



Foreign Migration of Brands Discussed under the Light of Intersubjectivity Perspective: Illustration with a Case of Food Products

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Authors' contributions

Both authors designed the study, collected and analyzed the data, read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

When producers intend to export a product abroad the original country, what about the impact of the brand on the new target of consumers? Will the few words composing the brand contribute to make people buy and eat the food product, or on the contrary will it make them push it away? Furthermore, might the possible negative effect of the brand exceed the single level of the product and extend to the level of the producer?

These questions referring to the communicational process of marketing and to the interaction of the consumer and the producer through the food product, the influence of perspective taking was analyzed in the light of the Intersubjectivity dynamic theory. For this aim, N=58 healthy adult subjects (English and French) were asked to assess two food products unknown of them (a foreign

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product and then a native language product) only on the basis of what was written on the package. For each sample of subjects, the foreign product presented the particularity that the writings on the package could be associated with another concept than that of the food product. Results showed i) A positive direct perspective linked with the consumers' intent to buy, ii) The confirmation of the intersubjective structure of trust, iii) A negative direct perspective towards the product leading consumers not to buy the product but not systematically, iv) A possible deterioration of the image of the producers perceived by the consumers due to the conceptual mismatch; this permitted to v) Identify the characteristics of contexts of distrust in the brand domain leading to identify intersubjective structures of distrust for the food products. It was then found and argued that these two last points could lead to a context of distrust towards the producers and consequently influence negatively the consumers' perception of all the producers' merchandises. This approach and resulting conclusions will undoubtedly contribute to prevent commercial failures or reinforce commercial success whilst exporting food brands and to highlight possible subsequent effects on producers' reputation.

Keywords: Brand; marketing; intersubjectivity; perspective taking; commercial failure.

ABBREVIATIONS

Symbol	Definition
A	: attribute
C; Cs	: consumer; consumers
DFP	: distorted foreign product
DP	: direct perspective
FLP	: foreign language product
FP	: food product
MP	: meta perspective
MMP	: meta meta perspective
NLP	: native language product
O	: Other
P; Ps	: producer; producers
S	: Self
Sjs	: subjects

SYMBOLS AND UNITS

Symbol	Quantity	Units
α	: Cronbach alpha	None
r	: Correlation coefficient	None
p	: significance	None
s	: questionnaire score	None; ranging from -2 to +2

SUBSCRIPTS

Symbol	Relates to:
med	: median value of a quantity

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Did you know that exporting food abroad could lead to confused associations? For example, depending on the consumers' country, an American soda brand may suggest sexual care of a horse or a well-known French baby food brand may refer to prostitution? As a west European or American citizen, it would not be so, but as a Chinese or Russian citizen, it would be quite different as seen very soon. Is it a question of communication, of communication and marketing, and what may be the subsequent implications?

Communication has evolved with time in marketing theory. In the 1960s, McCarthy introduced the Marketing Mix [1], a Producer-oriented model combining four controllable variables called "Ps": Product, Pricing, Place and Promotion. This model aimed at emphasizing which key variables companies had to put together to satisfy a target market. Later, in the 1990s, the Consumer-oriented model of marketing suggested by Schultz et al. [2,3], based on the "4Cs", which evolved later in "6Cs" with the work of Balmer & Greyser [4], identified criteria to promote a successful marketing: Consumer, Cost, Convenience, Communication (replacing respectively the 4 Ps) and Corporate and Channel.

It must be noticed that the Ps-item standing for "Promotion" became in the Cs-model "Communication" [5]. This substitution emphasized that marketing was not only a matter

of promotion of the product to be bought but also and mainly a question of sharing a meaning, thus coming back to the Latin root-word “communio-communionis” designating a “state of sharing” [6].

During the past decades, communication in the marketing of a product increased in importance with the technological advances improving the communication means [4,5,7,8,9]. At the same time, these advances increased the possibilities of communication ways involving one-way communications (e.g. radio, TV, internet through PC or mobile phone) but instead of being just an opportunity for marketing, financial and time considerations generated new constraints: the explosion of the number of advertisements made time slots allocated for a given product or service shorter and more expensive. Marketing communication had therefore to gain in efficiency.

Indeed this unilateral marketing communication (aiming at making the consumer to share a marketing message suggested by the producer) is done through a mediator (the brand through advertisement, for example) during a limited time (the length of the TV advertisement while consumer is watching TV, or the time the consumer is presented the brand while driving in the town) in a bounded space (the advertisement cannot be a long text; the brand is not displayed all over every wall of the town).

Among all the possible mediators of communication between the producer and the consumer, the brand is an element of great challenge. Brand must be here understood as suggested by Kotler and Armstrong [7] (see also [10]): it may be a word, just few characters with specific design, or a combination of diverse elements such as a name, a sign or a symbol with particular design. It must carry the right image of both the product and the producer towards the consumer.

When producers intend to export a product abroad the original country, what about the impact of these few words on the new target of consumers? Will these few words contribute to make people buy and eat the food product, or on the contrary will make them push it away? This kind of possible commercial failure is well illustrated by S. Roy [11] who reported: “The name Coca-Cola in China was first rendered as Ke-kou-ke-la. Unfortunately, the Coke company did not discover until after thousands of signs

had been printed that the phrase means ‘bite the wax tadpole’ or ‘female horse stuffed with wax’ depending on the dialect.” Communication through words is of great importance for food products [12], influencing the acceptance [13] or the perception of the food taste: for instance, descriptive names improve perceptions of foods [8]. In addition, words have acquired a new status with the development of consumption online [9]. Similarly, Vrublevskaia [14: 57] reported that the “the French brand of baby food Bledina of Danone”, despite its wide success in West Europe, “was not distributed in Russia, the reason being the cacophonous hearing of the word Bledina in Russian”, Bledina sounding like “Бледи́на” meaning “big slut” in Russian. Discussing this point with Russian colleagues in a university in Moscow in 2013, a dean of faculty claimed that no grandmother in this town would buy any product of this brand knowing that such a word is written on it, and a researcher raised the question of what we could think of all of the products of such producers and of the producers themselves.

This last remark gave rise to a corollary question: does the negative effect of brand meaning exceed the single level of the product and does it then extend to the level of the producer? While the inverse relationship was studied showing that trusting the producers was a criterion favoring consumers to trust the brand (e.g. [15-18]), where “trust” is defined as “the confident expectations of the brand’s reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the consumer” ([19: 574], adopted for example by [20]), this corollary question was not.

The question was thus: How the consumers’ perception of a foreign brand (positive or negative) may lead the consumers to buy or reject the associated food product and may the consumers’ feeling towards the producer be consequently affected?

1.2 Literature Background

This relates to the concept of intersubjectivity. As noticed in a previous work [6], intersubjectivity is fundamental to understand communication [21]. According to Rommetveit [22], intersubjectivity, may be understood as One’s orientation to the orientation of the Other. Yet, in the line of Mead [23,24] suggesting this reflection as part of intersubjectivity, it may be understood through a perspective-taking approach. Ichheiser [25] proposed a three interactional-level approach: the individual/group self-perception, the

individual/group perception of the Other, the perception of individual/group of the Other's perception of themselves. More recently, Gillespie [26] emphasized that these three levels could be considered to operate at two levels from the interlocutors' standpoint: "First, there is the level of a person's direct perception of Self or Other, and second there is the level of perception of the perspective of Other" which helps "to conceptualize how someone or a group might try to appear trustworthy. To appear trustworthy they must orient to the criteria that they think the Other is using in order to determine trustworthiness". The first level was conceptualized as the "direct perspective" by Laing et al. [27], the second as "meta perspective", and the authors added as a logical possibility a third level, the meta-meta-perspective: the perception of individual/group of the Other's perception of their perception of themselves.

