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Decoding the Multimodal Metaphors of Internet Memes: A Case Study of the 2024 ASEAN Cup Final

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ABSTRACT

In the context of contemporary digital technology, Internet Memes have emerged as a distinctive form of multimodal discourse, serving as a powerful medium for communication, humor generation, and social commentary. Since Internet Memes have emerged as a popular accepted language of the internet because they served communicate narratives in sharable formats by most interesting ways, research have recently put much focus on this emerging phenomenon. Drawing upon the strong theoretical framework of Multimodal Metaphor Analysis, this study undertakes a comprehensive investigation into the multifaceted role of Internet Memes as a dynamic tool for reflecting prevalent social sentiments, capturing emerging digital trends, and articulating evolving cultural narratives surrounding a sporting event_the 2024 ASEAN Football Cup Final. The hypothesis underlies this research is the manifestation of intricate mechanisms through which multimodal metaphors operate within digital spaces. By analyzing Memes related to the event, explores how the strategic combination of images, textual overlays, and other semiotic resources constructs metaphorical meanings, this research sheds light on how multimodal metaphors operate and contribute to broader digital discourses. Additionally, this case study aims to highlight the distinctive advantages of Internet Memes in shaping public perception, cultivating a sense of collective identity, and possibly affecting the interpretation and recollection of important cultural events. It also aims to inspire further research into multimodal discourse on social networks.

Keywords: Multimodal Metaphors; Multimodal Discourse; Internet Memes; Social Networks

1. Introduction

The advent of the Internet has profoundly transformed how individuals communicate, share ideas, and connect. Among the myriad forms of digital communication, Internet Memes have emerged as a distinctive and powerful medium of expression. These humorous images, videos, or text snippets, rapidly shared and adapted across social networks, distill cultural references and social commentary into an accessible and engaging format. The 2024 ASEAN Football Cup Final - a major national sporting event - catalyzed a surge in Meme creation within the Vietnamese context, providing a rich domain for analyzing the dynamics of multimodal discourse on social networks.

In the context of Internet culture, these metaphors often manifest visually. While metaphors have traditionally been studied as a linguistic phenomenon, they are currently extending far beyond the boundaries of language. In multimodal discourse, metaphors are constructed through the interaction of various semiotic modes, such as visuals, texts, and contextual elements, creating layered meanings that can signify effective communication with audiences. Memes, as a representing form of multimodal communication, combine these modes to convey complex ideas, emotions, and narratives in a condensing and impactful way.

Within this context, the study aims to (1) examine the multimodal metaphors embedded in Internet Memes inspired by the 2024 ASEAN Football Cup Final within the Vietnamese context, and (2) identify ideological meanings construed by these metaphors. This research hopes to contribute to the growing body of work on digital communication by highlighting the role of Memes in shaping public discourse and cultural identity.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Conceptual Multimodal Metaphor

Metaphors serve as pivotal constructs in language and cognition, establishing identity relations between disparate categories by juxtaposing a target domain with a source domain. This intrinsic relationship enables individuals to navigate complex concepts through familiar frameworks. For instance, the metaphor "*love is a journey*" situates the abstract notion of love within the concrete understanding of a journey, where "love" is the metaphor's *target*, and "the journey" is its *source*. Through this lens, both the target and the source are enmeshed in a web of shared meanings, which enlightens the metaphor's significance in human thoughts.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), popularized by scholars like George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, posits that "metaphor [is] not a figure of speech, but a mode of thought", and that metaphor can occur in other modes than language alone [1]. This assertion emphasizes the cognitive underpinnings of metaphorical reasoning, suggesting that such cognitive actors operate across various modalities beyond verbal expressions. Hence, the evolution of CMT has highlighted metaphor's multimodal capacity, basically, two strands of research of this latter variety developed. "One strand focused on metaphorical gestures in, and in the interaction with, spoken communication. The other strand examined metaphors in static pictures, initially in advertising, later also in the cartoon genre, comics, and in branding and logos" [2].

