

Case Study of Multimodal Metaphor——Taking Thai Hom Mali Rice Advertisement as Example

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Abstract: *Metaphors exist everywhere and influence people's recognition of the world to a great extent. Multimodal metaphor, put forward by Forceville(2009), broadens the range of the metaphorical research and becomes a heated topic for linguists. The author of the paper took the Thai Hom Mali Rice video advertisement as the research corpus to carry out the case study, exploring how the multimodes of the advertisement work together to construct the multimodal metaphor——PURE LOVE IS THE TASTES AND SMELLS OF THAI HOM MALI RICE. Finally, the deficiency of the research has been pointed out by the end of the paper.*

Keywords: *multimodal metaphor; Thai Hom Mali Rice advertisement; case study*

1. Introduction

For over 2000 years, metaphors are studied within the discipline known as rhetoric. Metaphor was characterized by the schematic form: A is B, as in ACHILLES IS A LION. As a consequence, metaphor has been identified since the time of Aristotle with implicit comparison [1]. *Metaphors We Live By*, written by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, published in 1980, broke down the narrow constraints of metaphor. The two great linguists made it possible that metaphors were not only the rhetoric device, but also, even more explicitly, a sort of cognitive representation, revealing human beings' mode of thinking. According to Lakoff and Johnson, what makes it a metaphor is the conventional association of one domain with another. Metaphor is inseparable from the connection between things, which is also called the similarity between things. From a cognitive perspective, a metaphor is a mapping from a source domain onto a target domain.

It was Forceville (2009) who combined the study of conceptual metaphor and advertisement design, starting with interaction theory, and then the main standpoints of the relevance theory, put forward the definition of multimodal metaphor: Multimodal metaphor is constituted by a mapping, or blending, of domains from different modes, e.g., visual and verbal, or visual and acoustic[2]. Multimodal metaphor has been a heated topic for the linguistic research. Multimodal metaphor, this new paradigm, based on the integration of metaphor concept and multimodal discourse, marks a new stage in cognitive metaphor research. The author of the paper took the Thai Hom Mali Rice Advertisement as the corpus of the case study to explore the multimodal metaphor in it. Multimodal is an important trait of advertisement, which is usually the combination of verbal elements, visual elements, and sometimes acoustic elements.

With the rapid development of the technology and economy, the life of humans has been changed greatly. The universalization of the Internet enables people to shop online. Advertisement is undoubtedly a common and a popular tool for commercial interaction. A well laid advertisement usually has the magic to attract consumers and increase shopping appetite. Some elaborate advertisements would make use of metaphors to maximally realize the value of commodities. Thailand advertisements are generally known for the thorough and thought-provoking contents and extraordinary design. The analysis of the Thai Hom Mali Rice advertisement is based on multimodal metaphor theory, and how the versatile models serve together to constitute the multimodal metaphor would be illustrated as well.

2. The Achievement of Advertisement Effects

2.1. Advertisement Overview

The corpus of the research is the Thai Hom Mali Advertisement, which takes the form of the video, at the same time, with the cosy love story as its carrier. The whole video is not too long, about four minutes and fifty-seven seconds. The video is special and different from the other rice advertisements which propagate the rice mainly, about the tastes, place of production, price, etc. What's more, compared with the pure commercial advertisement, the video is much more interesting in that the customers can not only get the information of the production that they want to buy, but also they can appreciate a touching love story, which is easy to grab the customers' eyes. Besides, the characters of the video comes from the Thailand native residents who are recorded accompanying each other for over fifty years, which endowing the advertisement with the sense of reality. Through the advertisement, Thailand people's custom of eating, clothing and other cultural traits, like Thailand music, can be introduced to some extent. In a word, through this kind of advertisement, people's versatile needs can be met, including the emotional need, shopping need and need of learning the other countries' culture. The elaborate advertisement design is pretty important for the propagation of the production.

2.2. Multimodal Metaphor in the Advertisement

What are the factors that make the advertisement successful? That's the research object of the paper—the multimodal metaphor. Compared with the other factors that influences the advertisement externally, like the layout, the investment, and spokesman, etc, multimodal metaphor can be seen as the internal factor that promotes the propagation effect of the advertisement because it is the representation of human cognitive thinking process, and the recognition of the multimodal metaphor is crucial to construct the customers' faith in the brand. Of course, multimodal metaphor is not the only factor that influences customers' opinion towards the brand, but it is at least can influence people's recognition of the brand to some extent.

