

Localized Cultural and Creative Design based on Metaphorical Techniques

-- A Case Study of Hakka Culture

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Abstract: This study conducts an analysis of classic product case studies utilizing the metaphorical technique. It extracts creative methodologies employed in these cases and explores their application in the design of other products, with a specific focus on incorporating the cultural essence of Hakka culture. The metaphorical technique is recognized as a valuable design tool that plays a pivotal role in product redesign. Given the unique and culturally rich nature of Hakka culture, it holds the potential to significantly influence product design. Thus, this research aims to investigate how the metaphorical technique can be effectively employed to integrate the distinctive features of Hakka culture into product design. By summarizing the research findings and contributions, this study examines the value and potential of the metaphorical technique in product redesign. Ultimately, it provides novel perspectives and directions for future research endeavors in related fields.

Keywords: Metaphorical Technique; Hakka Culture; Locality; Cultural Tradition; Cultural and Creative Design.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Rhetoric, regardless of its origin in the East or the West, occupies a significant position and has been seeking new directions in the ever-evolving and changing world. With the advent of the "linguistic turn" in the 20th century, rhetoric has extended beyond the traditional boundaries of linguistics and integrated into the emerging field of semiotics. Furthermore, driven by advancements in technology and rising economic levels, coupled with the proliferation of media channels, the "era of images" has emerged, intersecting with rhetoric. The robust development of rhetoric has enabled it to play a vital role in artistic design fields such as graphic design, advertising, and cultural creative promotion, making it one of the focal points of contemporary artistic research.

Metaphor, as the most prevalent rhetorical figure in the field of rhetoric, plays a central role in this study. Specifically, the research focuses on the application of the metaphorical technique, which involves the transformation of the tenor and vehicle relationship, leading to the emergence of various metaphorical rhetorical variations. Within the domain of applied design, the metaphorical technique finds frequent utilization in visual advertising as a symbolic rhetorical device. Notably, the inherent compulsion of the metaphorical connection between the tenor and vehicle, akin to the linguistic term "like," enables precise and unambiguous conveyance of intended meanings, eliminating the potential for semantic misinterpretation. Consequently, this technique achieves the profound communication of visually implicit symbolic meanings, embodying the essence of rhetoric in the realm of visual design.

The metaphorical design technique is widely used in various domains of design, including graphic design, product design, and architecture. Two examples illustrate its application: Example 1: Tabasco Sauce, known for its fiery and explosive spiciness, exemplifies the primary appeal of the

product. In a graphic advertising design, a portion of the Tabasco sauce packaging serves as the tenor, establishing a compelling metaphorical relationship with a large chili pepper as the corresponding vehicle. This design implicitly communicates to viewers that the sauce possesses an intensely hot flavor akin to the fiery chili pepper, thereby conveying authenticity in taste. Example 2: Butterfly Stool by Japanese design master Sori Yanagi, The Butterfly Stool, designed by Sori Yanagi, incorporates the metaphorical technique in its form. The stool itself serves as the tenor, while the wings of a butterfly, acting as the corresponding vehicle, establish a metaphorical relationship. Furthermore, considering the product name, the design allows observers to intuitively associate the stool with the beauty of butterflies and the natural world. Based on the aforementioned analysis of the metaphorical technique, this study will extract and apply various metaphorical approaches to creative expressions inspired by Hakka culture.

1.2. Research Scope and Objectives

The Hakka culture holds a prominent position among the diverse Chinese ethnic cultures, characterized by its extensive geographical presence and profound historical heritage. The region of eastern Guangdong, particularly in Meixian, Xingning, Wuhua, and other localities, serves as the cradle of Hakka culture. Throughout the passage of time, it has cultivated distinctive architectural, folkloric, and sartorial traditions. Emphasizing the significance of cultural self-assurance, General Secretary Xi Jinping once asserted, "Cultural self-confidence remains our fundamental principle." The Hakka culture embodies a robust sense of confidence derived from the enduring cultural vitality that has evolved over centuries. Notably, scholarly exploration of Hakka culture has seen remarkable progress since the 1980s, with over a hundred academic monographs published, alongside the establishment of more than ten specialized journals and magazines. Furthermore, international symposiums on Hakka studies have been held in multiple

countries, underscoring the global recognition and contemporary relevance of Hakka culture as a popular field of research.

