



AN EXPLORATION OF MULTIMODAL METAPHOR IN VINACAFÉ ADVERTISEMENTS: A TASTE OF VIETNAMESE CULTURE

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Abstract: This study examined the use of multimodal metaphors in Vinacafé’s advertising campaigns from 2010 to 2021, analyzing how visual, auditory, and verbal elements combined to construct compelling narratives that resonated with Vietnamese cultural values. By utilizing Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), and Forceville’s (2009) framework for multimodal metaphor analysis, this research explored how Vinacafé’s advertisements transcended simple product promotion to act as rich cultural symbols. Through a mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study evaluated the frequency and types of metaphors across different modalities and examined their effectiveness in shaping consumer perceptions. Findings indicated that Vinacafé strategically employed metaphors such as “COFFEE IS NATURE,” “COFFEE IS LOVE,” “COFFEE IS STRENGTH,” AND “COFFEE IS TRADITION” to reinforce brand identity, foster emotional engagement, and enhance cultural resonance. This approach provided valuable insights for enhancing consumer loyalty and developing culturally grounded advertising strategies.

Keywords. Multimodal metaphor, Vinacafé, Vietnamese culture, advertising strategies, brand loyalty.

1. Introduction

Advertising is not just about promoting a product; it is about creating meaningful narratives that resonate with the audience’s cultural and emotional values. In a culturally rich country like Vietnam, where values such as family, tradition, and nature play a central role, brands need to communicate in ways that connect with these dimensions to build lasting relationships. Vinacafé, a leading coffee brand in Vietnam, stands out for its ability to use

multimodal metaphors in its advertising campaigns, positioning itself as more than just a beverage but as an embodiment of Vietnamese culture and identity.

Multimodal metaphors in advertising combine visual, auditory, and textual elements to convey messages that connect with audiences on multiple sensory levels. These metaphors allow brands to convey complex ideas, evoke emotional responses, and create associations that extend beyond rational product attributes. For example, Vinacafé's advertising integrates themes such as nature, love, strength, tradition, and pleasure, transforming the brand into a cultural symbol for Vietnamese consumers.

While much research has focused on visual and verbal metaphors in advertising, the role of auditory elements has received limited attention, particularly in non-Western contexts like Vietnam. Sound, however, plays a crucial role in enhancing emotional resonance and creating immersive narratives. This study addresses this gap by exploring how Vinacafé incorporates multimodal metaphors in its advertising to establish connections with Vietnamese consumers.

Research Questions:

- (1) How do visual, auditory, and verbal metaphors in Vinacafé's advertisements embody and reflect Vietnamese cultural values?
- (2) What role does the auditory modality play in enhancing the impact of these multimodal metaphors?
- (3) How do these multimodal metaphors shape consumer perceptions and strengthen brand loyalty?

To answer these questions, the study employs the frameworks of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), and Multimodal Metaphor Analysis. These theoretical approaches provide a robust foundation for analyzing how metaphors function across various modalities to craft engaging advertising narratives that resonate with audiences and establish a strong cultural identity for the brand.

2. Literature Review

This literature review provides an overview of the theoretical frameworks relevant to understanding Vinacafé's use of multimodal metaphors in advertising, focusing on three areas: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), and studies on metaphor usage in Vietnamese advertising. This section will outline the key concepts without extensive analysis, setting up the foundation for a deeper exploration in the Discussion.

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in Advertising

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), suggests that metaphors are cognitive tools that help people understand abstract concepts through more concrete experiences. In advertising, metaphors create meaning by mapping a familiar source domain (e.g., love, nature) onto a less familiar target domain (e.g., coffee). This cognitive mapping simplifies complex brand messages, making them more relatable and memorable. Metaphors such as “coffee is love” in Vinacafé’s advertisements link the emotional warmth of familial love with coffee consumption, fostering an emotional connection with the brand.

According to Forceville (2009), metaphors in advertising are effective because they embed products within broader cultural and emotional narratives. This perspective is crucial for analyzing how Vinacafé’s advertisements use metaphors to position their brand within Vietnamese cultural contexts, creating emotional connections that resonate deeply with consumers.

2.2 Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Multimodal Metaphors

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), as developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), expands the scope of metaphor analysis beyond language to include visual, auditory, and textual modes. In advertising, MDA examines how different semiotic modes work together to create cohesive and persuasive narratives. Vinacafé’s advertisements employ multimodal metaphors by combining visual imagery, auditory elements, and textual components to convey meanings that resonate with Vietnamese cultural values.

Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) and O’Halloran (2004) show that advertisements utilizing multimodal metaphors engage consumers more effectively by appealing to multiple sensory channels. For example, the metaphor “coffee is love” in Vinacafé’s advertisements is not only depicted visually through family scenes but also sonically through soothing music and verbally through emotive taglines, enhancing emotional engagement and recall.