To depict these three levels of intersubjectivity in simple words from the Self's standpoint, it might be said:

- "I think you are a good scientist" (direct perspective),
- "I know you think I am a good scientist" (meta perspective),
- "I know that you know I think you are a good scientist" (meta meta perspective).

Fig. 1 gives an illustration of these three levels of intersubjectivity.

On the basis of Laing and co-workers studies, Gillespie & Cornish [28] reformulated how these three levels of perspective could be important and illustrated it by referring to the Cold War analyzed by the authors who argued that "the distrust between East and West operated at each of their three levels. Not only did East and West fear each other (direct perspectives), but they were each aware that the other feared them (meta-perspectives), and they each knew that the other was aware that they knew the other feared them (meta-meta-perspectives)." Gillespie [26] thus suggested a model of intersubjective structure of trust and distrust

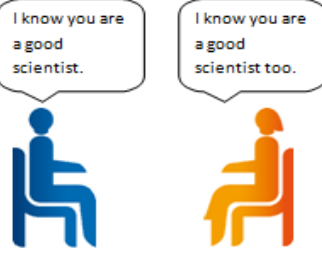


Intersubjectivity level	Situation
Direct Perspective	
Meta Perspective	
Meta Meta Perspective	

Fig. 1. The three levels of intersubjectivity

articulated upon these three levels and pointed out that a context of trust or distrust was satisfied when the three levels were fulfilled according to this structure through entwined properties as described hereafter.

These entwined properties characterizing the intersubjective structure of trust and distrust may be easily depicted on a diagram (see Fig. 2) considering two individuals (called “interactants”) involved in an intersubjective process. The two interactants are the Self (S) and the Other (O). The direct perspective (DP) assumes that S assigns an attribute (A) to O and vice versa. DP gives two statements. Statement (S)1=“S thinks A about O” and Statement (O)1=“O thinks A about S”. The meta perspective (MP) considers that each of them knows these statements. Again MP yields two statements: Statement (S)2=“S knows Statement (O)1” and Statement (O)2=“O knows Statement (S)1”. This means that “S knows O thinks A about S” and Statement (O)2=“O knows S thinks A about O”. Finally the meta meta perspective (MMP) addresses an upper level of knowledge. MMP produces two statements: Statement (S)3=“S knows Statement (O)2” and Statement (O)3=“O knows Statement (S)2”. The relationships drawn on Fig. 2, when complying with the intersubjective structure as described here, gives a strong consistency to the context. The way properties are entwined on Fig. 2 implies that the relationships are bilateral between S and O and analogous.

particularity: instead of interactants assigning an attribute to each other, in the case of marketing, they assign an attribute to an intermediate object, the food product. Thus the process also addresses an issue of interobjectivity where it is defined as “a representation of an object that incorporates different social meanings and that exists across diverse cultural groups [...] that permits different inter-objective relations [...] with the object in common, according to each group’s version of the object itself” [29: 456].

The research question was thus: Which intersubjectivity dynamic characterizes the consumers’ perception of a foreign brand (positive or negative), the associated intent to buy or reject the associated food product and the consumers’ consequent feeling towards the producer?

This approach and resulting conclusions from the research question must contribute to better understand intersubjective relationships in food marketing and hence contribute to improve marketing when exporting food brands and preserve producers from possible subsequent effects on their reputation. This must also be of great interest as a contribution to the academic corpus of marketing in order to help professionals in this domain who widely use marketing knowledge to improve their performance [30].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of the present study being to characterize the consumers’ perception of the foreign product and the producer, Intersubjectivity dynamic theory and perspective taking were quite appropriate as they provide a description of these kinds of entwined relationships. Indeed, Intersubjectivity (resp. interobjectivity) dynamic involves subjects or groups of subjects interacting with each other [28] (resp. an object). The method used in this study consisted in applying these dynamics and perspective taking between interactants (consumers and producers) through an intermediate object: the brand (or label) of food products as defined in the beginning of section “Introduction”. For scientific purpose, the food products were chosen so that a confusion could appear due to the possible association between the brand and the product when seen from a foreign standpoint. In order to permit a comparative analysis, two nationalities were involved: English speaking subjects and French

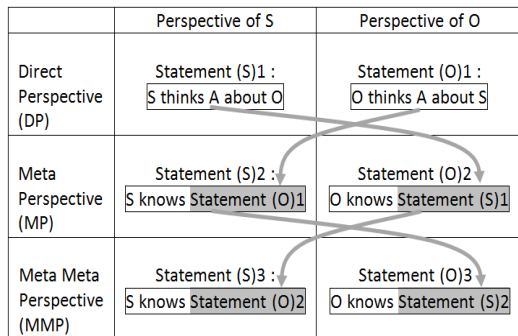


Fig. 2. The intersubjective structure of trust and distrust between the Self (S) and the Other (O) each of them assigning to each other the same attribute (A)

In the light of the Intersubjectivity dynamic theory and perspective taking [28], research was formed to aim at further investigating the influence of the consumers’ perception in the communicational process of food marketing with, however, one

speaking subjects. Each member of a group was presented with a foreign product (“foreign” in the sense the brand was from the other group’s country) and also a native language product (standing as the foreign product for the other group), this latter condition being the control condition.

2.1 Experimental Conditions

Two conditions were considered:

- In the first condition, said “Original product” condition, the researcher presented the picture of a French food product (presenting a particularity described in the following paragraph) individually to Anglo-Saxon subjects for assessment and then the picture of an English food product for assessment. The researcher also presented the picture of the English food product (presenting a particularity described in the following paragraph) individually to French subjects for assessment and then the picture of the French food product for assessment. The assessment is described in §2.2 “Protocol”. Subjects were met in their respective working country (England or France) in their workplace or in their home. The aim of this experiment was to obtain data characterizing the influence of the particularity of the writings on the package on the subjects’ assessment through comparison between the foreign product assessment and the native language product assessment (control condition).
- In the second condition, said “Distorted product” condition, the researcher presented individually the picture of the same English food product than in the first condition to other French subjects for assessment. Subjects were met in their respective working country (France) in their workplace or in their home. In this experimental condition, the particularity was distorted as described in the following paragraph. The aim of this experiment was to obtain data characterizing the influence of the size of the writings on the package on the subjects’ assessment. This was not done with the French product as explained in the following paragraph.

In all experimental conditions, subjects did not know previously the products.

The original English product was a pack of sweets for children, purchased in a food-store in London (UK). The brand was “organix goodies” and the food label was “mini oaty bites” (Fig. 3). The particularity of such a product for French subjects was assumed to be in the food label involving the word “bites” which could be read and related to the French slang word “bite” /bit/ meaning “dick”. According to the socio-psycholinguistic model for foreign migration of brands by Fauquet-Alekhine & Fauquet-Alekhine-Pavlovskaja [6], this particularity related to a homographic deviation of the concept in the domain of slang language.

The original French product was a pack of traditional orange chocolate purchased in a food-store in Paris suburb (France). The brand was “Roland Réauté” and the food label was “Les Fagots”, a plural noun usually designating a pile of wooden branches in French (Fig. 4). The particularity of such a product for English subjects was assumed to be in the food label involving the word “Fagots” which could be read and related to the English slang word “faggot” /fagət/ meaning “homosexual”. According to the aforementioned socio-psycholinguistic model, this particularity related to a homophonic deviation of the concept in the domain of slang language.

The distorted English product was based on the original English product: the picture was distorted in order to enlarge the letters of the words associated with the particularity of the packaging (Fig. 5) thus making them bigger than any other letters.

Regarding the French product, the distortion was assumed not to be relevant: increasing the size of the letters would not have clearly changed the perception of the package as the letter size of the particularity was already the highest on the pack, and decreasing the letter size could lead to a bias associated with the visual abilities of the subjects.

