to be

In example 141, the poster claims that he is an outstanding member of the male category. As a result, men want to be like him and women desire him. The metaphorical lexical units included in this category show how people know – at some level -- that not all the members of their gender category are equal, and that one needs to perform certain duties to be a real member.

On the other hand, one's gender can be activated or uncovered by others. The following lexical unit illustrates this notion:

(142) que sea capaz de descubrir *la mujer debajo de mi piel* (W. S. USA)  
(I am looking for a man) who is capable of discovering the woman under my skin

This last metaphor implies that a person becomes a complete woman or man when recognized by the other. The poster in example 142 wants somebody to discover the woman under her skin; she needs to be recognized by a man to become a woman. This example shows how the performance metaphor includes the other, a person who would recognize the gender performance as successful.

More evidence of how the performance metaphor works can be found in example 143. In this example the poster recognizes and considers herself to be a good example of the female category, implying that people know when their performance of gender is a successful one. The following metaphorical lexical unit shows this:

(143) me considero *muy mujer* (W. D. VZLA)  
I consider myself very much a woman

In example 143, the poster considers herself to be *muy mujer*, very womanly, implying that she has the characteristics that make her an ideal member of her gender. It seems like the posters are confident enough to proclaim that they are “real” men and women, implying at the same time that people represent their genders to different degrees.

All these examples illustrate how the category of gender is a prototypical one, in which membership has different degrees. This prototypicality of gender contributes to construct the metaphor GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE, since this performance has different levels of mastery. In gender categories, as well as in other prototypical ones, “the prototype can be understood as a schematic representation of the conceptual core of a category. On this approach, we would say, not that a particular entity *is* the prototype, but that it *instantiates* the prototype” [emphasis in the original] (Taylor, 1995, p. 59). It seems that there is not an original or concrete model of the perfect heterosexual man or woman, but a series of characteristics that, if performed, make people better or efficient representations of their category.

All these features associated with this metaphor reveal a specific ideology, an ideology in which posters or people in general know that gender is a performance of a series of characteristics determined by society. Here, the understanding of performance is not traditional as in play acting, since according to Cameron and Kulick (2003) “most of us, most of the time, are not aware of performing anything in [a] highly self-conscious way. What we are doing, however, is materializing gender/sexual identity/desire by

repeating, consciously or not, the acts that conventionally signify ‘femininity’ or ‘butchness’ or ‘flirting’.” (p.150)

However, even though people are not highly conscious of the fact that they are performing gender on a daily basis, these metaphors show that up to a certain point people know that there are features associated with being a good model of a woman or a man. They seem to know how a traditional man or woman should behave, and what are not the traditional features associated with either masculinity or femininity. The following example illustrates this last notion:

(144) Amo que un *hombre tenga los pantalones* para mostrar sus sentimientos y ser autentico y sin poses (W.S. MEX)  
I love that a man has the pants to show his feelings and be authentic and without poses.

In this last example, the poster claims that she likes when a man shows his feelings, and she uses the expression “having the pants” to characterize this behavior. Usually, “having the pants” is used to talk about features associated with traditional masculinity, and one of these traditional features is not showing feelings. The poster is using this expression to twist a traditional ideology: real men are those who are man enough to show their feelings.

An additional ideology that the performance metaphor contributes to create is that gender is a differentiation from the “other,” that person who is not one’s gender but the opposite. This opposite is also necessary in recognizing ourselves; the idea that another person recognizes one as her/his opposite. The following example contributes to the illustration of this point:

(145) Un hombre sincero, sencillo, inteligente, [...], culto y *que me haga sentir mujer* con sus halagos... (W.S. VZLA)  
(I am looking for) a sincere, smart, [...], educated man who makes me feel like a woman with his compliments

In this example, the poster needs compliments from a man to feel like a woman.

The recognition of her femininity by the “other” is what will help her represent her gender. The notion articulated in this metaphor relates an example mentioned by Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990). According to her, these kinds of expressions, “I feel like a man” by a male or “I feel like woman” by a female, are not meaningless and redundant. They articulate the notion that

although it might appear unproblematic *to be* a given anatomy [...], the experience of a gendered psychic disposition or cultural identity is considered an achievement. Thus, ‘I feel like a woman’ is true to the extent that Aretha Franklin’s invocation of the defining Other is assumed: ‘You make me feel like a natural woman’. This achievement requires a differentiation from the opposite gender, (Butler, 1990, p.29-30).

Therefore, when these posters articulate their desire for a real man or woman, they claim to be one of the real ones or express their desire to feel like a real one. They know that their construction of gender depends partially on getting recognition by the “other” as good examples of their own category. In addition, their articulation of knowing the features associated with the “other” shows that they know, up to a certain point, that the opposite becomes real when they can recognize her or him.

Besides articulating what real women and men are, the performance metaphor contributes to constructing and supporting the ideology of the ideal heterosexual. Real

men and women are heterosexual, but they also play and perform their roles properly. They maintain the division of gender roles, and they do not disturb the system with “modern” ideas. The following example contributes to illustrate this point:

(146) No creo en que los hombres y las mujeres seamos iguales, así que busco un *hombre que quiera desempeñar su propio rol* (W. S. VZLA)  
I do not believe that men and women are the same; therefore I am looking for a man who wants to play his own role

In example 146, the poster directly says she does not believe that women and men are the same and that she wants a real man who is not afraid to play his role. This example illustrates how these categories are performed and how people express their desire to meet good performers of the woman or man category – those who probably represent traditional roles. As expressed by the poster in example 146, men and women are not the same, and those who know how to act out these differences will make better candidates in the heterosexual market. Women and men need to find real models of the “other” — their opposite — so that in their mutual recognition they become their respective genders.

The GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE conceptual metaphor contributes to the circulation of ideologies of how real women and men should be, and also ideologies of how good heterosexuals behave. Real men and women are those who clearly distinguish themselves from the opposite gender. They play traditional roles and are not afraid to reside in a fixed binary gender model. Naturally, these real men and women are heterosexuals. However, not any model of heterosexuality will do; in order to sustain the ideology of heterosexuality people have to behave in a certain way. The reason behind this is that “not all expressions of heterosexuality are equal: the ‘ideal’ heteronormativity sexuality is the kind stereotypically associated with the middle-class nuclear family,

involving a stable, monogamous (preferably marital) and reproductive (within ‘sensible’ limits) relationship between two adults (not too young or not too old) whose social and sexual roles are differentiated along conventional gender lines,” (Cameron & Kulick, 2006, p. 9-10)

Posters seem to be aware of this model of the ideal heteronormativity sexuality when they claim that their objects of desire have to be a man or woman in “the whole sense of the word.” Also, there is an awareness of the prototypicality of gender and how some members are better representations of the category than others. Their metaphor use further supports the idea that gender is a performance, determined by social factors.

Posters’ need to express their desire for a prototypical member of the category indicates that their system is being threatened. It is possible that these people have perceived that the binary gender system has changed in the last few decades. This change is probably not radical; however, this change affects their belief system. As a consequence, they feel the need to stop or slow down the change, and the lack of face to face contact offered by the website allows them to do so, probably in a more explicit way than they would do in a personal interaction. When they say that they want a “complete” or “real” woman or man, they are expressing a desire for a partner who will follow the traditional model. If their partner will play her/his role, the posters will be able to recognize themselves as the one who is the opposite, and having one’s opposite is necessary to be a good heterosexual, and complete a good performance of one’s gender.

#### 4.2.13 LABEL METAPHORS

The term LABEL METAPHORS refers to those expressions used by posters to assign themselves or their partners a particular set of characteristics. These expressions are part of their groups' common knowledge; they come from movies or TV characters, from fairy tales, famous people, and so on. These metaphorical lexical units evoke a series of characteristics associated with a particular image, and therefore they target specific people who can understand the meanings evoked. These expressions are recognized by ad readers; once the readers recognize the label they know what characteristics the poster is invoking. There were 95 label metaphors in my data.

This category includes the metaphorical lexical units that posters use to identify themselves or their objects of desire. Within this category, there are lexical units that range from fairy tale characters, such as "Prince Charming," to characters from classic literature such as "Don Juan." Posters also use the names of famous people or references to beauty queens to express something about their personality, describe the way they look, or explain what they expect from their potential partners. Some examples included in this category are:

(147) Sigo buscando a mi *príncipe azul* y no me conformo con otro color.  
¡*Abstenerse ranas!!!* (W.S. VZLA)  
I am still looking for my *Blue Prince*<sup>13</sup> and I will not settle for a different color.  
Frogs need not to apply!

(148) No hay *princesa sin príncipe azul*. En dónde estás? (W.S. MEX)  
There is no Princess without Prince Charming. Where are you?

(149) soy un poco tímido, no soy un *Don Juan*. (M.S. ARG)  
I am a little shy; I am not a Don Juan

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<sup>13</sup> This expression is the Spanish version of Prince Charming.

(150) bueno tampoco un *Adonis*, ni un *Cuasimodo*<sup>14</sup>(W. S. MEX)  
I am looking for neither an Adonis nor a Quasimodo

In example 147, the poster indicates how she still wants to find her Prince Charming. Her reference indicates that she still believes in an ideal man – the prince portrayed in fairy tales. Her use of the verbal phrases *sigo buscando*, I am still looking for, and *no me conformo*, I will not settle for, indicates that the fairy tale character might not be very common and popular these days, or that most women have renounced the idea of finding him. However, this poster still wants to find this ideal Blue Prince, not another color, and she has no desire for another frog in her life, probably implying that she will not date anymore men who are not her ideal, or who are unfit to be good partners. In example 148, the poster also wants to find Prince Charming; her desire to find him is based not only on an interest in finding a partner, but also on her desire to be a Princess. The poster shows willingness to participate in the fairy tale imaginary; her use of these characters drafts a series of images associated with them, and allows her to target a potential partner who wants to participate in this imaginary too. In addition, her need to find a prince who can make her a princess illustrates a notion found in other examples. That is, people look to their partners as a way to define themselves; they look for contrasts and similarities with these special mates who complete them.

Another popular character taken from classical literature and used in label metaphors is Don Juan. In example 149, the poster considers himself a shy person; therefore he cannot be a Don Juan. This character brings a series of characteristics that people quickly recognize; a man considered a Don Juan is a person who can easily

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<sup>14</sup> As spelled in the original.

seduce women, he is probably polygamous or promiscuous, and he likes to play with women's feelings. The image of Don Juan is commonly used to express what posters do not want in their partners, or as in example 149, to express that the person is not a seducer, and he is probably trustworthy as a partner.

In example 150, the poster uses two well-known characters to describe the physical characteristics wanted in her potential partners. This poster describes her desired potential partner as neither an Adonis nor a Quasimodo – two characters considered to be at opposite ends in the beauty scale. In Greek mythology Adonis is considered the perfect representation of male beauty, while Quasimodo – also known as the Hunchback of Notre Dame – is the complete opposite of Adonis. The ad poster wants somebody in the middle of this beauty scale, which is a polite way to say that physical beauty is somehow important for her. These characters can be used to easily express this idea even if ad readers have not read Victor Hugo's novel or do not know the complete myth of Adonis.

