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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## A Multimodal Cognitive Approach to the Conceptualization of Coffee

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**ABSTRACT**

Metaphor is pervasive in our lives. In recent years, linguists have been prone to believe that metaphor is not only a figure of speech but also a way of thinking. It has been studied in a wide range of fields in which advertising is a typical one. In order to explore the conceptualization of coffee advertisements and Chinese coffee advertisements, the present paper combines multimodal metaphors and primary metaphors to present the promoting points of Luckin Coffee and Nescafe advertising based on a look at their promotion of coffee's taste, efficacy, and their cultural beliefs. The results show that the two companies use the same primary metaphor to highlight the taste of coffee. Coffee's refreshing function is highlighted in Nescafe advertising but not in Luckin's. In the cultural concept aspect, Nescafe advertisements encourage passion and individualism; while Luckin prefers the peace of the inner heart and the harmony between man and nature, its advertisements also tend to bring consumers aesthetic enjoyment by using wonderful words and images.

**KEYWORDS**

Luckin coffee; Multimodal Metaphor; Nescafe; Primary Metaphor

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**1. Introduction**

It is now widely accepted that metaphor is a way of thinking. It is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but also in thought and action. The ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Based on a deeper look at the tenet of conceptual metaphor, Forceville (2009) claimed that metaphor should manifest itself not only in language but also via other modes of communication, including pictures, music, sounds, and gestures. This is what the multimodal metaphor is for and has its role in a wide range of research domains, such as advertisements, films, cartoons, animation, and gestures, etc. (Rohdin 2009; Yu 2009; Teng 2009; Mittelberg & Waugh 2009; Ibarretxe-Antuano 2019, etc.). Among these fields, advertising can not be ignored due to its sweeping utilization of metaphors and the correlation between sales and metaphor usage. Tom & Eves (1999) allege that advertisements intend not only to inform but to persuade their viewers and trigger purchase intention; thus, metaphors have been widely adopted in advertising. Generally speaking, advertisements with metaphors in them could yield more positive attitudes towards those advertisements and their products than those without metaphors (Forceville 1996; Kim et al. 2012; McQuarrie & Phillips 2005; Phillips & McQuarrie 2009).

In contrast to monomodal metaphors, multimodal metaphors are more easily understood and accepted by audiences from different cultural backgrounds because the images and sounds being used are more universal than language, thus having a more powerful impact. In regard to research on advertising multimodal metaphors, researchers have achieved significant academic achievements in fast food, wine, and other products (Caballero 2009; Hernandez 2019, etc.). As for multimodal metaphors within the food advertising genre, Morris and Waldman (2011) examined metaphor usage and cultural attributes from food and beverage. Pérez-Hernández (2019) studied the interaction between primary metaphors and conceptual metaphors in printed advertising of fast food. Margariti, Boutsouki, Hatzithomas, and Zotos (2019) explored the conditional indirect effect of visual metaphors in food advertising. The role of applying food metaphors in non-food advertising and the principles and means of visualizing conceptual

metaphors in print wine advertising were fully explored (Boujena, Ulrich, Piris, & Chicheportiche 2021; Shilyaev & Shlotgauer 2021). However, few people studied the advertising metaphor of coffee, nor has a comparative analysis of the Chinese and Western coffee advertising metaphors been presented.

Coffee is a typical Western beverage that carries a large part of Western culture. According to Ferreira and Ferreira (2018), the Chinese market has witnessed three coffee waves, and the first coffee wave was the introduction of instant coffee in the 1970s, with Nestle and Maxwell House as the dominant brands. Today, Nescafe is still a much-publicized Western coffee brand in China. While, the domestic Luckin coffee, in recent years, has swept the country and gradually become a typical representative of Chinese coffee. It sees a growing coffee consumption trend in China these years. As a country with tea playing its main beverage, it's significant to explore the conceptualization of Chinese coffee advertising and Western coffee advertising. This paper thus offers a comparative analysis of multimodal metaphors in Nescafe and Luckin Coffee printed advertising. It is organized as follows. Section 2 defines the important notion of primary metaphor, multimodal metaphor, and metonymy, giving prominence to previous studies on advertising metaphors. Section 3 gives an account of the corpus and the metaphor identification method applied in this study. In section 4, we present the findings of the analysis and offer an account of the different conceptualizations of coffee. The summary and suggestions for further research are offered in the final section.