2.2 Protocol of Assessment

Subjects were presented individually with the picture of a food product (sweets inside a pack) and they were asked by the researcher about their feelings regarding this product (the foreign product first and then, after questionnaire, the native language product). In the case of the presentation of the foreign product, their spontaneous reaction was carefully observed and assessed by the researcher over a four

degree-qualitative scale: seems chocked (the face expresses a kind of obfuscation), stays serious, smiles (the corners of the mouth turn up), laughs (spontaneous sounds out of the mouth opened and movements of the face as instinctive expressions of amusement). Then they had to fill a questionnaire (see appendix) aiming at characterizing the subjects' feeling regarding the product through a qualitative assessment, what they thought the producer would think of their assessment, whether they intend to buy this product or not. When subjects said that this assessment was difficult without having the product in hands, it was replied that it was important to undertake an assessment only based on what the picture suggested. Regarding the question addressing the intent to buy, subjects were told that if they did not like the taste of this product, would they buy it for someone who might like it? This assessment was undertaken for both products, one by one, just after being presented with the picture.



Fig. 3. English product purchased in London (UK)



Fig. 4. French product purchased in Paris suburb (France)



Fig. 5. English product with distorted particularity

This questionnaire gave information regarding interobjectivity, intersubjectivity and perspective taking from the consumers' standpoint. Question 2 related to their direct perspective (DP) towards the intermediate object, the food product (FP). Question 3 gave information about what consumers (Cs) thought of the producers' assessment (Ps) of FP; this related to the DP of Ps (from Cs' standpoint) and to Cs' meta perspective (MP), i.e. respectively: Ps assign a given attribute to FP, and Cs know it. Question 4 gave information about what Cs thought of what Ps thought of Cs' assessment of FP; this related to the Ps' MP (from Cs' standpoint) and to Cs' meta meta perspective (MMP), i.e. respectively: Ps know that Cs assign a given attribute to FP, and Cs know it. Questions were answered on a Likert's scale and then coded to provide quantified scores. Scores and distributions of answers made it easier to compare results and calculate correlations.

The aim of this data collection was to permit a characterization of the different levels of perspective taking for each group standpoint for analysis and comparison. Analysis aimed at studying the possible link between DP, MP, MMP, consumers' feeling towards the product and the producer. Comparison aimed at making assumption about a possible discrepancy or similarity between two different nationalities.

After the test, subjects were explained the aim of the study and the expected contribution towards science. Qualitative complements were obtained in some cases through post-test interviews especially when subjects did not explain

spontaneously why they would buy the product or not.

alpha gave good consistency of data: $\alpha(\text{FLP})=.70$ and $\alpha(\text{NLP})=.80$.

2.3 Subjects

All subjects were volunteer healthy adults. For the first condition, tests were undertaken with French subjects ($N=28$, 67% male, average age: 42 yo.) and Anglo-Saxon subjects ($N=16$, 56% male, average age: 37.8 yo.). Anglo-Saxon gathered participants from UK, USA and Canada, hereafter referred to as “English subjects” for simplification. For the second condition, tests were undertaken with French subjects ($N=14$, 57% male, average age: 35.2 yo.). Due to the orientation of the English meaning of the particularity on the packaging of the French product, homosexuals and homophobes were rejected of the samples in order to avoid any bias. Both French and English subjects were from middle class.

In order to access an authentic spontaneous reaction, subjects were chosen among relatives so that researchers could attest that they would not contain their smile or their laugh in front of them when confronted with the foreign product; in other words, subjects were not stuck up.

3. RESULTS

Answers to questions were given numeric values ranging from -2 to $+2$ where -2 (resp. $+2$) denoting a negative (resp. positive) answer on the Likert scale and 0 related to “neither agree nor disagree”.

3.1 “Original Product” Condition – French Subjects

3.1.1 Spontaneous reaction

The spontaneous reaction of French subjects when presented with the foreign product was mainly to smile or laugh. None of them seemed or described themselves as shocked (Fig. 6).

3.1.2 Direct perspective

The assessment of the products (DP, question 2) was markedly different (Fig. 7) between the two types (foreign and native language) overall denoting a negative feeling for the foreign language product (FLP) and positive for the native language product (NLP). The Cronbach

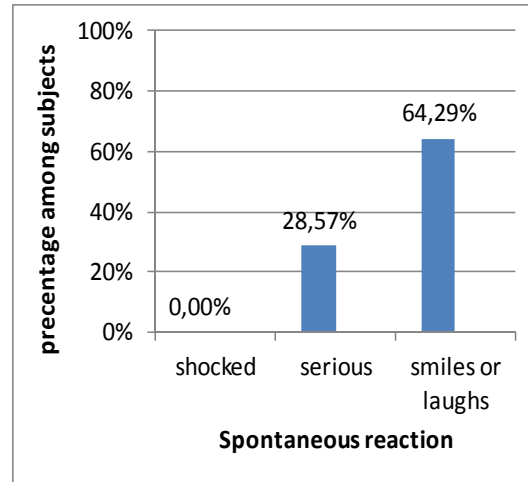


Fig. 6. Spontaneous reaction of French subjects when presented with the foreign product

3.1.3 Meta (meta) perspective, congruence and intent to buy

The meta perspective (MP, question 3) and meta meta perspective (MMP, question 4) of consumers (Cs) yielded positive scores (Fig. 8) when DP was related to positive feeling and negative otherwise. The correlation coefficient between MP and MMP was significantly good: $r(\text{FLP})=.47$ ($p<.08$) and $r(\text{NLP})=.81$ ($p<.0001$).

For the native language product, consumers found a positive congruence between the writings on the package and the product (question 1) and intended to buy it (question 5). For the foreign product, consumers found a negative congruence between the writings on the package and the product (question 1) and mildly intended to buy it (question 5). During post-test interview, when consumers were asked why they would buy the foreign product despite their assessment, most of them explained that they were curious to see what was inside the packet, how it tasted and some of them said that “for fun” they would get a packet of sweets with this sort of thing written on it and “because I am curious”.

The correlation coefficient between congruence and intent to buy was significant for foreign product with $r(\text{FLP})=-.69$ ($p<.01$) and for the native language product with $r(\text{NLP})=.99$ ($p<.01$).

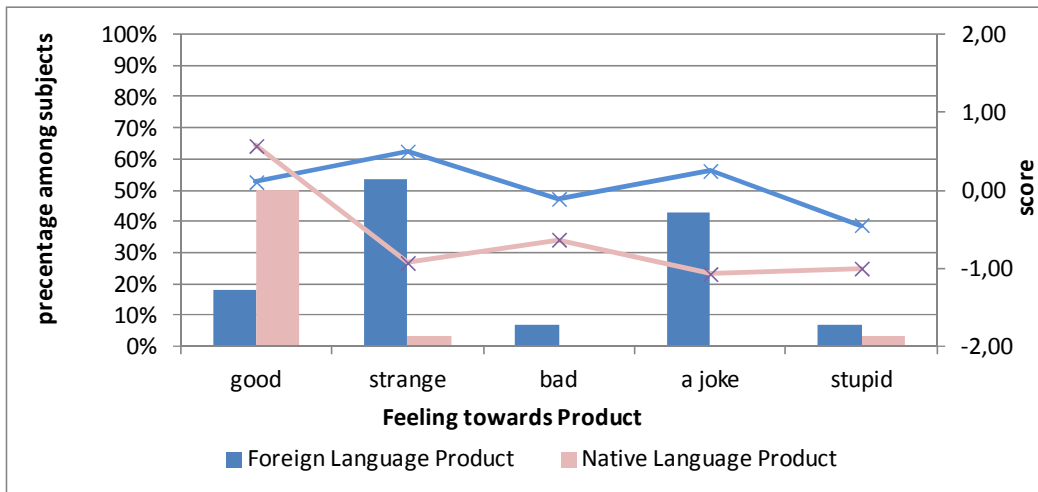


Fig. 7. Direct perspective (DP) of French subjects (percentages of subjects with positive score on bargraphs and mean overall scores on curves)

