

Original Research Article

Foreign Migration of Brands discussed under the light of Intersubjectivity Perspective: Illustration with a Case of Food Products

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 these few words 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?

In the light of the Intersubjectivity dynamic theory, we analyzed the influence of perspective taking on the communicational process of food marketing. For this aim, $N=58$ adult subjects (English and French) were asked to assess two food products (a foreign 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)the characteristics of contexts of distrust in the brand domain, v)a possible deterioration of the image of the producers perceived by customers due to the conceptual mismatch. It was argued that these two last points could lead to a context of distrust towards the producers and consequently influence negatively the customers' perception of all the producers' merchandises.

This approach and resulting conclusions might 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

1. INTRODUCTION (ARIAL, BOLD, 11 FONT, LEFT ALIGNED, CAPS)

Communication is a key point of marketing which theoretical description has evolved with time. We may point out two main steps. McCarthy presented the Marketing Mix [1], a Producer-oriented model introducing 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 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 pointed out 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. 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 [8]): 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 will 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 [9] 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 [10], influencing the acceptance [11] or the perception of the food taste: for instance, descriptive names improve perceptions of foods [12]. In addition, words have acquired a new status with the development of consumption on line [13]. 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 "Блядина" 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]), this corollary question was not. This relates to the concept of intersubjectivity. As noticed in a previous work [6], intersubjectivity is fundamental to understand communication [16]. According to Rommetveit [17], intersubjectivity, may be understood as One's orientation to the orientation of Other. Yet, in the line of Mead [18, 19] suggesting this reflection as part of intersubjectivity, it may be understood through a perspective-taking approach. Ichheiser [20] proposed a three interactional-level approach: the individual/group self-perception, the individual/group perception of Other, the perception of individual/group of the Other's perception of themselves. More recently, Gillespie [21] emphasized that these three levels may 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 Other is using in order to determine trustworthiness". The first level was conceptualized as the "direct perspective" by Laing et al. [22], 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. On the basis of Laing and co-workers studies, Gillespie [21] reformulated how these three levels of perspectives 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 [21] thus suggested a model of

intersubjective structure of trust and distrust 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. 1). Let us consider two individuals involved in an intersubjective process; we call them “interactants”. The two interactants are Self (S) and 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. 1, when complying with the intersubjective structure as described here, gives a strong consistency to the context. The way properties are entwined on Fig. 1 implies that the relationships are bilateral between S and O and analogous.

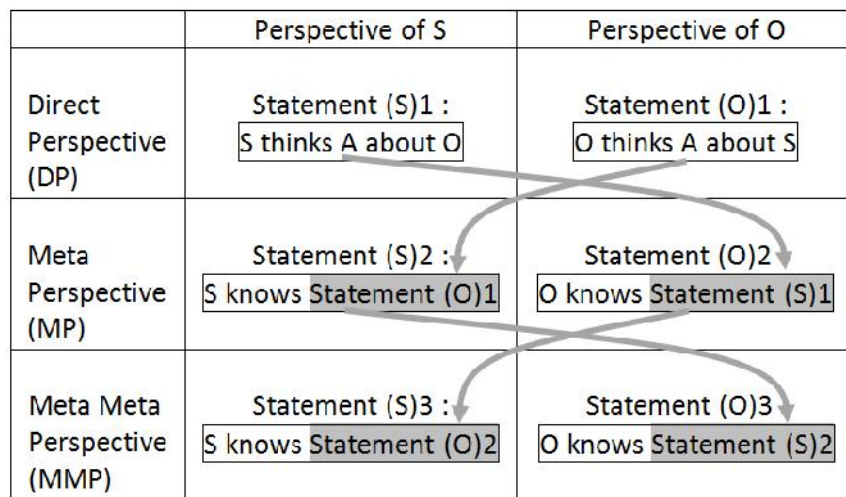


Fig. 1. The intersubjective structure of trust and distrust between Self (S) and Other (O) each of them assigning to each other the same attribute (A)

In the light of the Intersubjectivity dynamic theory and perspective taking [23], we aimed at further investigating the influence of intersubjectivity in the communicational process of food marketing with, however, one 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” [24: 456]. This approach and resulting conclusions might contribute to improve marketing when exporting food brands and preserve producers from possible subsequent effects on their reputation. This may 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 [25].

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Intersubjectivity (resp. interobjectivity) dynamic involves subjects or groups of subjects interacting with each other [23] (resp. an object). The method used in this study consisted in applying these dynamics and perspective taking between interactants through an intermediate object: the brand (or label) of the food product as defined in the beginning of section “Introduction”.

