

Strategic Brand Identity and Symbolic Design Cues

Toni-Matti KARJALAINEN

Helsinki University of Technology, P.O.Box 9555, 02015 HUT, FINLAND

University of Art and Design Helsinki, toni.karjalainen@uiah.fi

Abstract: The importance of product and brand recognition has increased in numerous product fields. While competitive products have converged in terms of technical performance, symbolic product functions have become increasingly emphasised. Consequently, this calls for the creation of strategically proper “design language” for the brand’s products that are the ultimate manifestations of the brand identity. This paper presents preliminary findings of my doctoral research. The objective of the paper is to discuss the use of symbolic design cues in terms of their embodied semantic references that support strategic brand identity. The research approach combines the perspectives of product/design semantics and brand research. The empirical data has been gathered through qualitative case studies, Volvo (passenger cars) and Nokia (mobile phones) representing the two in-depth cases of the research. Personal interviews of companies’ designers and design managers have functioned as the primary method of data collection. This has been supported by a rich variety of secondary data. The research clearly indicates the value of strategically managed product design. In this regard, there seem to be two critical aspects. First, the definition of the strategic brand identity requires well-grounded contemplation. Second, specific attention must be addressed also to the design process through which the semantic transformation from brand attributes to physical design cues actually takes place. Moreover, the various dissimilarities of Volvo and Nokia cases illustrate that the creation and management of brand’s design language is eventually an utterly case-specific issue. Differences in brands’ heritages and cultures, industrial environments, as well as companies’ business and product strategies may result in quite different approaches to the use of symbolic design cues.

Key words: Brand identity, Product design, Product semantics, Car industry, Mobile phone industry

1. Conceptual Background

1.1 Introduction

In an increasing number of product categories, the overload of product supply, together with the overload of stimuli that the people are faced to in the contemporary marketplace, has forced companies to find powerful way to stand out from the crowd. In design-intensive fields, this calls for the creation of strategically proper “design language” for the brand’s products.

This paper presents preliminary findings of my doctoral research. My doctoral research builds a conceptual framework to combine the perspectives of brand-related research fields (brand management, corporate identity, design management) and design/product semantics. The objective is to describe the potential of semantic

references in product design when evoking strategic brand associations. My study approaches these themes in a qualitative manner through the in-depth cases of Volvo cars and Nokia mobile phones.

The prior data sources within the cases may be grouped into three categories. First, public documents and internal company documents have been used to describe and analyse various representations of brand identity. Second, the products under scrutiny and, in specific, their design features (as they occur) have been analysed. Third, and most importantly, personal interviews have enabled potential insights of the design process as experienced and described by designers themselves.

1.2 Strategic Brand Identity

To build awareness, to foster recognition, and to strive for distinctive offerings, companies are stressing activities of strategic identity building. The metaphorical use of the notion of “identity” in the corporate context suggests that, similarly to human beings, also companies can be described through specific characteristics. Identity can be described as a set of attributes that distinguishes one entity from another [1]. The principal mission of a company identity is to foster recognition [2].

The company’s identity is communicated to the external world through branding. A specific brand (name) usually functions as the central manifestation of company’s identity. It involves the key identity attributes of the company in a “condensed” form. In specific, the brand name functions as a sign, connoting specific meanings by activating a network of associations, both intended and unpredictable.

The discussion around branding has evolved from a marketing-led product orientation into a holistic relational paradigm [3]. Instead of focusing solely on specific aspects of meaning transmission, “brands can be defined as unique, proprietary marketplace relationships that provide long-term strategic value to the organization. These branded relationships are the core of the intangible assets of the new economy” [4]. The creation of shared meanings within the interaction between the brand and the customer is at the core of this relational paradigm. Through branding, companies can embody meaningful codes in their products and guide customer perception. “Brand is shorthand for a customer-facing entity designed to be understandable” [5].

