The impact of multilingual product information on consumer evaluations: An assessment of basic effects, boundary conditions, and drivers

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Content overview

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List of acronyms

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
CI	Confidence interval
COO	Country-of-origin
Dr.	Doctor
EAA	European Advertising Academy
Ed./Eds.	Editor/editors
ed.	Edition
e.g.	Exempli gratia (for example)
EMAC	European Marketing Academy Conference
et al.	Et alii (and others)
FL	Foreign langauge
H	Hypothesis
ICORIA	International Conference on Research in Advertising
i.e.	Id est (in other words)
M	Mean value
NS	Not significant
p./pp.	Page/Pages
Prof.	Professor
RQ	Research question
SE	Standard error
UK	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States
Vol.	Volume

1 Introduction

Nowadays, consumers are used to the presence of product information in foreign languages when they buy or consume products. It is omnipresent in everyday life, be it on multilingual product packaging in stores referring to ingredients or key product features or in the instruction manuals of electric products, just to mention a few common examples. In this doctoral thesis, it is presumed that, in many cases, multilingual product information indicates that the product is also sold in a country that the foreign language suggests. Imagine, for example, consumers are confronted with translated product information in Spanish on the packaging of an electric product in a German store. It can be assumed that they may infer that the product is also shipped to Spain (apart from other likely inferences, such as concluding that Spain was the country of origin, or COO, of the product). Figure 1-1 provides a further real-life example of a product sold in the German market with product information in French also depicted on the product packaging, indicating France to be an additional foreign target market.

Figure 1-1. Example of multilingual product information in practice

The Italian brand "Ferrero" depicts a translation of product information in French on the packaging of their "Kinder Milch-Schnitte" in the German market:

In cases in which consumers draw the conclusion that the product is shipped to another country, the foreign language transfers a message that another nation of consumers buys the same product. This thesis is built on the notion that a foreign language can serve as a cue pointing to a foreign target market that constitutes a different country from the one in which a target consumer is located.

Even though the strategy of using multilingual product information is widespread in the marketplace nowadays, this has rarely been addressed and has received surprisingly little attention to date in the extant literature on marketing communications. Academic research has not yet investigated what consumers infer from a foreign language presented as a translation of product information and has rarely investigated

whether the usage of such cues has a beneficial effect on consumers' product evaluations. In the literature, the focus so far has been on a foreign, or non-dominant, language depicted to target consumers who are a part of a bilingual population. Swiss vendors, for instance, provide information in multiple languages due to various official languages. For illustration, a practical example is depicted in Figure 1-2. Prior studies investigated the effects of additional language usage in the context of multilingual countries (e.g., Krishna and Ahluwalia 2008; Puntoni, de Langhe, and Van Osselaer 2008) and non-dominant languages targeting minority groups within a country. With respect to minority groups, studies investigated either their reactions (e.g., Carroll and Luna 2011; Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994; Noriega and Blair 2008) or the reactions of the majority group in countries in which the minority group lives (Gopinath and Glassman 2008; Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013).

Figure 1-2. Practical example of multiple languages targeting bilingual consumers

The Swiss brand "Ricola" depicts a translation of product information in French on the packaging of their herbal candy in the Swiss market:
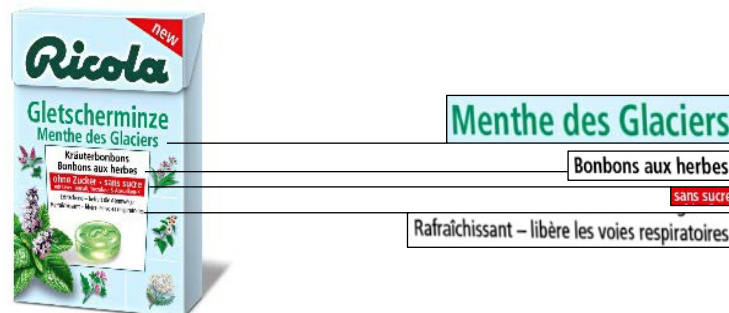
The aim of this research was to close the identified gap, meaning first, to shed light on what consumers infer from multilingual product information and second, to investigate its effect on product evaluations. Thereby, it was of special interest to clarify if the assumption of a foreign target market was transferred via the presence of multilingual product information. Note that the investigation of this doctoral thesis was limited to one additional foreign language, since the effects of more than one foreign language on product evaluations would probably be based on a different mechanism (i.e., the perception of a globalness as the literature already has indicated; Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013).