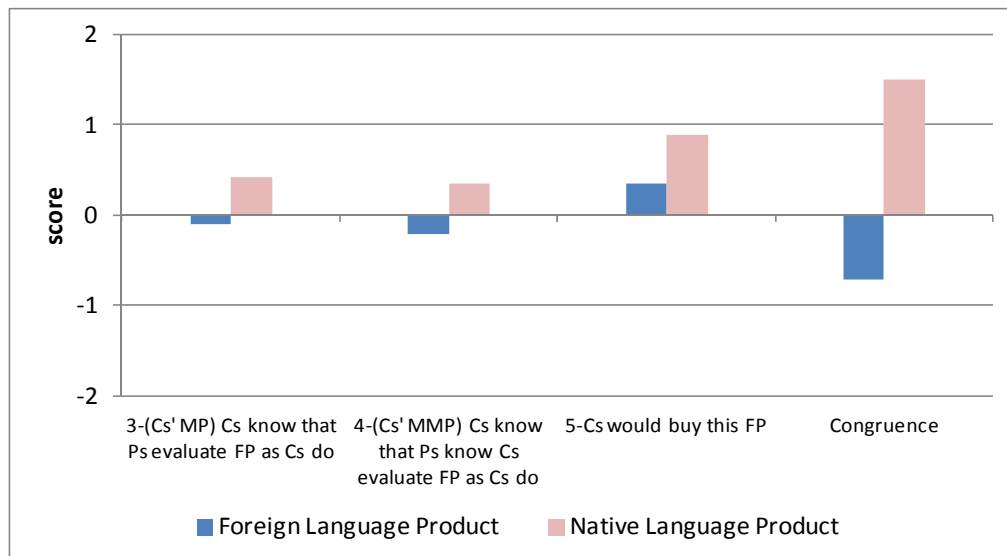


Fig. 8. Scores for meta perspective (MP) and meta meta perspective (MMP) of French Consumers (Cs)

The Cronbach alpha including MP, MMP, congruence and intent to buy gave good consistency of data: $\alpha(\text{FLP})=.63$ and $\alpha(\text{NLP})=.67$.

3.2 “Original Product” Condition – English Subjects

3.2.1 Spontaneous reaction

The spontaneous reaction of English subjects when presented with the foreign product was

mainly to smile or laugh. None of them seemed or described themselves as shocked (Fig. 9).

3.2.2 Direct perspective

The assessment of the products (DP, question 2) was markedly different (Fig. 10) between the two types (foreign and native language) overall denoting a negative feeling for the foreign language product (FLP) and positive for the native language product (NLP). The Cronbach alpha gave good consistency of data: $\alpha(\text{FLP})=.82$ and $\alpha(\text{NLP})=.70$.

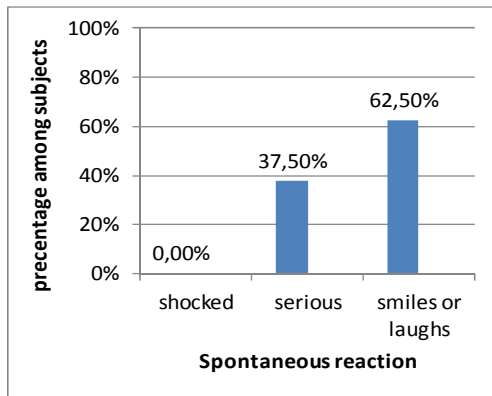


Fig. 9. Spontaneous reaction of English subjects when presented with the foreign product

3.2.3 Meta (meta) perspective, congruence and intent to buy

The meta perspective (MP, question 3) and meta meta perspective (MMP, question 4) of consumers (Cs) yielded positive scores (Fig. 11) when DP was related to positive feeling and negative otherwise. The correlation coefficient between MP and MMP was significantly good: $r(\text{FLP})=.70$ ($p<.001$) and $r(\text{NLP})=.81$ ($p<.0001$).

For the native language product, consumers found a positive congruence between the writings on the package and the product (question 1) and mildly intended to buy it (question 5). For the foreign product, consumers found a negative congruence between the

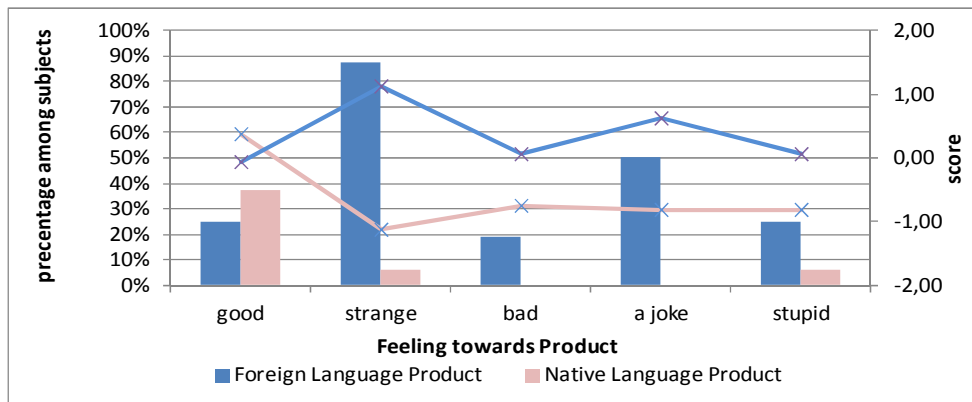


Fig. 10. Direct perspective (DP) of English subjects (percentages of subjects with positive score on bargraphs and mean overall scores on curves)

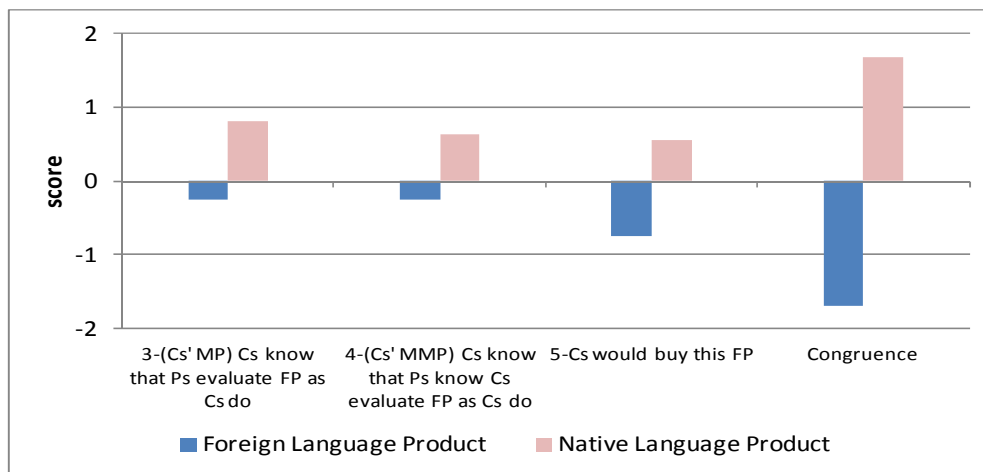


Fig. 11. Scores for meta perspective (MP) and meta meta perspective (MMP) of English Consumers (Cs)

writings on the package and the product (question 1) and did not intent to buy it (question 5).

The correlation coefficient between congruence and intent to buy was significant with $r(\text{FLP})=.92$ ($p<.01$) for the foreign product and for the native language product with $r(\text{NLP})=.83$ ($p<.08$).

The Cronbach alpha including MP, MMP, congruence and intent to buy gave good consistency of data: $\alpha(\text{FLP})=.64$ and $\alpha(\text{NLP})=.65$.