To a certain degree, brands are used as strategic devices to transmit intentional messages to customers. I use this viewpoint in my study, however, being fully aware of the interactive reality of meaning creation. In fact, transmission of embodied meanings and creation of shared meanings represent two different approaches to symbolic communication [6]. The transmission view stresses the strategic aspect and considers the underlying factors, such as brand heritage and company culture, as given. Nonetheless, a company should recognise the issues affecting brand perception before successful communication can take place.

1.3 Evoking Strategic Associations

Brands usually possess certain key identity attributes through which the brand is recognised and associated. “The lesson is to focus on a unique aspect of the brand that is easy for consumers to remember” [7]. This claim is supported by the notion that usually only a small proportion of attributions is widely shared [8], meaning that only a limited number of common associations (that are shared by a wide public) may be attached even to widely recognised and strong brands. Most associations are shared only by smaller groups or are even idiosyncratic. Associations may be more consistent and larger in quantity within the specific target segment of the brand than in general public.

Many successful brands are thus characterised by few key associations. These may be characterised as “competence associations” that are the company’s description of its main competencies as perceived by the

customer [9]. In a metaphorical sense, these may be regarded as forming the "core identity" of the brand - the most important elements of the brand's strategic identity - that contains the associations that are most likely to remain constant [10]. This core also includes the "brand essence", a single thought that captures the soul of the brand [11], that functions as a glue that holds the core identity elements together [12]. It is crucial to find a dimension that the target customers consider relevant. "Brand excellence comes principally from customer relevance" [13].

1.4 Communicative Product Design

As the idea of brand perception rests on associations, it then becomes crucial for companies to affect the associative construction that creates meanings and value for their stakeholders. As long as it is out of reach for companies to control customers' subjective associations, identity management can only occur through tangible identifiers. Part of the identity can be externalised and further manipulated.

Product design is one of the central components of the brand's visual identity. Products function as manifestations of brand identity by evoking certain associations that, in an ideal situation, are aligned to strategically defined message of the brand. A product may be claimed to have a specific "character" [14] that includes references to the brand. As illustrated in figure 1, product character is concretised, in the first place, on the level of qualitative descriptions some of which can have a

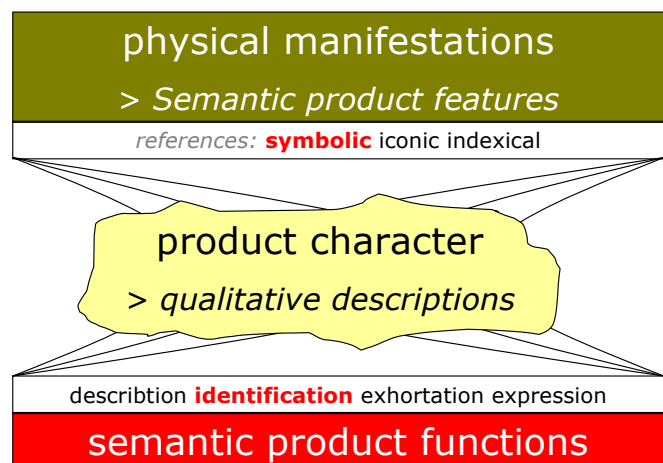


Fig.1 Product's semantic character

direct connection to physical product qualities such as design elements. Within the interaction between the product and the user, product character, physical product features perform various functions of which, from the perspective of brand identity management, it is important to recognise particularly those functions that identify the brand, make the product different from competitors' offerings.

In terms of product functions – the viewpoint of products in their various use contexts – special interests lie in distinguishing those functions that are typical for the respective brand. In specific, my attention is focused on functions that have high semantic relevance. As an example, product functions into practical functions and product language functions [15]. Alternatively, we may talk about communicative product functions [16]. Fundamentally, identification is a central task of these functions.

It is essential to recognise and define the physical product qualities that may have high semantic relevance in terms of specific brand associations. Different product qualities - such as dimensions, features, and characters - are often expressed by adjectival constructions [17]. We may say that a product looks (or feels) "harmonic", "modern", "safe", and so forth. In effect, products are often given a character in a similar manner as human beings. This character refers to a coherent set of characteristics and attributes that apply to appearance and behaviour alike, cutting across different functions, situations and value systems [18]. The character provides an end-user with support for anticipation, interpretation, and interaction. In the brand context, certain characteristics or attributes (for instance, supported by or embedded in specific design elements) signal to the user that while this product "seems" to be a product of that specific brand, it is anticipated to have that certain character.