In addition to transferring the information of a foreign target market implicitly via a foreign language, it can be noted that this information could also be provided

explicitly. Practice shows that firms use such information in their marketing communication, as demonstrated in the practical example depicted in Figure 1-3, "The top seller in Japan (More than 1.75 million items sold!) is now available in Germany!", or consumers may learn about foreign target markets from media coverage. While this was not the focus of the present research, this doctoral thesis can also shed some light on the effects of such explicit cues.

Figure 1-3. Examples of explicit foreign target market information in practice

In a print ad launched in 2018 in the German market, the Swiss underwear-retailer "Triumph" for their brand "Sloggi" claimed that the lingerie line "Zero Feel" was a top seller in Japan and was now available in Germany:

By analyzing the effects of foreign target market information on consumers' evaluations, this thesis contributes to the extant literature on international marketing by proposing a strategy for multinational brands that allows products to benefit from country associations. Although this practice can be observed in the marketplace and provides a feasible method to make products more appealing to customers with respect to companies selling their products in more than one country, it has not been addressed in the academic literature. The investigation of the effects of multilingual product information is highly relevant for marketers. Without knowing what inferences consumers draw from a foreign language and understanding how this affects product evaluations, practitioners run the risk of potential detrimental effects when using foreign language cues or using them incorrectly. In addition, foreign languages can be used in a favorable way. Companies selling their products in more than one country may follow a differentiated strategy using multilingual product information adapted to a specific market instead of just selling standardized products. With the knowledge of the impact in the use of a foreign language, they may be able to increase their competitive advantage and profit from its use. This doctoral thesis had the primary objective of closing the identified gap and investigating consumer responses to foreign language product information.

The introductory section continues with a brief demonstration of the research deficits and questions (section 1.1), followed by the presentation of the structure of the thesis (section 1.2) and a summary of the main findings (section 1.3).

1.2   Research deficits and questions

This doctoral thesis builds on several research areas in the use of a foreign language with different strategic intentions. The most relevant research stream is research on target marketing in which a foreign language is linked to a consumer group within a country and (similar to this doctoral thesis) when the translation of product information in a foreign language is part of the consideration (e.g., Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994, Luna and Peracchio 2005a; Noriega and Blair 2008). These studies mainly considered Spanish as a foreign language (or more accurately a non-dominant language) in the U.S. in order to target Hispanic people as an ethnic minority group. In this context, two studies are of specific relevance in that they focus on multilingual product packaging (Gopinath and Glassman 2008; Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013). When product information was translated into Spanish in addition to English, a culture targeting effect was observed that resulted in a negative effect from the majority group of U.S. consumers. Consequently, findings are limited to minority groups, which may be associated with negative stereotypes. In investigating the effects of foreign target market information on product evaluations, this doctoral thesis adds a positive perspective considering reference customer groups, which were not rated negatively in the first place. Moreover, the customer group to which it referred was located in a foreign country and was not a sub-group of the home country of the consumer.

Apart from studies in which language was used to target specific audiences, the broad research spectrum of country cues is considered, since foreign language is a part of it. With respect to the foreign language cues literature, foreign branding comprises a major part. Foreign branding describes the strategy of using foreign-sounding brand names or slogans in order to benefit from positive stereotypes that customers have about a specific foreign country (Aichner 2014; Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994). In these cases, a foreign language is either anchored in the brand name or part of the image concept. Many studies demonstrate that a foreign language in this context is used to imply a certain COO, and consumers' evaluations are driven by the perceived COO instead of the actual COO (Häubl and Elrod 1999; Leclerc et al. 1994; Melnyk et al. 2012; Verlegh et al. 2005). Apart from that, the language may also serve as a tool

to position a brand as global (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 1999; Chang 2008). The investigation of foreign language that is used to point to a foreign target market has not been addressed by researchers so far and therefore offers a new research stream. The goal of this doctoral thesis was to close this research gap.

