

MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS O HIGH-END BRANDS: THE GUCCI LOGO AND ADVERTISEMENTS AS A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Multimodality has been a key approach in both translation and media studies, drawing attention to the construction of meanings across semiotic modes – such as text, image, sound and spatial arrangement (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006). In branding and advertising, multiple modalities work together to express beliefs, identities, and ways of life that elude mere language. Luxury businesses such as Gucci count heavily on multimodal strategies in their logos and advertising to achieve a distinct look. Be it the logo, or its adverts, typography, iconography and semiotics are all used to depict exclusivity heritage and cultural capital. By examining these multilingual behaviors, we can better understand how translation & ... interpretation work across linguistic boundaries that affect international communication and consumer behavior (Bateman, 2014). In this paper, Gucci's logo and targeted advertisements are analyzed from a multimodal perspective to shed light on the interplay of semiotic resources shaping brand image and consumer response.

Approach

This article employs a multimodal discourse analysis focusing on the linguistic and visual components of Gucci's monogram plus selected advertisements. The study is based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar and O'Halloran's (2011) multimodal discourse studies, providing tools for investigating typography, colour, layout, symbolism and narrative features. Webscraped from gucci official advertising campaigns Spring 2025, Valentine's Day 2025, Pre-Fall 2019 "Camp" campaign, Gucci Guilty fragrance. Visual composition (color, light and texture), semiotic symbolism (legacy, love, authenticity) and textual anchoring (logo placement, brand narratives) were analyzed in each image. The method clarifies how the multimodal dimensions interact, highlighting a more holistic understanding of brand strategies between translation and world market.

One. What constitutes a brand?

A brand extends beyond a visual logo or trademark; it is a multi-dimensional concept for identity, reputation and customer's perception (Keller, 2013). It encompasses the literal values, appeals and emotional connections that separate a company's products/services from those of its competitors in the marketplace. Trust and loyalty towards a brand influences consumers' buying behaviors which is cultivated through consistent design, message and customer's experiences (Kapferer, 2012). Brand: A commercial and cultural concept in contemporary commerce A brand, as a concept, is referred to as both a commercial asset and as a cultural emblem. Its effectiveness lies in the ability to build lasting customer bond whilst increasing market competitive advantage (Aaker, 2020).

Two. What constitutes a luxury brand?

A prestige brand is characterised by exclusivity, outstanding quality and symbolic meaning beyond mere functionality (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017). Such brands tend to operate within verticals categories such as fashion, jewellery or lifestyle that are underpinned by a strong need for prestige in order to attract customers. Both of these attributes, demonstrativeness and heritage, accounts for why Hermès products are priced at a premium (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012). The industry of

luxury maintains traditions and culture narratives that enable the consumer to embrace a sense of lineage, social hierarchy, as well as communal distinction. They rely heavily on controlled distribution, symbolic logotypes and extensive advertising to retain the magic aura of secrecy and exclusivity (Ko et al., 2019).

Three. A look at Gucci and its tale of success.

One of the most well-known luxury fashion companies, Gucci, was founded in Florence, Italy by Guccio Gucci in 1921 (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004). The business, based on leather goods based on Guccio's experiences working at luxury hotels in London and Paris, quickly gained a reputation for fine craftsmanship and chic. – Gucci has expanded internationally and became an Italian symbol of elegance and creativity. At present, it operates under the French conglomerate Kering and is based in head offices in Florence and Milan (Kering, 2023). Gucci persists in its staying power because it has the ability to merge the old with the new based on innovation, appealing to a cross range between traditional and younger ages of consumers globally (Okonkwo, 2016).

Multimodality in translation studies investigates that meaning making is realized through the use of different semiotic modes, text, image, sound and gesture instead of relying solely on verbal representation. In advertising, for example, multimodality is especially relevant as there are no advertisements that consist solely of text, and all make use of a variety of modes. They draw on a mix of images, typeface, color and visual figures to assemble persuasive meaning which transcends language barriers (Kress & van Leeuwen: 2006). Commercial translation includes language accuracy and cultural/semitic context. For instance, an image in a poster ad can have symbolic meanings across culture and a direct translation of the text may not be sufficient if multimodal cues are ignored by simply taking them as literal equivalents (Bateman, 2014). As a result, multimodality contributes to translation research by insuring the complete decoding of text and image.

Knowledge about multimodal meaning gives translators, marketers, brand managers and communication researchers distinct advantages. Translators may similarly benefit, because their work often deals with more than just words, especially in the case of global advertising construction where text and images need to resonate with different audiences (Kaindl 2013). Multimedia marketing facilitates marketers to communicate persuasive campaigns combining cultural significance and brand identification. Multimodality For brand owners, multimodality means delivering consistent visual and written messages to various markets. In addition, linguists and communication scholars may also apply multimodal analysis to consider how meaning is constructed in media, educational, or corporate contexts (Forceville, 2009). The industry leaders learn through multimodal analysis about the way consumers read visual and verbal cues to help inform better ways of communicating.