1.5 Brand-Specific Design Language

Descriptive qualities may be directly or indirectly manifest in physical manifestations of the product, such as form elements, joining relationships, detail treatments, materials, colours and textures [19]. In terms of product design elements, it is important to distinguish those elements that are typical for the brand.

Some of the tangible attributes that are specific to a brand may be explicitly defined. In terms of industrial design, interest may be focused on recognising and creating so-called “traceable”, explicit design elements [20]. These elements may be deduced to basic-level ordering elements. Nonetheless, interpretation of design elements are always subject to subjectivity, which means that they need to have a clear strategic connection to brand identity. In other words, customers must be provided with relevant “codes” in order to nourish intentional associations.

There appear different methods to analyse products and product families in reactive manner (to find and define brand-specific cues) or in proactive manner (to create brand-specific design language) [21]. By performing such analyses, a list of brand-specific references (and perhaps their relative weights) may be formed. Precise mappings can also be problematic, while they offer favourable grounds for subjective interpretations. When searching for brand identity references, it is often reasonable to adhere to specific “key” elements, “design cues” of the brand. These cues may appear across the entire product portfolio or in selected “lead products” that incorporate the key identity of the brand [22].

2. Volvo Case: Designing “Revolvolution”

The importance of branding and communicative product design has been stressed in the automotive industry since long. An illustrative example is Volvo that had performed a radical redesign of its product language (“Revolvolution”) in the 1990’s and become one of the most appraised brands within the automotive design.

2.1 Starting Point

The Volvo brand has a long and consistent heritage of automotive safety and Scandinavian appearance. During the 1980’s and the beginning of the 1990’s, Volvo was characterised by manufacturing boxy, robust vehicles that drove at the front of safety development. After these years, a change towards more dynamic design language started to occur in the beginning of the 1990’s, as the conservative boxy image was considered not an appropriate strategy for the future. The gradual change of the design language through the models of the early 90’s and the actual “Revolvolution” - foreseen in the ECC study of the 1992 and eventually manifest in the S80 (launched 1998) - was orchestrated by Peter Horbury who started as Volvo’s Design Director in the Autumn of 1991.



Fig.2 Volvo 740 representing Volvo’s “boxy” period (Source: Volvo)

Redesigning Volvo identity was Horbury’s prior intention right from the start. However, the restyling of Volvo identity was not considered as the virtue in itself: It was important that the new design should preserve the strong Volvo identity of the past. As Horbury noted in an interview: “We had to be very careful that we maintain the recognition of Volvo, because it stood for a lot of things, even if it didn’t stand for beautiful design.” The starting

point for design modification was clear: designers were starting redesign with maintaining two basic things in products - "Swedishness" and strong Volvo heritage.

2.2 ECC - Environmental Concept Car

The new ideas incarnated in strongly in the Environmental Concept Car (ECC), presented to the public in 1992 Paris Motor Show. The idea of the ECC was born when the Safety Group and the Environment Group of Volvo wanted to build a concept car on the basis of the existing 940. From the perspective of design, first researching and developing advanced technology and materials and then hide it in a "grandmother's dress" did not seem to be a very clever move. Peter Horbury wanted to make ECC also a design study, to vision what Volvo would seem like in the future. The concept was seen as a good strategic opportunity to test new design language.



Fig.3 Volvo ECC (Source: T-M.Karjalainen/Volvo Museum)

When the first concepts of ECC were presented to Horbury in California, the sketches prepared by an American designer Doug Frasier made a special impression on him. The sketches seemed to embody genuine references to the Volvo heritage, to specific historical Volvo models, while at the same time presenting a fresh approach. These initial sketches embodied the design elements that later became characteristic for the whole product family of cars. Horbury considered this design language as "an immediate guide to the future" [23]. The design elements - V-shaped hood, shoulders, the lack of traditional bumpers, low-set but still recognisable Volvo nose, strong characteristic lines flowing front the front to the rear – are surprisingly similar to the elements embedded in the subsequent production models (see figure 4).