The current rapid development of the cultural and creative industry has witnessed the revitalization of cultural heritage through innovative design, as exemplified by the Palace Museum's cultural promotion achieved through cultural and creative initiatives. Similarly, Hakka culture can leverage the momentum of the cultural and creative industry to enhance its own promotion and development. This research aims to explore three distinct application methods of metaphorical design through literature review and case analysis. These methods will be integrated with elements of Hakka culture from Meizhou, Guangdong, and applied in the design domains of cultural and creative products, jewelry, and packaging, resulting in a total of six practical design solutions. By broadening the design approaches in the realm of folk cultural creativity, this study actively contributes to the cultural dissemination of Hakka culture.

2. Literature Review

This literature review examines the contributions of scholars in the field of metaphorical design and its application in the cultural and creative industries. Zhang Gongling proposed five categories of metaphorical techniques: displacement and adaptation, form-based transplantation, form-based appropriation, form-based transformation, and analogical transformation [1]. The study also discusses the application of design thinking and patterns when transforming design materials into product applications[2]. Ye Shushao emphasizes the importance of establishing connections and resonating with inherent products in modern packaging design. Metaphorical, metonymic, and synecdochic rhetorical devices are used to create resonance and communicate the functions and effects of the products[3]. Li Hongchao explores the development strategies of cultural and creative products based on the Palace Museum, advocating the integration of traditional Chinese culture with contemporary cultural demands[4]. Wu Ping's research focuses on the interpretation of packaging design, particularly symbolic interpretation as the most common method used by consumers. The study analyzes the mechanisms and characteristics of symbolic interpretation, providing principles for symbolic interpretation in packaging design[5].

Based on the literature review, this study aims to provide a structural analysis of metaphorical techniques and explore their application in design creation within the existing research framework.

3. Case Analysis of Metaphorical Design

3.1. Case Analysis

3.1.1. Analysis of Metaphorical Stylistic Levels

Case Study of Metaphorical Stylistic Levels: The "Yue Guang Treasure Box" tea packaging (Figure 1) implemented a design strategy that employed the metaphorical transplantation technique to emphasize the museum's image, thereby occupying a prominent position in consumers' mental models. The packaging box, originally intended for tea (tenor), underwent a transformation into the architectural form of the Guangdong Provincial Museum (vehicle). The design inspiration was derived from the museum's architectural

exterior, which was subsequently miniaturized and abstracted to create the tea packaging box. The packaging box features a "grand entrance" at the bottom, allowing consumers to shake it and randomly select their desired tea. This design approach involved the transplantation of elements from the architectural form to the tea packaging box, without any inherent conceptual connection between the source and target elements. The tenor elements extracted from this case study include the tea packaging box as a cultural product of the museum, while the vehicle elements embody the architectural form of the Guangdong Provincial Museum, signifying its cultural significance.

The cultural connotation of the "Taihe Hall" paper lantern (Figure 2) in the Palace Museum is the integration of the overall design of the paper lantern with the Taihe Hall, which embodies the historical weight of the Taihe Hall over the past century. The design technique used is to extract the Taihe Hall (source) as the metaphorical subject and incorporate it into the design of the paper lantern. By magnifying or reducing the extracted elements to fit the design objective, this case, like the previous one, directly utilizes the metaphorical subject's design. The main elements in this case are the Palace Museum paper lantern (the literal subject), the expression elements are the architectural features of the Taihe Hall, and the metaphorical elements are the architectural design of the Taihe Hall.



Figure 1. Guangdong Provincial Museum "Guangdong Light Treasure Box" tea box



Figure 2. The Palace Museum "Taihe Hall" paper lamp

3.1.2. Hierarchical Analysis of Multiple Functions in Metaphorical Design

Tea Packaging with Tea Chess Design (Figure 3): In terms of design, the tea brick packaging box serves as the literal subject, functioning as a storage box for tea bricks. In order to achieve the goal of promoting tea culture and related cultural activities, the design employs the metaphorical technique of metaphor, finding a representative object that corresponds to "promoting tea-related cultural activities" - chess, and incorporating it as the metaphorical subject into the final design of the product. This work combines the extracted chess metaphorical design with the functional aspect of the packaging box, consciously adding new product functionality to the existing literal functionality. As a result, it becomes a multifunctional cultural and creative product: whether the tea bricks are consumed or not, one can enjoy both tea drinking and playing chess, adding entertainment value to the

packaging while maintaining practicality. Through analysis and summary of this classic case, the tea brick packaging box is identified as the literal element, the promotion of tea culture and related cultural activities as the expression element, and chess as the metaphorical element, with all three elements integrated into the design.

