

Original Article

Research on Multimodal Metaphors in Chinese Liquor Advertisement Discourse

Chen Yanxi

School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering, Zigong, P.R.China.

Received: 11 April 2022

Revised: 30 May 2022

Accepted: 14 June 2022

Published: 23 June 2022

Abstract - *The multimodal Metaphor combined with pictorial signs, written signs, sounds, tastes, and touch in the Chinese liquor advertisement discourse contributes to the understanding of the product's abstract information, like the cultural and traditional connotation, and further benefits of stimulating the consumers' senses and arouse the consumer's psychological recognition.*

Keywords - *Advertisement discourse, Chinese Liquor, Multimodal Metaphor, Source domain, Target domain.*

1. Introduction

Chinese Liquor is the product of material civilization in China's thousands of years of history. Chinese Liquor is a special series of distilled Liquor, which is normally made from a mixture of barley, corn, rice, wheat, and sorghum (Zheng, 2016). Now it is not only an alcoholic beverage but has also become one of the elements of Chinese culture. Along with the prosperity of the liquor industry and the rapid development of Chinese liquor companies, related research on the promotion of liquor products and Chinese liquor culture is emerging one after another. Chinese Liquor's role in the well-off society lies in people's livelihood drinks and the development of the Baijiu industry (Zhang, M, 2017).

Most of the existing domestic research focuses on the innovative glamour of advertisement, liquor marketing strategies, or cultural research of Chinese Liquor, for example, on the application of poems in alcohol advertisements. In advertisements, some liquor companies create metrical poems, chants, or couplets as brand slogans by imitating ancient Chinese poems. Some research focuses on the slogans' differences between Chinese and Western alcoholic beverage products. However, these alcoholic beverage advertising researches are limited to the history, raw materials, craftsmanship, and poetry, and there is very little research on the dynamic construction of multimodal

metaphors in the advertisement. This paper analyzes the dynamic construction of multimodal metaphors in some Chinese alcohol advertisement discourse. It explores how printed advertisement combines picture layouts, images, words, and other media modes to convey product information, infuse consumers' vision, and arouse consumers' psychological recognition.

2. Research on Multimodal Metaphors in Chinese Liquor Advertisement Discourse

2.1. Multimodal Metaphor

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's book *Metaphors We Live By* pioneered the study of metaphors from a cognitive perspective. Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Thinking is the manipulation of abstract symbols, and symbols acquire meaning through their correspondence with entities and categories in the external world. A concept is a single symbol, and a certain relationship is formed between concept and concept, forming a coherent concept system. At the same time, concepts correspond to the entities and categories of the external world. When people's rational thinking is identical to the objective logic in the external world, it can accurately reflect the outside world. (Lakoff, 1987). From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, a Metaphor is a way of



thinking expressed in language with a certain system, metaphorical systematicity. A metaphorical concept includes many linguistic expressions, and different metaphor concepts constitute a coherent network system. Metaphor comprises two domains: a relatively clear source domain (resource domain) and a relatively ambiguous domain (target domain).

Metaphor is to map the graphic structure of the source domain to the target domain so that people can understand the abstract target domain through the intuitive and concrete source domain. Multimodal Metaphor is also a metaphor mapping, which refers to a Metaphor in which the source and target domains are presented separately or in different modes. Metaphor manifests themselves in verbal expressions and other non-verbal modes, like pictures, sounds, music, gestures, etc. Forceville divides multimodal metaphors into nine categories: pictorial signs, written signs, spoken signs, gestures, sounds, music, smells, tastes, and touch (Forceville, 2009). Printed advertising is mainly a visual discourse that combines pictorial signs and written signs, and it is a type of multimodal discourse. Language and images cooperate to construct discourse. So it is easier to convey ideas for multimodal communication (Forceville, 2018).

2.2. *Multimodal Metaphor in Chinese Liquor Advertisement Discourse*

Integrated advertising discourse is essential for marketing communication (Adetunji, 2013). By sorting out the advertisements for some brands of Chinese Liquor, there are two typical metaphors for Chinese Liquor: "Chinese Liquor drops are white pieces of the Game Go" and "Chinese Liquor is the Game Go." This chapter explains the embodiment of multimodal Metaphors in liquor advertising and analyzes the advertising effect achieved by using multimodal Metaphors. Metaphor is the use of concrete things to express abstract concepts. The source domain of image metaphors has changed from words to more intuitive images, so concrete images convey the abstract concepts of the target domain. We will analyze the dynamic construction of multimodal metaphors in advertising and explain the multi-modes in the metaphors "Liquor drops are white pieces" and "Chinese Liquor is the Game Go."