Initially, multimodal metaphor was understood as "metaphors whose target and source are each represented exclusively or predominantly in different modes" [1]. However, this understanding has since broadened, as highlighted by Gibbons who "noted that multimodal metaphor should be regarded as integrative drawing from different modes to construct experiences" [3]. This perspective acknowledges that metaphors often arise from an interplay of texts, visuals, gestures, sounds, and spatial arrangements, each contributing to a richer understanding of the metaphorical experience.

The multimodal approach to metaphor emphasizes the complexity and depth of human communication. By leveraging diverse modes, metaphors can articulate nuanced meanings and contextual subtleties that language alone may constrain. As such, recognizing the multimodal nature of metaphor not only enhances our comprehension of metaphorology but also enriches our interpretation of the myriad ways in which humans express and navigate their realities. In an increasingly interconnected world, the study of multimodal metaphors offers a valuable lens through which to understand the intricacies of communication in its full spectrum.

2.2. Internet Memes

The early definition of a Meme was introduced in Dawkins' book, "*The Selfish Gene*". Dawkins defines a meme as a unit of cultural transmission, analogous to a gene, which can be spread from one person to another through imitation [4]. In contemporary digital culture, however, "Internet Meme" refers to online content—such as image macros, videos, phrases, or ideas—that carries cultural, humorous, and sometimes critical meanings. Shifman defines them as: "(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form and/or stance, which (b) were created with awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed

via the internet by many users" [5]. The transition from analog forms of cultural transmission to networked modalities has significantly increased the speed, adaptability, and reach of Memes—thanks to the participatory and real-time nature of online platforms.

As digital artifacts, Memes rely on the interaction of these semiotic resources to achieve their communicative goals. Text serves to anchor or reframe the meaning of the accompanying visuals, while cultural context and audience familiarity contribute additional layers of interpretation. The multimodal nature of Internet Memes enables them to carry strong metaphorical meanings, which resonate not only in texts (language features) but also in thoughts and actions (visual features), influencing the way people perceive and communicate [3]. The power of multimodal metaphors in Memes lies in their ability to engage audiences on multiple levels by utilizing visual humor, linguistic cues, and socio-cultural contexts to deliver layered meanings that are both accessible and profound.

2.3. Previous Studies on Multimodal Metaphor and Internet Memes

Research on multimodal metaphors and Internet Memes has drawn considerable professional attention. Akhther [6] has acknowledged that Internet Memes phenomena rapidly gain popularity on the internet and contribute greatly to construct a new intercultural discourse. Internet discourse and its metaphorical conceptualization have been, therefore, flourishingly explored both for the purpose of fostering online communication [3] and improving competence or fluency within discourse-based second language learning contexts [7] through analyzing internet memes. This internet discourse analysis under the multimodal perspectives has also been further deployed in the field of Internet Memes responding to Trump's 2023 mugshot post on his X (formerly Twitter) account, where conceptual (multimodal) metaphor and metonymy theory have been combined to identify patterns of interaction between metaphor and metonymy in these memes [8]. Hee et al. [9] also classifies and explains hateful memes in their research work. In the political or media discourse domain, multimodal discourse analysis has gained the interest of Stancea, Călin, and Ciocîrlan [10] who emphasize the critical influence of memes on political discourse and public opinion during the 2019 Romanian presidential elections, and highlight the impacts of memes employment on

shaping public perceptions and narratives. Luca [11] also conducts a multimodal discourse analysis of a newspaper article during the Brexit campaign based on Halliday's Functional Grammar theory and claims that analysis strategies have helped improve the audience's comprehension of decoding media linguistic meanings.

3. Materials and Methods

In this study, we will analyze seven significant Internet Memes compiled by *Tuoi Tre Online* Newspaper [12], which were selected from popular phenomena circulating on social networks and the selection criteria also went to their virality and cultural impact. These Memes, created by Vietnamese social media users, are based on images from the 2024 ASEAN Football Cup Finals, an event that sparked widespread discussion and online creativity expression. By focusing on these culturally significant Meme 1 (**Figure 1**), Meme 2 (**Figure 2**), and Meme 3 (**Figure 3**), we aim to uncover the metaphorical structures and multimodal dynamics that underpin their impact and popularity.