It can be concluded that foreign language in general represents a rather ambiguous cue with respect to its triggered inferences and effects on product evaluations. It is assumed that what consumers infer from a foreign language is largely dependent on the context in which it is presented. The main assumption on which this doctoral thesis builds is that inferences regarding a foreign target market predominantly occur when product information is additionally translated into a foreign language. Note that cases in which minority groups within a country are obviously targeted with their own language or in which specifically bilingual consumers are evidently addressed were not investigated, as previous studies have examined these areas (Bishop and Peterson 2011; Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994; Luna and Peracchio 2005a, 2005b; Noriega and Blair 2008). Since research has neither taken account of foreign language as a foreign target reference nor has yet distinguished between different foreign language cues in a comparative manner, an explorative approach was the starting point of the investigation. Regarding different language stimuli, they were oriented toward the form in which foreign language in marketing communications was usually found in practice and research. In addition to a foreign-sounding brand name (e.g., Leclerc et al. 1994), a foreign language may either refer to product information in the form of a multiple-language product description (e.g., Gopinath, Glassmann, Neyer 2013) or a slogan (e.g., Hornikx, van Meurs, and Hof 2013). The following two outstanding issues were addressed as follows:

> **RQ1** *What do consumers infer from a foreign language that translates product information in marketing communications (i.e., packaging and advertisements)?*

> **RQ2** *Do inferences differ depending on the way foreign language cues are presented (i.e., brand name vs. product information vs. slogan)?*

After it has been clarified which inferences result from multilingual product information, their effect should be examined more closely. This should be done in a focused investigation of the effects of the foreign language in transferring the foreign

target market information to product evaluations that requires the identification of potential moderating and mediating variables.

First, the question of what conditions are needed for a potential positive or negative effect to occur will be addressed. According to Piller (2003), foreign languages can be used as a marketing cue that can influence the image or perception of a product or brand by means of creating a symbolic meaning. A foreign language can elicit associative processes and evoke mental images that may spill over to a brand (Ray, Ryder, and Scott 1991). In that regard, a foreign language carries cultural associations and stereotypes (Hornikx and Starren 2006; Hornikx et al. 2007). Research on target marketing indicates that a fit between the language used and the product category is crucial. Language, for instance, that is linked to associations that are not relevant for the product category, has turned out to trigger negative effects on the advertising effectiveness for multinational companies (Krishna and Ahluwalia 2008). This is supported by findings with respect to cues implying a country of origin (COO) in that the associations evoked by a foreign language display should match the relevant characteristics of the product advertised in order to be effective (e.g., Domzal et al. 1995; Kelly-Holmes 2000, 2005; Ray et al. 1991). Lastly, a fundamental precondition for the persuasiveness of COO effects is a product-country fit and that the country is generally evaluated favorably (e.g., Roth and Romeo 1992; Tseng and Balabanis 2011). To sum up, all the described research streams have emphasized the notion of a fit, match, or congruence between the foreign language and the product category. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that this is similar with respect to multilingual product information and might be crucial for its beneficial effects based on an associative process as well. Thus, the first question regarding potential moderating influences was as follows:

> **RQ3** *Does the fit between the country that the foreign language suggests and the product category determine the impact of the multilingual product information on the consumers' product evaluations?*

When a foreign language is interpreted as a reference to a foreign target market, this indicates that a product is consumed in another country. Therefore, it indirectly connects to a group of people and their consumption behavior. Thus, social influence could also play a role (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989; Deutsch and Gerard 1955). When consumers base their decisions on the presumed perspectives or values of a

group, this refers to the influence of the reference group (Belch and Belch 1995). If characteristics linked to a reference group in the context of multilingual product information affect product evaluations, this reflects a social-signaling function of a foreign language. Several research streams dealing with social influence (e.g., online shopping or word-of-mouth) suggest that perceived expertise determines the direction and strength of the social influence (Bone 1995; Jiuan Tan 1999). Consumers in a given country are more likely to be accepted as a reference group when they are perceived as experts in a certain domain (Witt and Bruce 1972). Therefore, an inferred expertise of consumers in the target market seems to be crucial for a positive influence. The second research question regarding potential moderating influences was as follows:

RQ4 *Does the inferred expertise of consumers of the foreign target market determine the impact of multilingual product information on consumers' product evaluations?*