## **2. Theoretical basis**

### **2.1 Multi-modal metaphor and metonymy**

Forceville (2009) is of the opinion that metaphor should not be confined to just written symbols since metaphor is a way of thinking. On the contrary, it should be applied to image symbols and other areas. Based on that, the Multimodal Metaphor theory was fundamentally established. According to Forceville, a multimodal metaphor is a kind of metaphor in which the source domain and the target domain are exclusively or predominantly presented by different modes. Unremarkably, multimodal metaphors project the source domain — frequently exemplified in the image model — to the target domain, thus allowing audiences to understand the complicated target domain through intuitive and concrete metaphors. In advertising, the metaphorical targets, on the whole, coincide with promoted products.

Metonymy is the same basic human cognitive means; it also constructs our thinking and establishes the possibility of the connection between two entities (Taylor 1996). It is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model (Panther & Radden 1999). Therefore, based on the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy, we use “face” or “hand” to refer to a person. Metonymy is at the top of our conceptual apparatus. As is at the basis of metaphor and other cognitive models, it can not only be externalized into language but also can be vividly represented through other symbols (Goossens 1999; Barcelona, 2011). By and large, metonymy plays a fundamental role in constructing metaphors; thus, it is inevitably included in metaphor research. In advertising discourse, metonymy not only reveals rhetorical strategies but also has an important role in motivating metaphor, highlighting the mappings, and defining how the product should be perceived by the audience (Forceville 2009). Ungerer (2003) also indicated that the advertised products are usually metonymically represented by an image or brand of the product itself. It is in line with our study. In our data, the target domain (the product) is often represented by logos or the entity in a metonymy way, while the source domain is mostly activated by pictures and texts.

Previous studies have made remarkable contributions to the development of multi-modal metaphors and metonymy in food advertising. In her incursion into multimodal metaphors of wine, Alousque (2015) demonstrates that visual metaphor exerts a persuasive strategy to enhance the appeal of the wine. She also highlights the fact that visual metaphor predominantly relies upon perceptual similarity, conceptual similarity, or a combination of both types. Tseng (2017) explores how the multimodal metaphors of food were creatively represented and elaborated through the actual dining experience, based on a food design event called EATAIPEI. In the study, he shows not only how the primary metaphor THOUGHT IS FOOD is multimodally represented in EATAIPEI but also highlights that multimodal metaphors can be enriched by proposition schemas, cultural assumptions, and intercultural considerations. Our study also provides an explanation for the different conceptualizations of coffee with respect to cultural modes.

### **2.2 Primary metaphor**

Grady (1997) first classifies metaphors into primary metaphors and resemblance metaphors. Primary metaphor, according to him, is the fundamental of resemblance, which is often constructed based on embodied experience. In particular, he reckons that the source concepts for the primary metaphors involve some kind of content that is tied to physical perception or sensation. While the target concept lacks image content, they are responses to our perceptions of the world, not direct perceptions of the world. Related to our experience, primary metaphors can easily be understood by different language speakers. For instance, the primary metaphor, TIME IS A RESOURCE, is a common one in the English language, and it's related to the equivalence of time and money.

Previous studies often combined primary metaphors with resemblance metaphors. Concentrating on primary metaphors, “SIMILARITY IS ALIGNMENT”, “SIMILARITY IS PROXIMITY”, “THE NATURE OF AN ENTITY IS ITS SHAPE”, “CONSTITUENTS ARE CONTENTS”, and “CATEGORIES ARE BOUNDED SPATIAL REGIONS”, Ortiz (2010) observes how primary metaphors generate visual

constructs in advertising, and finds that symmetric object alignment is motivated by the presence of primary metaphors. Ortiz (2011) combines mono-modal metaphors with primary metaphors to analyze some film fragments; thus, Primary Metaphor Theory was proved to be also suitable in a visual context. In the food advertising genre, Pérez Hernández (2019) points out the role of primary metaphor in revealing the characteristics and importance of products. It does not appear as the source domain or the target domain, but it is flexible enough to be combined with exaggeration, metonymy, and other approaches to highlight the importance and characteristics of the product by attaching to the source domain or the target domain. So primary metaphors are included in the present paper. Target domains in our data are also being presented with primary metaphors, including “IMPORTANT IS BIG” and “IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL”.

