

An analysis of Japanese CMs that use characteristic rhetorical techniques

Masao Okano and Masami Asakawa

Abstract

This research was undertaken to examine factors of viewers' impressions of CMs and to develop a causal model that explains how this impression affects Aad (Attitude toward the advertisement) in the case of CMs that use characteristic rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, metonymy and defamilialization.

For this purpose, a presentation of Japanese CMs that is remarkable in this respect was made to 227 college students. After the presentation, the students were asked to rate each CM on 20 scales of viewers' impression and a scale of Aad.

Factor analysis revealed five factors of "viewers' impressions" on the CMs : "Amusement", "Explanation", "Vitality", "Elegance" and "Warmth".

Based on this result, a causal model of "viewers' impression" on Aad was created, and the validity of the model was investigated with covariance structure analysis.

In conclusion, to improve the advertising effect of CMs, our results showed the importance of evoking amusing impressions in the audience.

1. Introduction

Rhetorics such as metaphor, metonymy, and defamiliarization are used in many advertisements. However, an analysis of rhetorics tends to be theoretical or subjective, and tends not to be based on the empirical data of individual responses of subjects. It might be interesting to find out real viewers' impressions of CMs that make abundant use of such techniques and also find out how these impressions are connected to their attitude toward the advertisements (Aad).

In this research, by means of an experiment, we examined factors of viewers' impressions of CMs and examined how this impression affects Aad in the case of CMs that use characteristic rhetorical techniques.

2. Method

2.1 CMs used for the experiment

As a preliminary analysis, we analyzed the rhetorics used in the CMs of alcoholic drinks that won the "Dentsu TV commercial award" (in the drinks category) between 1991 and 2001. The results revealed that the rhetorical techniques of metaphor, metonymy, defamiliarization were used abundantly in each CM. Because

the following four CMs were remarkable in this respect, we decided to use them as materials for the experiment.

The following is a description of the content of and rhetorics used in the four CMs:

1. Asahi Breweries, LTD., Black Label: "Table tennis at a hot spring resort"

In this CM, the metaphor and metonymy of intense sports is used extensively. This is evident from the serious facial expressions, scattered beads of perspiration, intense movements, cry, victory pose, etc. Camera techniques such as slow-motion and close-up shots that are typical of sport reports and action films are also used.

All the elements just mentioned are contradictory to a quiet and relaxing place like a hot springs resort, and may have a defamiliarization effect.

Furthermore, the scattered beads of perspiration resemble the water droplets that dot the beer bottle and remind us of its deliciousness in quenching our thirst after a hot and tiring game.

2. Asahi Breweries, LTD.: "First Lady"

Two women wearing bathrobes are having a conversation over two glasses of beer, which are on the table.

When the younger woman asks the older one whether she becomes self-conscious when buying the beer "First Lady", the older woman, while applying a face pack, answers that that is exactly how she feels. A gap between the relaxed mood and the naming of the beer "First Lady" makes the conversation humorous.

In this CM, the metonymy of femininity is used abundantly. This is evident from the cosmetic pack, shape of the glasses, posture of the younger woman, etc., suggesting that this CM is targeted at women.

After a voice narrates that this beer is "easy to drink" and "is not bitter," the younger woman drinks the beer and in a similar manner, says, "This is not bitter."

3. Suntory Whiskey, Kaku malt cubic: "DJ"

A radio DJ reads out a listener's letter. The letter reads, "After mother passed away, my younger sister did the housework. Since then, my father returned home early every night. He used to drink 'Kaku malt cubic' with cabbage---minced by my sister every night---as a simple treat. Father always said, 'I cannot teach you how to cook, but I can taste your cooking.' My sister got married this spring. Father sits on the same table as before. Nothing has changed; he still drinks 'Kaku malt cubic.' I want to tell the man who marries my sister just one thing. Please love my sister, so that you can drink whiskey with minced cabbage."

Scenes of a girl preparing supper for her family contain metonymies suggesting the simple life of common people, for example, a rural shopping center, a shopping bag, and a cabbage. A popular Japanese song playing as background music is well suited to the atmosphere.

4. Super Nikka Whisky: "Mother Water"

A man fills a glass with whiskey, takes a sip and puts the glass on a wooden desk, near a picture book of fish. Then, the fish begin to jump out of the book and surround the glass (CG image). A voice says, "They grew up in the clean water of the north. Super Nikka."

Classical vocal music playing in the background, a fine old picture book, and whisky are representative of

European high culture. Moreover, executional elements such as the clinking of the ice cubes, the picture book of fish, collectively constitute metonymies of water. The image of such clean water serves as a sign that this whiskey is of a high quality.