Globe Table Lamp (Figure 4): In terms of design, the table lamp serves as the literal subject, providing illumination in indoor nighttime environments. In order to achieve the goal of promoting geographical knowledge and culture, the design employs the metaphorical technique of metaphor, finding a representative object that corresponds to "spreading geographical knowledge" - the globe, and incorporating it as the metaphorical subject into the final design of the product. This work combines the extracted globe metaphorical design with the functional aspect of the table lamp, consciously adding new product functionality to the existing literal functionality, similar to the previous classic case. As a result, it becomes a multifunctional cultural and creative product: it provides illumination as a table lamp while also serving as an educational tool for geographical knowledge through the inclusion of a globe. Through analysis and summary of this classic case, the table lamp is identified as the literal element, the promotion of geographical knowledge as the expression element, and the globe as the metaphorical element, with all three elements integrated into the design.



Figure 3. Tea Packaging with Tea Chess Design



Figure 4. Globe Table Lamp

3.1.3. Emotional Techniques in Metaphorical Design Analysis

GREEDY Toothpick Holder (Figure 5): The key to this design lies in the emotional transformation of cultural elements. By utilizing the architectural design as the metaphorical subject, the spiritual meaning of Zen is extracted. It serves as an interesting and emotionally engaging ornament with a story, while also functioning as a tool to solve everyday problems. The scar on the head represents the exit for toothpicks, which can be dispensed by rotating the hat. By personifying and storytelling everyday products, and using the technique of metaphor, the design extracts the form of architecture and transforms cultural elements based on cultural understanding.

Changsheng Moon Spirit - Jade Rabbit Incense Holder

(Figure 6): The Jade Rabbit is crafted from Chinese white high-temperature ceramics, pure and flawless in appearance, with long ears symbolizing good luck and longevity. The Moon Spirit represents the moon, symbolizing reunion and happiness. By extracting the image of the Jade Rabbit as the metaphorical subject and incorporating it into the design of the incense holder, Changsheng Moon Spirit is a line incense holder design inspired by the Jade Rabbit. It can also serve as a pen holder, paperweight, or ornament. By employing the technique of metaphor, it directly expresses the immaculate purity of the Jade Rabbit and conveys a sense of longevity through the design of long ears. The transformation of the form gives the product a higher level, while the expression of emotions makes the design more vivid. The added functionality also allows the product to have infinite possibilities.



Figure 5. GREEDY Toothpick Holder



Figure 6. Changsheng Moon Spirit Jade Rabbit Incense Holder

3.2. Case Analysis

Through the summary and analysis of the above classic cases, it can be observed that metaphorical design techniques can be classified into three levels, which progress from the surface to the core: the form level, the functionality level, and the emotional level (Figure 7).

Firstly, Cases 1 and 2 belong to the form level, where the extracted metaphorical form is combined with the literal functionality. The metaphorical form is transplanted onto the literal subject, without changing its functionality. These changes are primarily focused on the appearance.

Cases 3 and 4 involve adding additional functionalities to the literal subject while maintaining the form level. These changes are focused on expanding the functionalities of the design.

Cases 5 and 6 emphasize the emotional expression of the metaphorical form, incorporating elements of storytelling and symbolism. These changes are primarily focused on the emotional aspect.

The commonality among these three techniques is that they all involve combining the extracted metaphorical form with the functionality of the literal subject, thereby conveying implicit visual symbolical meanings. The difference lies in the form level, which involves changes in appearance through form transplantation; the functionality level, which emphasizes diversification of functionalities; and the emotional level, which focuses on extracting the cultural connotations of the metaphorical form, resulting in a more emotional and narrative form of expression beyond mere appearance transplantation.

Based on the analysis and characteristics of the above cases, a creative framework for metaphorical design techniques at three different levels is summarized (Figure 8). In all three techniques, it is important to first determine the functionality of the literal subject, i.e., the purpose of the product. Then, the metaphorical subject is selected based on the creative objective. For example, in Case 1, the aim was to promote the image of the museum, so the metaphorical subject was chosen as the museum's architectural form itself. Once the literal and metaphorical subjects are chosen, the three creative techniques are used to integrate and design accordingly. The subsequent steps involve product design based on the metaphorical design method.

The chosen design theme is Hakka culture. Hakka culture refers to the collective material and spiritual culture created by the Hakka people, which has developed into a unique cultural style in the gathering places of the Hakka community. Hakka culture serves as a bond of identity for the Hakka ethnic group and is an important component of traditional Chinese culture. It is widely distributed and has a profound influence.