### 3. Research design

The corpus was collected through the social media Weibo (or Microblog, a social media platform based on user relationships, it allows users to access through a variety of mobile terminals to share and spread information instantly and interactively in the form of text, pictures, videos and, other multimedia) where the official accounts of the two companies post advertisements. Setting coffee as the target domain, we downloaded 109 printed advertisements posted by Luckin Coffee’s official Weibo account this year, while Nescafe’s Weibo account only displays the latest 6 months’ posts, so we only collected 102 items of Nescafe advertisements. By using the corpus selecting method, the authenticity of the data was ensured.

According to the visual metaphor identification process VISMIP (Šorm, E. & G. J. Steen 2018), 70 of the Luckin Coffee advertisements and 38 of the Nescafe advertisements contain multimodal metaphors. Primary metaphor and the representations of nonverbal metaphor (Forceville 1996, 2009) — context, perceptual resemblance, filling a schematic slot unexpectedly, and simultaneous cuing, are also assisted in the identification process. By analyzing advertising metaphors, the present paper aims to answer the following questions:

What do they want to persuade customers through advertising metaphors?

What’s the difference in their cultural vision?

Why does the conceptualization of coffee have a difference?

According to Kövecses (2005), universality and variation in metaphors across and within languages and cultures are the most intriguing aspects of the study of metaphors and cultures. Though promoting sales is the grounding aim of advertising, it is also a product that reflects cultural values. Nescafe and Luckin coffee have disparate cultural backgrounds and business experiences, thus presenting differences in the conceptualization of coffee. It is of significance to figure out their advertising aims, cultural visions, and the reason for different coffee conceptualization.

### 4. The analysis of Luckin coffee and Nescafe advertising metaphor

Coffee is a utility product. Its advertising metaphors often contribute to sales. Comparing Luckin and Nescafe’s advertisements, we found that they predominantly promote taste, efficacy, and their own corporate culture. In terms of taste, both use metaphors to highlight the smoothness of coffee. While Nescafe makes efforts to emphasize the energy boost function of coffee, such a strategy doesn’t occur in Luckin Coffee’s data. In cultural respect, the two companies adopt different strategies as a result of different corporate cultures and incompatible Western and Eastern cultures. Nescafe advertising tends to portray the product as football, daydream, energy, and man in order to highlight the refreshment efficacy of coffee. (Table 1). While Luckin Coffee is fond of shaping coffee as fruit, flower, and other images that symbolize the harmony between man and nature (Table 2). COFFEE IS MAN is also used in Luckin Coffee’s advertising, but the personification doesn’t convey the same cultural vision as Nescafe; thus, it’s not included in the similarities between the two.

Table 1: Frequently used multimodal metaphors in Nescafe advertising

The target domain	The source domain	Metaphor	N	%
Coffee	Football	COFFEE IS FOOTBALL	9	23.68
Coffee	Day dream	COFFEE IS DAYDREAM	8	21.05
Coffee	Energy	COFFEE IS ENERGY	6	15.80
Coffee	Man	COFFEE IS MAN	5	13.16

Table 2: Frequently used multimodal metaphors of Luckin Coffee advertising

The target domain	The source domain	Metaphor	N	%
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Coffee	Fruit	COFFEE IS FRUIT	36	49.3
Coffee	Flower	COFFEE IS FLOWER	7	9.6
Coffee	Man	COFFEE IS MAN	7	9.6

**4.1 Primary Metaphors in Luckin Coffee and Nescafe Advertising**

Primary metaphors are applied to give prominence to the smoothness of coffee, especially in the latte. Here we present the same primary metaphor adopted in the taste promotion case (Figure 1). Figure 1a presents the Nescafe in the central, endowing coffee goodness due to the exerting of the primary metaphor IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL. The texts in the figure further bring to the fore the smooth taste of the latte, as in “周末就该轻盈丝滑” (the weekend should be light and smooth) and “快乐周末就该轻盈又丝滑” (a happy weekend should be light and smooth).