2.3 Metaphors in Vietnamese Advertising: Cultural Resonance

Research on metaphors in Vietnamese advertising has consistently demonstrated their role in reflecting and reinforcing cultural values. Nguyen and Nguyen (2019) explore how metaphors like “FOOD IS FAMILY” resonate deeply with Vietnamese consumers by tapping into core values such as family bonds and community. Similarly, Le (2022) and Pham (2018) highlight that metaphors centered on authenticity, purity, and tradition—such as “NATURE IS PURE” and “TRADITION IS STRENGTH”—are particularly effective in constructing brand identities that align with Vietnamese cultural heritage. These metaphors not only facilitate brand recognition but also create strong emotional connections by embedding products within culturally significant narratives.

Zanotto et al. (2020) argue that the interpretation of metaphors is highly dependent on cultural context, suggesting that even universal metaphors can have varying meanings based on societal values. In the Vietnamese context, metaphors like “COFFEE IS FAMILY” and “COFFEE IS NATURE” are especially resonant due to the country’s collectivist values and deep connection with nature. While existing research has effectively explored visual and verbal metaphors in Vietnamese advertising, the role of auditory metaphors remains underdeveloped, leaving a gap in understanding how sound contributes to cultural storytelling.

2.4 Insights from International Studies

Research on multimodal metaphors in advertising has shown just how powerful they can be when different elements—visual, auditory, and verbal—are combined. Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) and O’Halloran (2004) explain that ads using multimodal metaphors are more engaging because they activate multiple senses at once, making them more memorable. Pérez-Sobrinó (2016) adds that blending different modes helps consumers understand and connect with the message in a more meaningful way.

Forceville (2009) provides a framework for how these metaphors work across different modalities, showing that when visual, auditory, and verbal elements come together, they can create a stronger emotional and cognitive impact. This is especially important in food and beverage advertising, where sensory experiences play a significant role. Fahlenbrach (2010) reinforces this idea, pointing out that sensory metaphors, like those related to taste and warmth, help build a deeper emotional connection to the product. Similarly, Krishna (2012) discusses how sensory marketing can create strong brand associations, which we see in Vinacafé’s metaphors like “COFFEE IS PLEASURE,” where taste and emotion are linked.

While research on visual and verbal metaphors in advertising is extensive, the role of auditory elements remains underexplored, particularly in Vietnam. This study addresses this gap by examining how Vinacafé integrates sound with visual and verbal metaphors to create cohesive, culturally resonant narratives. Through frameworks like Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), the study highlights the role of sound in enhancing cultural storytelling and brand communication.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon three interrelated theoretical frameworks: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), and Multimodal Metaphor Analysis (Forceville, 2009). These frameworks provide a comprehensive lens to understand how metaphors operate across different modalities—visual, auditory, and textual—to create persuasive advertising narratives that resonate with Vietnamese cultural values.

3.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), posits that metaphors are not merely verbal expressions but fundamental cognitive tools that shape how we understand abstract concepts. In advertising, CMT suggests that metaphors enable brands to convey complex ideas by mapping them onto more familiar, concrete experiences. This mapping allows consumers to relate emotionally and cognitively to a product by associating it with universally understood concepts like love, nature, or strength. For Vinacafé, metaphors such as “COFFEE IS LOVE” or “COFFEE IS NATURE” enable consumers to conceptualize coffee in terms of familial affection or natural purity, respectively. This cognitive strategy simplifies brand messaging and fosters emotional connections.

3.2 Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), as outlined by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), extends metaphor analysis beyond the realm of language to include other semiotic resources such as images, sounds, and gestures. In advertising, this approach is crucial for understanding how brands create narratives that engage consumers on multiple sensory levels. Vinacafé’s advertisements employ a multimodal approach by combining visual, auditory, and textual elements to create metaphors that evoke cultural meanings and emotional responses.

For example, the metaphor “COFFEE IS LOVE” is not only conveyed through the emotive language of the advertisements but is also supported by visual imagery of families gathering around a cup of coffee and auditory elements like soft, nostalgic music. This multimodal strategy allows for a more immersive consumer experience, where different sensory modalities reinforce each other to enhance the metaphor’s impact.

3.3 Multimodal Metaphor Analysis

Multimodal Metaphor Analysis, developed by Forceville (2009), provides a framework for understanding how metaphors function across different modalities to produce a unified narrative. Unlike traditional metaphor analysis, which focuses primarily on language, Multimodal Metaphor Analysis considers how visual, auditory, and verbal elements come together to create meaning. In Vinacafé’s advertising, metaphors such as “COFFEE IS STRENGTH” are constructed through a combination of visual symbols (athletes, national icons), dynamic music, and assertive language. This multimodal approach creates a coherent narrative that links coffee consumption with national pride and resilience.