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) to Anglo-Saxon subjects for assessment and then the picture of an English food product for assessment. The researcher also presented the picture of an English food product (presenting a particularity described in the following paragraph) to French subjects for assessment and then the picture of a French food product for assessment. The assessment is described in §2.2 “Protocol”. 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 the picture of the same English food product than in the first condition to other French subjects for assessment; 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.

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. 2). 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. 3). 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. 4) thus making them bigger than any other letters.



Fig. 2 English product purchased in London (UK)



Fig. 3 French product purchased in Paris suburb (France)



Fig. 4. English product with distorted particularity

2.1.1 "Original product" condition

In the first condition, subjects were individually presented two products one by one and independently. They were first presented with the picture of the foreign food product on the package of which the particularity could produce an emotional reaction. After the presentation of the picture, a protocol assessment was applied according to the description given in §2.2. They were then presented with the picture of the product in their native language. Again after the presentation of the picture, the protocol assessment was applied.

For this condition, two samples of subjects were concerned: Anglo-Saxons and French.

2.1.2 "Distorted product" condition

In this second condition, French subjects were individually presented with the English product with the picture distorted as described above. After the presentation of the picture, a protocol assessment was applied according to the description given in §2.2.

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 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, stays serious, smiles, laughs. 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 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.

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.

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: 42yo.) and Anglo-Saxon subjects ($N=16$, 56% male, average age: 37.8yo.). 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: 35.2yo.). 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.

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 from -2 to +2, -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. 5).

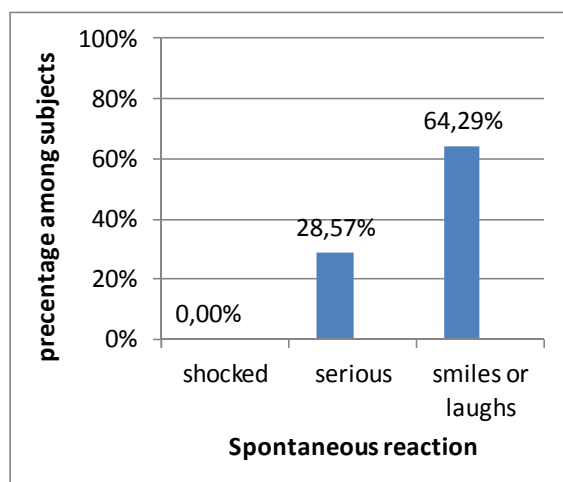


Fig. 5. Spontaneous reaction of French subjects when presented with the foreign product

3.1.2 Direct perspective

The assessment of the products (DP, question 2) was markedly different (Fig. 6) 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: $\alpha(\text{FLP})=.70$ and $\alpha(\text{NLP})=.80$.

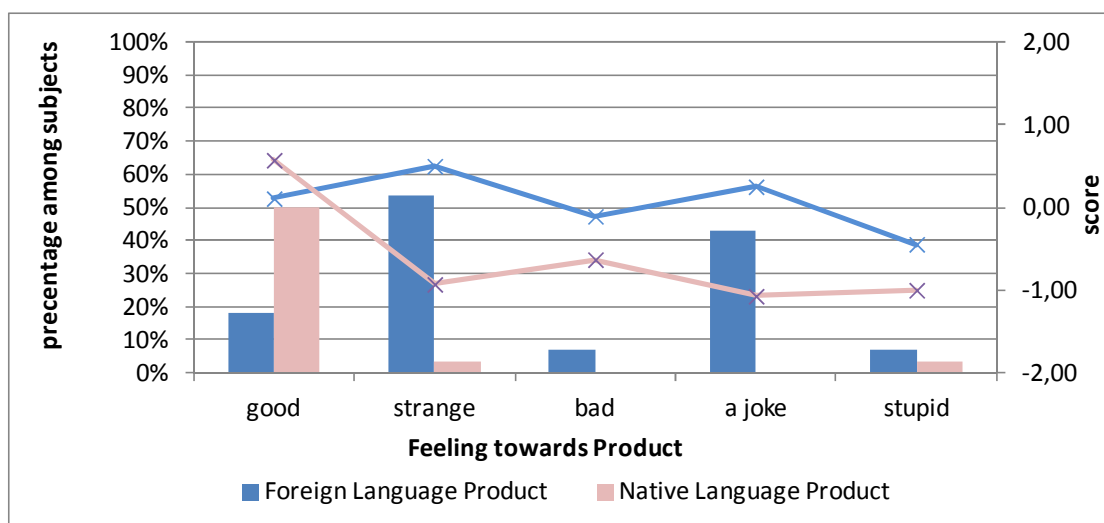


Fig. 6. Direct perspective (DP) of French subjects (percentages of subjects with positive score on bargraphs and mean overall scores on curves)

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. 7) 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 $r(\text{NLP})=.99$ ($p<.01$).