The same idea is transmitted with the Barbie reference in example 151. People can use these common labels to avoid saying directly that they do not want to date an unattractive man, or that they are not a traditional Barbie-like beauty. It seems that popular characters are very useful resources to talk about physical qualities; the following lexical units illustrate this affirmation further:

(151) No soy una *Barbie de presentación* (W. S. USA)  
I am not a showroom Barbie

(152) con respecto a su físico no busco a una *miss Venezuela* pero si esta chica es más bien lo que un hombre no pueda rechazar bienvenida es (M. S. VZLA)  
About the physical part, I am not looking for a Miss Venezuela, but if she looks like somebody who no man will reject, she is welcome

(153) con un cuerpo 90. 60. 90 (cm) (W. D. MEX)  
(I have) a 90-60-90 body (the equivalent in inches is 36-24-36)

The three previous lexical units illustrate how popular imaginary is used in label metaphors to express physical and beauty standards. In example 151, the poster clarifies that she does not look like a showroom Barbie, implying probably that her beauty is not ideal, it is just a standard beauty. In example 152, the poster affirms he is not looking for a beauty pageant queen (Miss Venezuela), but he is open to the idea of finding one. Using the Miss Venezuela reference, especially in Venezuela, has a strong implication of perfect physical beauty. Another example of references to perfect beauty is found in example 153, in which the poster claims to have a 90-60-90 body. This is a reference to a popular belief that a woman's perfect body should have those measurements: 90 centimeters (36 inches) for bust, 60 centimeters (24 inches) for waist, and 90 centimeters (36 inches) for hips. The target of this metaphor is the poster's body and the source is the measurements, 90- 60 - 90, popularly considered the measurements of the perfect body. Using the measurement reference allows the poster to claim that she has a perfect body without saying so directly, the poster uses the reference to measurements commonly associated with a perfect body to indirectly say that she considers her body perfect. Those who read the ads most likely are familiar with all these labels; therefore they will understand the message in a few words

Other references to popular culture used in these metaphors came from famous actors or actresses from movies, as shown in the following examples:

(154) No busco un *Brad Pitt*... Pero si un hombre super tierno (W. S. USA)  
I am not looking for a Brad Pitt, but I am looking for a really sweet man

(155) Una chica que me quiera por mis sentimientos y mi forma de pensar no por lo físico tampoco soy de las personas que busca a una *Jennifer López* sólo una que me quiera (M. S. VZLA)

I am looking for a woman who loves me for my feelings and my way of thinking not because of physical appearance, I am not the kind of person who is looking for a Jennifer Lopez, only a woman who loves me.

In example 154, the poster explains that she is not looking for a Brad Pitt, a reference to the famous American actor known for his good looks, implying that physical beauty is not a major consideration for her. This poster is more concerned with her potential partner's personality and the way he treats her (she is looking for a sweet man). A similar claim is made by the poster in example 155, who says he hopes to find a potential partner who would love him for his personality and not his looks. This request does not sound outrageous since physical beauty does not appear to be central for him. The poster reaffirms this by saying that he is not looking for a Jennifer Lopez, a popular artist also known for her beauty.

Label metaphors are used to describe physical characteristics of posters and their potential partners; in addition, they are also used to describe personalities. The following lexical units illustrate this point:

(156) Una mujer que acaricio el alma, capaz de serenar y atolondrar el espíritu. *Mitad serpiente. Mitad golondrina* (W. D. VZLA)

I am woman, who can caress the soul, capable of calming and agitating the spirit. Half snake. Half swallow.

(157) Quisiera conocer a una mujer sincera, sencilla [...] *un ángel con unas gotitas de diablesa....* (M. S. SPAIN)

I would like to meet an honest, simple woman [...] an angel with some drops of devil.

(158) de carácter fuerte (*no soy Hulk, pero sí tengo lo mío*) (W. S. MEX)  
(I have a) strong character. I am not Hulk but I have my moments

In example 156, the poster describes herself as woman who is half dangerous, and half sweet. Using animals to label her personality allows this poster to create this metaphor and communicate the notion of having a complex personality. In the same fashion, the poster in example 157 uses a different metaphor to describe a similar notion. Using the angel vs. devil comparison, the poster creates this metaphor to label his potential partner as a complex person who has a good side and a mischievous side. In example 158, the poster uses the comic book character Hulk to talk about her personality. This woman claims to have a strong character, probably a bad temper; however, her temper cannot be compared to Hulk's – who is associated with having an impulsive and emotional personality.

The previous label metaphors illustrate how using labels and references to popular characters contribute easily and indirectly to the transmission of a series of characteristics. However, these characteristics convey a series of values and ideologies. When a poster claims to be looking for a combination of an angel and the devil he reveals, indirectly, that he desires a woman who is probably open to having sexual relations but not with everybody. The labels allow him to reveal a double standard, or fear, that a woman should be sexual (a “devil”) but in a monogamous way. Posters use label metaphors to express how they share traditional ideologies of romance and dating. Invoking popular characters from fairy tales, for example, allows them to construct and label who they want to be in a relationship. The following label metaphors illustrate how these traditional ideologies are supported and distributed:

(158) Hombre *como los de antes*, amable y cariñoso (W. S. ARG)  
(I am looking for a) man like those from long-ago, nice and lovely

(159) Busco *un príncipe azul lindo y educado*. (W.S. USA)  
I am looking for a Prince Charming, cute and educated

As clearly stated in example 158, when she claims she is looking for a man “como los de antes,” some posters are looking for a relationship that reproduces traditional models of romance. The use of Prince Charming as a reference states that these women, and the men who might reply to them, still believe in the fairy tale love story. They believe in the conception of an ideal love, in which there is a hero who can save them and at the end the story will have a happy ending. In addition, they are expressing that they will not lower their standards regarding the men they would like to date, as in example 147 (reference to frogs); they have to be a prince. In other references to Prince Charming, as in example 148, the poster is not only claiming her desire for a Prince Charming, she also expresses that she will become a princess when she finds him. Her desire shows, as previously mentioned, the necessity of people to be recognized by the “other” — the idea that a person becomes who he or she is in the presence of the “other,” who is the person’s opposite.