2.3. The Mapping Process

The love in the youth is vigorous, passionate, and fresh. However, when lovers get old, many romantic things have been forgotten, and the life becomes pure and peaceful, like the Thai Hom Mali Rice. However, the love between the two has never disappeared, and it has just become gentle and smooth, resembling the tastes of the rice after being cooked. Similarly, the love between lovers can be far more touched and wonderful with the time passing by. The similarity of changing process between the rice cooking and the lover ageing paves the way for the metaphorical mapping. The mapping process of the metaphor can be illustrated as follows Figure 1 and Table 1.

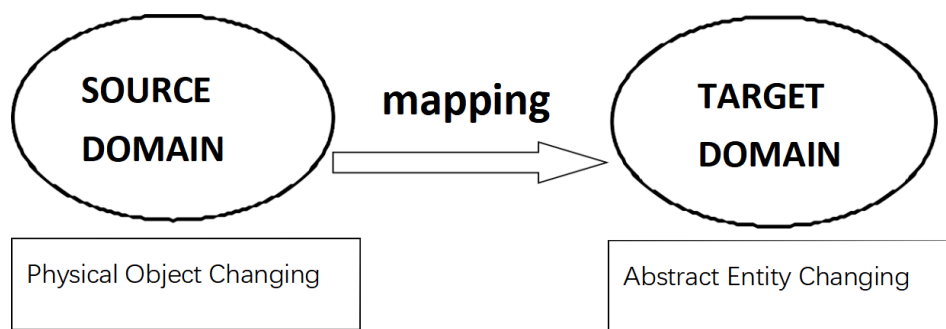


Figure 1: Mapping Scope Figure.

Table 1: Mapping for pure love is the tastes and smells of thai hom mali rice.

Source:Physical Object Changing mappings		Target: Abstract Entity Changing
tastes	smells	love state
hard &raw rice	Slight/little fragrance	innocent and vigorous love
↓	↓	↓
Soft&cooked rice	Obvious/great aroma	mature and peaceful love
→		
the tastes and smells of Thai Hom Mali rice		pure love

3. Multimodes’ Role in Metaphorical Meaning Construction

The form of this video consists of the following modes: sound and music, written and verbal symbols, contact and colour, pictorial symbols. The multimodes work together to construct the multimodal metaphor—PURE LOVE IS THE TASTES AND SMELLS OF THAI HOM MALI RICE. From this metaphor, it is easy to conclude that love is as fresh as the tastes of Thai Hom Mali Rice, and love is as pure and wonderful as the Mali rice.

3.1. Sound & music

As long as the customers click the link of the advertisement, the first mode comes the music. The music plays a great role in constructing the cosy and romantic atmosphere of the love, with its peaceful and soothing tune, thought-provoking lyrics. The instantly stopping music , and the sounds of second hand moving, both produced a mysterious and tense atmosphere when the characters recall their youth when they firstly went to this restaurant. All in all, music and sound play a great role in constructing the appropriate and necessary atmosphere in the multimodal metaphor.

3.2. Written & Verbal Symbols

The written symbols include the character’s lines on the screen and the touching lines on the receipt written by the man. The verbal symbols in the video include the character’s conversations in the video. The written and the verbal elements both belong to the language, but they are the different forms of representation. An advertisement is more successful with the co-work of the written and verbal symbols, which can make the advertisement more comprehensible.