2.2 Method of the experiment

The four CMs just described were shown to 227 college students. Each CM was presented twice using the following procedure:

Color bar (30 seconds) → CM presentation → color bar (5 seconds) → CM presentation

After each presentation, the subjects were asked to answer a questionnaire on their impressions and Aad of each CM.

2.3. Measurement items of viewers' impressions and Aad

By referring to preceding research (Aaker and Stayman, 1990; Batra and Ray, 1986; Biel and Bridgewater, 1990; Edell and Burke, 1987; Holbrook and Batra, 1987; Leavitt, 1970; Schlinger, 1979; Wells, Leavitt and McConville, 1971), we selected 20 items of 7-point SD scales to rate viewers' impressions of the CMs. As an index of Aad, we employed a 7-point scale of "degree of favorable impression" (1: extremely unfavorable, 7: extremely favorable).

2.4. Method of analysis

The following analyses were performed on the obtained data.

- (1) Factors of viewers' impressions were extracted by factor analysis using the maximum likelihood method.
- (2) ANOVA was carried out on Aad and the items of viewers' impression that showed high loadings on the factors among the four CMs.
- (3) For the CM with the most positive Aad, a model of influence of each factor of the viewers' impressions on Aad was created, as shown in Figure 1, and covariance structure analysis was performed.

3. Results

3.1. Factors of viewers' impressions on the CMs

Using the Scree test criterion, the number of factors extracted from the correlation matrix of 20 x 20 items was five. Then, we performed factor analysis using the maximum likelihood method and used promax rotation. The results are shown in Table 1 and can be interpreted as follows :

1. The 1st Factor: "Amusement"

The 1st factor was related to "Amusement" since items such as "unexpectedness," "impact," "freshness," "uniqueness," and "fun" showed high factor loadings.

2. The 2nd Factor: “Explanation”

The 2nd factor was related to “Message” since items such as “message clarity,” “sufficiency of explanation,” “intelligibility,” and “persuasive power” showed high factor loadings.

3. The 3rd Factor: “Vitality”

The 3rd factor was related to “Vitality” since items such as “vitality,” “healthy,” and “vigor” showed high factor loadings.

4. The 4th Factor: “Elegance”

The 4th factor was related to “Elegance” since items such as “high-class” and “refinement” showed high factor loadings.

5. The 5th Factor: “Warmth”

The 5th factor was related to “Warmth” since items such as “naturalness” and “warmth” showed high factor loadings.

Table 1. Result of factor analysis (after the promax rotation)

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Communality
Unexpectedness	0.97	0.01	-0.31	0.11	-0.06	0.55
Impact	0.85	-0.03	0.02	-0.11	0.08	0.70
Freshness	0.77	0.01	0.08	0.15	-0.01	0.67
Uniqueness	0.73	0.04	0.13	0.01	-0.12	0.70
Fun	0.64	0.03	0.19	-0.08	0.02	0.63
Impression of Color	0.35	0.01	0.28	0.22	0.12	0.46
Message Clarity	-0.06	0.92	0.01	0.00	-0.08	0.63
Sufficiency of Explanation	0.02	0.92	-0.18	-0.02	-0.09	0.59
Intelligibility	0.06	0.75	0.12	-0.08	-0.02	0.58
Persuasive Power	0.04	0.59	0.16	0.08	0.13	0.56
Vitality	0.01	-0.09	0.92	0.11	-0.08	0.71
Healthy	-0.16	0.09	0.80	0.21	-0.05	0.48
Vigor	0.26	-0.07	0.66	-0.18	-0.04	0.78
Grade of Silence	-0.14	0.06	-0.51	0.37	0.23	0.68
Brightness of Color	0.05	0.17	0.41	0.09	0.03	0.36
High-class	0.02	0.01	0.06	0.75	-0.03	0.41
Refinement	0.21	-0.07	0.22	0.63	0.00	0.38
Naturalness	-0.08	-0.03	-0.12	-0.08	0.81	0.42
Warmth	0.04	-0.05	-0.05	0.09	0.62	0.33
Congeniality	0.13	0.20	0.36	-0.14	0.42	0.52
Eigenvalue	7.05	3.44	1.82	1.01	0.91	
Proportion of variance explained	35.27	17.18	9.09	5.05	4.57	71.15

3.2. Comparison of viewers’ impressions and Aad among the four CMs

To compare the differences of viewers’ impressions and Aad among the four CMs , ANOVA and two-tailed multiple t-test with Bonferroni correction was carried out (Table 2). The results revealed that in the case of the CM for “Black Label,” the items that showed high factor loadings on the “Amusement” factor, i.e.,

“unexpectedness,” “impact,” “freshness,” “uniqueness,” and “fun,” were highly evaluated by the subjects. Moreover, the items that showed high factor loadings on the “Vitality” factor, i.e., “vitality,” “healthy,” and “vigor,” were also highly evaluated by the subjects. In the case of the CM for “First Lady,” the items that showed high factor loadings on the “Explanation” factor, i.e., “message clarity,” “sufficiency of explanation,” and “intelligibility,” received high evaluations from the subjects. In the case of the CM for “Kaku malt cubic,” the items that showed high factor loadings on the “Warmth” factor, i.e., “naturalness” and “warmth,” received high evaluations from the subjects. In the case of the CM for “Super Nikka,” the items that showed high factor loadings on the “Elegance” factor, i.e., “high-class” and “refinement,” were highly evaluated by the subjects. Among the four CMs, the subjects had the most positive Aad for “Black Label.”