Other label metaphors give general characteristics of a poster’s qualities or particularities through references to common figures, as shown in the following examples:

(160) Soy un chavo *rockero* (M. D. MEX)  
I am a rocker guy

(161) Que sea soñadora ya que yo soy *acuuario* y soy un *Picasso*. (M. S. VZLA)  
(I am looking for a woman) who is a dreamer since I am a Aquarius and a Picasso

In example 160, the poster describes himself as a rocker. This reference probably implies that he has a wild personality or is a free spirit, stereotypes associated with a rock star character. Also, using zodiacal references can help create a personality type. In example 161, the poster says that he is an Aquarius and therefore he needs to find a dreamer. In addition, the poster calls himself a Picasso, adding a characteristic that one can associate with an artist to his personality type.

In other metaphorical lexical units, posters use popular expressions of everyday life to help explain their personalities, as shown in the following examples:

(162) yo soy sólo yo una tipa con *unas horas de vuelo que no es mosca muerta* que está más que clara en la vida (W. D. VZLA)  
I am only a woman with some hours of flight, who is not a dead fly, who really knows what she wants in life.

(163) Soy una mujer *todo terreno*. (W. D. VZLA)  
I am an all-terrain woman

(164) no soy precisamente un *dulce en almíbar*, pues tengo un carácter que va desde lo más *sublime* hasta un *huracán*. (W.D. VZLA)  
I am not quite a fruit in syrup, because I have a character that goes from sublime to a hurricane

In example 162, the poster defines herself as having many flight hours, using a popular expression to assert she has experience in life. Then, she claims not to be a *mosca muerta*, a dead fly, a popular phrase used to describe a person who is naïve or silly. The combination of both expressions in this metaphor labels her as a strong and experienced woman; therefore, she knows what she wants in life. A similar situation is presented in example 163. In this label metaphor, the poster uses the expression *todo terreno*, all-terrain, to describe herself. This expression is commonly used to describe vehicles such

as SUVs. When the poster uses this expression, she's labeling herself as a strong person who can endure a lot of difficult situations. The poster in example 164 defines herself as a person who is not sweet, and therefore she can become a "hurricane"

As shown in the previous examples, a variety of labels are used to describe personalities. When the poster claims to be shy and not a Don Juan, his personality and his attitude toward women is described by the invocation of this classic character. The use of labels from a comic character, Hulk, to illustrate somebody's personality describes very clearly what that person is or is not like. The same occurs with the use of the expression all-terrain, which describes a strong car and therefore a strong woman in this case. In example 164, the poster claims not to be a fruit in syrup; this expression is commonly used to describe a person who is very agreeable and/or is passive. Therefore, she claims that since she is not a sweet lady and sometimes she can be a hurricane. In example 157, the invocation of the angel vs. devil contrast serves the poster's intentions and desires well; the woman that he desires cannot be a saint but neither an "easy girl," just a combination of both.

It is possible to see that posters create these label metaphors in a variety of manners, from romantic references to everyday life expressions. Another side of these metaphors is that they can be used to negate and reject the images they evoke. The following examples illustrate this notion:

(165) No espero un *príncipe* pero si un hombre de carne y hueso que quiera conquistarme y hacerme feliz... (W. S. VZLA)  
I do not expect a prince but a man in the flesh who wants to conquer me and make me happy.

(166) no creo en *cuentos ni príncipes azules* (W. S. VZLA)

I do not believe in fairy tales or prince charming

(167) También tengo que decir que no creo en las *princesitas de cuento...* Je jeje  
(M. D. SPAIN)

I also have to say that I do not believe in little fairy tale princesses

In the previous examples, posters reject the imaginary associated with fairy tales. In example 165, the poster wants a man in the flesh, not a fantasy character such as Prince Charming. In examples 166 and 167, the posters declare that they do not believe in fairy tales, princes, or princesses. These declarations of rejection probably imply that these people look at romances and relationships from a more realistic perspective. Another rejection of traditional values can be found in the following example:

(168) que le resulten más atractivos los hombres cultos que los borrachos, machistas, busca broncas, o *musculosos animales de granja* (M.S. VZLA)  
(I am looking for a woman) who is more attracted to educated men than to drunks, chauvinists, trouble makers, or muscular farm animals.

In example 168, the poster wants to find a woman who does not like *musculosos animales de granja*, muscular farm animals. With the use of this label (and drunks, chauvinists, and trouble makers), one can see that the poster rejects extreme characteristics associated with masculinity, and expects to find somebody who thinks in a similar way. In contrast, another lexical unit shows how a poster might reject inclusion in categories considered less traditional:

(169) Un hombre que me banque a muerte, no económicamente ya que para eso trabajo. Ojo, no soy *feminista*.... (W.S. ARG)  
(I am looking for) a man who supports me to death, but not economically since I make my own money. Careful, I am not a feminist

Despite declaring that she makes her own money and supports herself, the poster in example 169 does not want to be labeled a feminist. Affirming she is not a feminist, the

poster creates a label for herself that does not include the characteristics – one can assume negative – of her concept of a feminist.

This example is included here because I considered the use of the term feminist a label metaphor. It is a label metaphor because her claim of not being a feminist is not a political claim; it is a rejection of being characterized with popular and negative beliefs associated with this term. Despite the fact that she is economically independent, she warns readers that she is not to be mistaken for a feminist; by saying this, she is implying that a feminist is a woman who rejects men or male attention. Her rejection of the label feminist seems to me as a way to support traditional ideologies. As previously mentioned, label metaphors are also used to reject these ideologies; the following examples illustrate further this rejection:

(170) Alguien como yo, sin más aspiraciones, que no crea tampoco en *principitos azules...* (M.S. SPAIN)

(I am looking for) somebody like me, without more aspirations, who also does not believe in little princes charming

(171) Definitivamente no a un *príncipe azul o héroe mítico* que piense por mí, me resuelva los problemas o me rescate de qué sé yo cuál situación desgraciada (W. S. SPAIN)

(I am definitively not looking for) a Prince Charming or a mythical hero who wants to think for me, solve my problems, or rescue me from an unknown terrible situation.