Second, the purpose of this doctoral thesis was to investigate the issue of how multilingual product information affects consumers' product evaluations more deeply in order to identify the underlying effects. The most compelling aspect that had to be investigated was whether the beneficial effects triggered by the foreign language are indeed driven by the assumption that the product is sold in the country that the language suggests. Foreign language is an ambiguous cue that offers room for more than one interpretation of why the foreign language is depicted. Therefore, potential positive effects could also be driven by alternative inferences that the foreign language triggers. The most obvious would be the inference that the product is produced in the country that the foreign language suggests, as research shows extensive evidence that a brand's COO affects consumers' brand evaluations and behavioral intentions in a positive way (e.g., Herz & Diamantopoulos 2017). Moreover, the perceived globalness of the brand, which is connected with an appearance in multiple countries (Xie, Batra, and Peng 2015), constitutes an alternative potential driver for a positive effect of a foreign language since prior studies have demonstrated that its rise positively affects consumers' evaluations (e.g., Davvetas et al. 2015; Holt et al. 2004). In order to identify the perception of a foreign target market as a driver and differentiate the positive effect of a foreign target market influence from the variables already known in research for their positive influence, the fifth research question was as follows:

RQ5 *Does the inference of a foreign target market drive the impact of multilingual product information on consumers' product evaluations? Can this influence be distinguished from alternative drivers (i.e., COO or globalness inferences)?*

It seems obvious that the use of foreign language to transfer foreign target market information is applicable and therefore relevant for global brands since it is apparent that the products are being sold in more than one country. In particular, implicitly transferring this information via a foreign language might be a beneficial alternative to a common global branding strategy (i.e., a standardized positioning and marketing strategy across all the countries; Aaker & Joachimsthaler 1999) when the complexities of communicating a message in different language combinations adapted to the specific target markets cause lower costs and/or lead to financial profits in comparison to a single language use (e.g., English) across markets.

In contrast, whether local brands can profit from the use of a foreign language in that manner is less clear. The research findings indicate that language choice is less relevant for local brands from a consumer perspective, as the local language is expected in communications (Krishna and Ahluwalia 2008). Consumers evaluate a brand to be local based on their perception of availability (Devvetas and Diamantopoulos 2016). A conflict might arise when a foreign language display impairs the local image of a brand by triggering associations, such as foreignness, that would destroy an advantageous positioning. However, perceptions of globalness and localness are not mutually exclusive, as constellations of product alternatives, such as with global domestic players or locally available foreign producers, have shown (e.g., Westjohn, Magnusson, and Zhou 2015). A combination of both is sometimes even beneficial. Winit et al. (2014), for instance, found that a local origin allows global brands to command a price premium. To summarize, on the basis of previous research, it remains unclear for local brands if multilingual product information and transferring the information of a foreign target market is beneficial or detrimental. To clarify the managerial relevance for local brands, the sixth research question was formulated as follows:

RQ6 *Is the transfer of foreign target market information via multilingual product information a beneficial strategy with respect to product evaluations for local brands?*

In order to detect the underlying mechanism of potential positive or negative effects in the special case of local brands, drivers were again considered as part of a rather initial investigation for local brands. For this purpose, the social function of a foreign language due to the link with a reference group when referring to a specific foreign target market is considered once more. When consumers are confronted with a country cue, this activates stored mental stereotypes that represent social perceptions of the group of people living in that country (Diamantopoulos et al. 2017). These social perceptions are aggregated in a country's reputation for the consumers and contain perceptions about the competence of that country's people, which might be used as a signal in the consumers' decision-making process, as was already shown for export decisions in international trade (Dimitrova, Korschun, and Yotov 2017). When the foreign language refers to a reputable country and customer group, local brands can benefit from the prestige that is connected to that country, as has been identified by many researchers as a central country image dimension (for an overview, see Roth and Romeo 1992). In this case, associations connected to the specific product category might spill over, which raises the prestige of a brand. Moreover, since prestigious brands are strongly linked to an individual's self-concept and social image, consumers tend to perceive the consumption of prestige brands as a signal of social status (Alden et al., 1999). Therefore, the brand's social-signaling value might also be enhanced, which makes it also a part of the consumer's consideration. Taken together, the last research question was formulated as follows:

> **RQ7** *Is the impact of multilingual product information on consumers' product evaluations for local brands driven by the prestige and social-signaling value of a brand?*

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This doctoral thesis is structured in six chapters and comprises four research papers (one systematic literature review of foreign language in marketing communications and five empirical studies). To provide an overview, Figure 1-5 illustrates the structure of the thesis and information regarding the individual focus of each paper. The chapters are briefly described in the following, outlining the purpose and scope of each related research paper.