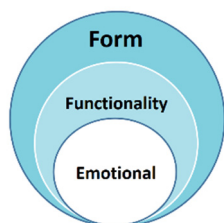


Figure 7. Progressive diagram

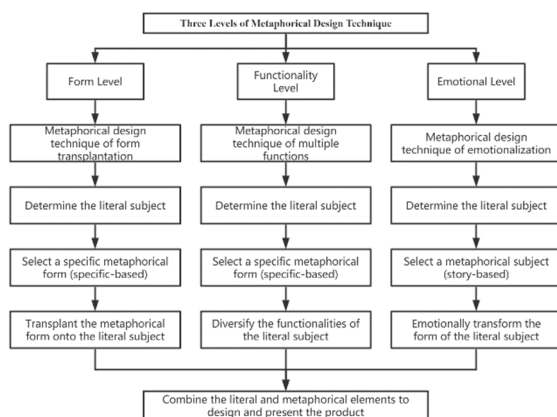


Figure 8. Creative framework diagram of this study

4. Experimental Design

4.1. Design Concept

We have chosen the Hakka culture of Meizhou, Guangdong, as the theme for our design. Hakka culture is one of the important Chinese ethnic cultures. According to incomplete statistics, there have been over 100 academic monographs and more than 10 journals dedicated to Hakka culture research since the 1980s. Several international conferences on Hakka studies have been held in various countries, indicating that Hakka culture is one of the popular contemporary cultures.

With the rapid development of the cultural and creative industry, for example, the Palace Museum culture has created a new wave of popularity through cultural and creative designs. Hakka culture can also leverage the momentum of the cultural and creative industry to promote its own further promotion and development. Therefore, we will combine the extraction of relevant elements from Hakka culture with

metaphorical design techniques, focusing on the aspects of form, functionality, and emotion.

Firstly, the extraction of Hakka cultural forms includes three aspects: architectural styles, intangible cultural activities, and embroidery and textile patterns. Secondly, in terms of cultural connotation, the Hakka culture embodies the importance of unity, diligence, resilience, and traditional values, which play a significant role in the daily lives and social interactions of Hakka people. These cultural connotations will also be reflected in our metaphorical and emotional design.

4.2. Design Practice

4.2.1. Redesign Using Metaphorical Technique in Form

The design of the "Hakka Tulou" packaging box (Figure 9) aims to transplant the form of Hakka Tulou onto the packaging box, effectively showcasing Hakka culture. The packaging box serves as the target object, while the metaphorical form is Hakka Tulou. The creative technique employed is form transplantation. The first piece of work draws inspiration from the Hakka Tulou architecture in the Meizhou region. The architectural form of the Tulou is extracted and simplified by removing intricate details, scaling it down to the desired size for the packaging box. As the packaging is the first visual impression for consumers, it needs to leave a lasting impact, allowing it to stand out among the competition. The Tulou architecture itself is a representation of Hakka culture, and directly transforming it into the design conveys the cultural origin represented by the packaging box and its contents. The target object is the packaging box, the expressive element is Hakka culture, and the metaphorical element is Hakka Tulou.

Since the Hakka enclosed houses have a different form from Hakka Tulou, showcasing different architectural structures can effectively represent the diversity within Hakka culture. The second piece of work (Figure 9) draws inspiration from Hakka enclosed houses in the Meizhou region. Although it is a different architectural structure, Hakka enclosed houses also represent Hakka culture. By extracting from different sources, it enhances people's impression of Hakka culture and further strengthens the promotion of Hakka culture. Through the above design process, the "form transplantation" design technique is employed, building upon the form of Hakka enclosed houses.

4.2.2. Redesign Using Metaphorical Technique for Multi Functionality

The third piece of work (Figure 10) combines Hakka Tulou with a notebook. The target object is the notebook, and the metaphorical form is the architectural shape of Hakka Tulou in Meizhou, Guangdong. The design utilizes the technique of multi functionality to create a notebook with a material composition of paper and a transparent PVC film layer. This allows for writing on the paper and sticking items on the transparent layer, such as sticky notes. The use of the transparent layer ensures that when the notebook is folded 360 degrees, the middle part of the Tulou is not obstructed while providing support. This design combines the functionality of writing with the decorative function of a display item. The showcase image represents the notebook rotating 360 degrees, with a hinge size of 16cm*9cm.

The fourth piece of work (Figure 11) combines the Hakka intangible cultural activity "Puzhai Fire Dragon" with a commemorative greeting card. The target object is the greeting card, and the metaphorical form is the fire dragon

from the intangible cultural heritage "Puzhai Fire Dragon." The design utilizes the technique of multi functionality, creating a three-dimensional structure for the greeting card using a zigzag pattern. The three-dimensional part is made from "seed paper" (an eco-friendly material that can be planted, printed, and embossed), which adds the entertainment function of planting and sprouting seeds to the traditional function of conveying messages through writing. The showcase image represents the opening and closing of the card, with a hinge size of 13cm*9.5cm.