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

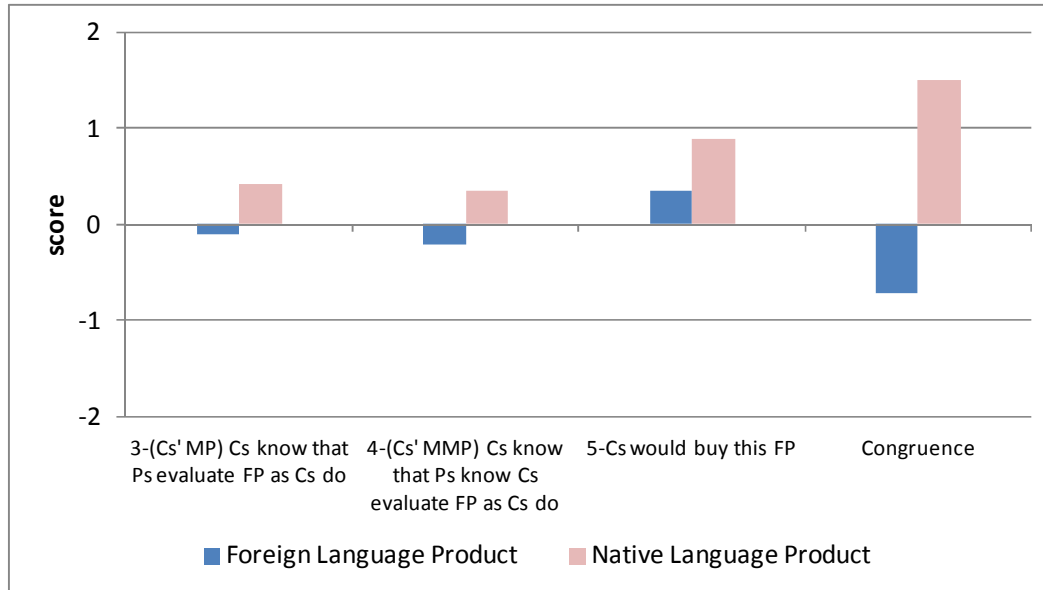


Fig. 7. Scores for meta perspective (MP) and meta meta perspective (MMP) of French Consumers (Cs)

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. 8).

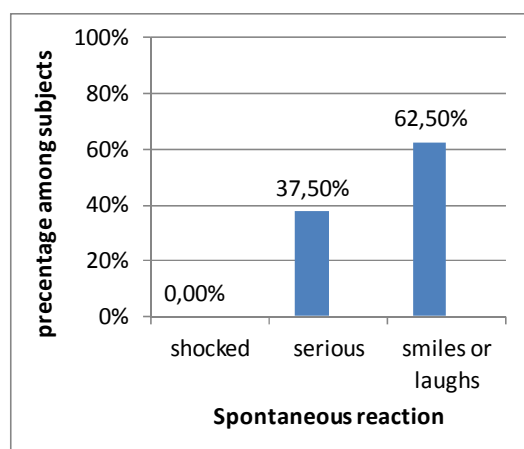


Fig. 8. Spontaneous reaction of English subjects when presented with the foreign product

3.2.2 Direct perspective

The assessment of the products (DP, question 2) was markedly different (Fig. 9) 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 $\alpha(\text{NLP})=.70$.

