

The Analysis of Implicatures in Vietnamese Local Brand Slogans

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 <https://doi.org/10.54855/ictep.24510>

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Received: 07/06/2024

Revision: 03/09/2024

Accepted: 24/09/2024

Online: 25/09/2024

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

implicature, implied meaning, Vietnamese slogans.

These days, it is evident that advertisements have become increasingly creative and accompanied by slogans that are meaningful as well as attractive. Therefore, the paper focuses on analyzing implicatures in the Vietnamese local brands' slogans, particularly those incorporating the terms "Việt" or "Việt Nam," with the purpose of finding out what type of implicature of each slogan as well as implied meanings and shared points between them. Based on the framework of the pragmatic identity approach of Erisha (2016), there were three main stages, starting with collecting slogans, analyzing them, and presenting the results. After researching, the author found five slogans that include the words "Việt" or Việt Nam." The study reveals that the slogans all express several of the same ideas, including top-notch products, care for customers, and deep-rooted respect for Vietnamese values and traditions.

Introduction

In such a competitive market nowadays, advertising serves a dual purpose. It not only introduces products to the public but also acts as a means for companies to reach their targeted customers (Bhasin, 2023). Advertisements play an integral role in many sectors like economy, food and beverage, marketing, electronics and more. They are ubiquitous across various forms of communication channels, such as newspapers, the Internet, and social media. It can be seen that advertising is ubiquitous in our daily lives. However, given the short duration of most ads, it is necessary for enterprises to create a unique slogan incorporating phrases or words capable of leaving a deep impression on buyers as well as delivering targets of enterprises, which can be revealed pragmatically. One of the six majors of language study is pragmatics which refers to the study of language in practical usage and how the meaning of words is understood in various contexts. The core focus of pragmatics lies in exploring how language is used to reach communicative goals by speakers and how meaning is interpreted by listeners and readers (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996; Huang, 2014; Tran, 2021). As stated by Yule (1996, p3), the four

primary areas of pragmatics include “the study of speaker meaning, the study of contextual meaning, the study of how more gets communicated than is said, and the study of the expression of relative distance.” On the other hand, Thomas (2013, p2) perceives pragmatics as the study of a speaker’s attention. Furthermore, from a pragmatic perspective, communication can be conceptualized as a procedure of encoding and decoding information, and implicature is a necessary element in comprehending language within specific contexts, specifically capturing the intended message that speakers aim to convey through their utterances.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the slogans of Vietnamese local brands with the aim of uncovering the hidden messages they convey. By systematically examining these slogans, the research seeks to identify the underlying meanings that are not explicitly stated but are implied through strategic language use. This analysis will provide a deeper understanding of how local brands in Vietnam communicate with their target audience, revealing the linguistic and cultural nuances that influence consumer perceptions and brand positioning in the market.

The significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of how language is strategically employed by Vietnamese local brands to convey nuanced messages to consumers. By analyzing the implicatures within these slogans, the study reveals not only the linguistic techniques used to influence consumer perception but also the cultural and social values embedded within these messages. This research is valuable for both linguists and marketers, as it offers insights into the intersection of language, society, and consumer behavior, highlighting how subtle language choices can shape brand identity and consumer engagement.

Literature review

Definitions of implicatures

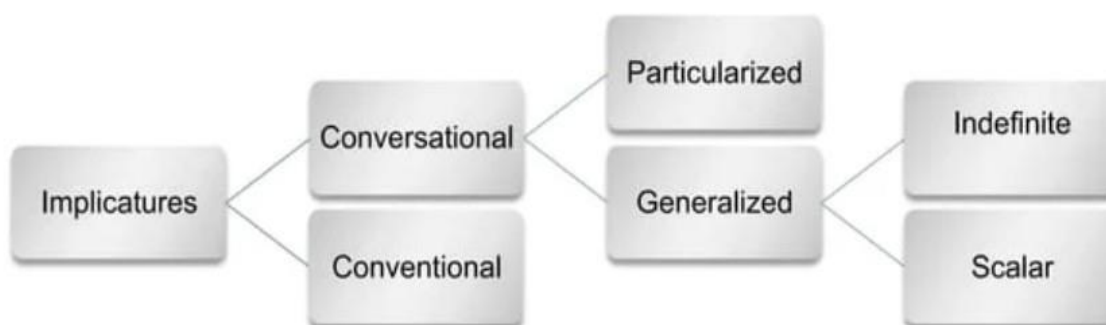
In terms of definition, David and David (2016) explores that implicature refers to the act of conveying a certain meaning by expressing something different through speech, while Grundy (2019) defines the term as any hidden meaning which can be interpreted through hints and understood indirectly without ever being directly expressed. According to Grice’s theory, implicature is about “how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied meaning.” Moreover, an implicature refers to any information that is inferred or implied from an utterance or the meaning that a speaker intends to convey through an utterance, which may go beyond the literal or surface meaning of the words used (Yule, 1996). In general, the speaker is likely to deliver communicated meaning via implicatures, and the listener or reader can recognize it through inferences. However, to understand the implicatures thoroughly, it requires knowledge in cultural and pragmatic areas, as the lack of it can lead to misunderstandings (Pham, 2021). Overall, the term “implicature” refers to the hidden meaning or information that speakers express implicitly in their utterances, going beyond the literal interpretation of their words.