3.3 “Distorted Product” Condition – French Subjects

3.3.1 Spontaneous reaction

The spontaneous reaction of French subjects when presented with the distorted foreign product was mainly to stay serious. None of them seemed or described themselves as shocked (Fig. 12).

3.3.2 Direct perspective

The assessment (direct perspective DP, question 2) of the distorted foreign product (DFP) overall denoted a mildly neutral feeling (Fig. 13) The Cronbach alpha gave good consistency of data: $\alpha(\text{DFP})=.68$.

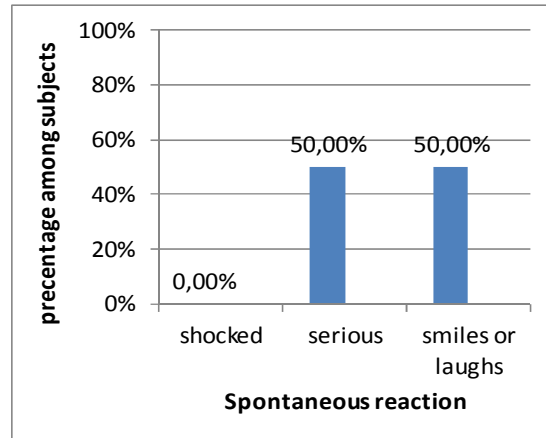


Fig. 12. Spontaneous reaction of French subjects when presented with the distorted foreign product

3.3.3 Meta (meta) perspective, congruence and intent to buy

The meta perspective (MP, question 3) and meta meta perspective (MMP, question 4) of consumers (Cs) yielded scores close to zero (Fig. 14). The correlation coefficient between MP and MMP was significantly good: $r(\text{DFP})=.68$ ($p<.008$).

Consumers found a mildly negative congruence between the writings on the package and the product (question 1) and did not know whether to buy it or not (question 5).

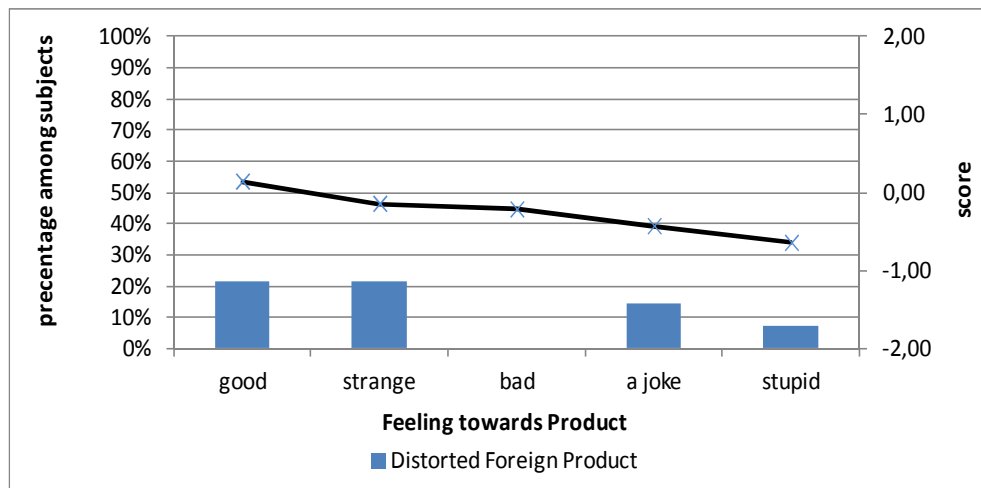


Fig. 13. Direct perspective (DP) of French subjects for distorted foreign product (percentages on bargraphs and scores on curves)

The correlation coefficient between congruence and intent to buy was not significant.

The Cronbach alpha including MP, MMP, congruence and intent to buy gave good consistency of data: $\alpha(\text{DFP})=.68$.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 “Original Product” Condition – French vs English Subjects

Fig. 15 draws together the direct perspective scores (DP scores) towards the products for

each case and each condition. The likeness between the assessment of foreign products (quite negative feeling) on one hand and native language products (quite positive feeling) on the other hand is visually significant: colored solid curves on one hand and colored dotted curves on the other hand have similar and contiguous shapes.

This likeness is well illustrated when the DP scores English vs French are plotted together excepting the distorted foreign product condition (Fig. 16). For this aim, data are considered in pairs for each item and each case: The

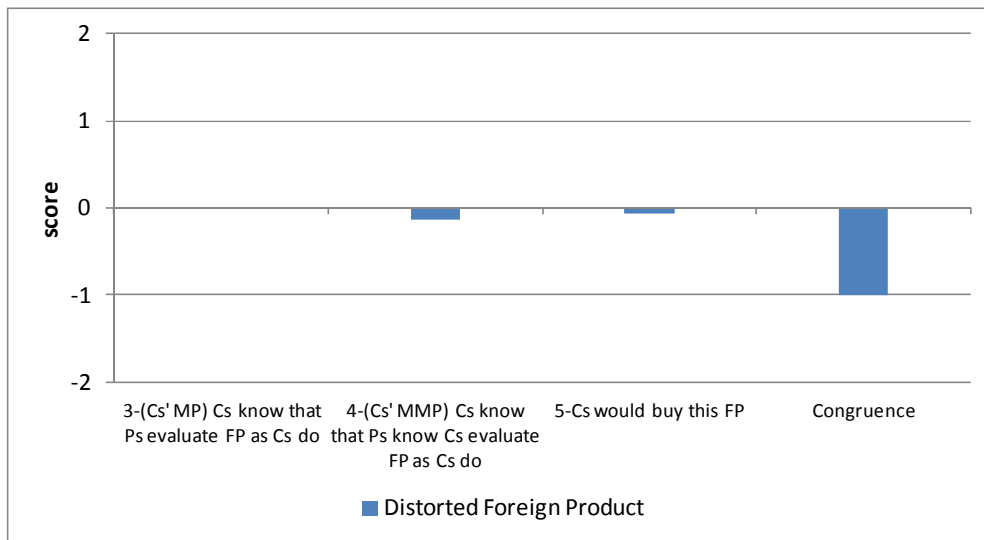


Fig. 14. Scores for meta perspective (MP) and meta meta perspective (MMP) of French Consumers (Cs) for distorted foreign product