We examined each meme through the lens of metaphor theory and multimodal discourse analysis, which provides insights into how abstract ideas are conveyed through the interplay of various semiotic modes - such as visuals, texts, and cultural contexts. The analysis will involve identifying the visual and textual elements of each Meme, categorizing their metaphorical components, and interpreting their cultural and ideological significance. Interpreting a Meme as a multimodal metaphor requires identifying (1) its two parts; (2) its target and source; and (3) the feature(s) to be mapped from source to target. Additionally, we will explore how different modes (e.g., visuals, text) construct the target, the source, or both together to create meaning.

This dual approach will allow us to decode the complex and layering meanings embedded in these Memes, shedding light on their role as reflections of cultural narratives, social sentiment, and collective humor in contemporary Vietnam. While this study focuses on a small sample of Memes, the findings may provide valuable insights into the broader trends of multimodal communication in digital spaces.

Figure 1. Meme 1: Me and my colleagues at 17:29.

Figure 2. Meme 2: Happy New Year!

Figure 3. Meme 3: The team who has won the AFF Championship twice in a row; Middle text: the 3rd AFF Champion; Bottom text: the 3rd AFF Champion.

4. Results

4.1. The Context of the 2024 ASEAN Cup Final Event

The 2024 ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) Cup Final is a significant event that captivates millions of fans in Southeast Asia. As the region's top football tournament, the AFF Cup features intense competition, culminating in an exciting showdown between the football powerhouses of Vietnam and Thailand, both supported by fervent fan bases. On January 5th, 2025, Vietnam secured a historic victory when scoring a decisive goal to triumph 3-2 in a match that became a defining moment in the rivalry between the two teams.

Beyond the on-field action, the tournament was equally defined by its digital footprint. Internet Memes emerged as a swift and pervasive medium for capturing the match's emotions, drama, and cultural significance. Memes featuring iconic players, pivotal moments (such as Vietnam's last-minute goal), and expressions of national pride proliferated

across social media platforms, enabling fans to engage with the event in creative and participatory ways. These Memes exemplify the multimodal metaphors discussed in Section 4.2., where visual and textual elements combine to encode cultural narratives and ideological stances. A spectacular save, a controversial referee decision, or a player's emotional reaction could instantly become meme-worthy material, shared widely alongside humorous or satirical commentary. Whether celebrating Vietnam's victory or playfully mocking Thailand's defeat, the Internet became a secondary arena for fan interaction, extending the passion and excitement about the ASEAN Cup long after the game finished.

4.2. Data Analysis

By analyzing specific Memes generated after the 2024 ASEAN Cup Final, we can discern patterns in how these digital artifacts function as multimodal metaphors. Each Meme is dissected to identify its "target" and "source" domains, the "semiotic modes" constructing these domains (visual, textual, contextual), and the "ideological meanings" mapped between them. Below, we examine seven representative memes to illustrate these dynamics.

4.2.1. Meme 1

This Meme presents a humorous comparison between a football celebration and everyday work life, offering a lighthearted reflection on shared emotional experiences.

a) Visual Frame: Meme 1 uses an image of the Vietnamese football team celebrating their victory over the Thai team in the 2024 ASEAN Cup Final. The players' jubilant expressions and celebratory gestures serve as a visual representation of triumph and relief. This victorious

moment is recontextualized to reflect the shared emotions of workers at the end of a tiring workday.

- Key Scene: The intense energy and celebration after a challenging football match resonate with the feeling of completing a demanding workday.

- Cultural Context: This comparison humorously aligns sports fans' emotions with the more universal experience of workplace exhaustion and relief.

b) Textual Elements: The text "Me and my colleague at 17:29" labels the image of the celebrating players as representing "me" and "my colleagues", creating a personal and relatable connection for viewers. The specific time, 17:29, signifies the traditional end of the workday for many, emphasizing the anticipation and joy associated with completing daily tasks.

c) Metaphorical Mapping:

The metaphorical structure of this Meme is detailed in **Table 1**.

The humor in this Meme stems from its relatable comparison between two seemingly unrelated scenarios: a football match and a workday. By equating the emotional highs of a sports victory with the universal joy of clocking out of work, the Meme cleverly bridges two different contexts.

