

An Analysis of the Advertising Language of Two Vietnamese and Two American Organic Skincare Brands

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Courtesy: <https://coconoriginal.com/>

Abstract

This paper examines and compares the advertising language use in four video

advertisements of two Vietnamese organic skincare brands, namely Cocoon, and Cococherry Mộc An, and two American organic skincare brands which are Andalou Naturals and True Botanicals. After providing a brief overview of each company's history and philosophy, the study analyzes the four commercial videos in terms of (1) multimodal texts, i.e. the linguistic, visual, audio, and gestural modes, (2) the ideologies applied in the advertisements, which are greenism, nationalism and consumptionism, and (3) the company's identity and value.

Keywords: Advertising language, Organic skincare, Analysis.

Introduction

Ever since humans learned how to produce and trade goods, there has been advertising. Advertising has taken on many forms over the years and is now deeply ingrained in our daily lives. Visual resources like paintings and moving pictures have been highlighted in modern society as video media, which has become popular. The visual/optical mode is effective at grabbing customers' attention by clearly describing the qualities and functions of the product. Nevertheless, when it comes to accurately conveying the information that senders intended, language resources continue to be quite important in the advertising sector. Since language is an agreed social contract, it is more objective than a visual representation, which is subject to personal interpretation. Therefore, it implies that the language and visual modes are complementary. Additionally, every aspect of communication, including those modes, has unique meaning-related potentials or restrictions. As a result, rather than using only one isolated mode, the advertising industry has chosen to express meaning across a variety of modes such as linguistic, visual, audio, and gestural. As a result, it is necessary to investigate how different communication methods interact with linguistic components to convey messages in advertisements.

Advertising is intentional communication used to persuade potential customers to buy a good or service. Advertising language is a tactic used to sway consumers' opinions and motivate their behavior. Consequently, ideological elements are present in advertising language to intrigue the consumers. Additionally, as the linguistic aspects in advertising are employed to improve a company's reputation and reflect the values it pursues, it reflects the

company's political, social, and cultural viewpoints.

In recent years, the skincare market has been growing tremendously and thereby has transformed itself into a high-profit market, as people start paying more attention towards their skin, which is reasonable since skin comprises the largest organ of human body. Organic skincare that focuses on safe, condensed ingredient list without the use of detrimental chemicals has become a huge trend lately as the use of plant extracts and herbs are becoming more popular in modern skincare formulations. The global demand for organic personal care products has skyrocketed in recent years. As a consequence, in order to stand out and have a stable position in this highly competitive industry, it is of the importance for brands and companies to possess clear brand identity and quality promotion campaigns, which include effective advertisements.

This paper compares and analyses the advertising language of two Vietnamese organic skincare brands, namely Cocoon and Cococherry Mộc An, and two US organic skincare brands which are Andalou Naturals and True Botanicals. The reason why these four brands are chosen to be analyzed is that they are all well-known brands in the organic skincare market in both countries and have all been founded for quite some time. Moreover, since advertising is the product of combining various modes, it is of importance to examine advertising language from diverse standpoints. Throughout this paper, the advertising language of the four mentioned brands in their commercial videos will be studied and analyzed.

Literature Review

Advertising focuses on grabbing the viewer's attention. Advertising, then, is the act of bringing something to people's attention through communication. However, as technology develops and market competition rises, an advertisement's success or failure depends on how its message is delivered. As a result, advertising is forced to design with depth and refinement by fusing many modes, ideologies, and values that are prized by both companies and customers.

Multimodal Texts

If a consumer pays attention to an advertisement, it signifies that their senses - such as sight and hearing - have been stimulated to become interested in the sender's sign. The decisions that consumers make about evaluations and purchases are influenced by visual cues (Krishna, 2011). Additionally, aural inputs play a role in how consumers interpret and express their emotions. It indicates that using multiple forms of communication rather than only linguistic mode will help to maximize the stimulation of vision and hearing in a short amount of time. Additionally, as several components combine to create an advertising message, their decryption must soon follow. As a result, studying multimodal texts, which means studying how video, images, and sound in addition to texts are combined to evoke senses, should come before.