Fig.4 Volvo ECC (up) compared with S60R production model (below) (Source: T-M.Karjalainen/Volvo Museum, Paris Motor Show 2002)

2.3 New Model Family

Horbury wanted to transform the convincing design of ECC into a production car. After a difficult period including the cancellation of planned merger with Renault, a new platform for future models was developed.

Volvo had a business plan according to which S80 was shortly to be accompanied by the new V70 estate (including the cross-country version of it), the S60 saloon, and the XC90 SUV. It was clear that the design language of ECC was to be used as a direct inspiration for the S80 and following platform models. Another point of emphasis was naturally the safety aspect. The S80 project started officially in the early 1994 and the final product was launched in summer 1998. The design process of the S80 lasted two years. The subsequent models were designed in a shorter time.

The new design language of Volvo may have been a surprise for many, but eventually, it received positive feedback, illustrated by several design awards. For instance, it won the 1999 European Automotive Design Award (voted by professional car designers and design students from 33 countries). The justifications for the selection included [24]: “Volvo S80 represents a radical change without breaking the continuity of Volvo design... S80 has been more successful in synthesising the past and the future than any other car in 1998. It integrates the typical Volvo design features, such as the classic grille and large headlights and at the same time provides a new concept of a prestigious four-door saloon.”

The new design language appeared to be strategically successful. The S80, and its followers - V70, S60, and XC90 - were evidently appealing new customer with a more emotional appearance while, at the same time, preserving strong link to the brand heritage. The redesign was carefully considered in terms of brand’s strategic communication. Furthermore, the new design language of Volvo has strong foundations when regarding the semantic references of strong design elements and their genuine relations to the core identity attributes of the Volvo brand.

The design language is particularly visible through a few strong design elements that have appeared in every model of the platform family (see figure 6). Designers are specifically proud of the boot (smooth shift of material between the body and the back light). As Horbury has stated: “The rear end of the S80 has a very strong identity. No one will have any doubt about the car in front of



Fig.5 (from top:) Early sketch of S80 by Doug Frasher, 1:1 model of S80 by Frasher, frozen design of S80, S80 production model from back, S80 production model from front (Source: Volvo)

them” [25]. The design cues of Volvo have been further evolved in recent concept studies such as SCC (Safety Concept Car) and VCC (Versatility Concept Car) that seem to, although stretching the limits of the design language, still maintain the brand recognition.

3. Nokia Case: “Definitely Yours”

The development of Nokia brand has undoubtedly been one of the most influential success stories of the recent decade. Nokia became the biggest mobile phone manufacturer in 1998 and has kept its position ever since. The global leadership position has been reached, among other things, through heavy emphasis on the product design as a differentiating and competitive factor.

3.1 Personalisation as the Core Message

Nokia started heavy focus on mobile phones in the middle of the 1990’s. The whole brand strategy was re-created during the transition from traditional industries. For this reason, Nokia does not have decades long heritage as a brand, which is rather different from the case of Volvo. The company became, however, the global leader in this relatively new industry and have succeeded in creating an extremely strong reputation for the brand. Clear differentiation from competitors and strong emphasis on personalisation and the “human aspect” were adopted as the core approach early on (see figure 7).

Personalisation means creating specific products for specific customer segments. Holistic and strategy-based segmentation has been the fundamental core of Nokia strategy.

Personalisation and segmentation has impacted also the requirements for design. Products of different categories have been differentiated particularly through design and software.