In the introductory section, the relevance of the current research and the research questions are explained.

Figure 1-4. Structure of the dissertation

Introduction	**1. Introduction**
	- Research deficits and questions - Key findings
Paper 1 Literature Review	**2. State-of-the-Art Picture of Foreign Language Research in International Marketing: An Overview Identifying Future Research in the Area of Foreign Language Cues** *(Working paper)*
	- Targeting bilingual consumers with a non-majority language - Positioning a brand as global through foreign language use - Effects of foreign language as an implicit country-of-origin cue - Identification of the research gap and suggestions for further research
Paper 2 Study 1	**3. Effects of Multilingual Product Packaging on Product Attitude, Perceived Quality, and Taste Perceptions** *(Published in in the European Advertising Academy's Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI), 2016)*
	Focus: Fit between the foreign language and the product category
Paper 3 Study 2 (Qualitative Study) Studies 3 & 4 (Experimental Studies)	**4. Multilingual Product Information: What Consumers Infer from Additional Information in a Foreign Language and How It Affects Consumer Evaluations** *(Submitted to the Journal of Business Research in August 2020, Under Review, 1st round)*
	Focus: Mediating influence of consumers' inferences Moderating influence of the inferred consumer expertise in the foreign target market
Paper 4 Study 5	**5. Adding Value to Local Brands through Foreign Language Cues** *(An earlier version of this manuscript was accepted for presentation at the European Marketing Academy Conferences, EMAC, 2018 in Glasgow, UK)*
	Focus: Effects of multilingual product information from the perspective of local brands
Discussion	**6. Discussion**
	- Contributions - Practical implications - Limitations and future research

In the following chapter, Paper 1, titled "State-of-the Art Picture of Foreign Language Research in International Marketing: An Overview Identifying Future Research in the Area of Foreign Language Cues," considers literature on foreign language in marketing communications that demonstrates different objectives for why a foreign language is used. The effects triggered by foreign language cues are discussed in detail, and the underlying theory used to explain these effects is briefly addressed. The investigation of the effects of foreign language cues that imply another foreign target market was identified as a research gap and suggested as a potential new research direction. This provided the basis for the subsequent papers.

Paper 2, titled "Effects of Multilingual Product Packaging on Product Attitude, Perceived Quality, and Taste Perceptions," aimed at providing an initial impression of the influence of a foreign language in product packaging on consumers' product evaluations. It examined how an additional foreign language printed on product packaging impacted product attitude, quality perception, and taste perceptions. In applying a 3 (foreign language: English, Spanish, absent) $\times$ 2 (product category: orange juice, tea) between-subjects factorial design, it investigated in Study 1 whether the effects of a foreign language depend on its fit to the product category. Thereby, RQ3 was addressed and the associative process was illuminated.

The objective of Paper 3, titled "Multilingual Product Information: What Consumers Infer from Additional Information in a Foreign Language and How It Affects Consumer Evaluations," was to analyze the effects of foreign language product information more thoroughly with a mixed method approach. In the first step, a qualitative study (Study 2) shed light on what inferences consumers draw from the presence of foreign languages on product packaging, addressing the explorative RQ1. It explored what consumers specifically infer when product information is additionally presented in a foreign language on the packaging in order to determine to what extent consumers interpret such language cues as foreign target market information. Several product-language combinations of either real or manipulated brands were presented (soap/French; crisp bread/Swedish; body wash/French; green tea/French; detergent/French). In order to support the findings of Study 2, a quantitative follow-up study (Study 3) was then conducted as a second step. Two real products (either a yoghurt cup or the packaging of a water bottle) were presented in an experimental approach differentiating between different pieces of information that were given in a foreign language as a between-subjects factor. Apart from the translated product information, these were foreign language cues commonly used in marketing practice (i.e., a brand