Social semiotics, which links a concept's (the signified) and a sound pattern's (the signifier) relationship through language, is the source of multimodal texts (Eco & Thomas, 1983). In other terms, the signified is the idea or meaning that the signifier expresses, whereas the signifier is defined as an item like a sound, image, or text. Understanding the signifier and the signified is therefore the key component. The latter is the interpretation that comprises of two sorts, whereas the former is the color, logo, slogan, and punchline in advertising. The first is "denotative," while the second is "connotative." While a sign's denotation can be defined as its literal and factual meaning, a sign's connotation relates to its sociocultural and individual associations, including its ideological and sentimental components (Daniel, 2007).

Advertising Language and Ideology

Advertising should be done specifically to encourage people to make purchases by grabbing their attention. They are crucial for establishing customer trust in brand-related information, such as whether a brand is trustworthy or not. These have an additional effect on consumer choice and brand perception. The ideal approach for companies to accomplish these goals is to produce a text that anybody can identify with because familiarity is directly related to positivity, which makes people's decision-making easier.

Contrarily, unfamiliarity encourages people to handle things more cautiously and

analytically. Therefore, the ideological system is a manipulative tool used in advertising to promote the use of the product by creating a favorable perception of it. Advertising was recognized by Goldman (1992) as a crucial institution for creating and disseminating ideology. Therefore, it is important to look at which ideology has been accepted in the sender's message and how ideology is constructed inside the advertising discourse in order to comprehend the hidden meaning of advertising.

Language Reflecting Identity and Value

According to Johannessen et al. (2010), advertising messages are employed to build a strong brand image, therefore the language used represents the company's social and cultural ideologies. Building an image is important since it reflects the company's personality and direction. Because of this, the message incorporates the values and ideas that a company upholds. However, often, the corporation targets specific audiences before establishing its line and brand. As a result, the company's identity organically reflects the customer group's priority value. Additionally, the language used in advertising reflects the values and beliefs of the target audience. Thus, it is necessary to read the advertising language in order to fully understand the company's character and the consumers' priority value.

Linguistic Style

Various styles are used based on the circumstance. People adopt a formal style when perceived as necessary for prestige, and an informal manner when things are more laid back (Van Herk, 2012). Long and complicated sentences, sophisticated language, strictly adhered-to grammatical rules, the absence of colloquial idioms, and a persistently somber tone are characteristics of the formal style. Contrarily, informal style, which forgoes the formal tie-up, is associated with speaking non-standard dialect, which maximizes communication and rhetorical efficacy.

Background

The paper examines four video advertisements posted on YouTube. All these advertisements are from four organic skincare brands, namely Cocoon, Cococherry Mộc An, Andalou Naturals and True Botanical. The analysis is carried out to have a more profound look at how the brands introduce and present themselves. It is of great importance to understand a company's history and their philosophy before analyzing their advertising language. As the four brands have similar philosophy and target audience, it has led to some similarities in their advertising language.

Organic Skincare and Its Rising Popularity

Organic skincare has become a huge trend in recent years as the use of plant extracts and herbs are becoming more popular in modern skincare formulations. This is due to a large quantity of people going green or simply because of people's fear of harmful and damaging preservatives and chemicals.

The History of the Four Organic Skincare Brands

Needless to say, the USA has always been in the lead when it comes to the beauty industry, specifically the skincare industry. They are also a nation where the number of people going green is tremendously high. As a consequence, organic skincare has been a blooming trend for the past few decades. There have been many brands established that focus on organic skincare products. Andalou naturals and True Botanicals are prime examples.