The exaggerated connection between an epic victory and the mundane task of finishing work is a metaphorical lens through which people can view and express their everyday struggles and victories. Meme 1 reflects the human tendency to find parallels between grand events and personal experiences. It humorously underscores how even ordinary aspects of life, like work, can feel like a battle or competition, with the end of the day representing a moment of triumph.

Table 1. Metaphorical Mapping of Meme 1.

Category	Description
Source Domain	A victorious football match, symbolizing hard-fought success and celebratory relief.
Target Domain	The end of a workday, is characterized by exhaustion but also a sense of accomplishment and relief.
Key Mappings	- Victory in football → Completing a workday successfully. - Players celebrating → Workers feeling joy and relief. - Match challenges → Work-related fatigue and struggles.

4.2.2. Meme 2

This Meme creatively blends a key moment in the match with elements of Vietnamese cultural tradition, adding a festive and humorous twist to a serious sports event.

a) Visual Frame: The Meme 2 humorously compares referee Ko Hyung-jin's red card for Thai midfielder Weerathep Pomphun in the 74th minute of the match to a lucky money envelope. In Vietnamese culture, lucky money envelopes (lì xì) are vibrant red and represent good fortune and prosperity, especially at the beginning of the Lunar New Year. The red card, an object traditionally associated with penalties and disadvantages in football, is reinterpreted

in this context as a symbol of luck and opportunity for the Vietnamese team.

- Key Scene: The act of showing the red card, a dramatic and tension-filled moment in the match, is reframed in a celebratory and positive light from the perspective of Vietnamese fans.

- Cultural Context: This reinterpretation aligns with the Vietnamese cultural association of the color red with luck and happiness, making the metaphor culturally resonant and immediately relatable.

b) Textual Elements: The inclusion of phrase "Happy New Year" further anchors the metaphor in Vietnamese cultural traditions, emphasizing the comparison between the red card and a lucky money envelope. The textual element

shifts the focus from the football-specific penalty to the broader cultural symbolism of the red card, encouraging audiences to see the moment as a stroke of good fortune for the Vietnamese team.

c) Metaphorical Mapping:

The metaphorical structure of this Meme is detailed in **Table 2**.

The humor in this Meme lies in its unexpected reinterpretation of the red card. While football fans globally understand a red card as a source of frustration or disadvantage, the Meme flips this meaning to celebrate the card as a gift of luck for the opposing team. By linking the moment to the Vietnamese tradition of exchanging lucky money during the Lunar New Year, the Meme infuses the high-stakes sports moment with a lighthearted and culturally specific twist.

This Meme reflects how cultural context shapes the interpretation of events. What may be seen as a purely negative or punitive moment in one context is reframed as an opportunity for luck and success in another. This reframing demonstrates the flexibility of multimodal metaphors in Meme 2, which blends cultural traditions with current events to offer fresh, humorous perspectives.

In addition, the Meme highlights how shared cultural knowledge - like the significance of red in Vietnamese traditions - creates a sense of community among its audience. It celebrates not only the Vietnamese team's success but also the broader cultural values in Vietnam.

Table 2. Metaphorical Mapping of Meme 2.

Category	Description
Source Domain	The red lucky money envelope, symbolizes good luck, fortune, and prosperity in Vietnamese culture.
Target Domain	The red card issued during the football match, which disadvantaged Thailand but benefited Vietnam.
Key Mappings	- Red card → Lucky money envelope. - Act of showing red card → Gifting of luck/opportunity. - Thailand's disadvantage → Vietnam's stroke of good fortune.

4.2.3. Meme 3

This Meme draws from popular cartoon imagery to depict the emotional highs and lows of sports competition, illustrating a clash between expectations and outcomes.

a) Visual Frame: This Meme uses a well-known scene from Tom & Jerry's cartoon, where Tom, the cat, enthusiastically reaches out to embrace Jerry, the mouse but is interrupted by a speeding train. The image is edited to include the Vietnamese flag on the train, symbolizing Vietnam's role in thwarting the anticipated "reunion" between the characters.

- Top frame: Tom (the Thailand team) is depicted as jubilantly anticipating their third consecutive AFF Championship title. Jerry (the third championship) represents their ultimate goal.