Types of implicatures

Regarding genres of implicature, linguists claim that there are two main genres: conversational implicature and conventional ones. In the group of conversational implicature, there are other types such as particularized, generalized, indefinite and scalar (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996; Huang, 2014).

Table 1.

Genres of implicatures



Conventional implicatures

As stated by Grice's theory (1975), **conventional implicatures** do not originate from contextual factors or the speaker's personal intentions, but rather from how language is conventionally used. Consider.

(1) *Even John likes this pizza.*

By using the word "even", the speaker wants to emphasize that John is a picky eater who is normally not interested in pizza, but the pizza is so good that he likes it a lot.

Conversational implicatures

According to Grice's finding (1975), **conversational implicatures** "depend on features of the conversational context, and are not determined by the conventional meaning of the sentences uttered". In other words, conversational implicatures refer to assumptions or inferences expressed by the speaker and inferred by the listener during a conversation. Besides, because these inferences are not directly reflected in the words used by the speaker, the participants need to cooperate to achieve effective communication. For example,

(2) *Alex: Are you going to join us?*

Bob: I have to study.

In this situation, Bob did not directly say that he is not going to join Alex and other friends, but we can infer from his utterance that he is unable to play with Alex and other friends by saying that he is busy studying.

As stated by David and David (2016), the finding of philosopher Grice (1975) about cooperative principles and their sub-maxims serves as the driving factor behind conversational implicature.

The cooperative principles encompass four sub-maxims that contribute to effective communication in conversations, four of which are the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of manners (Afrougheh & Lieaghat, 2017; Xiao, 2020)

With the maxim of quality, the speakers need to provide information that is reliable, precise, and proved by evidence, and obviously avoid any untruthful information or unsupported claims. Next, the maxim of quantity, indicates that the speakers should convey the right amount of information necessary for the conversation, which means that people need to speak or answer what others need to know and avoid excessive or insufficient details. Thirdly, in accordance with the maxim of relevance, the speakers should contribute information that is relevant to the ongoing conversation. Lastly, the maxim of manner necessitates speakers to communicate clearly and coherently, preventing ambiguity and unclear language (Grice, 1975).

In terms of **particularized conversational implicature**, it heavily depends on the context and on the speaker's intent, resulting in its manifestation solely within certain contextual situations (David & David, 2016). Overall, particularized implicatures are context-dependent. For instance,

(3) A: *Did you enjoy **the** movie?*

B: ***The popcorn** was great.*

In the above conversation, A is able to derive the implicature “the film was so boring and B did not really enjoy it” from B's statement. From this example, we can see that B's response correlates with the principle of relevance within the particular context of A's question. Another example is that,

(4) Anne: *Where are you going with the dog?*

Tim: *To the **V-E-T**.*

With this example, we can presuppose that Tim's dog is sick and that he is going to take it to the vet for check-ups, but instead of saying the word directly, he spelled it so that his dog would not understand.

On the other hand, **generalized conversational implicature** is less straightforward than conversational one, as the implied meaning can be reflected through the use of certain words rather than depending on the context (David & David, 2016). An example is that.

(5) John ate ***some*** of the cookies.