Three. Analysis of multimodality within a domain such as branding or advertising allows scholars to display the complexity of the processes by which meaning is mediated. Unlike monomodal analysis that focuses on language alone, multimodal analyses attend to the interrelation of multiple semiotic resources in order to create effect (Jewitt 2009). A top high fashion brand does this with the help of a logo, tag lines and nitty-gritty advertising visuals that helps in portraying luxury, exclusivity and prestige. Focusing on multimodality by means of which researchers can explore how cultural norms, visual aesthetics and verbal strategies contribute to brand identity. Such an integrated strategy helps not just in enhancing academic understanding, and but has pragmatic effects for developing campaigns which are cross-cultural (O' Halloran, 2011). It is therefore that

analyzing multimodality provides conceptual and methodological insights into the construction of meaning in contemporary communication.

Four. Who Buys Luxury Brands?

Those interested in buying luxury brands are also typically part of a segment focusing on expressing identity, status and lifestyle through their possessions. This segment of consumer are generally from the upper or upper-middle class luxury lifestyle group possessing large amount of landmark income (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). The attraction of chasing high quality products goes beyond nothing but wealth, as some aspirational consumers – they do not own that much money, but aspire to such luxury life styles – are an important consumer group. Consumers of luxury marques seek exclusivity, quality, heritage and symbolism. Owning a Gucci or Louis Vuitton product is indicative of the capacity for supra-ordinary expenditure and membership in signs of cultural privilege and refinement (Okonkwo 2007). It is these customers, influenced by societal stories about luxury and personal desires for self-expression. Understanding these demographics allows firms to successfully tailor tactics in order to maintain exclusivity.

Advertising: Clients tend to like sales advertising and are more willing to purchase. Ads create emotional linkages with consumers via a variety of multimodal techniques, such as compelling graphics, persuading stories and unforgettable logos (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Advertisements between luxury brands often make use of symbolic and narrative strategies, narrating aspirational lives to which products are ancillary. This emotional appeal leads people not only to buy but to identify with the brand. Advertisement, according to survey is also a stimuli that lead to likes of the consumer as far as brand awareness trust and preference superiority can be sited (Belch & Belch, 2021). In the world of luxury brands, ads might add value to a product, validating its exclusivity and status. Therefore, efficient advertising practices that support fast sales lifting as well as long-term brand building are indispensable for luxury marketing success.

Multimodal Analysis of the Gucci Sign / Logo

The Gucci signifier is an example of multimodal meaning making because it combines both verbal and visual elements. The wordmark “GUCCI” is a serif capital letter font that connotes heritage, sophistication, and timelessness, while the famous intertwined double-“G” icon represents the initials of Guccio Gucci as evidence of its heritage and continuity (Okonkwo, 2007). Typography functions as a semiotic of stability and authority, while when linked to it’s visual emblem creates a bi-layered identity: a verbal one and an iconic oneQ (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Colour choices, often in black or gold or silver, act as additional modes of meaning. For black, sophistication and power are the message; while metallic colours represent opulence and exclusiveness (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). The simplicity and recognizability of the design means that it can be adapted for use on a variety of goods and media, making it an effective status semiotic. The logo works as a multi-modal signifier denoting cultural capital, aspirational identity and conspicuous consumption.

Practical segment

This is a multimodal analysis of the selected Gucci advertisement campaign images, focusing on the intersemiotic relationships between visual and verbal components in meaning making.

Analysis of Particular Images and Campaigns

Image 1 (Spring 2025: The Convergence of Lighting Power)

This image has such good looking models in a nice composition and pleasing environment, soft indirect daylight through fabrics, delicate shadow filling and pastel colours. Light plays a powerful semiotic role: it creates an ambiance of intimacy and authenticity, situating Gucci’s clothes as part

of reality rather than spectacle. The colorway (which boasts warm neutrals and pops of color) speaks to both luxury, through its use of sumptuous fabrics, as well as attainability. The text (likely the Gucci logo itself, hidden in an insignificant location) accentuates without obliterating; it's a watermark-filter which equivocally inserts identity into surroundings with as little disturbance as possible. The presentational approach disavows luxury clothing in favor of true feelings – ease, comfort, and connection.