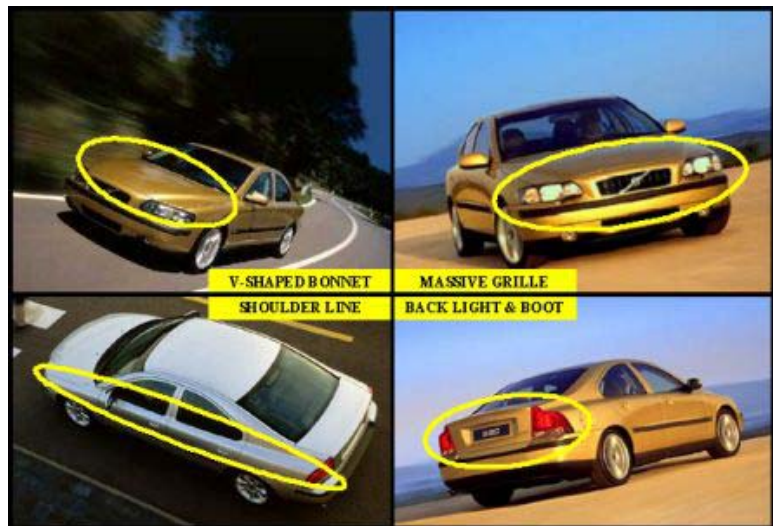


Fig.6 Volvo design cues illustrated by the S60

“The increased cellular demand came both from private users and businesses. The trend was increased segmentation. Business users emphasize the importance of value-added services, data and advanced voice-based services. Private users prefer well-designed, easy-to-use, affordable phones.”
(Nokia annual report 1995)

“**Technology has a face...** For high-tech companies technological sophistication also includes knowledge and appreciation of different cultures. Understanding technical equations is not enough. Technology has a face, and we must never forget people and different cultural values. What do people really want, and why? Will they want that tomorrow? Equipment and services must be reliable and easy-to-use. Service applications are not produced to wait passively on store shelves for customers. Our product and system development is always carried out in close cooperation with the customer and based on the understanding of the changing demands.”
(Nokia Annual Report 1996)

“**Products, brand and design based on human technology:** An essential part of the Nokia brand is our design. It integrates our award-winning interface solutions with a style that combines ergonomics and aesthetics. Userfriendliness is becoming increasingly important, as the technology is getting more and more complex and sophisticated owing to the trend of the digital convergence of various key technologies. Our aim is to combine the most sophisticated technology with user-friendly interfaces. In this way users can concentrate on utilizing the devices without needing to focus on the equipment or technologies. We call this approach Human Technology: technology, which is easily understood, accepted and learned.”
(Nokia Annual Report 1998)

Fig.7 Extracts from Nokia Annual Reports

3.2 Nokia 3310

Nokia 3310 was developed primarily during 1999 and 2000 and launched in Autumn 2000. The phone was the most important product of the Nokia in terms of sales volumes and expectations at the time it was launched. The expectations and requirements for the 3310 were high. It was supposed to reach sales volumes of tens of millions. The phone was the continuation of the most popular (i.e. biggest in terms of sales) “basic” category of Nokia. The personalisation aspects in this category were considered particularly important, while basic products are meant specifically for younger customers.

The starting point for the 3310 was to create a product “for people with a social character”. It was not necessarily meant for young but “young-minded” customers, and particularly for those that don’t want to have a dull office tool and pay big money for the product. In addition to personalisation through software, design had to allow personalisation. Traditionally, Nokia had been pioneering in this functionality, specifically within the basic category, by introducing changeable covers and buttons for the first time in the 5110 a couple of years earlier (see figure 8).

The key driver in basic category, to which the 3310 was also located, is cost – the basic phone has to be affordable to most customers. Expensive materials and solutions were avoided. Moreover, the basic product must not imply too edgy design, but it must not be too boring either. The qualitative “themes” in the 3110 case included “correctness, honesty, fun, relaxed, and sci-fi”. The description was characteristically different from the definitions of other Nokia products that were on the market at the time, some of which are illustrated in figure 9.