California, a state known for its creative ingenuity, technology, and sunlight, is where Andalou Naturals was born and raised. Stacey Kelly Egide and Mark A. Egide founded Andalou in 2010. The company thinks that one should never have to sacrifice ethics for effectiveness. Therefore, all Andalou products are vegetarian, gluten-free, and 98% naturally derived. Along with the brand's commitment to using natural, sustainable skincare ingredients, they made history in 2011 when Andalou Naturals became the first cosmetics company to have all products certified as non-GMO.

Hillary Peterson founded True Botanicals in 2014 after her experience with thyroid cancer, which motivated her to establish a skincare line that was equally concerned with

health and efficacy. MADE SAFE, a nonprofit organization that checks ingredients for over 5,000 known harmful compounds, has approved the True Botanicals line of goods.

Although being a little behind with the “organic skincare” concept, using herbs and plants as medicine and beauty products has always been common here. As a result, when the notion of organic skincare is introduced, the demand has been consistently high and is continuously growing.

Born in 2013, Cocoon quickly became popular for their focus on using natural ingredients. Cocoon is the first Vietnamese brand to receive the certification of being cruelty-free and vegan from PETA. In addition, Cocoon also says no to microplastics in products, use packaging made of environmentally friendly and recyclable materials. COCOON is the first Vietnamese cosmetic brand approved in the Leaping Bunny program committed to not testing on animals. In addition, COCOON products are 100% vegan, registered by The Vegan Society, a long-standing organization.

CocoCherry Mộc An is a cosmetic brand born in 2014, developed by a team of Pharmacists of Hanoi University of Pharmacy with the passion of creating cosmetic products with natural and organic ingredients. CocoCherry Mộc An’s products are fully evaluated for safety before use, manufactured in a factory that meets the standards of cosmetic production, fully meeting the requirements of the state management agency on cosmetics.

Similar Philosophy and Aims

As the four brands come from similar background and have similar aims and inspiration, they have several similarities in their philosophy: to beautify and nurture people’s skin with safe, familiar and effective ingredients, say no to animal testing and care for the environment.

Cocoon and Cococherry Mộc An were both born with a simple reason: to beautify Vietnamese people with familiar ingredients. All of their products are carefully sourced, clinically tested, vegan and cruelty-free. Their products are claimed to be safe for even

pregnant women and small children with carefully selected natural ingredients and little to no use of preservatives. The brands claim to respect nature, strive to use recycled packaging and actively participate in activities for the environment.

Compared with the two Vietnamese brands, Andalou Naturals and True Botanicals have slightly higher price range but same philosophy and aims regardless. It is the brands' belief that *ethics should never be compromised in favor of efficacy*. What set the two brands apart from other organic skincare brands is their technology or their collaboration with prestigious organizations. PhytoCellTec® Fruit Stem Cell Science is Andalou Naturals's signature innovation and is formulated within their products. As for True Botanicals, they always collaborate with prestigious laboratories or universities for their products.

Analysis of the Four Advertising Videos

Multimodal Texts

Analyzing multimodal texts for examining the advertising language is vital. The study looks into the four advertisements and analyzes the visual, audio, and gestural modes.

Cocoon Brand Advertising

Linguistic	Use of Standard Vietnamese (Formal style), written form (subtitle, slogan- MỸ PHẨM THUẦN CHAY CHO NÉT ĐẸP THUẦN VIỆT, which means Pure vegan skincare products for pure Vietnamese beauty).
Visual	Video (filmed video), logo, subtitle, brown and beige background symbolizing the main ingredient which is coffee.
Audio	Recorded instrumental music.
Gestural	None

CocoCherry Mộc An Brand Advertising

Linguistic	Use of Standard Vietnamese (Formal style), written form (subtitle, slogan- LÀNH TỪ NGUYÊN LIỆU SẠCH, which means SAFE NOURISHMENT FROM CLEAN INGREDIENTS), speaking form (narration).
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Visual	Video (filmed video with some acting and interview), logo, subtitle (small-sized, bottom-centerd of the video)
Audio	Spoken voice (a woman’s narration), recorded instrumental music.
Gestural	Performance (acting).