(172) la mujer perfecta sólo existe en los *cuentos de hadas y en las telenovelas mexicanas...* (M.S. USA)

The perfect woman only exists in fairy tales and Mexican soap operas

The poster in example 170 claims that he does not believe in fairy tales, and probably he expects to find a person who shares his feelings. As expressed by the poster in example 171, rejecting fairy tales means that this woman does not expect to find a hero or be

saved by one. In this label metaphor the poster directly declares that she does not need to be saved by a prince or a hero. The posters also imply that they do not believe in relationships being ideal, perfect or a matter of magic. In the case of the poster in 172, he also claims his disbelief in the perfect woman by rejecting the characterization of women in fairy tales and Mexican soap operas. The reference to Mexican soap operas shows an additional aspect of label metaphors. Some of these label metaphors incorporate references to modern forms of storytelling, Mexican soap operas, or current famous actors.

The reference to Brad Pitt, to Mexican soap operas characters, beauty queens, Jennifer Lopez, Barbie, and a comic character like the Hulk, shows that these label metaphors are creating modern versions of princes, princesses and ogres. Instead of using Adonis as a standard of male beauty, they use Brad Pitt; instead of using Quasimodo, they use the Hulk as the modern version of an ogre.

Posters are creating new metaphors that are gradually becoming conventionalized ones. They are conventional since a reference to Jennifer Lopez implies a series of concepts that everybody, at least in the posters' world, is familiar with. This shows a change in ideologies about prototypical models of femininity and masculinity. The modern prince can also be equal to a dentist (as mentioned in a popular song from Spain) since these standard citizens are the current heroes of our times. These label metaphors are essential in the construction of posters' images and the images of their objects of desire, and they are essential for the transmission of their ideologies about gender and relationships. As said by Charteris-Black (2004), "the advantage of using metaphors —

especially those that have become the conventional ways of expressing certain points of views — is that this taps into an accepted communal system of values. This has the effect of making a particular value system more acceptable because it exists within a socially accepted framework,” (p. 12). Using references such as Jennifer Lopez expresses a certain point of view, and it is acceptable since her beauty is “common knowledge.” Label metaphors are essential to create and distribute ideologies about gender, love, and relationships in the heterosexual market. In the case of my data, the rejection or subscription to the Prince Charming metaphor, the use of labels such as Brad Pitt and Jennifer Lopez, and the rejection of the label feminist illustrate posters’ ideologies about their ideal relationship, their beauty standards, and their social values. These ideologies include the support or rejection of traditional gender roles, and the support or rejection of traditional narratives about romance.

The metaphors used in these personal ads are circulating and producing ideologies about gender, heterosexuality, and romantic relationships. These metaphors allow people to reference ideologies that might seem conservative without mentioning them directly. Additionally, they might contribute to the circulation of new ideologies and the introduction of changes in a social group’s ideologies.

After analyzing metaphors used in personal ads, especially those that refer to love, relationships, romance and gender, it is possible to see how they are helping ad posters to convey their personal expectations and desires within a frame of reference shared by potential readers of the ads. Also, posters can express through these metaphors their ideologies about romance and gender, regardless of how acceptable they might be. The

metaphors used by these posters contribute to narrow their search for potential partners, and offer the possibility to understand the ideologies and belief of the members of the community who participate in this exchange, more specifically their ideologies about gender and heterosexuality.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions**

The main purpose of my research was to determine how everyday language is used in the articulation of gender and gender ideologies, more specifically, how ad posters articulate heterosexuality and its ideologies, and how these ideologies contribute to the maintenance of heteronormativity. In order to study this, I chose to analyze personal ads from a dating site on the Internet.

The decision to study personal ads is based on the fact that this genre is very structured, and it contains common iterations of articulations of desire that can reveal the ideologies supported by the ad posters. Personal ads are spaces where people describe themselves and/or their objects of desire; these descriptions might be real or inventions, but they contain people's ideas about themselves and their partners that often reflect their underlying ideologies. This is an excellent reason to study them since the descriptions by posters – their expressions of desire – represent how they want to be perceived and their impressions of the characteristics of ideal partners. Despite the fact that personal ads are expressions of individuals' desires, they share a large number of common expressions and beliefs; for this reason, personal ads are “textbook examples of how people's most intimate desires for connection to others are highly structured along readily observable lines of power” (Cameron & Kulick, 2003, p. 114). These lines of power shape the posters' individual desires and images of themselves at different levels, whether they are aware of this or not.

When analyzing the personal ads, I focused on determining how the metaphors created and used in these personal ads from the Internet reveal and transmit ideologies about love, relationships, desire, sexuality and gender. In order to accomplish this, I selected personal ads from one Web site (cybercupido.com) and included five different groups of Spanish speakers from five different countries: the United States, Venezuela, Mexico, Spain, and Argentina. This selection allowed me to find common ideologies among Spanish speakers across different cultural groups. Despite the fact that posters had different cultural backgrounds, I considered that these groups of posters could be studied as a group that had a common endeavor: using the Internet to find a romantic partner.

Metaphors are used in everyday language to help speakers express abstract concepts such as love and gender in more concrete terms, for example, as valuable objects or as war. The abstract concept is known as the target, and the term used to talk about the target is known as the source. According to the Cognitive Theory of Metaphors, the primary sources of conceptual metaphors are bodily experiences from people's early life (Lakoff & Johnson, 1986). However, "ideological influences are just as important as bodily experiences in the nurturing and proliferation, if not the origin, of metaphor themes" (Goatly, 2006. p. 25). An analysis of metaphor themes helps to reveal the underlying ideologies shared by this community.

Considering this, I analyzed these metaphors not only as a window to people's concepts of the world, but also as a space where ideologies get reinforced and distributed. To carry out my analysis I employed Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) approach. The CMA approach integrates corpus linguistics, cognitive

linguistics, and Critical Discourse Analysis. CMA uses a large corpus to analyze metaphors, taking into account the cognitive approach and, like Critical Discourse Analysis, an awareness of how language uses, forges and maintains social structures and discourses. This methodology includes three stages: metaphor description, metaphor interpretation, and metaphor explanation. Following these stages I was able to answer my research questions, which were:

1. What metaphors are used by internet ad posters to talk about desire, love and relationships in Spanish?
2. What metaphors are used by ad posters to label themselves and to construct their or their potential partners' images?
3. What are the sources of the metaphors used by ad posters?
4. What conceptual metaphors did ad posters create in their announcements?
5. What ideologies are supported or produced by the use of these metaphors?
6. What do these ideologies reveal about ad posters' performance of heterosexuality?
7. How are these metaphors creating and supporting ideologies of heteronormativity?