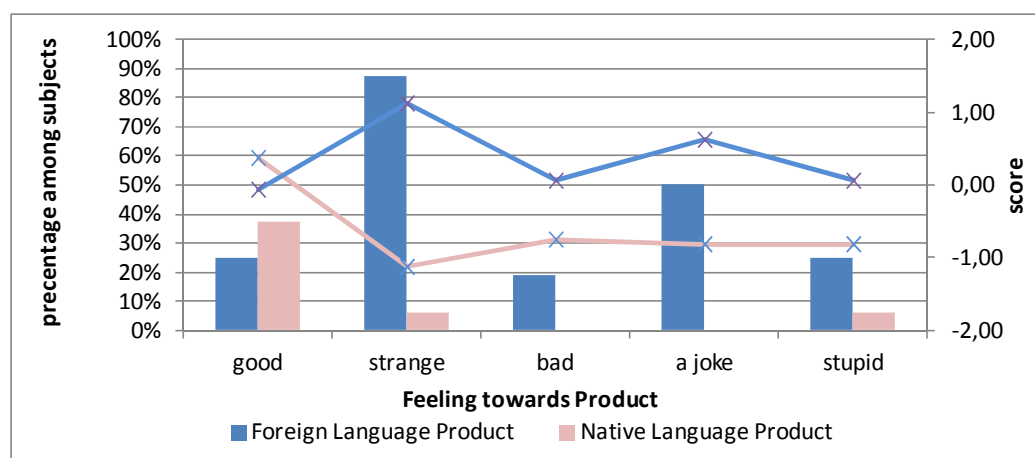


Fig. 9. Direct perspective (DP) of English subjects (percentages of subjects with positive score on bargraphs and mean overall scores on curves)

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. 10) 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 writings on the package and the product (question 1) and did not intend 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 $\alpha(\text{NLP})=.65$.

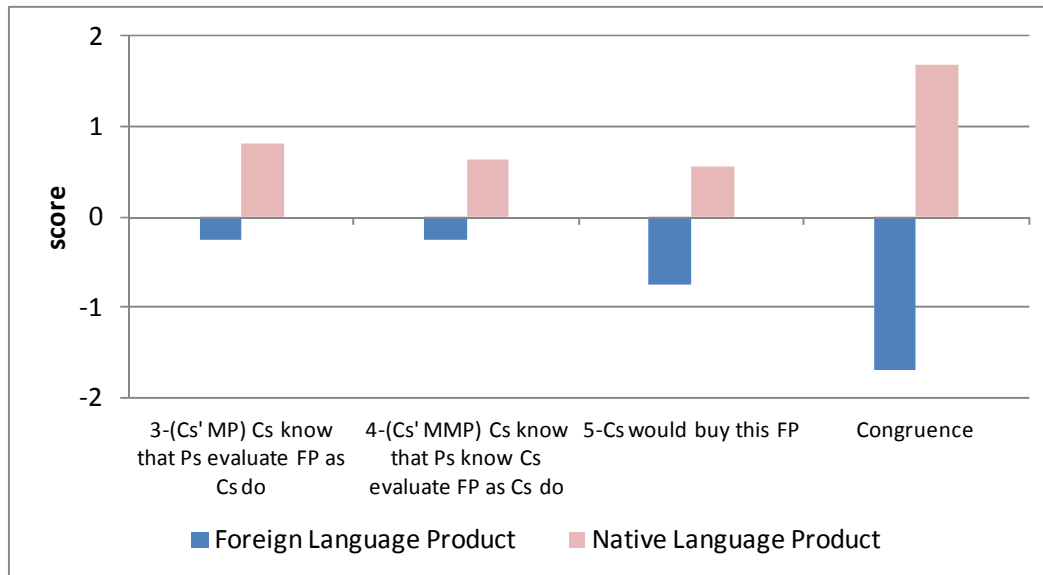


Fig. 10. Scores for meta perspective (MP) and meta meta perspective (MMP) of English Consumers (Cs)

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. 11).

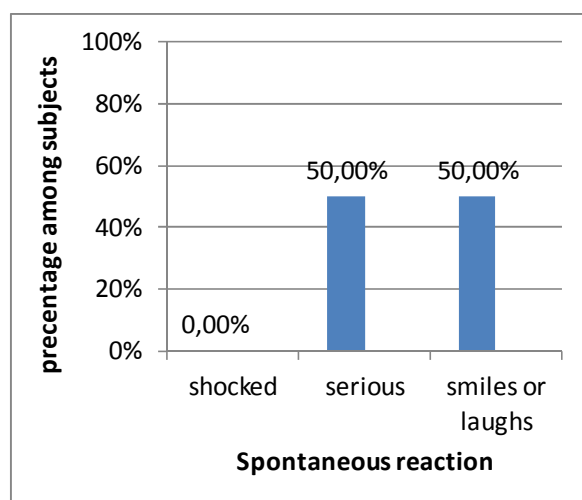


Fig. 11. Spontaneous reaction of French subjects when presented with the distorted foreign product

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. 12). The Cronbach alpha gave good consistency of data: $\alpha(\text{DFP})=.68$.