These three theoretical frameworks—CMT, MDA, and Multimodal Metaphor Analysis—are instrumental in analyzing Vinacafé’s advertisements. They highlight how metaphors can serve as powerful cultural and emotional connectors that engage consumers at multiple levels, thereby enhancing brand recall and loyalty.

4. Research Methods

This study employs a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore the use of multimodal metaphors in Vinacafé’s advertisements. The research sample consists of 12 video advertisements produced between 2010 and 2021, selected based on their cultural relevance and impact. Each advertisement was analyzed to identify the visual, auditory, and verbal elements that create metaphorical meanings. The analysis focused on how these elements interact to convey cultural values and emotions and how they contribute to the overall narrative of the advertisement. Data collected provided detailed descriptions of each advertisement’s visual, auditory, and verbal components, forming the basis for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The study involved two phases: a quantitative analysis to determine the frequency and types of metaphors used across different modalities and a qualitative analysis to explore the cultural significance and effectiveness of these metaphors in shaping consumer perceptions. The quantitative analysis involved coding and categorizing each metaphor based on its modality (visual, auditory, verbal) and theme (e.g., nature, family, strength). This was followed by a detailed qualitative analysis to understand how these metaphors are constructed and integrated across modalities to create cohesive and emotionally resonant narratives.

5. Findings

This section delineates the distribution and frequency of multimodal metaphors in Vinacafé advertising, classified by visual, auditory, and spoken modes. These metaphors are categorized into eight principal themes to illustrate their prevalence across various facets of Vietnamese society.

Table 1: Frequency of Metaphor Use across Modalities in Vinacafé Advertisements

Theme	Visual Metaphors	Auditory Metaphors	Verbal metaphors	Total Occurrences
Nature and Authenticity	1. Images of sunshine; 2. Rain; 3. Natural elements; 4. People enjoying coffee amidst nature; 5. Serene landscapes (ad	1. Sound of rain; 2. Birdsong; 3. Gentle melodies (ad 2010, ad 2017).	1. “Thật hơn cuộc sống” (“More real than life”) (ad 2010); 2. “Hương vị của thiên nhiên” (“Flavor of nature”) (ad 2017); 3. “96% nắng, 97% mưa, 98% nước mắt, 99% nụ cười, 100% hương vị của tự nhiên”	11

	2010, ad 2017).		("96% sunlight, 97% rain, 98% tears, 99% smiles, 100% natural flavor") (ad 2017).	
Family and Love	1. Family gatherings; 2. Gifting coffee; 3. Shared smiles; 4. Hugs; 5. Intimate family settings (ad 2012, ad 2015, ad 2020).	1. Soft, warm music; 2. Sound of familial laughter; 3. Soothing piano tones (ad 2012, ad 2015, ad 2020).	1. "Yêu thương thành lời" ("Love turned into words") (ad 2015); 2. "Tình yêu lớn trong ly cà phê nhỏ" ("Big love in a small cup") (ad 2020); 3. "Nói lời yêu thương" ("Say words of love") (ad 2015).	11
Strength and National Pride	1. Athlete preparing; 2. Patriotic symbols; 3. Vietnamese landscapes; 4. Vietnamese flag formed by coffee steam (ad 2019).	1. Inspirational music; 2. National anthem-style melodies; 3. Drum rolls (ad 2019).	1. "Sức mạnh lớn trong ly cà phê nhỏ" ("Great strength in a small cup") (ad 2019); 2. "Đậm đà bản sắc Việt" ("Rich in Vietnamese identity") (ad 2019); 3. "Vinacafé tiếp sức tinh thần" ("Vinacafé empowers the spirit") (ad 2019).	10
Time and Tradition	1. Traditional coffee-making; 2. Roasting; 3. Heritage elements; 4. Old coffee shops; 5. Farmers working (ad 2013, ad 2014).	1. Calming, traditional music (ad 2013, ad 2014).	1. "Tinh túy vị thời gian" ("The essence of time") (ad 2014); 2. "Nét đẹp truyền thống" ("Beauty of tradition") (ad 2013); 3. "Lưu giữ hương vị xưa" ("Preserving the old flavor") (ad 2013); 4. "Cà phê chỉ làm từ cà phê" ("Coffee made only from coffee") (ad 2014).	10
Sensory Experience and Pleasure	1. Steaming coffee; 2. Rich textures; 3. Close-ups of	1. Sound of brewing; 2. Pouring coffee; 3. Sensual	1. "Đậm đà" ("Rich and full-bodied") (ad 2016); 2. "Cảm nhận vị đắng ngọt" ("Savor the bitter-sweet	12