The next section of this chapter gives an account of what metaphors were used by ad posters, the conceptual metaphors created and used by ad posters, the label metaphors produced by ad posters, and the sources of these metaphors. The second section conveys the ideologies about love, relationships, desire, sexuality, and gender revealed and circulated by ad posters' use of metaphors. The third section reports the limitations of my

study and the possible research studies that can follow this first attempt to explain how gender is articulated in the genre of personal ads in Spanish and in everyday language in general.

#### **5.4 Conceptual metaphors, label metaphors, and sources of metaphors used in personal ads.**

The first stage of the analysis of metaphors in personal ads was identifying the metaphors used in them. As a result of this process, 575 metaphors were identified. These metaphors have love, relationships, desire and gender as their targets. After the identification, they were classified in 12 conceptual metaphors, and the label metaphor category. These 13 categories shared nine different sources among them. The 12 conceptual metaphors identified in my data were:

1. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A FIELD
2. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT
3. LIFE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT
4. PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS
5. THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS
6. LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT
7. LOVE IS A SKILL
8. LOVE IS WAR
9. LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS
10. ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION

11. RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS, and

12. GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE

These metaphors had nine different sources, which are *field, space, valuable objects, chemical reaction, skill, war, unity, performance, and popular culture*. The sources indicate that the concepts available to people to construct metaphors are close to their everyday reality, and the nature of the genre. The sources of *field, space, and valuable object* were used to metaphorize the target: *object of desire*. The target *love* was metaphorized with the sources *valuable object, space, chemical reaction, war, and unity*. *Valuable object* was also used as a source for the target *life*, the source *performance* was used to target *gender*, and the source *popular culture* was used in label metaphors.

The conceptual metaphors found in my data LOVE IS WAR, LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS, and ATTRACTION IS A CHEMICAL REACTION are metaphors previously documented in English (Kövecses, 1986, 1990, & 2000). Using war and chemical reaction as sources for metaphors that target love and attraction seems to be related to the idea of love, and similar emotions, as irrational and uncontrollable forces. There are several documented metaphors that contain the same notion: LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE, LOVE IS FIRE, LOVE IS MAGIC, LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE, and so on. According to these metaphors, when a person falls in love, she/he has no control over those feelings and/or themselves. It seems that the underlying ideologies of the metaphors about love are similar for Spanish as well as English speakers. The main belief that love is an irrational force that affects people's behavior, up to a point where people cannot

control themselves, seems to be a concept from romantic love that might be common among western cultures. This might also be the explanation for the use of a metaphor like LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS, a metaphor that idealizes romantic love as the only possible situation where people can be satisfied and content.

The metaphors PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS, THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS, and RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS found in my data are also found in English in the vocabulary of love and relationships (Kövecses, 1986, 1990, & 2000). These metaphors, which use the source of space for people, the heart, and relationships, are also connected with this notion of emotions being uncontrollable forces. Since emotions and love need to be contained and controlled, metaphors that use the source of close spaces to target the places inhabited by emotions are to be expected. The metaphor LOVE IS A SKILL, found in my data, seems to add a novel feature to the conceptualization of love. Using the source of skill to target love seems to reduce the level of uncontrollable force and feeling, since it indicates that loving somebody can also be a skill that a person can acquire and master.

The use of the source *valuable object* to create metaphors that target *love*, *life*, and *objects of desire* shows that commercialization is a concept that seems to be familiar at least to this group of posters, and it also shows the commercial nature of the personal ads genre. Personal ads adapt to the discursive norms of marketing genres; they label and construct the poster and their potential partners as catalog products in the dating-market (Coupland, 1996). As stated in section 2.5, personal ads contain communicative strategies to interact and establish a dialogue with potential readers, and as such, share elements

with commercial advertisements (Thompson & Thetela, 1995). In this genre, the self is a possession that might be sold and exchanged as somebody's goods (Coupland, 1996), and there is the commodification of the self that is highly focused on physical appearance (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). As a result, the frequent use of metaphors with the source of valuable object can be expected in these ads.

A conceptual metaphor that was represented by a large quantity of lexical units was GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE. This metaphor uses the source performance – the capacity to play a role – to target gender. The role can be played with different levels of efficiency, and as a consequence, some members of a gender category seem to be better representations of their group than others. The way this notion was constructed was through the use of expressions that describe how being a woman or man is not due simply to nature, since some people are better models of real women and men than others. Posters claimed to be looking for or claimed that they themselves were women and men in the “whole sense” of the word. Posters also said they were “complete” and “real” men or women, implying that they considered that having the genitalia associated with a person's gender is not the only requirement to belong to that category. For the most part, posters expected that their potential partners knew how to perform their gender roles appropriately, and were good representations of their genders.

The last category established from the personal ads was LABEL METAPHORS. This category included the expressions used by ad posters to label themselves or their potential partners. The use of these expressions conveyed a series of characteristics known by the group through popular culture, and for this reason they are considered to be

metaphorical. Clearly, the source of the target label metaphors is popular culture. This source includes a variety of concepts, from fairy tales to famous actors and actresses. The label metaphors category is adapted from the Marley's (2007) category "identity metaphors". In my opinion, these metaphors did not assign identities to the posters or their potential partners, but rather they assigned a series of characteristics that contribute to the creation of the individual's self-image and label him/her in a certain group. These label metaphors are spaces that reveal the ideologies shared by the community that uses and recognizes them. The ideologies underlying the use of label metaphors, and the other 12 conceptual metaphors identified in my data are discussed in the following section.