Andalou Naturals Brand Advertising

Linguistic	Use of Standard English (Formal style), written form (subtitle, slogan - INSPIRED BY NATURE. REALIZED BY SCIENCE).
Visual	Video (filmed video), logo, subtitle, background with coordinating colors according to the ingredients.
Audio	Recorded instrumental music.
Gestural	Performance (acting).

True Botanicals Brand Advertising

Linguistic	Use of Standard English (Formal style), written form (subtitle, slogan - LET’S BE THE ONES WHO SEEK THE TRUTH AND SHARE THE TRUTH), speaking form (narration).
Visual	Video (filmed video), logo, subtitle, blue background and colorful background that focuses on nature.
Audio	Spoken voice (a woman’s narration).
Gestural	Performance (acting).

The linguistic (written and speaking form) style of the video advertisements of all the four brands is formal, using Standard English or Standard Vietnamese. In terms of lexis, the vocabulary of CocoCherry Mộc An is far more advanced than that of Cocoon, as the former involves detailed narration of not only the features of the products but also the manufacturing process. Similarly, the vocabulary of True Botanicals is more complex than that of Andalou Naturals. For instance, in the True Botanicals’ video advertisement, there are sentences like “By refusing toxins, choosing transparency and revealing that what’s most potent can be equally safe.” or “Let’s be the ones who choose what heals instead of

harms”. These sentences are much more indirect and poetic than just directly saying ‘safe, clean, effective ingredients without toxins’.

Conversely, the advertisements of Cocoon and Andalou Naturals have a more straightforward way of conveying meaning and transmitting message. The subtitle and slogan show the absence of commas, periods, and connectives. It is noticeable that for these two brands, they are very straightforward, mainly focus on stating features, achievements, and commitments, which can easily be seen through the way these two brands list out the features, the ingredients and their strong points.

On one hand, the audio mode of CocoCherry Mộc An’s advertisement comprises of a woman’s spoken voice (narration) and instrumental music, which conveys vividly the feeling of nouns such as “sincere heart,” “safe”, “clean”, “green lifestyle” and “truth.”. On the other hand, the advertisement of True Botanicals only comprises a woman’s spoken voice (narration) with no background music, which creates an impression of “truth”, “transparency” just like their main hashtag on the ad “#TRUTHREVEALED”. However, while the advertisement of True Botanicals only includes a narration with very poetic and indirect way of introducing the brand, the narration of Cococherry Moc An is very detailed and informative, which discusses not only about the story of the founder but also the manufacturing and supervising process.

The visual mode is where many similarities can be found. First and foremost, all four brands tend to focus primarily on the “natural” ingredients, hence the usage of brown or green background which leads customers to relate that to nature. For Cocoon, they focus on the coffee, be it the coffee beans or the coffee berries and showcase the images of these ingredients throughout the whole advertisement. This also applies to Andalou Naturals since they also showcase numerous ingredients as well as their names in the ad. CocoCherry Mộc An and Andalou Naturals do not really showcase individual ingredients and mainly focus on them. Rather than that, they use background that looks like a garden or forest full of plants and sunlight which immediately creates indication to nature. Andalou Naturals and True Botanicals also showcase women with very glowing skin, youthful expression dancing or looking joyful to create the impression that using their products will surely help brighten the

mood, release all the worries and better the skin condition. Cocoon and True Botanicals use very large-sized texts to create strong impression and evoke attention, whereas Andalou Naturals uses medium-sized texts and CocoCherry Mộc An uses small-sized subtitles at the bottom-center of the screen as the focus is not only on the texts but also the visual and the audio.

Advertising Language and Ideology

The ideologies applied in the advertisements are ‘greenism’, ‘nationalism’ and ‘consumptionism.’

Greenism's primary objective is to increase public understanding of the value of environmental protection. It clarifies that the only way to restore the environment is through mindful, sustainable activities. The ideology of greenism can be seen clearly in all four advertisements, as all of the brands focus on using natural ingredients, being cruelty-free, using recyclable, sustainable packaging and so on.