Luckin Coffee also uses primary metaphors (i.e. IMPORTANT IS BIG, IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL) to catch customers’ eyes. In the meanwhile, the primary metaphor assists in the identification of the target domain (Luckin coffee), along with the name of the coffee, “生椰丝绒拿铁” (coconut velvet latte), and the company’s logo on the cup. Around the coffee stretches a strand of white ribbon, establishing a multimodal metaphor LUCKIN COFFEE IS RIBBON. In virtue of such a metaphor, the notion of softness is transferred to the target domain “Luckin coffee”.



a. Nescafe advertisement      b. Luckin Coffee advertisement

Figure 1. The smoothness of coffee

**4.2 Multimodal metaphors in Nescafe coffee advertisements**

**4.2.1 Nescafe Coffee Is Football**

Football is a sport in which two teams play against each other on the same rectangular field in attack and defense according to certain rules, controlling and dominating the ball with the feet. Normally, one can hardly associate football with Nescafe coffee. However, the metaphor NESCAFE COFFEE IS FOOTBALL builds a mapping relationship between football and Nescafe coffee, attracting football lovers to purchase the coffee. Figure 2 presents a football field scenario. In the picture, a coffee bean is in the goal, which triggered the ICM of the football goal. Typically, it should be a football in the goal, but the coffee bean takes its place in it. Combing with the coffee brand in the picture, the multimodal metaphor “NESCAFE COFFEE IS FOOTBALL” is constructed by filling the schematic slot of football unexpectedly. The left corner of the picture presents the product “燃魂” (literally: burning souls). The text “沸腾之夜，先燃为敬” (literally “exciting night, burning first”) in the picture also provides hints about the intention of this delicate advertisement. Football is an exciting sport that brings joy to the whole world, especially during the pandemic. It is

also a symbol of power and passion, thus endowing Nescafe coffee with the features of football by exerting the metaphor. With the twenty-second World Cup underway, such a metaphor would increase sales since it gives customers a hint that Nescafe coffee is as exciting as football.



Figure 2 Nescafe Coffee Is Football

#### 4.2.2 Nescafe Coffee is Inspiration

Not many metaphors are exerted in the Nescafe corpus, while the multimodal metaphor NESCAFE COFFEE IS INSPIRATION takes a large part of the data. As seen in Figure 3, the product is called “轻咖白日梦”. “轻” means “light” in Chinese, “咖” often combines with “啡” to refer to “coffee”, while “白日梦” stands for “daydream” or “pipe dream”. Daydreams are fantasies and images that occur in the waking mind; usually, they are of happy thoughts, hopes, or ambitions. Though daydreamers may be dismissed as lazy, daydreaming is considered as a source of inspiration.

Inspiration is valuable to creative scholars or scientists in composing works or conducting research. In line with this belief, Figure 3 builds a situation where the spokesman is playing the piano while drinking Nescafe coffee. Behind him is a guitar, also a representative of music. Under such a scenario, Nescafe coffee is inevitably considered as the inspiration. Presenting the product in the bottom right corner of the figure, the target domain “Nescafe coffee” is activated. Over the person showed a line “白日梦香，灵感开张” (A sound daydream lets inspiration kicks in), where the source domain “inspiration” is represented in the text. Thus, the multimodal metaphor NESCAFE COFFEE IS INSPIRATION is established.



Figure 3 NESCAFE COFFEE IS INSPIRATION

4.2.3 Nescafe Coffee Is Energy

COFFEE IS ENERGY is a frequently seen metaphor in the data, for the main ingredient of coffee is caffeine, which accounts for the refreshing function of coffee. In our data, Nescafe selects source domains, including the sun and battery, to represent the multimodal metaphor. Primary metaphors often function as inputs to metaphoric blends in the process of conceptual integration. (Grady 2005) This is in line with the activation of the target domain in Figure 4. Setting a jar of coffee at the center of the figure, the conceptual mapping from “the central position” to “importance” (i.e. the primary metaphor IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL), whereby we understand the coffee as important. The primary metaphor IMPORTANT IS BIG is also established between the size of the coffee and “importance”. Both embodied metaphors attract customers’ attention and endow the jar of coffee with the characteristics of “important”. This accelerates the activation of the target domain, “Nescafe coffee”, licensed by the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy mapping from the logo on the product.