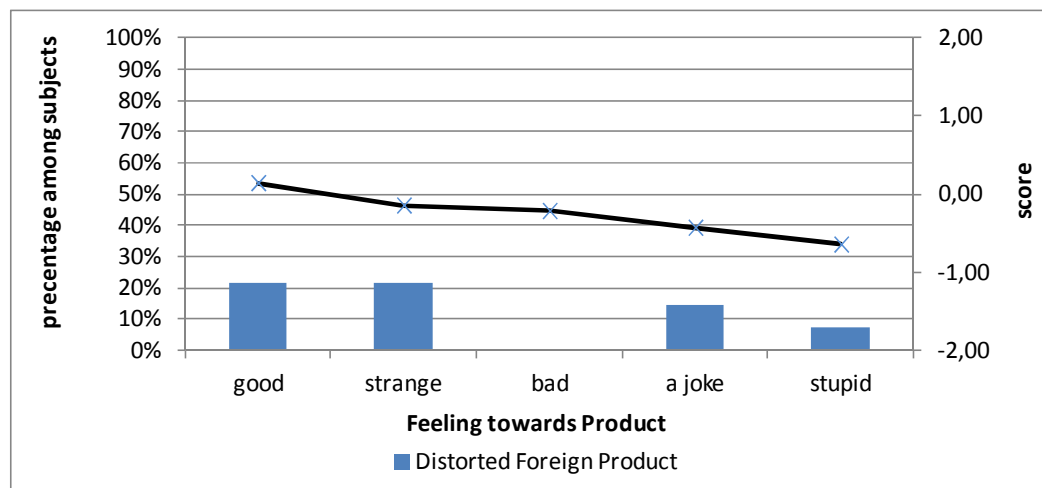


Fig. 12. Direct perspective (DP) of French subjects for distorted foreign product (percentages on bargraphs and scores on curves)

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. 13). 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).

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:
 $\alpha(\text{DFP})=.68$.

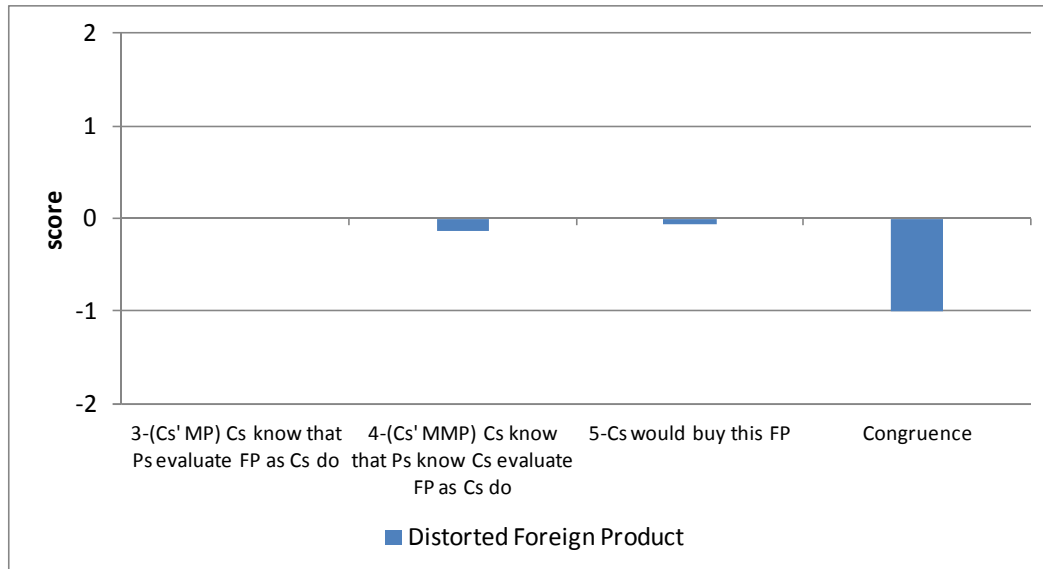


Fig. 13. Scores for meta perspective (MP) and meta meta perspective (MMP) of French Consumers (Cs) for distorted foreign product

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 “Original product” condition – French vs English subjects

Fig. 14 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.