The quantifier “some” implies that John did not eat all of the cookies. Another example is that:

(6) *I was sitting in **a** car, and **a little** boy knocked on the door.*

In phrases like “a car” or “a little boy, the speaker uses the article “a” to indicate that both the car and the little boy do not belong to him or her.

The next implicature is scalar implicature (or quantity implicature). According to Hansen and Strudsholm (2008), scalar implicature is a linguistic phenomenon that ascribes a hidden significance that goes beyond the overt or direct meaning of a statement. It implies that the speaker intentionally chose not to employ a more detailed or forceful expression along the same

spectrum of meaning. Besides that, scalar implicature is a type of conversational implicature that arises from the use of scalar expressions, such as “*all, most, many, some, and few*” or “*always, often, and sometimes*”. These expressions represent different levels on a scale of quantity and quality. When a speaker uses a scalar expression in a specific context, it often leads the listener to infer something beyond the literal meaning of the words (Yule, 1996). An example of scalar implicature is that:

(7) *Some of the students failed the test.*

In this example, the word “some” implies that not “all” students in class failed the test. Another example is that:

(8) *They are sometimes late for class.*

In this example, the word “sometimes” indicates that they are not “always” or “never” late for school.

In a word, different types of implicatures are beneficial for both speakers and listeners or readers. For speakers, they can express their implicit ideas without saying them directly. On the other hand, they help readers or listeners figure out the true meaning of an utterance.

Definitions and characteristics of slogans

According to Niwa et al. (2021), slogans are concise and memorable phrases designed to convey a specific message or idea, often used in advertising and political campaigns. They serve as powerful communicational tools that encapsulate the essence of a product, candidate, or cause, aiming to influence and persuade the target audience. In addition, Macaryus et al. (2020) determined that slogans are characterized by their ability to evoke emotions and create a lasting impression, often relying on rhetorical devices to enhance their effectiveness. In the same vein, Gilliland (2018) believed that a slogan is a concise phrase or collection of words that convey the core message of a brand, crafted with the intention of being memorable to consumers. Furthermore, Suyitno (2005) claimed that slogans often contain implicit propositions that require an understanding of the broader discourse to fully grasp their intended message. In the field of marketing, slogans reflect a brand’s essence, identity, and competitive positioning. To be more specific, they are crucial for creating brand recognition and emotional resonance among consumers, influencing purchasing behavior through repeated exposure in media (Stumpf, 2009).

Regarding the characteristics of slogans, Gilliland (2018) stated that an effective slogan needs to have three factors. First of all, like a song chorus, a slogan should be short yet captivating, aiming to make a lasting initial impression on customers. Additionally, it should convey positive aspects that provide advantages to consumers. The uniqueness is the final feature for a well-crafted slogan. Typically, people link a slogan with its respective company; hence, a distinctive slogan can result in consumers remembering the company for a longer time.

Previous studies

In the book of Klima (2008), the author states that an advertisement is always associated with several factors, including cultural values, traditions, experiences, and even history. Therefore, it is essential to identify the context of an advertisement when interpreting it.

According to Erisha (2016) whose paper's primary focus lies in the examination of implicatures or implied meanings within advertisements related to life insurance found that slogans from insurance companies all reflect factors about providing financial solutions, ensuring a secure and happy life, safeguarding health, and providing comprehensive life solutions that are accessible by becoming a part of the insurance company. Those slogans also implicitly highlight the companies' quality. Similarly, according to Verboven (2012), slogans that draw from pragmatic inspiration have played a role in enhancing public approval of the chemical industry. Concerning slogans used in television commercials, they are seen as suggesting the exceptional quality of the products being advertised. They also include phrases and words that implicitly aim to boost sales, create a positive image of the product, and promote the manufacturer itself (Ashari, 2009; Ekoyono, 2019; Herman et al., 2022). Another similar study on shop signs has showed that this type of advertisement often implies key factors like superiority (a strong impression of product or service quality), identity (business identity), relationship (the emphasis on connections with customers, fostering trust and familiarity), and scale (the size of the business, indicating whether it is small, medium, or large) (Pham, 2024).

Besides that, Wijayatiningsih (2018), through the analysis of advertisement slogans on TIME magazine advertisement, figures out that particularized implicatures outweigh generalized ones.