	coffee beans; 4. Smooth pouring of coffee; 5. Morning sunlight (ad 2016, ad 2017).	auditory cues; 4. Clinking cups, footsteps (ad 2016, ad 2017).	taste”) (ad 2017); 3. “Mỗi giọt là một niềm vui” (“Every drop is a joy”) (ad 2021).	
Connection and Belonging	1. People connecting over coffee; 2. Community gatherings; 3. Workers enjoying coffee together; 4. Sharing cups in workplaces (ad 2018, ad 2021).	1. Lively chatter; 2. Group laughter; 3. Social music tones (ad 2018, ad 2021).	1. “Cà phê kết nối” (“Coffee connects”); 2. “Đồng hành cùng bạn” (“Accompanying you”) (ad 2021); 3. “Cùng nhau tạo ra những khoảnh khắc đáng nhớ” (“Creating memorable moments together”) (ad 2021).	10
Celebration and Joy	1. Coffee dancing in animated scenes; 2. Festive decorations; 3. People celebrating (ad 2011, ad 2019).	1. Upbeat, lively music; 2. Clapping and cheering (ad 2011, ad 2019).	1. “Vị đắng thơm nồng bao trái tim cuồng say” (“The bitter aroma enchants the heart”) (ad 2011); 2. “Vina cà phê ngát hương đời” (“Vinacafé fills life with fragrance”) (ad 2019).	7
Calm and Relaxation	1. Peaceful family moments; 2. Serene nature settings; 3. Elderly enjoying coffee (ad 2015, ad 2017).	1. Gentle, relaxing music; 2. Birds chirping; 3. Soft ambient sounds (ad 2015, ad 2017).	1. “Đậm vị Tết thư thái cả năm trọn an nhiên” (“Rich Tet flavor, peaceful year-round”); 2. “Thư giãn cùng cà phê” (“Relax with coffee”) (ad 2017).	8
Total	34	26	23	83

Table 1 illustrates the allocation of 83 metaphorical occurrences among three modalities: visual (34 instances), auditory (26 instances), and verbal (23 instances). The metaphors encompass eight themes: nature and authenticity (11 occurrences), family and love (11

occurrences), strength and national pride (10 occurrences), time and tradition (10 occurrences), sensory experience and pleasure (12 occurrences), connection and belonging (10 occurrences), celebration and joy (7 occurrences), and calm and relaxation (8 occurrences).

Visual metaphors are predominantly utilized, especially in topics highlighting sensory experiences, nature images, and familial relationships. Auditory metaphors, such as natural noises or laughing, augment visual elements to intensify emotional involvement. Verbal metaphors, via culturally significant terms, enhance depth and strengthen tales. The data underscores a calculated approach to effectively incorporate multimodal components in Vinacafé's advertising campaigns.

6. Discussion

The examination of Vinacafé's commercials from 2010 to 2021 reveals the intentional employment of eight fundamental metaphorical terms to communicate culturally significant storylines. These expressions, disseminated through visual, audio, and spoken modes, embody the brand's strategic alignment with Vietnamese cultural values and consumer attitudes. Each metaphor encapsulates a unique theme aspect—spanning nature, authenticity, joy, and relaxation—illustrating the harmonious integration of multimodal aspects to elicit emotional engagement and enhance brand identification.

This section, rooted in Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980) and bolstered by Kress and van Leeuwen's Multimodal Discourse Analysis (2001), meticulously analyzes eight metaphorical expressions, investigating their thematic significance, multimodal composition, and ramifications for Vinacafé's advertising strategy.

6.1 "COFFEE IS NATURE": Evoking Authenticity through Natural Imagery

The metaphorical expression "COFFEE IS NATURE" is a cornerstone of Vinacafé's advertising strategy, used to underline the purity and natural origin of its coffee. This metaphor is constructed through visual elements like "images of sunshine, rain, natural elements; people enjoying coffee amidst nature; serene landscapes" (ad 2010, ad 2017). These visuals create a narrative that directly associates coffee with untouched, pristine environments, appealing to consumers' desires for authenticity and purity.

In line with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which suggests that people understand abstract concepts (e.g., purity) through more concrete experiences (e.g., nature), these advertisements effectively map the desired qualities of the coffee onto elements of the natural world. The auditory cues, such as "sound of rain, birdsong, gentle melodies" (ad 2010, ad 2017), work synergistically with the visuals to immerse the viewer in a tranquil, natural setting, enhancing the sensory appeal of the metaphor.

The verbal expressions “Thật hơn cuộc sống” (“More real than life”) (ad 2010), “Hương vị của thiên nhiên” (“Flavor of nature”) (ad 2017), and “96% nắng 97% mưa 98% nước mắt 99% nụ cười 100% hương vị của tự nhiên” (“96% sunlight, 97% rain, 98% tears, 99% smiles, 100% natural flavor”) (ad 2017) reinforce the theme of natural authenticity. According to Forceville’s (2009) framework on Multimodal Metaphor Analysis, such integration of text, image, and sound creates a more persuasive and memorable advertising message by engaging multiple sensory modalities.