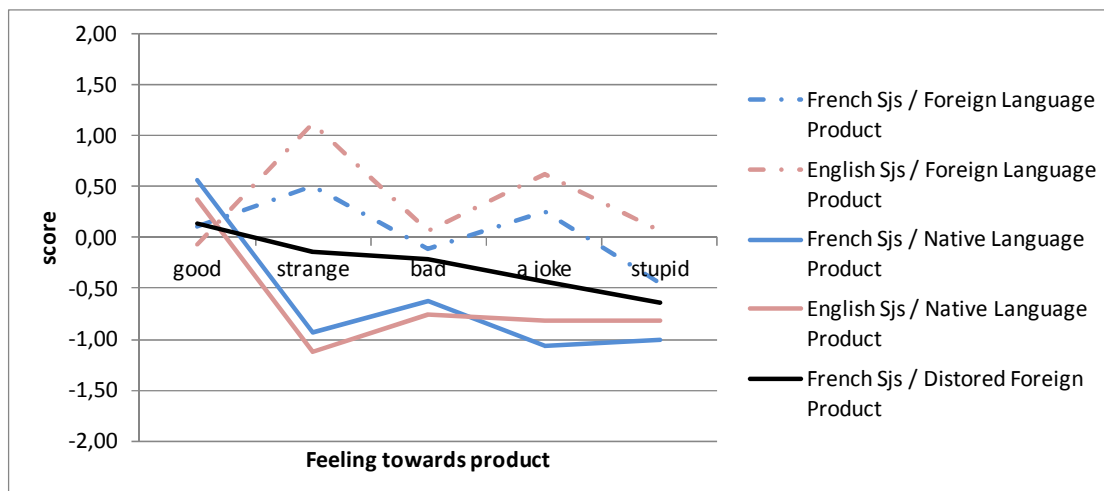


Fig. 14. Direct perspective scores (DP scores) per items

This likeness is well illustrated when the DP scores English vs French are plotted together excepting the distorted foreign product condition (Fig. 15). For this aim, data are considered in pairs for each item and each case: the 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.

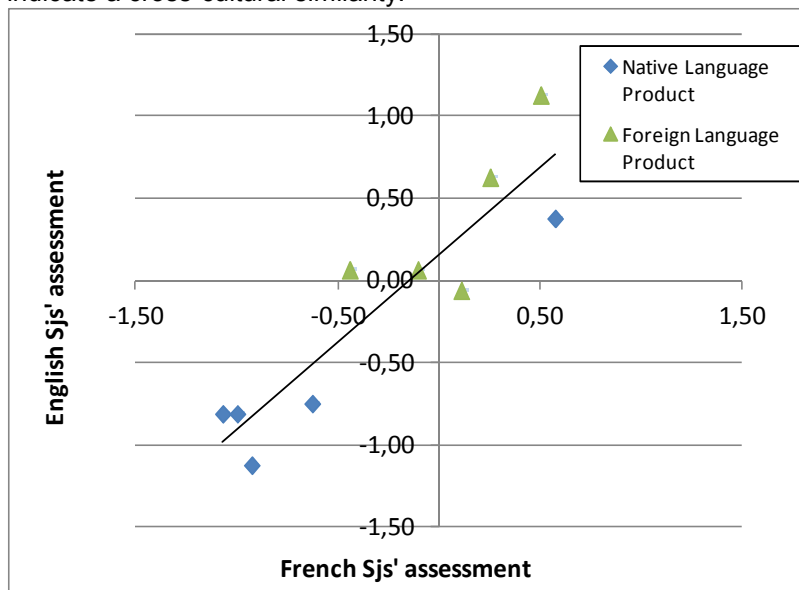


Fig. 15. Comparison between direct perspective scores (DP scores) per subjects' nationality

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. 14 (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 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 associated with an intent to buy if congruence and no intent to buy if no congruence except the negative correlation for French subjects towards the foreign product.

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

	French product	English product
French subjects	$r = .99$ ($p<.01$)	$r = -.69$ ($p<.01$)
Anglo-Saxons 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. 14). 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 [26] showed significant effects of brand name location and typography and mentioned previous studies regarding font size factor: Pillai et al. [27] demonstrated the effect of type size on consumers' comprehension and on their attitude toward the product; earlier, analyzing various food products, Aydinoglu and Krishna [28] 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. 1, 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. 16 in the case of compliance with the intersubjective structure of trust or distrust.