3.3. Impact of viewers’ impressions on Aad: The case of “Black Label”

To examine the viewers’ impressions that influence Aad, a causal model, as shown in Figure 1, was created. For covariance structure analysis, we decided to use the data of “Black label,” for which the subjects had the most positive Aad. However, the model had an improper solution. Nevertheless, by removing the path that was not significant, the model was improved, as shown in Figure 2.

Consequently, the model’s goodness of fit index was high, i.e., the CFI was 0.980, and the RMSEA was 0.043. In addition, among the four factors, the “Amusement” factor had the strongest impact on Aad.

Table 2. Comparison of viewers’ impression and Aad among the four CMs

Factors	Items	Black label	First lady	Kaku malt cubic	Super Nikka
		Mean			
Amusement	Unexpectedness	5.46 *	3.92	4.10	5.04
	Impact	6.42 *	4.30	4.07	4.63
	Freshness	5.82 *	4.18	4.12	4.75
	Uniqueness	6.42 *	4.65	3.85	4.77
	Fun	6.15 *	4.44	3.60	4.20
Explanation	Message Clarity	4.62	5.34 *	4.86	4.90
	Sufficiency of Explanation	4.14	5.15 *	4.54	4.76
	Intelligibility	4.92	5.19 *	4.39	4.60
	Persuasive Power	4.50	4.69	4.59	4.49
Vitality	Vitality	6.12 *	4.04	3.59	3.67
	Healthy	5.05 *	4.35	3.81	3.92
	Vigor	6.39 *	4.11	3.10	3.35
Elegance	High-class	3.67	3.77	4.26	5.20 *
	Refinement	4.81	3.98	4.59	5.11 *
Warmth	Naturalness	3.10	4.83	5.16 *	4.50
	Warmth	4.43	4.78	5.86 *	5.20
Aad	Favorable impression	5.72 *	4.39	4.33	4.56

‘*’ means a significant coefficient (≥ 0.05) and the score is the highest among the four CMs.

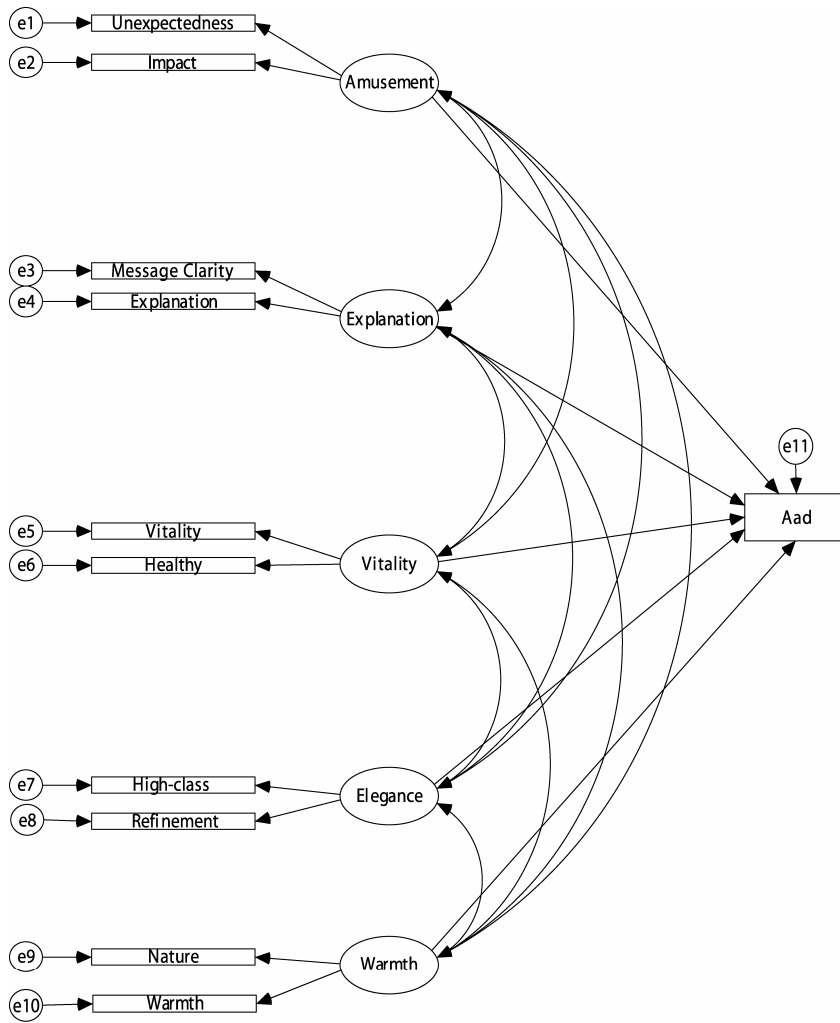


Fig.1 Casual model of viewers' impressions that influence Aad (1)