- Bottom frame: The train (the Vietnamese team) disrupts the moment, preventing Tom from achieving his desire to reunite with Jerry, implying that Vietnam's performance prevented Thailand from securing their third consecutive win.

b) Textual Elements:

- The caption "The team has won the AFF Championship twice in a row" labels Tom, identifying the Thailand team as the dominant force in the past two tournaments.

- The phrase "3rd championship" on Jerry reflects Thailand's goal of achieving their third successive title.

- The Vietnamese flag on the train visually establishes Vietnam as the unexpected force that derails Thailand's ambitions.

c) Metaphorical Mapping:

The metaphorical structure of this Meme is detailed in **Table 3**.

This Meme humorously conveys the disappointment of the Thai team and their fans, leveraging a universally recognizable cartoon scene to evoke sympathy and amusement.

Table 3. Metaphorical Mapping of Meme 3.

Category	Description
Source Domain	The Tom & Jerry cartoon scene, where Tom's reunion with Jerry is interrupted by an external force (the train).
Target Domain	The sports competition, where the Thai team's attempt to win a third championship is thwarted by Vietnam.
Key Mappings	- Tom → The Thailand team. - Jerry → The third consecutive championship title. - Train with Vietnamese flag → Vietnam's team, acting as an obstacle to Thailand's aspirations.

4.2.4. Meme 4, 5, 6, 7

- Visual Frame: All 4 Memes (4, 5, 6, 7) share a common visual frame: the moment in the 90+19th minute of the 2024 ASEAN Cup Final when two Thai players helplessly chase a slow-rolling ball into their goal, as **Figure 4** below.

- Textual Elements: By recontextualizing this scene with varying textual elements, each Meme creates a distinct multimodal metaphor that conveys humorous, self-deprecating, or ironic commentary. Below is a detailed analysis of those Meme:

a) Meme 4: Textual Elements: (1) "Tôi" (Me): The individual striving for success; (2) "990 TOEIC": A perfect or near-perfect score in the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), symbolizing mastery of English. This Meme humorously captures the difficulty of attaining a high TOEIC score, portraying it as a goal that always seems just out of reach. The player's helplessness emphasizes the speaker's struggle with English proficiency despite their efforts.

b) Meme 5: Textual Elements: (1) "Tôi" (Me): The individual striving for success in their career; (2) "Tiếng Anh của tôi" (My English): A representation of the individual's inadequate English skills, depicted as inactive and disconnected; (3) "Lương vài chục triệu" (Salary in tens of millions): A high salary, symbolizing financial success or career advancement. This Meme highlights the perceived importance of English proficiency in achieving financial success. The humor arises from the exaggerated blame placed on "My English" for career setbacks, illustrating the speaker's frustration and self-awareness.

c) Meme 6: Textual Elements: (1) "Tôi" (Me): The individual striving to achieve financial stability or rewards; (2) "Lương + thưởng Tết" (Salary + Lunar New Year bonus): A symbol of financial success or rewards during the New Year; (3) "Ví tiền của tôi" (My wallet): A representation of the financial strain or inability to retain rewards, emphasizing the disconnect between effort and outcome. This multimodal metaphor effectively uses humor to highlight the tension between expectations and reality, particularly during culturally significant periods like the Lunar New Year.

d) Meme 7: Textual Elements: (1) "Tôi" (Me): The individual vying for the attention or affection of the "Crush"; (2) "Bạn tôi" (My friend): The companion of the character "I"; (3) "Crush": The object of affection or romantic interest. For a Vietnamese audience, the label "Crush" carries the universal yet deeply personal experience of unrequited or competitive love, a theme that resonates across generations. This Meme, like others in the series, uses humor to highlight the futility and emotional complexities of romantic pursuits. The choice of a football scene - a high-stakes, goal-oriented activity- perfectly captures the intensity and frustration of striving for love or attention.

- Metaphorical Mapping:

The metaphorical structure of these Memes is detailed in **Table 4**.

The shared themes across these Memes revolve around the concept of helplessness and inevitable failure. Each Meme utilizes the image of the Thai players' futile attempt to stop the slow-moving ball as a metaphor for personal struggles in various aspects of life, such as education, career, financial aspirations, or romance. This sense of failure is humorously exaggerated to emphasize the frustration of trying hard but falling short, a relatable experience for many viewers.