name and slogan in a foreign language). A comparison of these foreign language cues offered the opportunity to show that a foreign target market inference was predominantly drawn in the case of multilingual product information (addressing RQ3). In a third step, the evaluative consequences of multilingual information were examined using fictitious brands in three different product-country combinations. Following a 2 (foreign language information: absent vs. present) $\times$ 3 (product-language combination: shampoo, chocolate, bicycle) between-subjects design, the effect of multilingual information on the consumers' attitude toward the product was analyzed. In particular, the mediating role of foreign target market inferences and the moderating role of the inferred consumer expertise of consumers in the foreign target market were implemented in the assessment model addressing RQ5 and RQ4, respectively. This shed light on the social-signaling effect of a foreign language when referring to a reference customer group.

Finally, Paper 4 addressed the perspective of local brands. It investigated whether the usage of multilingual product information constituted a beneficial strategy for local brands in maintaining their local image in an international study (addressing RQ6). Therefore, both functions of a foreign language identified in the previous studies were taken up and combined. First, the rather stereotypical function of language was covered through the consideration of a rather reputable and less reputable country while varying the fit to the product category. This was assumed to trigger a transfer of relevant associations, which can cause either negative or positive effects. Second, the social-signaling function of a foreign language was considered through the effect due to the link to a social group, in other words, the specific foreign target market suggested by the foreign language. The prestige and the social-signaling value of a brand were included as serial mediators in the assessment model in order to detect their driving forces (addressing RQ7). Surveys were conducted in Taiwan and Germany. For each sample, the chosen product was a typical existing product with regional uniqueness only produced in the respective country from a local brand (i.e., Taiwanese high-mountain tea, German beer). In the experimental study (Study 5), the foreign language information was presented as a between-subjects factor (absent vs. present) and in the Taiwanese sample referred to a rather reputable country with regard to the product category (Germany), while in the German sample it referred to a less reputable country with regard to the product category (China). The effect of foreign language infor-

mation on product attitude and brand-related behavior was analyzed, while also examining whether the effect was mediated by the prestige and social-signaling value of the brand.

In the last chapter, the main results of each study and the contribution of this dissertation are discussed, and practical implications are drawn. Finally, limitations of the current work and avenues for future research are provided.

Figure 1-6 provides an overview of all the papers, including the applied empirical studies (Papers 2–4), and illustrates how these studies have addressed the research questions in a full conceptual model.