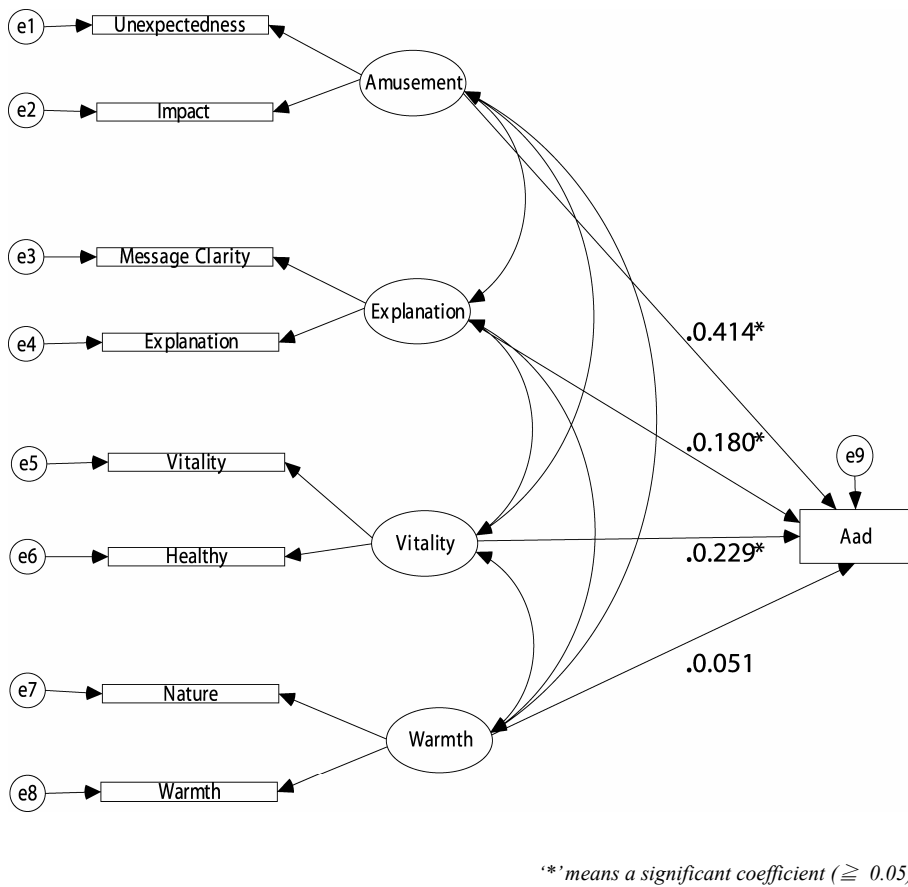


Fig.2 Causal model of viewers' impressions that influence Aad (2)

4. Conclusion

Our result revealed five factors of “viewers' impressions” on the CMs : “Amusement”, “Explanation”, “Vitality”, “Elegance” and “Warmth”. Based on this result, we created a causal model of “viewers' impression” on Aad, and the validity of the model was investigated with covariance structure analysis. In conclusion, to improve the advertising effect of CMs, our results showed the importance of evoking amusing impressions in the audience.

References

Aaker, D. A. & Stayman, D. M. (1990). Measuring audience perceptions of commercials and relating them to ad impact. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 30(4).7-17.

Batra, R. & Ray, M. L. (1986). Affective responses mediating acceptance of advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(September), 234-249.

- Biel, A. L. & Bridgwater, C. A. (1990) Attributes of likable television commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 30 (3), 38-44.
- Edell, J. A. & Burke, M. C. (1987). The power of feelings in understanding advertising effects. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(December), 421-433.
- Holbrook, M. B. & Batra, R. (1987). Assessing the role of emotions as mediators of consumer responses to advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(December), 404-419.
- Leavitt, C. (1970). A multidimensional set of rating scales for television commercials. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 54(5), 427-429.
- Schlinger, M. J. (1979). A profile of responses to commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 19(2), 37-46.
- Wells, W. D., Leavitt, C. & McConville, M. (1971). A reaction profile for TV commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 11(6), 11-17.