Studies on Vietnamese advertising, like those by Nguyen and Nguyen (2019), indicate that metaphors connecting products to nature are particularly effective in markets where consumers value environmental sustainability and natural ingredients. By rooting its brand in the metaphor of nature, Vinacafé not only differentiates itself from competitors but also appeals to environmentally conscious consumers, enhancing brand loyalty and trust.

6.2 “COFFEE IS LOVE”: *Connecting Emotionally with Family-Oriented Audiences*

The expression “COFFEE IS LOVE” is central to many of Vinacafé’s advertisements, where coffee is portrayed as a bridge for building and expressing emotional connections. Visual metaphors such as “family gatherings, gifting coffee, shared smiles, hugs, intimate family settings” (ad 2012, ad 2015, ad 2020) depict coffee as an integral part of family life, reinforcing its role in creating warm and loving environments.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) suggests that combining visual and auditory elements can create a more immersive and emotionally engaging narrative. In these advertisements, the auditory backdrop of “soft, warm music, sound of familial laughter; soothing piano tones” (ad 2012, ad 2015, ad 2020) enhances the emotional impact of the visuals, making the metaphor of “COFFEE IS LOVE” more relatable and effective.

Verbal expressions like “Yêu thương thành lời” (“Love turned into words”) (ad 2015), “Tình yêu lớn trong ly cà phê nhỏ” (“Big love in a small cup”) (ad 2020), and “Nói lời yêu thương” (“Say words of love”) (ad 2015) further articulate the theme of emotional connection. These metaphors align with Vietnamese collectivist cultural values that prioritize family unity and social harmony (Le, 2022). As previous studies have shown, such culturally resonant metaphors help strengthen the emotional bond between the brand and its audience, making the advertisements more memorable and impactful.

6.3 “COFFEE IS STRENGTH”: *Tapping into National Pride and Resilience*

The metaphor “COFFEE IS STRENGTH” aligns Vinacafé with themes of resilience, vigor, and national pride, which are deeply rooted in Vietnamese culture. Visual elements such as “athlete preparing, patriotic symbols, Vietnamese landscapes, Vietnamese flag formed by coffee steam” (ad 2019) serve to position coffee as a symbol of energy and national pride. This is

supported by auditory metaphors like “inspirational music, national anthem-style melodies; drum rolls” (ad 2019), which evoke a sense of collective strength and unity.

Verbal cues such as “Sức mạnh lớn trong ly cà phê nhỏ” (“Great strength in a small cup”) (ad 2019), “Đậm đà bản sắc Việt” (“Rich in Vietnamese identity”) (ad 2019), and “Vinacafé tiếp sức tinh thần” (“Vinacafé empowers the spirit”) (ad 2019) reinforce the brand’s alignment with national pride. Drawing on CMT, these metaphors effectively map the qualities of strength and resilience onto Vinacafé, making it more than just a coffee brand but a symbol of Vietnamese endurance and pride.

Research by Vu and Nguyen (2023) shows that metaphors emphasizing national pride can significantly enhance brand loyalty in Vietnam, where historical and cultural narratives are important in consumer decision-making. By anchoring its brand narrative in the concept of strength, Vinacafé appeals to both older and younger generations who value national heritage and identity, thus creating a robust and emotionally resonant brand image.

6.4 “COFFEE IS TRADITION”: Celebrating Heritage and Cultural Continuity

Vinacafé often utilizes the metaphor “COFFEE IS TRADITION” to highlight its deep roots in Vietnamese coffee culture. The visual metaphors of “traditional coffee-making, roasting, heritage elements; old coffee shops; farmers working” (ad 2013, ad 2014) evoke a sense of nostalgia and continuity. These elements suggest that Vinacafé is not only a product but also a cultural artifact that connects modern consumers to the rich history of Vietnamese coffee.

The auditory metaphors such as “calming, traditional music, sounds of roasting; clinking cups, footsteps” (ad 2013, ad 2014) enhance the sensory experience, reinforcing the feeling of being transported back in time to a traditional Vietnamese coffee shop. This use of sound to support visual and verbal elements aligns with Forceville’s (2009) emphasis on the power of multimodal metaphors in creating a cohesive and persuasive narrative.

Verbal elements like “Tinh túy vị thời gian” (“The essence of time”) (ad 2014), “Nét đẹp truyền thống” (“Beauty of tradition”) (ad 2013), “Lưu giữ hương vị xưa” (“Preserving the old flavor”) (ad 2013), and “Cà phê chỉ làm từ cà phê” (“Coffee made only from coffee”) (ad 2014) emphasize the brand’s commitment to heritage and authenticity. As Nguyen (2021) points out, metaphors that link products to traditional practices and values are particularly effective in Vietnam, where cultural continuity is highly valued.