As for nationalism, this ideology can be noticed clearly through the two Vietnamese brands’ advertisements. For Cocoon, their slogan is “Pure skincare products for pure Vietnamese beauty.” They also highlight the fact that all of their ingredients are native to Vietnam. The same goes to CocoCherry Mộc An. For Andalou Naturals, they also introduce themselves as “#1 US Natural Skincare Brand”.

As all the advertisements’ purpose is to introduce the brand and encourage customers to purchase their products, the ideology of consumerism is certainly incorporated directly or indirectly. They keep emphasizing on the fact that using clean, safe, natural products is better and therefore encourage customers to get rid of their normal, mainstream skincare products that are full of synthetic chemicals in order to switch to organic, natural skincare products.

A Company’s Identity and Value

As there are conflicting values in the market such as price and service, consumer’s value judgment is the primary factor that leads to purchase. That is why the advertising

language of the four skincare brands try to appeal to the consumer's value system, which reveals in the slogans of these companies.

Cocoon's slogan is "Mỹ phẩm thuần chay cho nét đẹp thuần Việt", which means Pure vegan skincare products for pure Vietnamese beauty. This slogan indicates that Cocoon is a brand that focuses on natural, vegan, organic skincare products that suits the skin condition of Vietnamese people, as they clearly state that all their ingredients are native to Vietnam. They also emphasize on key words such as "BPA-free", "paraben free", "cruelty free" to reinforce the brand's philosophy in order to attract those who are intrigued or are passionate about trying an organic, natural and certified Vietnamese skincare brand with an affordable price range.

CocoCherry Mộc An's slogan is "LÀNH TỪ NGUYÊN LIỆU SẠCH", which means SAFE NOURISHMENT FROM CLEAN INGREDIENTS. Similar to Cocoon, they also focus on natural, vegan, organic skincare products that suits the skin condition of Vietnamese people. The key words or phrases that appear dominantly in their advertisement are "no toxic preservatives", "safe", "clean", "suitable for all skin types", "suitable for pregnant women and young children", "certified", "sustainable" and so on. This will surely attract those who are intrigued or are passionate about trying an organic, natural, and certified Vietnamese skincare brand or those who have extremely sensitive, irritative skin and want to have some calming, nourishing products that are free from harmful chemicals.

For Andalou Naturals, their slogan is "INSPIRED BY NATURE. REALIZED BY SCIENCE." This helps them to set their brand apart from other organic skincare brands as a brand that not only use effective natural ingredients but also implement their own exclusive technology to maximize the effect of these natural ingredients.

The same case happens for True Botanicals. Their slogan is LET'S BE THE ONES WHO SEEK THE TRUTH AND SHARE THE TRUTH. Their advertisement has many key words such as "truth", "nourish", "heals", "without toxins", "safe", "potent", "protects" and "transparency". This shows that they are completely truthful and transparent with their products, specifically their ingredients, which surely will attract customers who are really

Careful with choosing their skincare products.

Conclusion

Advertising is combined with a variety of economic tactics and communication modes. As a consequence, a variety of factors, including ideologies that influence customers' value judgments as well as the political and social stances of businesses, are encoded in advertising language. The language approach was sufficient for achieving past communication goals. However, as technology and society improve, current relationships can no longer be adequately achieved by a single piece. Today, a variety of artistic mediums, including plays, musicals, movies, and TV commercials, combine language and other resources. As a result, it is preferable to interpret advertising using a combination of several perspectives and styles. Furthermore, customers unknowingly aid in its reproduction as advertising signals serve as vehicles for the dissemination of ideologies. In light of this, the study posits that the essence of linguistics and the best way to communicate with the general public both include recognizing and analyzing the meanings of advertising signs. In this sense, linguistics has more opportunity to interact with the general population, making it more pragmatic and emphasizing the importance of its practitioners.

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