The initial ideas included the concept of layered structures and particular forms that that would be wrapped around the product. Conceptualisation produced various different concepts, of which the eventual solution was to frame the display and the top of the phone with a strong characteristic element. By creating such a frame, the intention was to create an image that the phone would be “watching through the



Fig.8 Changeable covers illustrated by the predecessors of the 3310, the 5110 (top) and the 3210 (below) (Source: Nokia)

Basic - 3310	Classic - 6210	Fashion - 8210	Premium - 8810
personal correct honest funny relaxed sci-fi	honest reliable, trustworthy performing balanced, in control efficient progressive	individual fashionable, trendy enthusiastic, vibrant self-expressive relaxed contemporary progressive	individual minimalistic, refined self-expressive relaxed timeless, understated elegant, sensual honest
			

Fig.9 Initial descriptions of selected Nokia products and their final designs (Source: My research data & Nokia)

hole”. In addition to again enhancing the personalisation of the phone (the display is often perceived as the “face” of the phone), the frame also connects the most important function buttons with the display, thus enabling visual ergonomics. Another intention was to maximise the coloured area, which was considered as an important aspect in terms of personalisation.

3.3 Nokia Design Language

Individual design cues are not used in Nokia products in such a consistent manner as in the Volvo case. The design language is manifest merely on the level of qualitative attributes. The absence of strong elements is due to the industry dynamics and the strategy of personalisation. Design is driven, in the first hand, by individual customer needs and consequent target segments. As stated by an interviewee: “Target groups are so carefully identified that they don’t leave us many choices. We have to meet the needs of target groups... And on average, we must be able to satisfy awfully lots of different people, different tastes, different cultural, national, political, and whatever environments. And in that sense, planning and design parameters are rather clear.”

Nonetheless, there are few product features that may be considered typical for Nokia, especially at the time when the 3310 was launched. Such are the large display and easy-to-use interface. On the level of design elements, it is difficult to state Nokia-specific design cues. In comparison to Volvo, Nokia “deals with the issue much more broadly. The frame of the display, “the face”, (see figure 10) and the four clearly visible horizontal lines of buttons are elements that may be considered as “icons” of Nokia, but their incarnations have varied remarkably among the product portfolio. “We don’t want to lock ourselves to such things [traceable elements]. They come through something else. They have to evoke a feeling, whether a subconscious, or in some cases immediate feeling”, commented an interviewee.



Fig.10 The frame of the display appearing in the 3310 (left and second left top) and a number of different Nokia models (Source: My research data & Nokia)

4. Conclusions

4.1 Importance of Clear Identity

Both Nokia and Volvo cases illustrate the importance of clearly defined identity that appears in the brand literature. The focus on transmitting a coherent message that reflects the brand’s core competencies is vital. In both case studies, powerful brand identity and various actions supporting that are strong success factors. The strategic identity may be utterly explicit and simply aligned, like safety in the case of Volvo (brand slogan: “safety for life”), or based on a more subjective interpretation, like personalisation in the case of Nokia (brand slogan: “connecting people”). It seems to be relevant to define the identity with such commonsensical (though often ambiguous) themes. Human beings tend to use easy, brief, familiar forms of description and communication rather than difficult, lengthy, technical phraseology [26].

In order to maintain consistency of communication, this identity has to be internal to the brand culture. In both case studies, the inherent (and not only conscious) impact of brand culture, heritage, and reputation on aligning the strategic identity is clear, though differing among respective cases. Volvo has an established brand image that has a strong character and is rather stable. The company cannot neglect the heritage – it offers an extremely powerful platform to stand. Nokia is also as the market leader of the mobile phone category an extremely powerful brand. Nonetheless, as the category of mobile phones is still on its early phases of development, and the brands do not yet have clear profiles. In fact, Nokia is shaping the whole product category, and innovation (and thus constant renewal) is required from the brand. In addition, Volvo has a much narrower product line and scope of activities than Nokia that has to pay much attention to differentiating the messages of different product categories and thus stretch the brand’s identity.