The use of multimodal interaction further enhances the impact of these Memes. The visual frame of the football match, which captures a moment of inevitable defeat, is transformed through the addition of text labels that reinterpret the scene. These labels serve as metaphors for everyday struggles, effectively bridging the gap between the visual and textual elements to create layering meanings. The synergy between the two modes underscores the versatility of multimodal metaphors, demonstrating how they can communicate humor, irony, and social critique simultaneously.
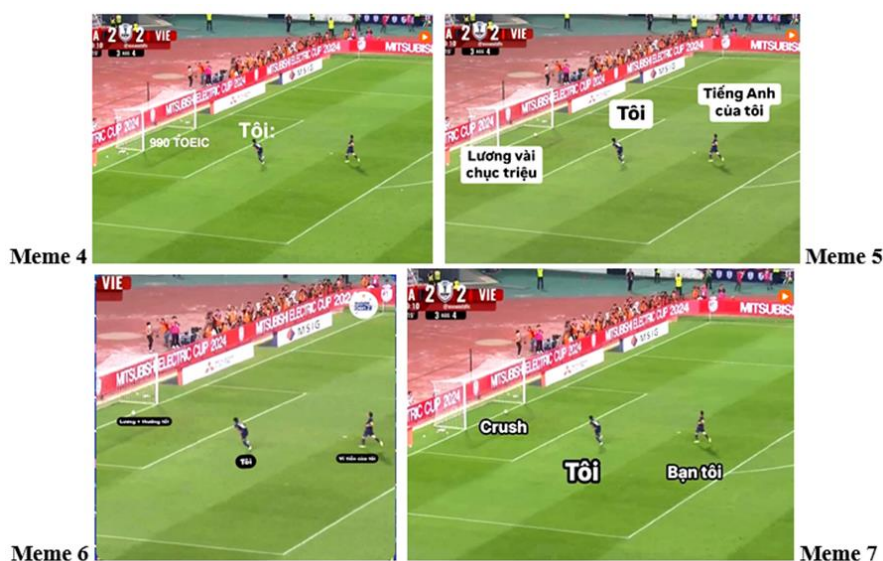

Figure 4. Meme 4, 5, 6, 7: Two Players are chasing a Slow-rolling ball.

Table 4. Metaphorical Mapping of Meme 4,5,6,7.

Category	Description
Source Domain	A football scene from the 90+19th minute, showing Thai players helplessly chasing a slow-rolling ball into their own goal.
Target Domain	Different real-life struggles, including academic achievement, career advancement, financial rewards, and romantic pursuits.
Key Mappings	- Player chasing ball → Struggling individual. - Ball → Desired goal (TOEIC score, salary, Tet bonus, crush). - Helplessness → Feeling of frustration or inadequacy in different life scenarios Specific Interpretations: • Meme 4: TOEIC score as the unreachable ball • Meme 5: High salary slipping away due to poor English • Meme 6: Bonus escaping despite effort • Meme 7: Romantic interest unattainable despite pursuit

5. Discussion

In the Vietnamese context, the interplay of these modes - text and image is particularly evident in Memes inspired by the 2024 ASEAN Football Cup Final. This event, as a major cultural and emotional touchstone, provided fertile ground for the creation of Memes that encapsulate societal values, humor, and critique. For example, Memes from this context frequently employ sports imagery to comment on broader struggles, such as personal failure, societal expectations, or aspirational goals. A missed goal or a comical misstep on the field becomes a metaphor for challenges faced by individuals in their daily lives. These multimodal constructions reflect not only the emotional intensity of the sporting event but also deeper societal anxieties, aspirations, and critiques. The research findings support the claim by Mitsiaki [7] that Internet Memes often make use of metaphorical conceptualizations and humor.