The image-dominant metaphors are the mapping of two domains in the visual component (Tasi, 2015). the liquor drops are given images of Go pieces, and the source domain is presented in a visual mode. Then, how are the pictorial meanings, implied meanings, and contextual meanings of the advertisement metaphor constructed? The source domain is the white piece of Go. Let us first look at the characteristics of the source domain image Go pieces. The white Go pieces are transparent and round, like wine drops, clear and transparent. The Chinese liquor drop metaphorically activates a visual target domain. The Go pieces are divided into black and white and are round in shape, which is consistent with the shape and texture of the wine drop. Alcohol research expert Peynaud once pointed out that the ideal wine should be round (Peynaud, 1987). The liquor drop's transparent and round image stimulates consumers' senses of sight, touch, and taste. Go pieces only have two colors, black and white. Go pieces are very different from traditional Chinese chess pieces, which symbolize no hierarchical distinction, and that is just the pursuit of Chinese liquor lovers.

The two colors of the white and black Go pieces correspond to "Yin-yang" interchanging in Chinese tradition. So people would associate Liquor with harmony and symmetry, reflecting the beauty of life and cyclical return. It properly explains the mapping relationship between the source domain "Go pieces" and the target domain "Liquor drops."

The pieces and the board constitute Go, which represents one of the elements of Chinese culture. the source domain Go first activates a target domain, "history." Go originated in China in the 6th century BC and is one of the oldest games in the world. Since ancient times, Go has been a game for ancient Chinese literati and scholars. Both sides of the game and activities belong to the upper class of society or the literati. The elegant intellectual game activates the target domain, "successful men," people with elegance, success, and virtue. This source domain also activates the consumer group to buy liquor products. Consumers of Chinese Liquor have common characteristics, middle-aged men with high income or successful people with high social status.

In the game of Go, each side holds a piece of the same color, with black first and then white, and then playing alternately. Therefore, Go is also known as "hand talk." Go players' rhythm and strength of the moves can reflect the mental activities of both sides. "Hand talk" implies that Go is a silent dialogue and exchange between the two sides of the game. This essence of Go matches the function of Chinese Liquor, that is, silent communication. Between pushing the cups and changing them cups, people exchanged spirituality. Chinese Liquor is not only a beautiful experience for the taste buds but also a spiritual enjoyment. Multimodal feedback would be very helpful, especially haptic feedback, making the new object more active (Steinicke, 2005).

Go is a game, and it is one of the elegant games. "Many games have a backstory providing motivations for the player's quest, which brings in the story domain" (Kromhout, 2013). the source domain Go activates yet another target domain, "game." Since ancient times, there has been a saying of "singing at the banquet," a game for drinking. The drinkers' wager game is also a kind of language game. Another target domain for Go activation is "art." Go is an art, one of the four arts in Chinese cultural elements: lyre-playing, chess, calligraphy, and painting, the fancies of intellectuals. According to Charles Forceville, Advertisers' self-imposed task for creative pictorial/multimodal metaphor use is to develop a creative representation of a semantic domain (source domain) or structures that can be mapped onto the product promoted (target domain) to arouse the consumers' recognizance upon the product (Forceville, 2012). Liquor's profound cultural heritage highlights the essence of traditional Chinese culture, the charm of Chinese culture, and the nobility and elegance. "the modelling of liquor culture should integrate the characteristics of enterprise brands, which could then play the supporting roles of liquor culture for liquor quality" (Zhang, 2008). Cultural elements will always be passed on. Hence, liquor companies are good at applying cultural elements to market themselves.

The various semiotic resources in one advertisement cooperate appropriately to convey ideas rather than separately (Wang, 2021).

3. Conclusion

Metaphors can be found everywhere in life. The concrete experiences of human beings in life can help us understand abstract concepts or metaphors. The source domain always activates some positive features mapped to the target domain in advertising (Forceville, 2017).

The advertising case in this paper clarifies that abstract concepts can be mapped not only through literal language symbols but also through other modes such as pictorial signs, smells, tastes, or touch. That is, using multimodal metaphors can better achieve advertising effects. Image symbols give consumers a more intuitive impression and convey rich implicit and conceptual meanings. With the development of the times and the rise of cultural and creative industries, cultural elements act on Chinese liquor enterprises and liquor products and play a very important role in greatly improving the economic benefits of enterprises. The continuous advertising campaign in the enterprise has become the most effective booster for brand culture construction. Exploring the cultural connotation of alcohol advertisements is an effective way to enhance the brand value of enterprises. With the help of brand culture construction, liquor enterprises awaken consumers' inner cultural and artistic awareness through advertisements that combine words and images and resonate with consumers. The brand will naturally enter the hearts of consumers. The advertisement's success lies in using the metaphor model to fully express the abstract concepts of cultural relics, culture, and civilization promoted by Liquor, reflecting the core concept of Chinese Liquor that combines history, art, and elegant elements. The elegant life taste, elegant cultural feeling, and heavy historical charm contained in the advertisement of Liquor reflect the brand-added value of the product and become a model of the combination of brand and elegant art.

4. Funding Statement

The work was supported by the Research Center for International Transmission of Sichuan Liquor Culture(CJCB1810, CJCB2202).

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