3.3. Written symbols

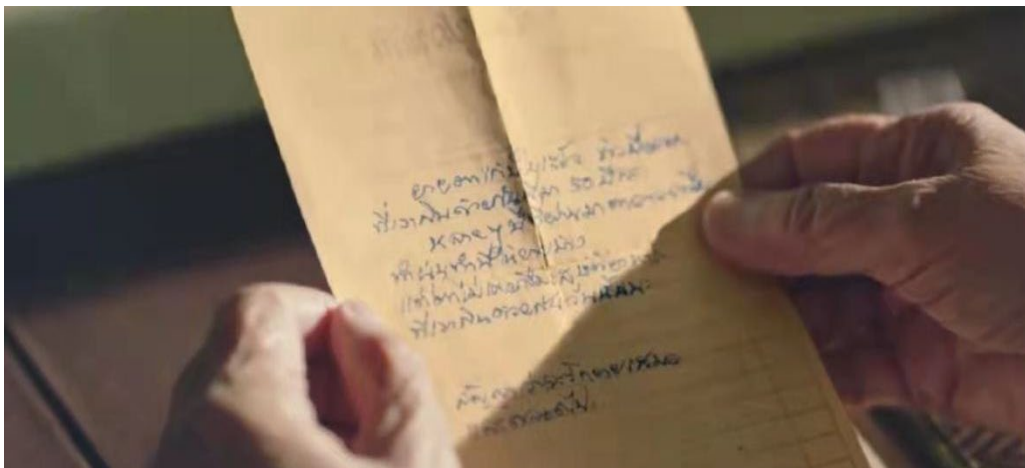


Figure 2: The Written Receipt(<https://b23.tv/EBIzMzn>)

With the time passing by, lovers would become old, and they would forget to do many romantic things, for example, travelling together, preparing the flower and gifts as the surprise, taking pictures for each other, etc. However, the old man remembered to maintain their first bill when they firstly came to the restaurant in their best youth. The receipt, which represented though figure 2, was the connection linking the past and the present life, and it is the proof that the man still loved the old woman so much, regardless of the fast passing of time and the ever-changing world. The written lines on the receipt are touching and warm, they are the carrier of the deep love of the old man. Besides, the translation lines on the screen play the auxiliary role in helping customer's understanding, especially for some foreigners, thus it can also be beneficial to the cultural communication.

3.4. Verbal symbols

It would be less fascinating if there is only the written symbols in the advertisement. The verbal symbols endows the video the vividness and sense of reality. According to literary philosopher Jacques Derrida(1998), the Speech is superior to the written language, for it owns the sense of reality, or in another word, the proof of presence[4]. Derrida argues that the privileging of speech over writing is a classic feature of logocentrism(the desire of centre). That is to say, verbal symbols actually presupposes that the people who are speaking are usually at the presence, or in the video, no matter what kinds of forms, one thing is certain: Audience know whom the speaker is. However, the written language is easy to be copied or plagiarized by others, and who is the original writer is difficult to be known.

Besides, the speech has the majestic power of persuading the listeners and winning the support and trust of the audience. That is the reason why the presidents of countries would always deliver speeches on all kinds of important occasions, instead of writing something. Therefore, it is not difficult to conclude that the verbal symbols in the advertisement are helpful to increase the sense of reality and then promote the persuasive effects of the advertisement.

In this advertisement, the conversation between the two old lovers is deserving to be analyzed, in that it is full of the utterances that produced implicature. Austin's Speech Act Theory can help to understand the implicature in the man's speech. According to Austin (1962), not every sentence is for describing or stating something, that is to say, true or false is not the criteria to evaluate such sentences. For example, 'I do', which is actually doing something, the action of 'marrying' at the wedding ceremony[5].

In this advertisement, For example, the man said 'What's wrong with you? Don't want to eat?' And the woman just shook her head, because she was frustrated that the man did not took care of her like before. And actually the man knew the reason why the woman did not eat, but he still asked the question. Why? In illocutionary act, the man intended to let the woman know that he was not so indifferent, and he at least asked about her. In perlocutionary act, the woman would understand the man, or just keep maintaining unhappy.

Besides, when needing to pay for the meal, the man said 'Can you pay for that? I forget to bring my wallet.' This utterance obviously violated the maxim of 'Quality' in Cooperation Principle: 1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence[3]. Therefore, the implicature was produced: the man wanted the woman to pay, and then she could find the surprise—the first receipt they got when they were young in the bill, thus the man's purpose of preparing the surprise for the woman in Valentine's Day was carried out.

3.5. Contact&Colour

The contacts are very important in maintaining love, especially the physical contact, including holding hands, hugging, kissing, etc. Contacts can usually be used to measure the closeness degree between people from Figure 3 to Figure 4 and Figure 5.

Words like Young, energetic, enthusiastic are usually used to describe the young. Young people have more contacts with their lover, because they want to stay with each other and share everything. However, for old people, their life is far more plain and simple, and the passion has been faded away gradually. Therefore, there is no wonder that the old people have less cicontacts with each other. However, less contacts don't mean less love. As time goes by, body would get older and older, bbut the love between lovers is capable of keeping lasting through appropriate and necessary contacts., no need of too much of that, and only be justifiable.