By presenting its coffee as a symbol of tradition, Vinacafé distinguishes itself from competitors who might focus on modernity or convenience, thereby attracting consumers who appreciate authenticity and a deep cultural connection.

6.5 *“COFFEE IS PLEASURE”: Enhancing Sensory and Quality Perception*

“COFFEE IS PLEASURE” is the metaphorical expression employed to highlight the sensory delight and premium quality associated with Vinacafé’s coffee. Visuals in the ads such as “steaming coffee, rich textures, close-ups of coffee beans; smooth pouring of coffee; morning sunlight” (ad 2016, ad 2017) are carefully designed to engage viewers’ senses, creating a rich sensory narrative that invites them to indulge in the moment. These images function as a visual metaphor that directly ties the physical appeal of coffee to the pleasure of consuming it.

From the perspective of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), combining visual and auditory cues enhances the sensory experience, making the metaphor more effective. The auditory elements, like “the gentle sound of coffee brewing, the soft clinking of cups, and the pouring of coffee” (ad 2016, ad 2017), complement the visuals to create a multisensory environment that draws the viewer in. This aligns with Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2001) argument that multimodality in advertising allows for a more engaging and memorable consumer experience.

Verbal expressions such as “Đậm đà” (“Rich and full-bodied”) (ad 2016) and “Cảm nhận vị đắng ngọt” (“Savor the bitter-sweet taste”) (ad 2017) reinforce the idea that Vinacafé offers a luxurious coffee experience that is both rich in flavor and enjoyable in its complexity. According to Forceville (2009), such metaphors can evoke strong sensory responses, making the product more memorable and desirable. In the context of Vietnamese advertising, Le (2022) found that metaphors focusing on sensory pleasure significantly enhance perceived quality and consumer satisfaction.

By presenting coffee as a sensory experience rather than just a beverage, Vinacafé positions itself as a premium brand that appeals to consumers who appreciate quality and indulgence. This approach effectively differentiates the brand in a competitive market and reinforces its image as a choice for connoisseurs.

6.6 *“COFFEE IS CONNECTION”: Building Social Bonds and Community*

The expression “COFFEE IS CONNECTION” emphasizes the role of coffee as a social catalyst that brings people together, whether in personal, social, or professional settings. Visual elements such as “friends catching up over coffee, colleagues sharing a cup during a break, and community members bonding at a local café” (ad 2018, ad 2021) depict coffee as an integral part of social life, facilitating conversations and connections.

In line with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), these ads map the abstract concept of social connection onto the concrete experience of sharing coffee, making the idea more accessible and relatable. Auditory elements like “the buzz of lively conversations, shared

laughter, and soft background music” (ad 2018, ad 2021) create an auditory environment that mirrors real-life social interactions, enhancing the metaphor’s impact.

Verbal expressions such as “Cà phê kết nối” (“Coffee connects”) (ad 2018), “Mỗi giọt là một niềm vui” (“Every drop is a joy”) (ad 2021), and “Cùng nhau tạo ra những khoảnh khắc đáng nhớ” (“Creating memorable moments together”) (ad 2021) further reinforce the idea that Vinacafé is not just a beverage but a shared experience that strengthens social bonds. Nguyen and Nguyen (2019) argue that metaphors emphasizing social connection are particularly effective in Vietnamese culture, where community and relationships are highly valued.

By framing coffee as a connector, Vinacafé taps into a fundamental human need for social interaction, enhancing its relevance to consumers who see coffee as an essential part of their social lives. This approach not only increases brand appeal but also fosters a sense of belonging among its audience, which can significantly impact brand loyalty and advocacy.

6.7 “COFFEE IS JOY”: Elevating the Brand with Themes of Celebration and Happiness

The metaphorical expression “COFFEE IS JOY” is strategically used to associate Vinacafé with happiness, celebration, and life’s special moments. Visual metaphors such as “coffee dancing in animated scenes; festive decorations; people celebrating” (ad 2011, ad 2019) create an energetic narrative that aligns the brand with positivity and excitement. These visuals suggest that Vinacafé is an essential part of life’s celebratory moments, adding to its appeal.

The use of “upbeat, lively music; clapping and cheering” (ad 2011, ad 2019) further reinforces this joyful atmosphere, appealing to the emotional states of happiness and contentment. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) supports the idea that combining sensory stimuli can amplify the emotional response of the audience, making the metaphor of “COFFEE IS JOY” more engaging.

Verbal metaphors such as “Vị đắng thơm nồng báo trái tim cuồng say” (“The bitter aroma enchants the heart”) (ad 2011) and “Vina cà phê ngát hương đời” (“Vinacafé fills life with fragrance”) (ad 2019) suggest that Vinacafé adds joy and meaning to daily life. Research by Nguyen (2021) indicates that in Vietnamese advertising, metaphors that align products with positive emotions and celebrations can significantly enhance brand perception and consumer loyalty.