Figure 2 (Valentine's Day 2025)

In this photograph, couples and family members wearing Gucci are shown in sumptuous interiors. The atmosphere (lush, inviting interiors) speaks of heritage, tradition and home style. Features of semiotic nature are certain forms of body language - proximity, relaxed position and eye contact that require emotional engagement in order to feel pleasure. The graphic frame underlines Gucci's commitment to establishing relationships and openness that go beyond the aesthetic of luxury. That logo/name font is probably jagged but classy, placed right up front while still keeping it real. The ad uses narrative multimodality: the images tell a story about love and connection, while the logo reaffirms corporate identity.

Image 3 (Pre-Fall 2019 "Camp" Campaign)

The campaign is full of over-the-top outfits and eclectic fashion, bold colors that just don't seem to match and some pretty odd backgrounds. It's a full-throttle visual mode, featuring pattern clashes, bright accessories, and dramatic posture. The pictures are nearly performative. The "Camp" sensibility is in full effect – where everything seems equivalent to artifice, sarcasm and overstatement. The logo/text imagery here is strangely more subdued than the visual performance - it's there, but Gucci lets the visuals come out on top, hinting that brand identification will hinge upon recognizability and not verbal saturation. The contrast between the opulent and the classical (ruins, dramatic interiors) suggests a link between past and present.

(MarketWatch had not calculated The following are the results of Gucci's Go Lala, which was inspired by Rovzar, and partly on Rovzar himself. Image 4 (Gucci Guilty Campaign: #GucciGuilty)

It shows celebrities (such as A\$AP Rocky, Julia Garner and Elliot Page) at a softer remove — maybe at home, or even in an intimate setting. Identity is, by its very nature, species of massacre. Clothing, lighting and mise-en-scène all work to achieve realism. The semiotics of diversity and self-expression are strong: these are not mannequins, but individuals — indicating that the brand wishes to align itself with current values surrounding inclusivity and self-definition. The literary device (branding, the names of scents) is a means of connecting the olfactory/sensory element (the actual smell and what it represents) to its visual and cultural footprint in society (who's wearing it, where are they wearing it, why does that matter?)

Inter-Image Comparisons and Insights

The tension between a more authentic and spectacular mode is palpable, as are the moments of minimalism, intimacy, and everyday life in certain ads (Spring 2025, Valentine's Day) contrasted with the dramatic surreal extravagance (Camp: Fall). Gucci uses two different strategies to chime with these different emotional registers – want and fantasised life in one, warmth, belonging and real self-expression in the other.

Logo/Text versus Visual Dominance: In imagery with high visual dominance, the logo becomes visually subordinate. In calm, story-based imagery, the logo quietly strengthens who we are. Gucci assumes consumers already know who they are; in several cases, meaning is communicated through imagery rather than the logo alone.

Color, light and texture are semiotic modes. Texture Again (silk and velvet, lovely) with light (misted filtered soft versus clear bright dramatic) and color (soft muted versus strong not only screams luxury but mood/desire/emotional context love drama identity fantasy.

Use of celebrities, inter-personal effects, and story telling (how family, love and self-acceptance are covered) suggests Gucci to be associating itself with notions beyond fashion – values that society otherwise carries. The modalities combine to communicate not only “buy this product,” but “this is who you are or aspire to be in an identity-and self-expression-obsessed society.”

Outcomes

The analysis has revealed how Gucci strategically draws on multimodality in order to reconcile authenticity with illusion. In campaigns such as Spring 2025 and Valentine’s Day 2025, the addition of soft light, home scenarios and relational body language placed Gucci into real stories channeling inside out storytelling for a picture of relatability alongside luxury. The Camp 2019 campaign was theatrical and extravagant, featuring the most bizarre clothes in vibrant colours and exaggerated poses that associated the brand with creativity and farce. The icon often played second fiddle and recognition was based more on images than type, a testament to Gucci’s strong global identity. Across all ads, multimodal aspects such as font, color palette and celebrity endorsement forged narrative connections between luxury objects and affective aspirational lives. They also demonstrate how multimodality enables Gucci to preserve brand prestige in a range of cultural and consumer contexts.

Final Assessment

The study provides evidence that multimodality is key in understanding the translation and communication of luxury branding. What Gucci has done is deliberately collapse the distinction between verbal and visual language, in a vivid example of how luxury brands create meaning that goes beyond literal language, reaching into both cognitive and emotional dimensions of customer understanding. In this context, the Gucci icon acts par convention and excelsiorification in terms of characters that manifest itself through use of typography (font) and figurative representation; advertizing extends these connotation supplementing narrative pictures with images repertoires cutting across cultural analogies and esthetic preferences. A close reading of several ads shows that Gucci uses multimodality to reconcile tradition and novelty, exclusivity and inclusion, fantasy and reality. This article shows translators, marketing researchers and academics how an MM analysis brings to light the complex interplay of signs which distinguish global brand communication (Jewitt, 2009: n.p.; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). The results highlight the significance in adopting multimodality in academia and branding strategies at concrete level

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