Figure 1-5. Thesis overview
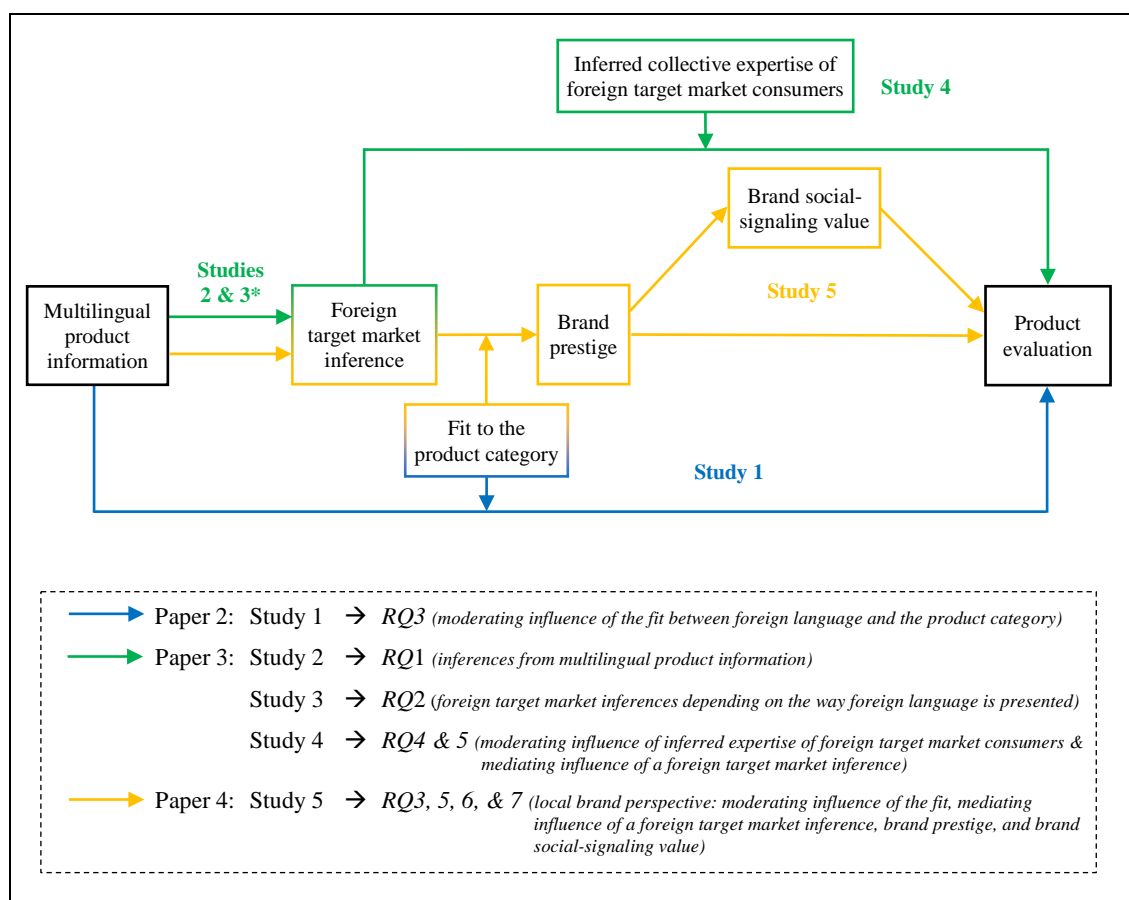
Notes: RQ = research question
  * Studies 2 and 3 are differentiated in the conceptual model with respect to the independent variables. Study 2 did not manipulate multilingual product information as a between-subject factor (absent vs. present), and Study 3 compared different language cues (brand name vs. product information vs. slogan vs. absent). However, they supported the causal relationship of multilingual product information in triggering foreign target market inferences.

2 State-of-the-art picture of foreign language research in international marketing: An overview identifying future research in the area of foreign language cues[1]

Abstract

This paper reviews the literature investigating the effects of foreign language on consumer behavior in the context of country cues in marketing communication. In an international market environment, the following reasons why foreign language is used are identified. Research has investigated foreign language as a tool to target specific consumer groups, such as bilingual consumers or minority groups (e.g., Holland & Gentry, 1999). Moreover, marketers can use foreign language in to position a brand as global or foreign (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). In the context of a foreign positioning strategy, foreign language may imply a foreign origin and act as an implicit country-of-origin cue. The effects triggered by foreign language cues are discussed in detail, and the underlying theorizing used to explain these effects is briefly addressed. Based on the reviewed literature, this paper identifies research gaps and develops suggestions for further research in this area. As a potential new research direction, the investigation of foreign language cues suggesting another country of sale is recommended.

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[1] This manuscript has not been submitted. It represents a working paper of the author.

2.1   Introduction

In an international marketing context, the usage of foreign language in marketing communications is omnipresent. The reasons why practitioners use foreign language are diverse and depend on the function they assign to foreign language. For one thing, in a culturally diversified marketplace, foreign language can be used as a **targeting tool**. Academic literature has shown that foreign language can be used in order to target specific consumer groups, such as consumer ethnicities in general (e.g., Holland & Gentry, 1999), bilingual consumers of a country (e.g., in Belgium or Switzerland; Luna & Peracchio, 2005a), or ethnic minorities (e.g., Hispanics in the U.S.; Gopinath & Glassman, 2008). In order to achieve persuasiveness in this context, practitioners may present words or sentences in their native language (e.g., Bishop & Peterson, 2011; Luna & Peracchio, 2005a, 2005b). Apart from the benefits in connection with targeted communication, foreign language can be applied as part of the brand positioning strategy and, in this role, has the potential to associate the brand with a globalness or foreignness (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999; Hornikx & van Meurs, 2017). From a consumer viewpoint, perceiving a brand as global or foreign sheds light on different mindsets, even though they sometimes may overlap. The impression of a global brand is defined as "the extent to which the brand is perceived as global and marketed not only locally but also in some foreign markets" (Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). Thus, the perception of globalness requires the association of an appearance in multiple countries (Xie, Batra, & Peng, 2015). In contrast, a perceived brand foreignness refers to a consumer's assumption that a brand is of foreign or non-local origin (Batra et al., 2000). Therefore, a perceived globalness points to markets where the brand is sold, whereas a perceived foreignness emphasizes the origin of a brand. This implies that a foreign (even a local) brand may also represent a global brand when consumers perceive it as prevalent worldwide. However, the difference between localness and foreignness is salient, which means that a local brand may not be perceived to be foreign at the same time due to the local origin of the brand. Based on the segmentation of a global and foreign branding approach, companies may benefit from foreign language use. On the one hand, foreign language may emphasize the global elements of a brand's image concept (Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010). A global strategy refers to **standardization** and can be pursued when using a global language such as English in different markets (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999) or multiple