Figure 9. "Hakka Tulou" packaging box

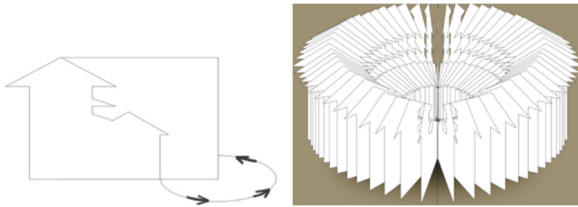


Figure 10. Hakka Tulou notebook

4.2.3. Emotional Design Using Metaphorical Technique

The "Root-Connected Ring" (Figure 12) embodies the Hakka spirit, which refers to the unity, hard work, and upward striving of Hakka people. Its core values are unity, reform, exploration, and progress. In modern times, Hakka people of Hakka culture are self-confidence, self-reliance, self-strengthening, and self-striving. By extracting the cultural connotation from Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, and the Jiangsu-Zhejiang-Shanghai area have migrated overseas, leaving their mark around the world. They spread Chinese culture with a core of patriotism and yearning for their homeland. The basic connotations of unity as the metaphorical element and incorporating it into the design of jewelry, the design showcases the interconnectedness of Hakka people. Hakka culture is one of the many branches of Han ethnic culture and one of the most influential ethnic groups. Although Hakka people are distributed across various regions, they place great importance on blood relations. No matter how far they go, their roots are always together. The interconnectedness of two enclosed houses, symbolizing the unity and support among Hakka people, is represented by the ring design, where the two enclosed houses are connected. This design highlights the unity and progress of Hakka people.

The "Ethnic Element Bracelet" (Figure 12) showcases the diverse patterns of Hakka clothing, which are expressed in various forms and designs. The aesthetic design principles of complex forms, color combinations, and selected materials fully reflect the inherent meaning of Hakka culture. By extracting traditional Hakka patterns as the metaphorical element and incorporating them into jewelry design, the inspiration comes from cloud patterns and scrolling vine patterns found in traditional Hakka patterns. Both patterns signify auspiciousness and good fortune. By applying the Hakka pattern's form, the bracelet is endowed with a sense of

auspiciousness and happiness.

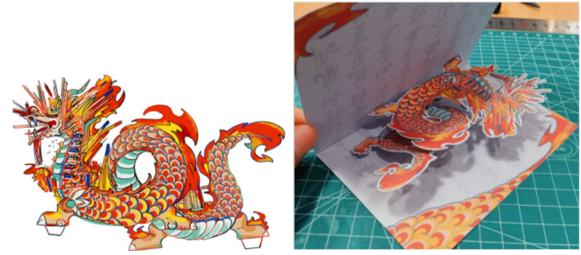


Figure 11. "Puzhai Fire Dragon" commemorative greeting card

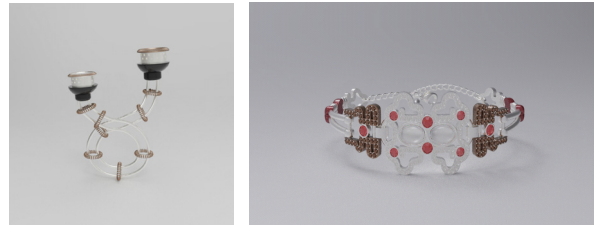


Figure 12. Root-Connected Ring and Ethnic Element Bracelet

5. Conclusion

This study focused on the methods and value of product redesign based on the metaphorical approach, using the context of Hakka culture. Through an in-depth exploration of the metaphorical approach and Hakka culture, the following conclusions were drawn. Firstly, the metaphorical approach is an effective design tool with broad application potential in product redesign. By incorporating metaphors and symbolic elements into product design, it can convey rich cultural connotations and emotional resonance, making the products more attractive and distinctive. Secondly, Hakka culture, as a unique and rich cultural tradition, significantly influences product redesign. By thoroughly understanding the core values, traditional customs, and artistic expressions of Hakka culture, these elements can be integrated into product design, creating products that are related to Hakka culture and satisfying people's need for cultural identity and emotional connection.

Through specific case studies of cultural and creative product designs inspired by Hakka culture, we have demonstrated the application of the metaphorical approach in practice. These cases have proven that the metaphorical approach effectively conveys the characteristics and values of Hakka culture, enabling products to establish a deeper emotional connection with users.

However, we also acknowledge that product design based on the metaphorical approach may face challenges and limitations. These include balancing cultural expression with functional requirements of the products and ensuring the feasibility and sustainability of redesign solutions. Future research can further explore these issues and propose more comprehensive design frameworks and methods to achieve better cultural integration and product innovation.

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