This metaphor is particularly effective because it connects the brand with positive emotional experiences, making it more memorable. By presenting coffee as a source of joy and celebration, Vinacafé not only strengthens its emotional appeal but also positions itself as a brand that enriches everyday life.

6.8 “COFFEE IS RELAXATION”: *Providing Calmness and Tranquility*

Vinacafé employs the metaphor “COFFEE IS RELAXATION” to highlight the calming and soothing effects of coffee, promoting its product as a way to unwind and relax. Visual metaphors like “quiet family moments, serene nature settings; elderly enjoying coffee” (ad 2015, ad 2017) create a narrative that links coffee consumption with relaxation and stress relief.

Auditory metaphors such as “soft, ambient music; birds chirping, soft ambient sounds” (ad 2015, ad 2017) further enhance this calming experience, providing an auditory environment that supports the visual narrative. These elements work together to create a sense of peace and well-being, aligning with the concept that coffee is a moment of relaxation.

Verbal metaphors such as “Đậm vị Tết thu thái cả năm trọn an nhiên” (“Rich Tet flavor, peaceful year-round”) (ad 2015) and “Thư giãn cùng cà phê” (“Relax with coffee”) (ad 2017) emphasize the brand’s role in providing relaxation and comfort. Le (2022) argues that in the Vietnamese context, metaphors focusing on relaxation and mindfulness are increasingly effective as consumers seek balance in their lives.

By framing its coffee as a pathway to tranquility, Vinacafé appeals to a growing consumer base that values relaxation and mindfulness. This metaphor helps the brand position itself as more than just a product but as a lifestyle choice that aligns with modern wellness trends.

The analysis of Vinacafé’s advertising campaigns reveals a deliberate and effective use of multimodal metaphors that align with Vietnamese cultural values. Each metaphor—whether focusing on nature, family, strength, tradition, sensory delight, social connection, joy, or relaxation—serves to deepen the emotional connection with the audience and enhance brand perception. Supported by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), and reinforced by previous studies such as those by Nguyen and Nguyen (2019), Le (2022), and Vu and Nguyen (2023), these metaphors help position Vinacafé as a culturally relevant and emotionally engaging brand in Vietnam.

Vinacafé’s strategic approach demonstrates the power of metaphors in advertising to not only differentiate a brand but also to build strong, lasting relationships with consumers. Future research could explore the effectiveness of these metaphors across different product categories or cultural contexts to further understand their impact.

6.9 Investigating the Function of Auditory Metaphors in Augmenting Multimodal Narratives

Although visual and verbal metaphors predominate in contemporary analysis, aural metaphors constitute a crucial yet underexamined aspect of multimodal storytelling in advertising. Forceville (2009) asserts that multimodal metaphors gain potency through the

interplay of diverse semiotic forms. In this framework, audio features serve as essential instruments for augmenting emotional resonance and cultural significance, frequently collaborating with visual and textual components.

In the metaphor “COFFEE IS NATURE,” audio elements like birdsong, mild rain, and soothing tunes act as sensory enhancements to the visual representations of peaceful landscapes and natural imagery. The noises, when correlated with the abstract attributes of purity and authenticity, correspond with Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which asserts that abstract concepts are comprehended through embodied experiences. By engaging the auditory senses, these metaphors cultivate immersive experiences that reinforce the connection between Vinacafé’s coffee and Vietnam’s unspoiled natural landscape.

In “COFFEE IS LOVE,” the combination of gentle piano melodies and familial laughing enhances the visual depiction of cozy family gatherings and intensifies the audience’s emotional involvement. Forceville (2009) highlights the significance of multimodal integration, illustrating how auditory elements enhance the formation of cohesive, memorable tales that profoundly align with collectivist cultural norms, particularly those inherent to Vietnamese society.

The results indicate that auditory metaphors often function as transitional components that connect the emotional divide between textual content and visual representations. In “COFFEE IS CONNECTION,” the sounds of animated conversation and communal assemblies replicate genuine social situations, augmenting the narrative’s authenticity and relatability. This corresponds with Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2001) Multimodal Discourse Analysis framework, which emphasizes how auditory elements can shape temporal experiences, thereby enhancing consumer involvement.

This study highlights the auditory modality, addressing a significant gap in current research that frequently focuses visual and verbal metaphors. Fahlenbrach (2010) posits that sensory metaphors, especially those including music, elicit profound emotional reactions, fostering a multimodal atmosphere that amplifies consumer perceptions of the product. This viewpoint is further corroborated by Krishna (2012), who recognizes sound as a crucial element in sensory branding, especially in culturally affluent settings such as Vietnam, where auditory signals frequently possess symbolic significance.

7. Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for advertisers and marketers:

Strategic Use of Multimodal Metaphors: Effectively integrating visual, auditory, and verbal elements can create more engaging and memorable advertisements that appeal to

multiple sensory channels and cognitive processes. This approach helps brands build deeper emotional connections with consumers.

Cultural Resonance in Advertising: Aligning advertising strategies with core cultural values is crucial for building strong brand relationships. Vinacafé's success in embedding themes such as nature, family, and national pride in its advertisements underscores the importance of culturally resonant storytelling.

Driving Emotional Engagement and Brand Loyalty: Metaphors that evoke strong emotions can help brands create more profound connections with their audience, driving emotional engagement and brand loyalty. Vinacafé's emotionally charged narratives demonstrate how brands can connect on a personal level through culturally relevant metaphors.

Enhancing Brand Perception through Sensory Marketing: Engaging the senses through multimodal metaphors can enhance brand recall and preference. Advertisers should leverage sensory experiences to differentiate their brand and create lasting impressions that resonate with consumers.

Positioning through Heritage and Tradition: Emphasizing heritage and tradition in advertising can help brands differentiate themselves in markets where authenticity and craftsmanship are highly valued. Vinacafé's use of "COFFEE IS TRADITION" effectively positions the brand as a custodian of Vietnamese culture, enhancing consumer trust and loyalty.

8. Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the use of multimodal metaphors in Vinacafé's advertisements, it has several limitations:

Sample Size and Scope: The study focuses on 12 advertisements from Vinacafé. Future research could expand the sample size to include more advertisements from different periods and brands to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

Cultural Specificity: The findings are specific to Vietnamese culture, and their applicability to other contexts may be limited. Future studies could explore the use of multimodal metaphors in different cultural settings to understand their universality and cultural specificity.

Consumer Response Analysis: This study focuses primarily on the analysis of metaphors in advertisements. Future research could incorporate consumer response analysis to understand how these metaphors are perceived and their effectiveness in influencing consumer behavior.

9. Conclusion

This study has analyzed the strategic use of multimodal metaphors in Vinacafé's advertising campaigns from 2010 to 2021, highlighting how these metaphors effectively shape brand perception and foster consumer loyalty within the Vietnamese market. By leveraging metaphors such as "COFFEE IS NATURE," "COFFEE IS LOVE," "COFFEE IS STRENGTH," "COFFEE IS TRADITION," "COFFEE IS PLEASURE," "COFFEE IS CONNECTION," "COFFEE IS JOY," and "COFFEE IS RELAXATION," Vinacafé constructs a cohesive and culturally resonant brand narrative that appeals to a wide range of consumers. Each metaphor integrates visual, auditory, and verbal elements to engage multiple senses and create a more immersive experience, in line with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA).

The metaphor "COFFEE IS NATURE" serves to align the brand with values of purity and environmental authenticity, appealing to consumers who prioritize natural products. Similarly, "COFFEE IS LOVE" and "COFFEE IS CONNECTION" emphasize social and familial bonds, reflecting the collectivist culture of Vietnam where family and community are central. These metaphors effectively position Vinacafé as a brand that strengthens emotional ties and nurtures meaningful relationships, thereby enhancing emotional engagement and brand loyalty.

Metaphors such as "COFFEE IS STRENGTH" and "COFFEE IS TRADITION" underscore the themes of resilience, national pride, and cultural heritage. These advertisements resonate deeply with Vietnamese consumers who value historical continuity and national identity. The use of such metaphors not only appeals to older generations but also to younger ones who are proud of their cultural roots, effectively bridging generational gaps and reinforcing the brand's image as a symbol of Vietnamese strength and unity.

The metaphor "COFFEE IS PLEASURE" focuses on sensory delight, positioning Vinacafé as a premium product that offers a rich and indulgent experience. This approach appeals to consumers who seek quality and sensory richness in their coffee-drinking rituals, thereby elevating the brand's perceived value in a crowded market. Meanwhile, "COFFEE IS JOY" and "COFFEE IS RELAXATION" cater to the emotional needs for celebration, happiness, and tranquility, portraying coffee as a companion in both joyous and serene moments.

Drawing on previous studies and theories, such as those by Forceville (2009), Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), and Vietnamese scholars, this research demonstrates that multimodal metaphors, when carefully integrated, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of advertising. The use of visual, auditory, and verbal elements allows Vinacafé to communicate complex brand messages that resonate with cultural values, making the advertisements more memorable and impactful.

In conclusion, Vinacafé's strategic use of multimodal metaphors provides valuable insights for brands seeking to build strong connections with their audience through culturally relevant and emotionally compelling narratives. Future research could explore the application of these strategies in different cultural contexts or product categories to understand their broader implications and potential adaptations. By continuing to harness the power of multimodal metaphors, brands can create meaningful and engaging advertising that not only captures attention but also builds long-lasting relationships with consumers.

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