4.2. Internal Design Knowledge

The internalisation of brand’s strategic message is crucial, as illustrated by both cases. Experiential knowledge plays a major role during the conceptualisation period when the major lines of the new product are drawn. In both cases, an “incubation period” (as Volvo calls it) precedes the actual design process (see figure 11). During this period, initial ideas are incubated through conceptualisation. Materialisation of ideas during the conceptualisation phase, and especially the incubation period, is more likely to take the direction of strategic brand identity, if the brand knowledge is embedded in the design culture of the company. This experiential knowledge of “right design language” (that involves strategic brand identity), that often is employed on a merely subconscious level helps in maintaining consistency and, ultimately, strengthening brand equity.

Further, the orchestra needs a talented and visionary manager who can both justify the strategic significance of

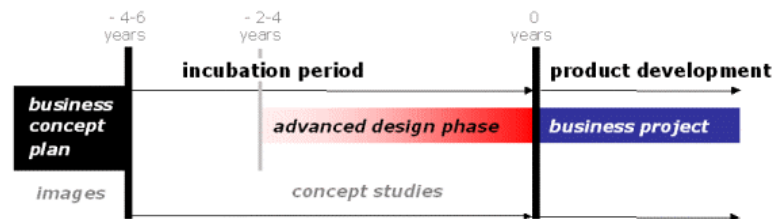


Fig.11 The “incubation period” illustrated in the Volvo design process

design to other parties and get the best creative power out of the design staff. In both cases, design managers have important roles in keeping the design culture strong. The manager’s role in both cases is stressed in particular in guiding the design into direction that both supports strategic brand identity and includes a sufficient level of innovation.

4.3 Semantic References of Design

The semantic references to strategic brand identity appear on three main levels. First, if there appear explicit design elements that are assumed to embody brand-specific associations and that are consistently used across a number of products, these may comprise a “design bank” of the brand.

Second, the identity domain of product design may be described by qualitative (linguistic) descriptions in order to define the “design language” of the brand, in specific when consistent design cues seem to be missing. There may appear various physical manifestations of the underlying identity across the product history of the brand. In order to recognise such characteristics, it should be contemplated through which “traits” design is connected to the very basics of the brand identity. In specific, it is important to distinguish temporal characteristics, especially those related to stylistic trends, from the prevalent ones, as well as the “complete” characteristics [27] with genuine (objective) references, if they appear, from partial (merely subjective) ones. This

issue involves the interesting concept of anthropomorphism [28]. This concept states that human beings have what appears to be a natural, perhaps instinctive, tendency to give human attributes to things. One major aspect in the design of Nokia phones, for instance, having impact on personalisation is to embody strong “human” references in design elements.

Third, brand recognition always involves an implicit aspect. This concerns also product design, which suggests that the identity domain cannot be entirely reduced to explicit elements or describing linguistic characteristics. The significance of implicit experiential knowledge, embedded in brand culture, may vary between different cases. By working for the brand, an individual designer (or other employee) gains individual experience of the brand’s identity and appropriate design language. The implicit recognition may, for example, involve metaphorical associations [29].

The main cases of my research offer two different approaches to managing brand-specific product design in terms of explicit references. Differences are explained especially by different business contexts, strategic objectives, variety of product portfolio, and brand heritage. In the case of Volvo cars, the existence of explicit design elements is clear. Volvo design cues are used consistently in all the recent Volvo models to strengthen the recognition. Hence, regarding Volvo, there appears rather strong correspondence between strategic brand identity and identity domain, between physical design cues and brand heritage.

In Nokia case, in turn, the lack of as consistent cues is evident. This is due to the very different business context and market position of the brand. Nokia has currently an extremely wide product portfolio; it has implemented distinctive segmentation with distinctive product identities, which leaves lesser room for the use of consistent design cues. The strategic identity (and competitive associations) of Nokia is strongly related to personalisation of the phones according to specific needs of market segments, thus not supporting the use standard elements. Moreover, the aspect of good usability, in specific in terms of the phone’s use interface, has strongly contributed to the creation of favourable brand reputation. In addition to supposedly strong implicit recognition brought by strong commitment to personalisation and usability, there, however, appear some physical elements that may be characterised as typical Nokia-elements.