## **5. 2 Ideologies about love, relationships, desire, and gender produced and supported by metaphors**

Metaphors as discourse tools are essential to the circulation of ideologies. When speakers use a metaphor, they are supporting the ideologies behind it, frequently without realizing it. In the genre of personal ads, people describe themselves and their potential partners in a very similar manner. The fact that these posters share a large quantity of common features in their narratives indicates that this genre is structured and shaped mostly by the reigning ideologies of society (Cameron & Kulick, 2003).

In this study, I attempted to identify the ideologies that were revealed and circulated in the metaphors used by ad posters, more specifically, their ideologies about love, desire, relationships, and gender, and how these ideologies shaped their performance of heterosexuality and supported heteronormativity. Ideologies are defined

here as “*the basis of social representations shared by members of a group*. This means that ideologies allow people, as group members, to organize the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, *for them* to act accordingly” (van Dijk, 1998, p.8).

After interpreting the conceptual metaphors used in these personal ads, I explained their ideologies and their role in their specific context of use, relationships and dating. These conceptual metaphors revealed ideologies that are commonly associated with love. In their metaphors, posters supported the idea that love is an uncontrollable and irrational force, and people are powerless in its presence (Kövecses, 2000). Therefore, since emotions are irrational, they need to be contained and controlled. This irrationality feature of love, in my opinion, supports an ideology that might validate any behavior in the name of love. For example, the association of love with an uncontrollable force is what lies behind cases of violence against partners or objects of desire. The fact that this ideology of love gets circulated as common knowledge is what makes people justify all sorts of erratic behaviors in the name of love. This ideology gets circulated and naturalized in ways that people do not question, and therefore they do not question the behaviors that come as a consequence of this ideology.

This notion works in tandem with the ideology circulated by the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS THE UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS (Kövecses, 1986). This conceptual metaphor establishes that people are incomplete beings unless they find their other half – the love of their lives, and according to Kövecses (1986), the unity metaphor is basic in the construction of the concept of the ideal love. Despite the

fact that love is irrational, it can be contained and controlled once people are in their ideal state, with their other half, with their partners. These ideologies are working together to legitimize a system in which people's ideal state is in a relationship or marriage, since they are expressing how people who choose not to be in a relationship, willingly or not, are not part of the ideal model of heterosexuality.

As a consequence, they express a clear ideology about heterosexuality; ideal heterosexuals are those who are in a marriage or at least a monogamous relationship. This ideal state for heterosexuals contributes to the maintenance of the status of marriage, and all the values and ideologies associated with it. It seems that since love is an irrational force, that affects people's behavior, it is necessary to contain it in socially acceptable relationships. Promoting the idea of unity being a basic need for people contributes to the stability and maintenance of the institution of marriage. The maintenance and protection of this institution contributes to the preservation of traditional gender roles and the promotion of heteronormativity.

In addition, the concepts of love and relationships are constructed and associated with the concept of valuable objects. The genre of personal ads seems to trigger a large quantity of metaphors that use the source of valuable object. However, it seems that in general, love and relationships are regulated by an ideology of private property. Loved ones are properties that nobody else can possess, and that give people the right to keep others off their property. In addition, people express how their love is a means of exchange, and as such, it needs to be returned in the same quantities that it is given. Also, their objects of desire or love are valuable objects, which belong to them and need to be

protected from others. As previously mentioned, the reason behind this seems to be that modern capitalist societies naturally associate money and possessions with well-being; therefore, love and loved ones are conceived of as objects with material value (Goatly, 2007).

Furthermore, conceiving of loved ones as property allows them to be considered as part of private spaces. It seems that these metaphors that incorporate the concepts of buildings, private property, ownership, and completion with the other half expose an anxiety about monogamy, and traditional gender roles. This anxiety, shared by men and women, might have its origin in the fact that in recent decades traditional gender roles have increasingly been questioned and reinvented by members of the heterosexual community and outsiders.

The maintenance of an ideology that provides ownership of people brings some risks with it. In the name of love, people's free will can be compromised. If relationships and marriage are conceived of as spaces where one has rights of ownership, the other participant in the relationship might not have the right to leave the relationship. As with metaphors that promote love as an irrational force or that promote the need to be in a monogamous relationship, this notion circulates an ideology that promotes the maintenance of traditional institutions and models of partnership, which are essential to the preservation of heteronormativity. These ideologies show how society conceives of the ideal heterosexual, not only as somebody whose object of desire is a person of the opposite sex, but as a person who canalizes this love in a monogamous relationship, preferably marriage.

The preservation of heteronormativity is the main reason behind the construction of a common metaphor found among ad posters, GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE. This conceptual metaphor conveys that the level and quality of being one's gender may vary. A person might or might not be a good model of a real man or a real woman depending on his or her performance of gender. These metaphors show how the category of gender is a prototypical one. Not all the members of the category have the same status, and those members who are closer to the prototype enjoy a higher status. The prototypicality of the category gender, shown in the metaphors, supports the idea that love is a performance. When posters express their belief that there are different degrees relate to being a "real" woman or a "real" man, they are showing that some people are better at playing the role than others. Therefore, gender is performance rather than an innate characteristic.

As previously mentioned, this conceptual metaphor contributes to circulating ideologies of gender in which some people are better models of their gender, and those who are better models are the ones who behave in a more traditional way. This traditional binary model allows people to become their gender when they recognize their opposites, who have to be good representations of the other group. All these ideologies contribute to the preservation of heteronormativity since heteronormativity not only needs to keep the others – those who do not belong – outside, but also needs to maintain an ideal model of heterosexuality that does not question and disturb the system (Butler, 1990, 2004). The conceptual metaphor GENDER IS A PERFORMANCE reveals how this community of heterosexuals perceives the binary gender system. It seems that these people perceive the gender system as unstable and in constant risk; therefore, their metaphors reflect a

profound anxiety about possible changes. It reflects that they fear changes in what they perceived as clear gender divisions. In our society, scientific studies, research, articles, and/or books that claim to explain how gender roles are naturally different are very successful and welcomed by the general public. Most people find clear explanations that divide the gender system in clear roles for every group appealing, disruptions of these simple divisions cause large amounts of anxiety. This anxiety is revealed in these metaphors in personal ads that circulate traditional ideologies in order to protect the binary gender system.