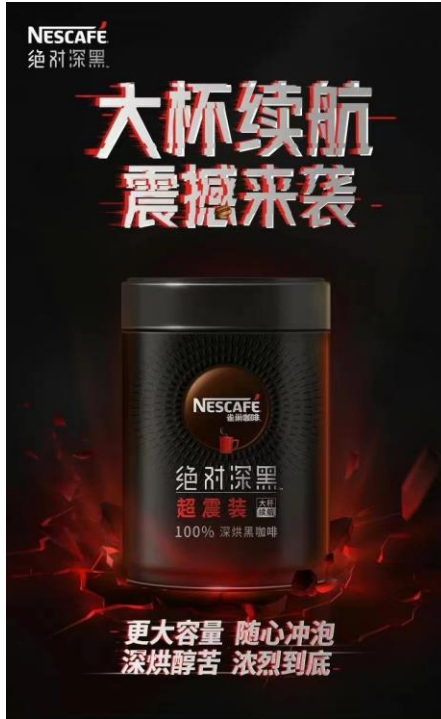


Figure 4 NESCAFE COFFEE IS ENERGY

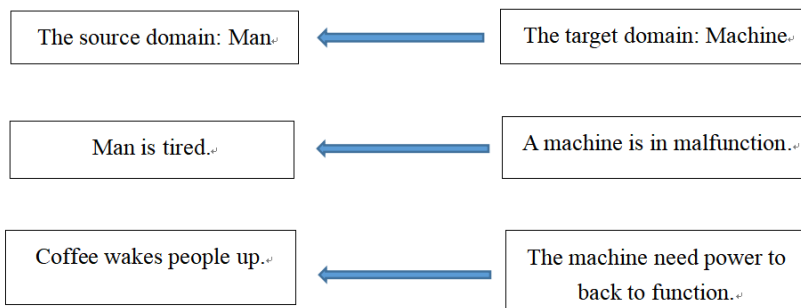


Figure 5 The mapping mode of MAN IS A MACHINE.

Again, the text over the coffee “大杯续航 震撼来袭” is bigger than the text at the bottom of the figure. Licensed by the primary metaphor IMPORTANT IS BIG, it leads to the successful interpretation of the source domain. The text “大杯续航 震撼来袭” (the large and long-lasting coffee comes in a shocking way) highlights the long-lasting of the product. While the word “续航” (endurance) originally refers to “a continuous and uninterrupted flight”, it sometimes also refers to “the number of miles a car can be driven continuously”. More often, it typically occurs in a context of an electronic device to describe the performance of a battery; thus, the source domain “energy” is metonymically activated by “battery”. In electronic devices, the long-lasting performance of the battery equals the good quality of the equipment. Similarly, the endurance of Nescafe coffee is equally seen as cost-effective

and good. With the help of such a metaphor, the characteristics of energy have been projected into the target domain “Nescafe coffee”, thus constructing Nescafe coffee as an energy boost. This metaphor also activates a superordinate metaphor, MAN IS A MACHINE, which is a common strategy adopted by advertisers to highlight the refreshing effect of coffee. Based on the embodied experience, consumers can quickly identify the metaphor and map the attributes of “machine” to the target domain “man”, thus regarding coffee as the energy to activate people. Electronic equipment needs power (energy) to run. When the power runs out, the equipment dies. Thus, energy is of significance to the equipment. A machine may break down, thus requiring energy such as electricity and oil to resume its operation. Similarly, people may feel tired, and coffee cheers people up. The metaphor presents coffee as energy, thus constructing the relationship between “the energetic state” and “Nescafe coffee”, contributing to the sales of the product. The correspondence between the source domain and the target domain of the conceptual metaphor is illustrated in Figure 5.

#### 4.2.4 Nescafe Coffee Is Man



Figure 6 NESCAFE COFFEE IS MAN

Personification is the extension of ontological metaphor. It is in line with the embodied principle of human cognition. Describing the product as man is a common strategy adopted in beverage advertisements. Nescafe also applies this metaphor to persuade customers that Nescafe coffee is refreshing or that it is good. Figure 8a builds 3 football scenarios where the goalkeeper, the defender, and the forward are respectively presented. In the 3 scenarios, coffee appears near the football players; thus, the target domains are activated in metonymy. While the source domains are represented by the texts “守门员” (the goalkeeper), “后卫” (the defender), and “前锋” (the forward). NESCAFE COFFEE IS FOOTBALL PLAYER is thus constructed, along with the subordinate multimodal metaphors NESCAFE COFFEE IS GOALKEEPER, NESCAFE COFFEE IS DEFENDER, and NESCAFE COFFEE IS FORWARD.