4.4 Final remarks

As the cases illustrate, the actual semantic transformation in terms of intentional design cues is a case-specific issue. The eventual manner of handling brand-specific design language is the sum of several underlying factors. Most of all, the level of perspicuity and consistency is affected by the pursued strategic direction of the brand. In addition to intentional message transmission, much of the communication is also guided by inherent actions stemming from the embodied experiential knowledge within brand’s design culture.

Due to the limitations of length, the cases were handled in this paper only in a cursory manner. A number of illustrative details that would have offered insights and evidence of the use of symbolic design cues in the case companies did not fit into the paper.

References

1. Bromley, Dennis B. Relationships between personal and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*. Vol 35, No 3/4. 316-334 (2001).
2. Keeley, Larry. New! Improved! (Uh huh, yeah sure, whatever...) A look at the modern dynamics of brands. *Design Management Journal*, Vol 12, No 1. 14-18 (2001).

3. Louro, Maria João & Cunha, Paulo Vieira. Brand Management Paradigms. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17/2001. 849-875 (2001).
4. Speak, Karl D. Brand Stewardship. *Design Management Journal*. Vol 9 No 1. 32-37 (1998).
5. Keeley (2001)
6. Fornäs, Johan. *Kulttuuriteoria*. Tampere: Vastapaino (1998).
7. Farquhar, Peter H. "Managing Brand Equity". *Marketing Research*, Sep 1989: 24-33 (1989).
8. Bromley (2001)
9. Conradi, Tomas. Build Brands on Competitive Associations. *Differ Practice Paper* (available through www.brandchannel.com/papers, referred 23.10.2002) (2001).
10. Aaker, David A. *Building Strong Brands*. The Free Press, New York (1996).
11. Aaker (1996)
12. Aaker, David A. & Joachimsthaler Erich. *Brand Leadership*. The Free Press, New York (2000).
13. Keeley (2001)
14. Janlert, Lars-Erik & Stolterman, Erik. The character of things. *Design Studies*, 18. 297-314 (1997).
15. Gros, Jochen. *Gründlagen einer Theorie der Produktsprache*. Einführung, Heft 1. Hochschule für Gestaltung am Main (1983).
See also: Steffen, Dagmar. *Design als Produktsprache*. Der "Offenbacher Ansatz" in Theorie und Praxis. Verlag Form GmbH., Frankfurt an Main (2000).
16. Warell, Anders. *Design syntactics: A Functional Approach to Visual Product Form*. Chalmers University of Technology (2001).
17. Krippendorf, Klaus. On the Essential Contexts of Artifacts or on the Proposition that "Design is Making Sense (of Things)". *Design Issues*, Vol V No 2. 9-39 (1989).
18. Janlert & Stolterman (1997)
19. Chen, Kuohsiang & Owen, Charles L. Form language and style description. *Design studies*, 18. 249-274 (1997).
20. Karjalainen, Toni-Matti (2002). Semantic construction of brand's design DNA: Managing brand identity through product design references. *Conference proceedings of the 11th Academic Forum of Design Management Research and Education*, Boston MA, June 10-12 2002.
Karjalainen, Toni-Matti (2002). On semantic transformation: Product design elements as brand manifestations. *Proceedings of the "Common Ground" International Design Conference*, London, September 5-8 2002.
21. Warell (2001)
22. Ealey, Lance & Troyano, Luis. Cars as Commodities. *Automotive Industries*. March 1997. 77-81 (1997).
23. Chapman, Giles. "Volvo – Six Screens, a Table and a Nice View". In book by Bayley & Chapman (eds.), *Moving Objects – 30 Years of Vehicle Design at the Royal College of Arts*. Eye-Q Ltd, London. 109-115 (1999).
24. Volvo news release, March 09 1999
25. Cinti, Fulvio. "Scandinavian Solution", design story of the Volvo S80. *Auti & Design*, August/September 1998. 12-20 (1998).
26. Bromley (2001)

27. Janlert & Stolterman (1997)
28. Bromley (2001)
29. Karjalainen, Toni-Matti. When is a car like a drink? Metaphor as a means to distilling brand and product identity. *Design Management Journal*, 12 (1). 66-71 (2001).