Here exists the dramatic transformation in the advertisement, about the attitude of the old man. The

man took his lover to eat at a restaurant at Valentine's Day. At the very beginning, the old man sat down, and ordered the rice, and then began to eat by himself, without any communication or intimate physical contact with the woman. He even took picture and then chatted with others on the phone, rather than his old lover. However, when they were young, the man would share every interesting moment with her, take pictures for her, hold her hands and have approachable eye contacts with her.

Now, then they are old, the man seems to have become a selfish and indifferent man who didn't touch his wife's hand and only with his hands on the phone, as we can see in Figure 3. Being frustrated and disappointed, the woman did not eat anything. After finishing the eating, the man said that he had forgotten to bring his wallet, and let the woman pay for the bill. The woman took the receipt and she was shocked, because that was the first one they got when they firstly came to the restaurant. And the touching, warm lines were written by her lover: 'Dear wife, although I forgot to do many things for you, I was always maintaining the first receipt, and I will never forget the wonderful memory when firstly we ate together in the restaurant. I love you forever!' Then the two lovers hold hands together, with their eyes full of happiness.

Now it is not difficult to find that the man was actually preparing a surprise for the woman. It is the totally different attitude that reinforces the surprising and touching effect of the advertisement. Young, energetic, enthusiastic, etc usually are the characteristics of the young people. Young people have more contacts with their lovers, they want to stay together every moment. However, for old people, their life is far more plain and simple, the passion has been faded away gradually. Therefore, there is no wonder that old people have less contact than young people. However, less contacts don't mean less love. Body would be older and older, but the love is capable of keeping lasting through the appropriate and necessary communication and contact, no need of too much of that, just be suitable.



Figure 3: Seem Less Hand Contact of the Old Lover. (<https://b23.tv/EBIzMzn>)



Figure 4: Actual Hand Contact of the Old Lover. (<https://b23.tv/EBIzMzn>)



Figure 5: *The Constant Interaction between the Young .* (<https://b23.tv/EBIzMzn>)

3.6. Color

Whiteness can be the symbol of death and purity. The purely white Thai Hom Mali Rice resembles the love between people, pure and wonderful. However, people would get old, and die some day, thus the white can also represent the mortality of people. Therefore, the whiteness has dual metaphorical meaning. Such metaphorical meaning endows the rice with the holiness of love. In order to enlighten the effect of contrast, the designer of advertisement chose two kinds of hues to deal with the two periods of life, youth and old age. The hue is warm, colorful and vivid when the memories of the past emerge. While the hue is plain and simple for the period of old age. The strong color contrast, as found in Figure 6, helps to enlarge the contrast of the man's attitude, strengthening the consumer's sense of shock.



Figure 6: *Colour Contrast between Youth & Old Age.* (<https://b23.tv/EBIzMzn>)

3.7. Pictorial Symbols

In the advertisement, there is a key symbol, the camera, which misled some customers, judgment about the object of the advertisement. The man when he was young, would take many beautiful pictures for the woman. The pictures actually are a kind of pictorial symbol or visual symbols. Pictures can help people remember some unforgettable and beautiful moments, for example it is accepted that lots of wonderful pictures should be taken on wedding ceremony, as shown in Figure 7. However, like

people, the photos get old and coarse over years, yet the happy moment of the past was still printed on the photos, never disappearing, as long-lasting as the true love, which is the metaphorical meaning of the photos.



Figure 7: Some Important Pictures.(<https://b23.tv/EBIzMzn>)

4. Conclusion

It is concluded from the research that it was the internal multimodal metaphor and the co-work of the multimodes in the advertisement that achieved the effects of the advertisement. The Multimodal metaphor—PURE LOVE IS THE TASTES AND SMELLS OF THAI HOM MALI RICE is constructed by the co-work of different modes including sound&music, written&verbal symbols, contacts and color,pictorial symbols. Metaphorically thinking, the similarity between pure love and the tastes and smells of Thai Hom Mali Rice is the process of changing—the rice changed from raw and hard to cooked and soft, tasting and smelling great; The love between lovers changed from fresh and vigorous to mature and peaceful,yet still pure.

The deficiency of the research includes the following points. On one hand, the research mainly focuses on the case study, and more rice advertisements should be added to make some comparative studies. Besides, the research is lack of statistic analysis, which is an important approach in scientific research. All in all, the case study provided a relatively explicit illustration of the multimodal metaphor analysis in advertisement.

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