The goalkeeper is a necessary role for the football team, whose main responsibility is to prevent the opposing team from scoring with their hands, feet, and other body parts during the game. Defenders are predominantly responsible for the team’s defensive work; sometimes, they assist the forward in organizing the attack and controlling the pace of the game. The forward is mainly the first-line force in the offense. When defending, defenders should actively block, stop, intercept, disrupt the opponent’s counterattack, and get back to the backfield in time. These players exert their own strengths in scoring, both critical to a football game and also paving the ground for the interpretation of particular aspects of the product. For instance, the NESCAFE COFFEE IS GOALKEEPER metaphor endows the target domain (i.e. Nescafe coffee) with some of the attributes of a goalkeeper (i.e. stopping the goal). Combined with the text “美好一天守门员” (the goalkeeper of a wonderful day), the target domain is interpreted as a player who contributes to the creation of a wonderful day, indicating that Nescafe coffee brings customers “美好” (goodness). Being confined to the office and fitness context, the other two products are blessed with refreshing functions.

### **4.3. Multimodal metaphors in Luckin coffee advertisements**

#### **4.3.1 Luckin Coffee Is Fruit**

The most frequent metaphor of Luckin coffee conceptualization in our corpus involves projecting from fruit, such as green grapes, coconut, and grapefruit. Let us consider the metaphor in Figure 7. The coffee is deposited in the middle of the figure, and around the coffee are green grapes and milk. The target domain “Luckin coffee” is activated by the logo on the cup, while the source domain “green grape” is cued by the name of the coffee “初恋青提拿铁” (literally: first love green grape latte). Green grape is used as an ingredient in green grape flavored coffee. Constructing such a metaphor indicates that Luckin coffee is pure. Other than this, another metaphor LUCKIN COFFEE IS FIRST LOVE, is also established. First, love is seen as the sweetest and most wonderful experience, which normally occurs in youth. In China, we use “青涩” (not experienced or green) to describe first love, which sounds similar to the color of green grape (“青色” for “green”) and coincides with the flavor of green grape (sweet-and-sour). First love, for anybody, is the most unforgettable experience. The hazy and haunting feeling is a symbol of pureness. Calling coffee first love also transfers the notion of pureness to the target domain.



Figure 7 LUCKIN COFFEE IS FRUIT

#### **4.3.2 Luckin Coffee Is Flower**



Figure 8 LUCKIN COFFEE IS OSMANTHUS



The flower is a commonly used source domain in Luckin Coffee's advertising metaphor. In the corpus, Luckin principally shapes coffee as osmanthus, cherry blossom, camellia and other flowers. In Figure 8, combined with primary metaphors IMPORTANT IS BIG and IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL, the target domain "Luckin Coffee" was activated. While the source domain, the osmanthus was activated by the flower and the text "富桂厚乳拿铁" (osmanthus flavored newer latte). The product hit the market in autumn and attracted plenty of customers for using such a metaphor. In China, osmanthus is usually a representative of good things. Its pronunciation "gui" is the same as "贵", which is an auspicious word in Chinese culture. "Guibin" (贵宾) means "distinguished guests", and "guizhong" (贵重) is "valuable". That's why Luckin uses "富桂" in Figure 8, which activates "富贵" (wealthy and respectable). The Chinese people either pursue "富" (financial success) or "贵" (a high social status).



Figure 9 LUCKIN COFFEE IS CHERRY BLOSSOM

"桂" is a principal image that relates to career and success. Legend has it that there grows an osmanthus tree on the moon; thus, the Chinese regard it as something extraordinary. The ancient Chinese use "蟾宫折桂" (literally: breaking off an osmanthus branch in the moon) to represent excellent performance in the imperial examination, which is usually the starting point for an official career. "桂" is also tightly connected to one's moral sense, thus "桂折兰摧" means "the passing away of a high moral character". Poets regard the flower as a symbol of serene since the evergreen tree often grows in the secluded mountains. Moreover, the flower is a symbol of autumn for the Chinese people. Many typical festival foods, especially those festivals in autumn, take osmanthus as an ingredient. For instance, we eat osmanthus cake during the Mid-Autumn Festival and drink osmanthus wine at the Double Ninth Festival. Using such an auspicious source domain can project the characteristics of osmanthus to the product, thus attracting customers who pursue inner peace.

Figure 9 creates a wonderful scene of coffee and cherry blossom. The product is presented in the center of the picture, attracting customers' attention based on the primary metaphor IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL. Combined with the Luckin logo on the coffee, it metonymically activates the target domain "Luckin coffee". The source domain "cherry blossom" can be inferred from the flower in the figure and the text "珞珈樱花拿铁" (Cherry blossom flavored velvet latte). Usually producing flowers in March, the cherry blossom is thus a typical symbol of Spring. In China, spring symbolizes the beginning of a year; thus, we say "一年之计在于春, 一日之计在于晨" (Plan your year in spring and your day at dawn). It is also the symbol of hope, for spring is about rebirth and starting over. Choosing such source domains can project the characteristics of the source domains (wonderful, delicate, etc.) to the product. In the ad, Luckin uses elegant words and imagery to create a beautiful mood, thus highlighting Luckin Coffee's cultural philosophy of pursuing harmony between humans and nature.