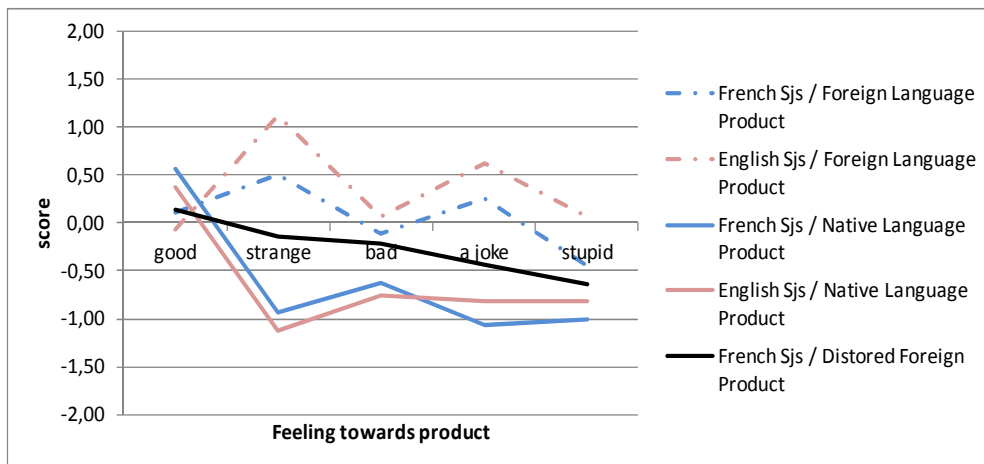


Fig. 15. Direct perspective scores (DP scores) per items

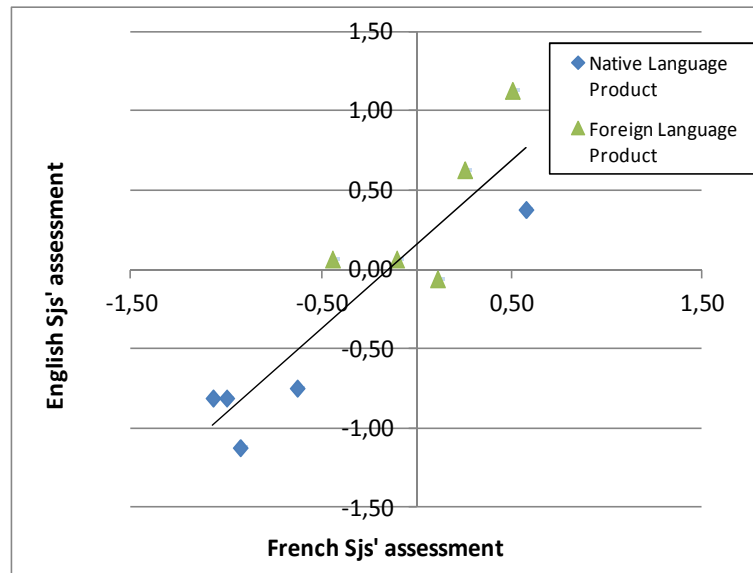


Fig. 16. Comparison between direct perspective scores (DP scores) per subjects' nationality

item “good” gives two points, one point for the pair {English subjects with native language product / French subjects with native language product} the related scores being the coordinates of the point, a second point for the pair {English subjects with foreign product / French subjects with foreign product} the related scores being the coordinates of the point, and so on.

The resulting set of points follows a straight line with a correlation coefficient $r=.91$ ($p<.0004$) which might indicate a cross-cultural similarity.

English subjects' feelings were more negative than those of French towards the foreign product with a larger amplitude on the English curve than that of the French Fig. 15 (dotted curves), however the only assessments that were significantly different concerned the item “strange” differing by .63 ($p<.005$ calculated using average scores and applying t-test) and “joke” differing by .88 ($p<.035$). This may contribute towards explaining why English subjects would not buy the foreign product conversely to French subjects (the difference in score is significant regarding the intent to buy: $p<.007$). This is a remarkable difference that may relate to cultural difference: whilst both samples distrusted the foreign product, English subjects did not intend to purchase it whereas French subjects were curious to buy it and see it. This assumption of cultural difference is well illustrated when comparing correlation coefficients between the distribution of scores

per sample regarding congruence (question 1) and intent to buy (question 5) reported in Table 1: all coefficients show positive significant correlation between congruence and intent to buy if congruence is perceived positively and no intent to buy if congruence is perceived negatively except for French subjects towards the foreign product: in this case, congruence is perceived negatively and yet there is intent to buy.

Table 1. Correlation coefficient between congruence and intent to buy the original product

	French product	English product
French subjects	$r = .99$ ($p < .01$)	$r = -.69$ ($p < .01$)
English subjects	$r = .92$ ($p < .01$)	$r = .83$ ($p < .08$)

4.2 “Distorted Product” Condition vs - “Original Product” Condition – French Subjects

French subjects' feeling towards distorted foreign product (DFP) adopted a median position between their feeling towards original foreign language product (FLP) and native language product (NLP) (see Fig. 15). Only two differences appeared significant through t-test and were of

the same order regarding direct perspective (DP). They concerned the DP items:

- “strange” with a difference between the mean scores FLP vs DFP: .64, $p < .035$
- “joke” with a difference between the mean scores FLP vs DFP: .68, $p < .075$

This reflected a kind of skepticism giving a mean score regarding intent to buy close to 0. A third of the individual scores were 0, a third were negative and a last third were positive.

This effect of font size on the subjects' perception of the product matched previous studies. In their analysis of persons' attitudes toward package designs, Grobelny & Michalski [31] showed significant effects of brand name location and typography and mentioned previous studies regarding font size factor: Pillai et al. [32] demonstrated the effect of type size on consumers' comprehension and on their attitude toward the product; earlier, analyzing various food products, Aydinoglu and Krishna [33] showed the effect of different size labels on the judgments and consumption.

4.3 Impact of Intersubjectivity Dynamic and Perspective Taking

On the basis of the relationship of intersubjectivity designed between the Self and the Other on Fig. 2, the entwinement of the relationship of interobjectivity and intersubjectivity between Consumer (C) and Producer (P), each of them assigning to the food product (FP) an attribute (A), is drawn on Fig. 17 in the case of compliance with the intersubjective structure of trust or distrust.

	Perspective of C	Perspective of P
Direct Perspective (DP)	Statement (C)1 : C thinks A about FP assessed through Q2	Statement (P)1 : P thinks A about FP assessed through Q3
Meta Perspective (MP)	Statement (C)2 : C knows Statement (P)1 assessed through Q3	Statement (P)2 : P knows Statement (C)1 assessed through Q4
Meta Meta Perspective (MMP)	Statement (C)3 : C knows Statement (P)2 assessed through Q4	Statement (P)3 : P knows Statement (C)2

Fig. 17. Relationships of interobjectivity and intersubjectivity between Consumer (C) and Producer (P) each of them assigning to the food product (FP) an attribute (A) in the case of compliance with the intersubjectivity structure of trust or distrust

As explained in section “Introduction”, this intersubjective structure favors a context of trust or distrust according to the Intersubjectivity dynamic theory and perspective taking. One of the constraints of the present study is that only the consumers' perspectives is accessible, the producers' perspective being assumed through the consumers' answers. However, as argued in section “Introduction”, the main point for marketing is not what the producers actually think but what the consumers think the producers think regardless the producers' actual feelings. This is supported by the fact that, in practice, consumers do not know what the producers actually think: for daily shopping, the process works as in our experiment that is according to the consumers' perspective and assuming the producers' perspective. Thus only the column describing the perspective of the consumer (C) remains relevant.

From this angle, Table 2 summarizes the overall trend of consumers' perspectives according to the structure presented on Fig. 17 for each case studied. It gives account for the overall value of the scores (positive (+) or negative (-)) and when close to zero, it gives account of a trend from the positive (resp. negative) values: 0^+ (resp. 0^-). For DP, only items “good” and “bad” are considered. Table 2 permits to highlight several important properties:

- The consumers' perception of the producers' DP is invariant
- Intersubjective structure with positive attribute leads to a context of trust
- Intersubjective structure of distrust is not the only possible context of distrust
- The relationship between trust/distrust and intent to buy is not systematic
- Both product and producers are concerned by distrust
- The intent to buy (or not) goes beyond the short-term

4.3.1 The consumers' perception of the producers' DP is invariant

Table 2 shows that when the consumers' DP is positive towards the food product (positive scores), the consumers think that the producer has the same DP and is aware about the consumers' feeling (positive scores); conversely, when the consumers' DP is negative towards the food product (negative scores), the consumers think that the producer has not the same DP and is not aware about the consumers' feeling (negative scores).

Table 2. Overall trends of consumers’ perspectives according to Fig. 17 for each case studied: English or French subjects with Native Language Product (NLP), Foreign Language Product (FLP) or Distorted Foreign Product (DFP)

	English Subjects vs Native Language Product code: English (NPL)	French Subjects vs Native Language Product code: French (NPL)	English Subjects vs Foreign Product code: English (FLP)	French Subjects vs Foreign Product code: French (FLP)	French Subjects vs Distorted Foreign Product code: French (DFP)
Direct Perspective (DP)	+	+	0 ⁻	0 ⁺	0
Meta Perspective (MP)	+	+	-	-	0
Meta Meta Perspective (MMP)	+	+	-	-	-
Intent to buy	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0 ⁻

This shows that the consumers systematically think that the producers have a positive assessment of their product.