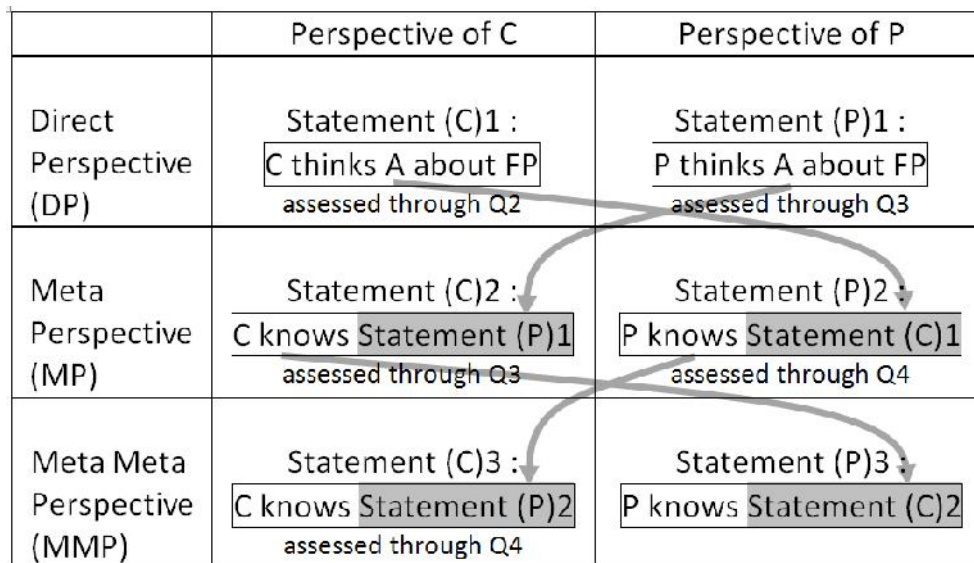


Fig. 16. Relationships of interobjectivity and intersubjectivity between Consumer (C) and Producer (P) each of them assigning to the food product (FP) an attribute (A) in the case of compliance with the intersubjectivity structure of trust or distrust

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", we consider here that 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. 16 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: Overall trends of consumers' perspectives according to Fig. 16 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 ⁻

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

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).

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

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 [21, 23] described in section "Introduction" is confirmed in case of trust.

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 [21, 23] is not the only intersubjective context possible for distrust.

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. 17), where DP is quantified by the median score of the items "good" and "bad" of question 2, noted as s_{med} .

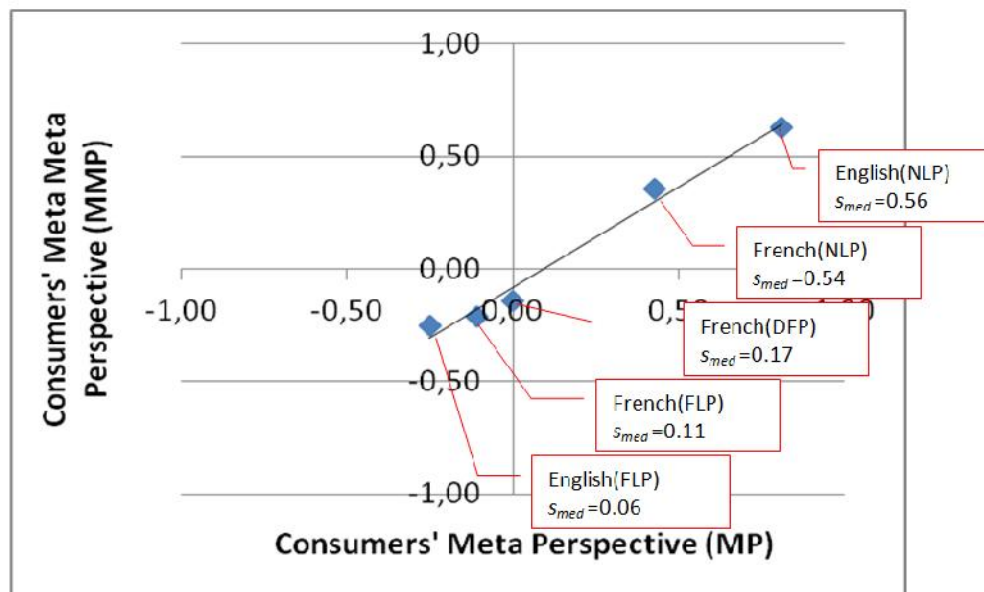


Fig. 17: The three levels of perspective for each experimental case with the MP and MMP relating to the X-axis and Y-axis respectively and where the DP median score s_{med} is given in the tags; the cases are labeled as in Table 2 (for example, English(FLP) designates the case of English subjects vs foreign language product)

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. 18):

- 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.