The support and resistance to traditional ideologies can also be seen in the use of LABEL METAPHORS. The label metaphors used by ad posters showed how some of them share some beliefs about love and relationships. Posters use label metaphors such as Prince Charming and princesses to label themselves and their objects of desire. In general, invoking fairy tales characters, characters from classical literature, and current famous actors or actresses was a resource used to assign a series of physical characteristics and personality traits. Some posters support traditional models of romance when they claim to be looking for a Prince Charming. On the other hand, some posters rejected these ideologies, claiming that they did not believe in that kind of romance.

Furthermore, posters created new metaphors to label themselves and their partners with the use of current famous characters. These new metaphors are gradually becoming conventional ones, since the evocation of these famous people conveys a series of characteristics known by their community. These new metaphors bring change in ideologies about prototypical models of femininity and masculinity. These label

metaphors are creating the new princes and princesses, as it is possible to see this process in the lyrics of the song *La lista de la compra* by *La Cabra Mecánica*, when the singer tells his love that she deserves a prince or a dentist. The modern prince can also be equal to a dentist, since these common citizens might have a series of qualities desired in a partner. This reflects the possibility of creating new metaphors; people can “invoke metaphors as a means of cognitive/representational subversion. By applying language in new or unusual ways or structuring concepts differently metaphors have a potential for challenging the commonsense categories of knowledge” (Goatly, 2007, p. 28). If new metaphors about love, relationships, desire, and gender are created by language users, there is the possibility of creating ideologies that can restructure the concept of heterosexuality and change the ideologies supported by heteronormativity.

The analysis presented here makes contributions to the field of linguistics and gender and sexuality studies. First, it contributes to a better understanding of how metaphors, both conventional ones as well as new ones, support and create ideologies, and how these ideologies are transmitted in what is mostly considered common language. Second, in the case of metaphors about romance and gender, this study shows how traditional metaphors of love and relationships contribute to the maintenance of traditional gender roles and heterosexual hegemony. Third, it shows how metaphors are always doing something in discourse; in this case, most of them are generally preserving the system, although some metaphors compete to reinvent the system. In addition, it contributes to our understanding of how speakers articulate the notion of gender as a performance and how they are aware, up to a certain point, of this performativity.

### **5.3 Limitations and future research**

This study of the metaphors used in personal ads on the Internet could have benefited from the use of a larger corpus. A larger corpus would have allowed me to compare differences among different age groups, and explore the differences among ad posters from different countries. I consider that the data set I analyzed was not large enough to explore the differences in language use and ideologies among ads from the five countries analyzed. I also consider that there might be differences among age groups in their use of metaphors, since their use of the personal ads seems to differ; older posters seem to use more metaphors than younger ones. This difference, and other possible ones, could not be analyzed in this study due to the fact that my data was not equally distributed across age groups.

Future research about the use of metaphors of love, relationships, desire, and gender in personal ads will benefit from the study of personal ads posted by gay people. It is necessary to explore if gay people are also supporting heteronormativity in their metaphor use, or if they create new metaphors that challenge the traditional binary gender system. Also, it seems necessary to explore how these discourses on the internet, which is a public space, are used to preserve the value of private spaces, and how this tension between these two spaces is being negotiated by Internet users. Additionally, exploring the use of metaphors in similar genres, such as columns of dating advice and articles about relationships and romance, will contribute to our understanding of people's ideologies about gender and sexuality, and their role in the preservation of heteronormativity.

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Appendix 1.

**CÓDIGO:** F216289

**SEXO:** Femenino

**EDAD:** 21 Años

**PESO:** 64 kg

**ESTATURA:** 180 cm

**OJOS:** Marrones

**PELO:** Castaño

**PAÍS:** Venezuela

**CIUDAD:** Caracas

*Picture*

**OCUPACIÓN:** Estudiante de psicología

**SIGNO:** Escorpio

**BUSCA:** Un hombre

**ENTRE:** 22 y 38 Años

**RELACIÓN:** Amistad y tal vez... algo mas...

**ASÍ SE DEFINE...**

Hola, soy una persona bastante agradable, amigable, extrovertida, comprensiva, exigente conmigo misma, decidida, inteligente, y muy pero muy sincera... Mis gustos son extensos así que no caigo en la monotonía, trato de que cada día sea diferente al anterior, adoro a las personas que me rodean (familia, amigos) y siempre doy lo mejor de mi con las personas con las que me relaciono y en todo lo que hago.

**SUS GUSTOS...**

Me encanta leer, diseñar prendas, escuchar música, adoro bailar, ejercitarme físicamente, conversar, viajar, disfrutar de la vida al máximo y de sus placeres también.

**LO QUE BUSCA...**

Lo que mas me atrae de una relación es la compenetración que exista entre ambos, el llevarse bien, el aprender del uno y del otro, el trabajo en equipo, la comprensión, sinceridad y comunicación son muy importantes de ahí depende el éxito de una relación... Si le doy importancia a los valores, prefiero el prototipo de hombre seguro de si mismos, inteligentes, educados, emprendedor, autentico, original, con una personalidad única e incomparable, con aspiraciones y metas, en cuanto al aspecto físico preferiblemente altos, de cuerpo atlético aunque no le doy tanta importancia al cuerpo y bien parecido. No me importa la distancia...

## Appendix 2.

The MIP is as follows:

1. Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse
3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit. (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be:
  - More concrete [what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste];
  - Related to bodily action;
  - More precise (as opposed to vague);
  - Historically older;Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.
- (c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.
4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical. (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p.3)