#### 4.3.3 Coffee is man



Figure 10 LUCKIN COFFEE IS MAN

COFFEE IS MAN is a frequently used metaphor in Luckin Coffee's advertising. It conveys Luckin's pursuit of harmony between man and nature. Figure 10 builds a seaside vacation scene. In the picture are coconut trees, sand beaches, coffee, and a chair. Some coffee cups are scattered in the beach, while one is on the chair. The coffee cups metonymically activated the target domain Luckin Coffee, while the source domain was activated by ICM. Prototypically, in a seaside vacation ICM, people sit in a chair to bask in the sunshine and enjoy the peaceful moment. While in Figure 10, coffee takes up the slot of people; thus, the metaphor LUCKIN COFFEE IS MAN is constructed. Unlike Nescafe, Luckin set the source domain "man" in a peaceful environment that would not be disturbed by anyone or any work. By posting such a poster on Weibo, Luckin successfully establishes connections between the product and a wonderful vacation, thus arousing customers' desire to enjoy the peaceful moment. People with heavy work would regard drinking Luckin coffee as getting relaxed.

#### **4.4 Summary and Discussion**

The two companies use the same primary metaphor when promoting the softness of their products (as in Figure 1), but they adopt different multimodal metaphors in promoting their cultural concepts. In our data, Nescafe shapes the product as football, inspiration, energy, and man. Football is usually connected to passion, and it's an exciting sport that brings people together. Inspiration relates to creative thinking; it is of significance in work. Energy is indispensable to electronic equipment and cars. Most of these metaphors are constructed in the work environment. Therefore, all these source domains endow the product refreshing function. On the contrary, Luckin Coffee applies multimodal metaphors, including "COFFEE IS FRUIT", "COFFEE IS FLOWER", and "COFFEE IS MAN" more frequently. Fruit and flowers are used as an ingredient in coffee; thus, such metaphors often occur in fruit flavored or flower flavored coffee products. Other than claiming the pureness of coffee, these advertisements also build an aesthetically enjoyed scenario. Different from Nescafe's advertising, the COFFEE IS MAN applied in Luckin's advertisements aims to build a serene scene. Such source domains that contain natural elements were selected to convey Luckin's cultural concept — the harmony between man and nature.

According to Kövecses (2005), the human body is the basis for many conceptual metaphors (embodiment). Frequently, people tend to delineate concepts by using source domains that conform with their perceptual experience (Meier, Schnall, Schwarz, & Bargh 2012). People from different cultures are familiar with the smooth taste of Latte. Thus, the same experience with coffee is the reason why they highlight the same characteristics in taste aspects. Based on experience, coffee advertising brings to the fore the same attributes in taste, but there's something different in the cultural vision aspect. In fact, metaphor is also influenced by cultural models, thus presenting differences in the data. Margariti, Boutsouki, Hatzithomas, and Zotos (2019) carried out an empirical study based on coffee advertising and ice cream advertisements, only to find out the significant effect of the linguistic and cultural background on the perceived effectiveness of metaphorical advertisements. Suseno and Nguyen show that marketers can increase consumer digital engagement by using metaphors to remind consumers of their cultural values (2021).

Therefore, coffee advertisements also use multimodal metaphors and primary metaphors to convey their cultural beliefs. Chinese culture expands against the background of humanity, society, and the self-cultivation of the individual, while Western culture

develops based on industrial and commercial activities, scientific wisdom, and people's main interests (Liu 2003). Based on different cultural backgrounds, the advertisements also emphasize different cultural concepts. Yuan & Li (2005) reckon that Chinese advertising inherits the traditional Chinese culture, paying attention to the harmony between man and nature, while Western advertising advocates freedom and promotes individualism. The present study has also demonstrated this result.