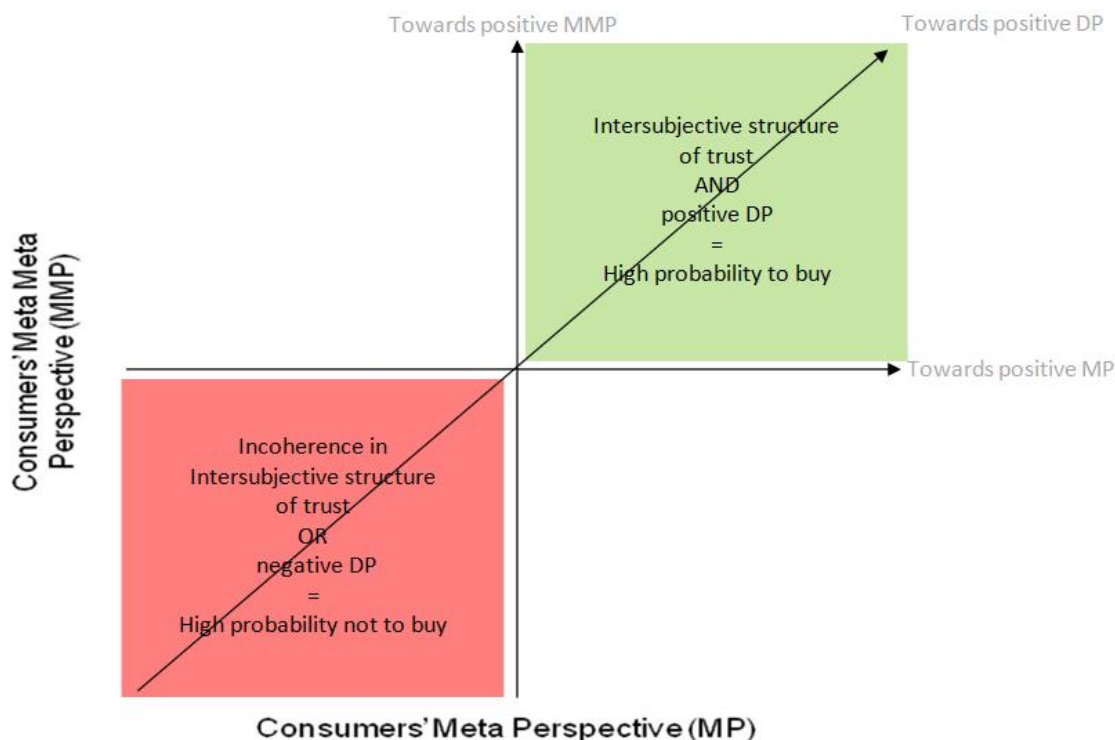


Fig. 18: Food consumers' intent to buy in the 3D space of intersubjective structure defined by the two dimensions MP and MMP complemented by the diagonal dimension DP

Nevertheless, the influence of MP and MMP on consumers' intent to buy the product must not be underestimated. If we consider 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, we may assume that the probability to buy the product would not be so high as for a point within the positive space. In such a case of positive DP within the positive 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 we 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 cannot cross the half space defined by $MP < 0$; in this 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.

Both product and producers are concerned by distrust

In the previous paragraphs, we discussed the product-oriented distrust. 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, 29], this incoherence between DP versus MP and MMP may lead to a negative perception of the producers by the consumers.

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 [30, 31]). 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 [30: 1242]). Therefore we may assume 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 [32: 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 score 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 validity 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 customers' perception differently. Two of them even suggested that we should have depersonalized the packs 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. We might expect other results with teen-agers. This consideration might give rise to additional 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 point out 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 explore: academic language, common language, popular language, rude language, slang, and "no meaning" language. 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 may help them to save a significant amount of money by avoiding financial investment in an unsuitable brand and furthermore, it may avoid deteriorating the image of the producers perceived by customers because, as demonstrated in this study, an unsuitable brand impacts customers' perception beyond the product: it may lead to a context of distrust towards the producers and consequently influence negatively the customers' perception of all the producers' merchandises. This may be difficult to counterbalance through other factors (such as corporate social responsibility [33]).

The socio-psycholinguistic model for foreign migration of brands provides a systematic approach for an exhaustive analysis.

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 skip the descriptive model presented on Fig.18 to a predictive model.

647 **CONSENT**

648
649 The author declares that written informed consent was obtained from subjects for publication of this
650 paper.

651 **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

652
653
654 This study received ethical approval of the Ethics Committee of the Dept. of Social Psychology (LSE,
655 London, UK) and has therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the
656 1964 Declaration of Helsinki.

657 **APPENDIX**

658 **English version of the questionnaire.**

- 659
660
661 1-According to you, is it a good writing for sweets? / a good name for chocolates? Explain why.
662 2-According to you, this product is: good, strange, bad, a joke, stupid.
663 3-You think that the producer of this product agrees with the evaluation of the product you did in 2.
664 4-You think that the producer of this product knows that consumers of your country evaluate the product
665 as you did in 2.
666 5- You would buy this product.

667
668 Questions 2 to 5 were assessed on a Likert scale.

669
670 The Likert scale was: strongly disagree / disagree / neither agree nor disagree / agree / strongly agree.

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