Furthermore, multimodal metaphors in Memes often capitalize on the immediacy and shareability of digital platforms, allowing them to rapidly disseminate and evolve within cultural discourse. The interplay of modes makes them particularly effective at addressing contemporary issues, as they can quickly adapt to new contexts and audiences. In the case of the 2024 ASEAN Football Cup Final, the shared experience of the event created a unifying backdrop for Meme creation, enabling multimodal metaphors to articulate collective experiences and cultural narratives in an accessible and engaging manner. This is similar to research by Stancea, Călin & Ciocîrlan [10] who suggested aiming to grasp internet multimodal discourse's impact on shaping public perceptions and narratives towards the Romanian presidential elections 2024.

Multimodal metaphors extend the traditional understanding of metaphor by incorporating multiple semiotic modes to construct layered and dynamic meanings. In the context of Internet Memes, they draw on the interplay of visuals, text, and cultural context to communicate ideas with precision and creativity. As Anurudu [3] argues, multimodal metaphors operate across different modes (e.g., visual, textual, auditory), creating richer and more nuanced meanings than purely linguistic metaphors. Memes exemplify this by combining images and text to evoke humor, critique, and emotional resonance. In addition, Scott [13] also reports that interpreting multimodal metaphors is very much the same processes as interpreting verbal metaphors.

The Memes analyzed in this study reflect uniquely Vietnamese cultural values, such as national pride. Several examples interweave details from the "exciting atmosphere of the match" with elements of "Vietnamese Lunar New Year (Tết)" as seen in the use of phrases like "Happy New Year" and "New Year bonus". Notably, the match took place on January 5, just before Vietnamese Lunar New Year, a time when people anticipate prosperity, luck, and celebration. This temporal connection added emotional and symbolic depth to the Memes, making them more relatable to Vietnamese audiences who were already immersed in New Year traditions and expectations. By humorously linking football victory to themes of festive joy and financial rewards, these Memes highlight how cultural knowledge and social context shape meme interpretation, reinforcing their role as dynamic reflections of collective identity and shared experiences. This reflects the findings by Akhther [6] when examining Bangladeshi culture and exerted that the ways in which memes function as rhetoric to investigate the cross-cultural communication and identity formation that are common in representative cyber-culture".

In summary, the multimodal metaphors embedded in Internet Memes inspired by the 2024 ASEAN Football Cup Final reveal the dynamic interplay of text, image, and cultural context in digital communication. These Memes not only capture the emotional intensity of the sporting event but also serve as a medium for exploring broader societal narratives, from workplace struggles to national pride. They are products of Vietnamese culture and contain ideological underpinnings. By analyzing these digital artifacts, we gain valuable insights into the social, cultural, and emotional landscapes of contemporary Vietnam, underscoring the transformative power of Memes as a tool for collective expression and cultural critique. This hopefully sets more perspectives for future research of

multimodal discourse analysis and more in-depth research into linguistic sources of Internet Memes.

6. Conclusions

This study has explored the multimodal metaphors embedded within Internet Memes inspired by the 2024 ASEAN Cup Final, focusing on their interplay of textual, visual, and cultural elements. By analyzing these Memes through the lens of metaphor theory and multimodal discourse analysis, we have highlighted their ability to encapsulate and convey complex social and emotional experiences in a humorous and relatable manner. The findings reveal that these Memes not only function as tools of entertainment but also serve as vehicles for cultural commentary, reflecting the collective sentiments, and aspirations of Vietnamese society.

The analysis reinforces the unique affordances of multimodal metaphors in digital communication, where the interaction between different semiotic resources enhances meaning-making and engagement. Memes transform seemingly mundane or specific events into broader representations of human challenges, such as struggles with career advancement, linguistic proficiency, financial aspirations, and interpersonal relationships. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital media fosters collective identity and discourse, particularly in the context of cultural and social phenomena.

In conclusion, the use of multimodal metaphors in Memes exemplifies their potential as powerful communicative tools that bridge individual experiences with societal narratives. Future research could expand this framework to explore cross-cultural variations in Meme interpretation, as well as their evolving role in digital literacy and multimodal discourse. Through such investigations, the broader implications of multimodal metaphors in shaping online culture and communication can be further illuminated.

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Data Availability Statement

This is the link (https://cuoi.tuoitre.vn/meme-sau-chuc-vo-dich-cua-tuyen-viet-nam-hai-qua-di-20250106133731566.htm) where internet memes analyzed in the paper can be found.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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