Research gaps

After reviewing the previous studies, several research gaps emerge. First of all, this area has not been extensively studied in Vietnam. While previous research has focused on the role of pragmatic inspiration and the implicit promotion of product quality in advertisements, there is limited exploration of how the cultural values are reflected through slogans, particularly within the context of Vietnamese local brands. Hence, this study aims to address these gaps by analyzing the implicatures and hidden messages within the slogans of Vietnamese local brands.

Research questions

What are the implied meanings of the slogans used by Vietnamese local brands?

Methods

This descriptive study adopts methodologies outlined by Erisha (2016). Data collection was conducted using an observational method, specifically employing a Non-Participant Observation Technique. In detail, the non-participant observation technique is a research method where the observer does not engage with the subjects being studied (Esiri et al., 2017).

The slogans were gathered from the official websites of various local brands in Vietnam and recorded in a Word document. The authors chose to visit the homepages of these brands because these sites provide a trustworthy source of information, ensuring the slogans are accurately represented. Nevertheless, owing to the aim of the paper, after considering a whole host of slogans, only those containing the terms "Việt Nam" or "Việt" would be analyzed. At the end, there were 5 chosen slogans.

In the analysis process, the writer might look for some information about the brands such as the process of formation, the goals, the achievements, or the values, to form background

information about the companies. The author also collected illustrations or pictures of those slogans to analyze those slogans more comprehensively. In the data analysis, the researcher first provided a general overview of the local brands. Subsequently, the researcher linked this overview with an analysis of the slogans to uncover the implied meanings and identify the relationship between the slogans and the corresponding goals or values. This approach enables the researcher to find the underlying messages and intentions of the advertisers, effectively capturing the ideas, thoughts, and messages conveyed through the slogans.

Following the slogans analysis, the researcher would present the results through the informal method, which means that the researcher only provided an explanation about the findings.

Results/Findings and discussion

In this section, the writer intends to examine a range of slogans from domestic Vietnamese brands with the aim of finding out the hidden messages of them.

Nâng niu bàn chân Việt



This slogan can be basically translated as “Cherishing Vietnamese Feet”. This slogan belongs to Biti’s, a prominent Vietnamese footwear brand with a widespread retail presence across the nation (<https://bitis.com.vn/pages/ve-bitis>).

The first implied meaning can refer to the commitment of the brand to produce pairs of shoes that are not only soft but also durable, providing a sense of nurturing and care to its customers. As a consequence, customers themselves will be motivated and confident that they are choosing the right product. Moreover, it can be a way to build brand loyalty and a deeper connection with the customers. Secondly, the slogan may imply Biti’s footwear will serve as steadfast companions on the Vietnamese individual’s journeys to success and achievement.

Vì một Việt Nam khỏe mạnh hơn

The aforementioned slogan can be interpreted as “For a healthier Vietnam”. This slogan is of the company Lifebuoy, one of the top international hygiene companies in the world. Lifebuoy has played a crucial role in forming the regular washing habit among Vietnamese people for over 25 years and during the Covid-19 pandemic, the brand had joined hands to prevent the infection of the virus (<https://www.lifebuoy.vn/>).

Overall, the slogan is like a commitment of Lifebuoy towards enhancing the public’s health as well as living standards for the Vietnamese community. In its primary implication, the sanitation conditions in Vietnam were previously not good; however, innovative products from Lifebuoy have considerably improved the situation, as indicated by the term “hơn.” The second unrevealed meaning is that the company wants to emphasize that its products are of high quality, possessing the capability to effectively eliminate viruses and bacteria; hence, enhancing the general health of the community. It suggests that the company’s products are not just for

individual use but are part of a broader mission to promote hygiene and prevent illness on a national scale. Finally, the use of “Việt Nam” in the slogan reinforces a sense of unity and community. It implies that Lifebuoy’s mission is inclusive, targeting the health of all Vietnamese people, regardless of their background. This can foster a sense of collective responsibility and encourage customers to see themselves as part of a larger effort to achieve better health outcomes for everyone in the country.

Vươn cao Việt Nam



The slogan “Vươn cao Việt Nam,” originated from the Vinamilk company, can be translated to “Elevate Vietnam.” The company is known for the superior quality of its dairy products, especially milk, and is ranked among the top 40 largest companies globally according to Forbes (<https://www.vinamilk.com.vn/>).