Nescafe is representative of the typical Western coffee culture, and its cultural value inevitably has the shadow of Western culture; thus, it shapes the product as football, inspiration, energy, and man (see Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 6). Combining it with work context, both source domains shape Nescafe coffee as a practical energy boost, for in Western culture, coffee is a common beverage that resembles energy and passion. Unlike the Chinese, westerners pay attention to personal interests, so they place career achievements before family and morality. The source domains of football and football players (see Figure 2 and Figure 6) highlight the importance of passion in work, which reflects their pursuit of enthusiasm; while inspiration and energy are indispensable to work, they are the source of effective work achievements. Besides, the source domains chosen in Figure 6 are different football players, and each plays a key and indispensable role in the game. It doesn't emphasize collaboration as a team but gives priority to distinctive features of different players, reflecting the search for individualism and distinctive self in Western culture.

Generally speaking, Chinese people are pragmatic; they attach importance to work and family; therefore, some advertisements stress such affections. In our data, due to the advertising types, these relationships are not being highlighted. However, the implicit character of Chinese people was demonstrated. Though Chinese people are not as romantic as Western people, through the advertisements, Luckin Coffee conveys hope for a wonderful life; thus, they use attractive words and pictures to establish coffee metaphors. Choosing source domains, including flowers and fruit, the advertiser attaches bright blessings to the product. The sweet and clean "初恋" (first love) resembles a beautiful relationship, and the "富桂" (sound similar to "富贵", which means "wealth and respectable") in Figure 8 expresses the hope to achieve success in a career and society, the beautiful cherry blossom symbolizes love in Figure 9. Aiming at creating a world-class coffee brand originating from China, Luckin evokes the consumer's desire for a better life in an implicit Chinese way, that is, attaches such hope to familiar things (e.g. fruit and flowers). Other than reflecting the desire for happiness, the images of flowers and fruits selected by Luckin (such as osmanthus, cherry blossom, coconut, and green grape) are often the raw materials of coffee. Such a strategy not only avoids the thick taste of coffee but also highlights the "purity" of coffee. By constructing aesthetically enjoyable pictures, Luckin conforms to Chinese people's pursuit of serenity in the inner heart (see Figure 10).

Besides, the attitude of respecting nature and the pursuit of harmony between man and nature are conveyed. In ancient times, Chinese philosophy advocated the idea that nature and man are unified and that the universe and the human correspond to each other (Yu 2009). That's why the Chinese have long advocated the law of nature and the harmonious coexistence between man and nature. As a local Chinese brand, Luckin Coffee is inevitably influenced by the cultural philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism; thus, it denies being self-centered but respects nature and pursues the harmony between man and nature. Choosing source domains, including osmanthus and cherry blossoms, emphasizing authentic ingredients in coffee production, Luckin shows the attitude of respecting nature. Constructing a wonderful vacation scenario (Figure 10), Luckin reveals the desire for harmony between man and nature.

## 5. Conclusion

Coffee is a practical product. Advertisers often use metaphors to promote the effectiveness of their products in order to boost sales. Comparing the advertising metaphors of Luckin coffee and Nescafe ads, we find that they mainly promote the taste, efficacy, and cultural concept of the products. In terms of taste, both advertisers use metaphors to highlight the smoothness and comfort of the product. As for efficacy, Nescafe coffee highlights the refreshing function of coffee. Such promotions are not found in the Luckin data, and it's probably that Chinese people do not like the thick taste of coffee or because they dislike the sleep-disturbing result of caffeine. When promoting the cultural concept, Luckin Coffee tends to depict the source domain as aesthetically pleasing things that symbolize nature and happiness (Figures 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10). Nescafe is a typical representative of Western beverage culture, shaping coffee as football, inspiration, energy, and man; it gives prominence to the refreshing function of coffee, emphasizing the passion for work (see Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 6).

Shaping coffee into different images is based on the different cultural backgrounds of the two companies. As a Western coffee brand long existed in the Chinese market, Nescafe emphasizes Western values, thus laying stress on individualism. While Luckin Coffee, as a young brand rooted in Chinese culture, needs to endow coffee with some Chinese characteristics to promote its acceptance in China, coffee is not the first choice in a tea-culture-dominated country. Therefore, it conforms to the Chinese people's taste and emphasizes Chinese culture in coffee advertisements.

The present study is a comparative analysis of Luckin coffee and Nescafe advertisements. The similarities of advertising metaphors are proof of embodiment. While the differences show the role of cultural models. The corpus in this study is not a large one; follow-

up works may collect more Chinese coffee brands as a corpus or concentrate on the conceptualization of Chinese coffee brands only.

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