4.3.2 Intersubjective structure with positive attribute leads to a context of trust

Table 2 gives two cases complying with the intersubjective structure of trust from the consumers’ perspective (the producers’ perspective being assumed). These two cases (English and French subjects vs their native language product) are associated with a positive DP (positive attribute assigned to the food product) with MP and MMP as expected in the intersubjective structure. In both cases, subjects intended to buy the product. The theory as proposed by [26,28] described in section “Introduction” is confirmed in case of trust.

4.3.3 Intersubjective structure of distrust is not the only possible context of distrust

For the other cases, the compliance with the intersubjective structure of trust and distrust is not achieved: a negative attribute is assigned to the food product (negative DP) by the consumers but a positive attribute is assumed to be assigned to the product by the producers according to the consumers (negative MP). In addition, the consumers assume that the producers are not aware of this state (negative MMP). This clearly depicts a context of distrust despite the fact that the intersubjective structure of distrust is not matched.

To match the intersubjective structure of distrust, MP and MMP would have to be positive: the consumers would thus have to assume that the producers would assign a negative attribute to the product, and would have to assume that the producers would be aware of the consumers’ feelings. From the marketing standpoint, this would definitely be aberrant since producers would not put on the market such a product but from the strict theoretical standpoint of the intersubjectivity, the context of distrust would be matched.

However, the present results show another structure of distrust characterized by opposite DP for each party (consumers vs producers) and negative MP and MMP. This makes two levels of incoherence when compared with the proposed intersubjective structure. It means that the intersubjective structure of distrust as proposed by [26,28] is not the only intersubjective context possible for distrust.

4.3.4 The relationship between trust/distrust and intent to buy is not systematic

In addition, Table 2 emphasized that the consumers’ positive DP is directly related to the consumers’ intent to buy, but the inverse proposal is not systematic: consumers’ negative DP does not mean the consumers will not buy despite the fact that the context of trust is not met (case of French subjects vs original foreign product).

Finally, the finding is that i) A context that matches the intersubjective structure of trust leads to intent to buy the product and this may entail that intersubjective structure of trust describes any context of trust, ii) A context that does not match the intersubjective structure of trust has a high probability to lead to the intent not to buy, iii) In the cases studied, a context of distrust is characterized by an incoherence at the level of DP and at the level of MP and MMP.

The transcription of these considerations on a single graph gathering quantitative data regarding DP, MP and MMP is quite relevant (Fig. 18), where DP is quantified by the median score of the items “good” and “bad” of question 2, noted as s_{med} .

It is remarkable that the points follow the same straight line (the correlation coefficient is $r=.99$ with $p<.001$) and that the scores of the three levels of perspective increase simultaneously. This might be considered as a possible quantification of the entwinement strength of the relationships describing the levels of intersubjectivity and perspective taking in the brand domain. However, further studies are needed to confirm this point. Nevertheless, it allows us to identify two areas of interest in this 3D space defined by the two dimensions MP and MMP complemented by the diagonal dimension DP (Fig. 19):

- The first zone is the positive data space in terms of MP and MMP. In this space,

intersubjective structure of trust is effective and DP is positive; these characteristics are associated with a high probability for the consumers to buy the product.

- The second zone is the negative data space in terms of MP and MMP. In this space, there is an incoherence of the intersubjective structure of trust and there may also be a negative DP; these characteristics are associated with a high probability for the consumers not to buy the product.

The fact that DP is positive in the positive space is crucial to lead to a high probability of consumers' intent to buy the product. Indeed, when considering the aforementioned aberrant case with DP negative in the positive space, this would lead to a high probability of consumers' intent not to buy the product. The result would be the same for a negative DP in the negative space. This means that the values of DP determine the consumers' intent to buy the product.

Nevertheless, the influence of MP and MMP on consumers' intent to buy the product must not be underestimated. If it is considered a case for which the DP is significantly positive (like for the NLP) and for which MP and MMP would be negative hence related to a point within the negative space, it may be assumed that the probability to buy the product would not be so high than for a point within the positive space. In such a case of positive DP within the positive

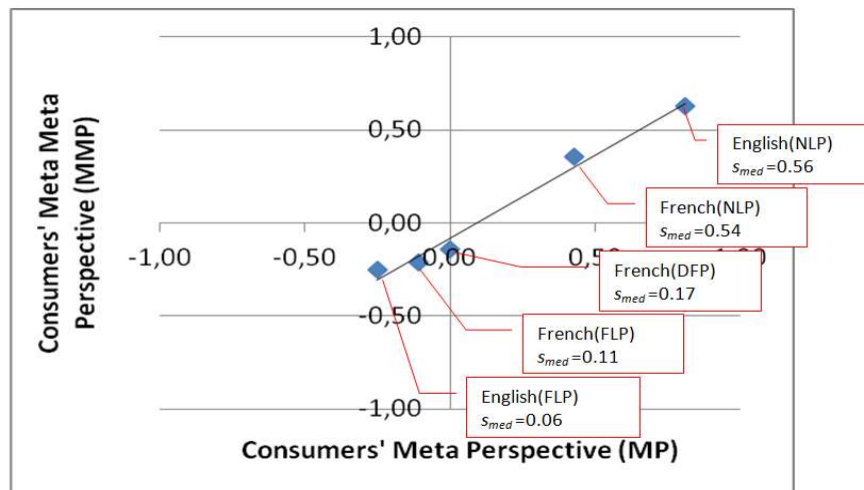


Fig. 18. The three levels of perspective for each experimental case with the MP and MMP relating to the X-axis and Y-axis respectively and where the DP median score s_{med} is given in the tags; the cases are labeled as in Table 2 (for example, English(FLP) designates the case of English subjects vs foreign language product)

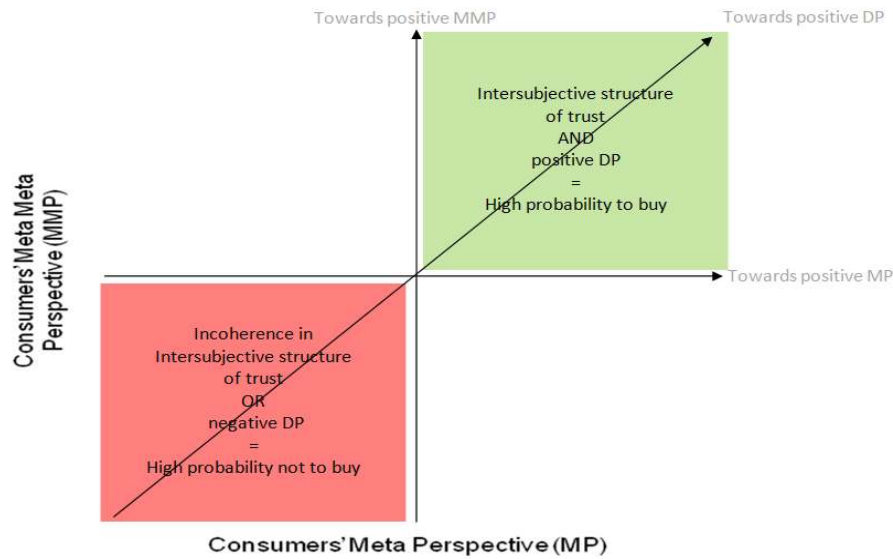


Fig. 19. Food consumers' intent to buy in the 3D space of intersubjective structure defined by the two dimensions MP and MMP complemented by the diagonal dimension DP

space, this would reflect that the consumers are not aware of the producers' DP and think these ones are not aware of their positive DP. Is such a situation possible? Probably not because it would mean that consumers do not think that producers think their product is good while it was found just above that consumers logically think it is the case. This means that positive DP implies positive MP and that negative DP implies negative MP. Therefore, the DP axis is linked with the half spaces defined by $MP=0$; in the negative half space, DP can only tend to zero or be negative.