Concerning the implied meanings, the first meaning may originate from the story about the average height of Vietnamese people. According to Dr. Cuong Nguyen in the blog named “Khám phá chiều cao người Việt cổ”, the average height of Vietnamese has increased rapidly compared to the past due to the development of lifestyle, healthcare and nutrition fields. Therefore, the slogan can be interpreted as a declaration by the company about the nutritional value of its milk products, suggesting that consumption of their products can contribute to the physical growth of Vietnamese individuals. Second, the slogan also highlights the goal of the company which is to promote superior quality dairy products from Vietnam on a global scale, thereby showcasing the excellence of Vietnamese goods to the international market.

Niềm tự hào của Việt Nam



“Niềm tự hào của Việt Nam” - “The pride of Vietnam” is the slogan of Bia Saigon, a well-known beer brand coming from Vietnam. With more than 145 years of experience, the brand is trying its best to satisfy domestic and global customers (<https://www.sabeco.com.vn/>).

In Vietnam, the agricultural industry is one of the leading economic sectors and rice is the top product exporting to other parts of the world. Moreover, Vietnam is even claimed as the 6th country in producing and exporting rice. Through the slogan, the company wants to highlight that the beer is crafted from premium fermented rice from Vietnamese land, making it like a quintessence that fills us with pride. Furthermore, by stating that it is “the pride of Vietnam,” the brand emphasizes its deep roots in Vietnamese culture and history, suggesting that it is a product that embodies the spirit and tradition of the nation. The slogan also implies a high standard of quality. It suggests that Bia Sài Gòn is a product that meets and exceeds expectations, both domestically and internationally. The brand is positioning itself as a top-tier beer that represents

the best of what Vietnam has to offer.

Mỹ phẩm thuần chay cho vẻ đẹp thuần Việt



This slogan is from an organic beauty brand named Cocoon. Despite being relatively new in the market, Cocoon's skincare products, which are derived from fresh vegetables and flowers such as coffee beans, roses, turmeric, pomelos, and others, have captured the attention of Vietnamese women. Furthermore, the brand is committed to being cruelty-free by refraining

from animal testing, which has added to its popularity (<https://cocoovietnam.com/>).

Primarily, the implied message suggests that the use of vegetable-based products for skincare and hair care has been a long-standing tradition among Vietnamese women, which is also the context of the slogan. Taking advantage of this habit, the brand has been developing organic products which are good for not only the skin and hair but also the environment. The second meaning is that the brand wishes to contribute to Vietnamese beauty by taking care of the appearance of Vietnamese women, making them more gorgeous and shining naturally without too much effort.

Discussion

Overall, there are several commonalities between these slogans. The first similarity which is also the most noticeable one is that there are several slogans (Bia Sai Gon and Cocoon) associated with the cultural values of Vietnam, which makes the brands distinct and outstanding from others, which is aligned with the finding of Klima (2008) who found that slogans have a strong connection with the cultural values of a nation. Secondly, they all highlight the exceptional quality of their products and the goal to be prominent all over the world, which corresponds with the finding of Erisha (2016). In Erisha's (2016) study, the author investigated the majority of the slogans of insurance companies that claim that their products are the best solutions for people's lives. Next, all of them are short but attractive enough to make a good first impression and stay in people's minds for a long time. Last but not least, the convenience and comfort of customers are consistently prioritized by these brands, which is clearly shown in the slogans and reminds of the quote "The Customer is God".

Conclusion

All in all, thanks to different types of implicature, the speakers can express their implicit ideas without saying it directly. However, as the true meaning is often context-dependent and influenced by speakers' intentions and shared knowledge, it is crucial for people to acknowledge implicatures. Understanding implicatures helps us navigate the intricacies of language use and enables more effective and accurate interpretation of messages in various social and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the analysis of slogans can be useful for students in fields such as linguistics, marketing, and cultural studies in many aspects. First of all, linguistics students can study these analyses to explore how language and cultural context, especially implicatures, reflect the brand's identity, values, or goals, which paves the way for further research about implicatures and its application in real-life contexts. Next, marketing students can take advantage of the study to create slogans that are more purposeful and applicable, effectively conveying a brand's intentions or values.

Limitation

On the other hand, due to the limit and random selection of research samples, other types of slogans have not been examined; hence, future studies can consider applying the same analytical strategy for other slogans to figure out similarities and differences between them in terms of pragmatics and meanings.

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