Another case may be considered: a consumers' positive DP combined with positive MP but negative MMP. This might reflect the fact that consumers think that the producers do not know that the consumers like the product. What may lead to such a context? This may happen when the producers stop providing the product because they find its production not cost-effective.

4.3.5 Both product and producers are concerned by distrust

In the previous paragraphs, the product-oriented distrust was discussed. However in the cases studied, contexts of distrust characterized by incoherence between DP versus MP and MMP showed that the distrust extended beyond the product towards the producers. This proposal is supported by the fact that negative MP and MMP

reflected the consumers' perception that the producers were not aware of the consumers' negative DP towards the product whereas, as a consumer, you expect that the producers did their best to put on the market a product that yields a consumers' positive DP. If not, then the producers did not undertake what the consumers expected from them. Considering that, in the brand domain, trust between parties implies actions from a party as expected by the other combined to an expectation of positive outcome [15,34], this incoherence between DP versus MP and MMP may lead to a negative perception of the producers by the consumers.

4.3.6 The intent to buy (or not) goes beyond the short-term

Furthermore, many studies demonstrated that trusting the product or the brand led to repurchasing (see for example [35,36]). Indeed trust in brand is in part related to brand reliability implying "viewing the brand as a promise of future performance which has to be consistently accomplished if the company wants the brand to be trusted by the consumer, increasing his/her brand repurchase intentions on the next buying occasion" involving the consumers in a process of brand loyalty (see for example [16: 88; 30: 1242]).

Therefore it may be assumed that the first emotional feeling induced by the label of the product (as it was the case in the present

experiments) has implications for the long term. This is supported by previous studies regarding food marketing emphasizing that “trust in a brand contributes to behavioral intention of brand loyalty” [15: 359], which is possible if a positive emotional and normative attachment is elaborated between the consumers and the brand [37: 300]. In our study, the positive DP could lead to develop a positive emotional attachment with the brand leading possibly later to brand loyalty; conversely, the negative DP likely led to develop a prior negative emotional relationship with the brand which might be difficult later to change into a positive attachment, making the brand unlikely to be bought one day and thus making it far from brand loyalty.

4.4 Limits

The experimental cases were carried out with few subjects in each sample in the present study. This was made possible because the characteristics of the brands were exacerbated (for the research purpose), leading to significant difference between the mean scores despite the low number of subjects. In practice, for products which particularities would be more subtle, it is obvious that several tens of subjects would be necessary for significant results. Even if the number of subjects per sample is not a limit for the present study, however analysts must be aware that larger samples might be needed depending on the product characteristic.

Another point might be thought as a limit regarding the generalization of the conclusions. When the results of the present study were discussed in seminar at the Dept. of Psychological and Behavioural Science (LSE, London, UK), the difference of packaging between the two products was pointed out by some of our colleagues, arguing that a sober or a colored packaging would influence the consumers' perception differently. Two of them even suggested that the packs should have been depersonalized and put the writings on a white background. We think that this objection is quite valid but we rejected the proposal of a white background: our purpose was to work with real food products, not with kinds of “sterilized ersatz”. In our opinion, working with real products gave a higher ecological validity to our experiments.

A last remark was suggested by our colleagues of the Dept. of Psychological and Behavioural

Science (LSE, London, UK). It concerned the psychological value of the linguistic particularities of the products; they were not symmetric: one concerned the body (English product) and one addressed the social status of a person (French product). Therefore, the word could be perceived more aggressive by one sample of subjects than the other. In order to investigate this point, we decided to undertake further experiments soon, the main difficulty being to identify another appropriate product.

Finally, the experiments were undertaken with adults. It might be expected other results with teen-agers reacting differently than adults. Similarly, it may be objected that choosing subjects “among relatives so that researchers could attest that they would not contain their smile or their laugh in front of them when confronted with the foreign product” (§ 2.3) may create a bias: maybe, nevertheless this factor must be considered as a necessity in order to access subjects' spontaneous reaction when presented with the product. This consideration might give rise to further experiments.

5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed at analyzing the assessment of two food products (associated to native and foreign languages) by subjects on the basis of the writings on the product package. This was undertaken through Intersubjectivity dynamic theory and perspective taking. The analysis evaluated the consequences beyond the products and the possible consequences on the producers.

It was shown that the Intersubjectivity dynamic theory was fulfilled for the context of trust and the results helped us to identify other intersubjective structures of distrust for the food products: the product has a high probability to be bought when there is coherence between the direct and meta (meta) perspectives combined with a positive direct perspective towards the food product and the product has a high probability not to be bought in case of negative direct perspective or incoherence between the direct and meta (meta) perspectives.

To prevent any problem of this sort and avoid commercial failures, Fauquet-Alekhine & Fauquet-Alekhine-Pavlovskaja [6] elaborated a socio-psycholinguistic model for foreign migration of brands. This model helps for an exhaustive analysis of possible linguistic impacts of brands

(in its broadest sense) before going onto the market taking into account sociological factors. It helps the analysts to estimate the possibilities for the product to be linked with an unexpected concept through the brand by analyzing what kind of other communication channels might be used instead of the expected one: homograph, homophone, paronym, neograph. It also suggests six social dimensions of language to be explored: academic language, common language, popular language, rude language, slang, and "no meaning" writings. In the cases designed for the present experiments, this model was used on the opposite, in order to create the link between the product and the unexpected concept.

For the producers, being aware of a possible conceptual mismatch of the brand can help them to save a significant amount of money by avoiding financial investment in an unsuitable brand and furthermore, it can avoid deteriorating the image of the producers perceived by consumers because, as demonstrated in this study, an unsuitable brand impacts consumers' perception beyond the product: it may lead to a context of distrust towards the producers and consequently influence negatively the consumers' perception of all the producers' merchandises. This may be difficult to counterbalance through other factors (such as corporate social responsibility [38]). The socio-psycholinguistic model for foreign migration of brands [6] provides a systematic approach for an exhaustive analysis. In practice, the associated expenditures are quite low: before marketing a brand abroad, analysts have to ensure the congruence of the brand with the products in the targeted country in order to be ensured of the future consumers' intent to buy, or at least to be sure not to lessen the intent to buy. To do so, the brand must be analyzed by conducting a survey of a representative sample of future consumers the aim of which being to investigate the brand through the socio-psycholinguistic model for foreign migration of brands. Compared to the cost of a commercial failure, the cost of such a survey is derisory.

Further interesting research might be carried out by analyzing the intersubjective structure using a probabilistic approach for the possible combinations between direct and meta (meta) perspectives. Indeed, as seen in the section "Discussion", in case of food products, psycho-sociological considerations may lead to estimate certain combinations impossible. From a pure mathematical standpoint, it might be possible to

assign probabilities to each combination when integrating these considerations. This might lead to expand the descriptive model presented on Fig. 19 to a predictive model.

CONSENT

The authors declare that written informed consent was obtained from subjects for publication of this paper.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study received ethical approval of the Ethics Committee of the Dept. of Social Psychology (LSE, London, UK) and has therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX

English version of the questionnaire

1. According to you, is it a good writing for sweets? / a good name for chocolates? Explain why.
2. According to you, this product is: good, strange, bad, a joke, stupid.
3. You think that the producer of this product agrees with the evaluation of the product you did in 2.
4. You think that the producer of this product knows that consumers of your country evaluate the product as you did in 2.
5. You would buy this product.

Items 2 to 5 were assessed on a Likert scale.

The Likert scale was: strongly disagree / disagree / neither agree nor disagree / agree / strongly agree.

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