languages on product packaging (Gopinath, Glassman, & Nyer, 2013). Academic literature shows that the perception of being global leads to competitive advantages for companies. For example, global brands are commonly regarded as high in quality and prestige (e.g., Holt, Quelch, & Taylor, 2004; Xie, Batra, & Peng, 2015) which may positively affect purchase likelihood, brand equity, and trust (Johansson & Ronkainen, 2005; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). On the other hand, foreign language may function as an **implicit country-of-origin (COO)** cue indicating a foreign origin (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dubé, 1994). Therefore, foreign language also has the potential to strengthen the perception of the brand as a foreign player, activating positive COO effects (Hornikx & van Meurs, 2017).

From a theoretical perspective, research on foreign language in advertising identifies two main reasons why foreign language is used (Hornikx, van Meurs, & Starren, 2007). Foreign language may attract attention through which consumers may become more interested in the advertising message (e.g., Piller, 2001). Moreover, foreign language can elicit associative processes and evoke mental images (Ray, Ryder, & Scott, 1991). Therefore, language is able to influence the image of the brand or the product due to associations that the language evokes, which then transfer to the brand or product (e.g., Piller, 2003). Thus, the above described intentions of using foreign language lead to consumers' reactions by either attracting attention or transferring associations. In the following sections, these effects are reviewed in detail and theoretically examined.

2.2   Targeting bilingual consumers with foreign language use

Effects of bilingual consumer advertising are mainly researched in terms of code-switching, a common practice among bilinguals, which can be simply explained as the mixing of two languages within a sentence (e.g., Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). Marketers can create code-switched messages through the insertion of a foreign word or expression into a sentence, for example, into an advertising slogan (Luna & Peracchio, 2005a). These messages can either be majority-language (language spoken by the group that holds the political, cultural, and economic power within a country, such as English in the US) slogans switching to the minority language (language spoken by the group that possesses less power and prestige, such as Spanish of the minority group Hispanics in the US) or minority-language slogans switching to the majority language. In addition to intrasentential code-switching, Vizcaíno (2011) mentions mixing two

languages between sentences (i.e., extrasentential code-switching) and in-text trans-lated code-mixing under the rubric of code-switching (i.e., using one language to trans-late what has just been said in another). Academic literature in the area of code-switch-ing mainly considers scenarios in which one of the two languages is perceived to be inferior due to its link to a minority group, such as Hispanics in the US (i.e., Luna & Peracchio, 2005a). However, there are also studies which analyze a bilingual context in which both languages are viewed positively (i.e., English and Hindi in India) focus-ing on language perceptions rather than on language favorability (e.g., Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). Table 2-1 offers an overview of representative publications dealing with language cues which are used to target bilingual consumers or minority groups. The key insights show that code-switched messages may lead to positive but also neg-ative effects on product evaluations from the perspective of bilingual consumers. The underlying theorizing used to explain these effects is briefly discussed in the following sections.

The most prominent theory mentioned in connection with bilingual language processing is the **markedness model** which can be allocated to the more general goal of attracting attention (e.g., Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008; Luna & Peracchio, 2005a, 2005b; Myers-Scotton, 1999). According to this theory, the code-switched language term becomes marked or salient (it stands out from its context) through which attitudes and associations related to the code-switching language are activated. The activated sets of features or associations linked to a particular language represent language sche-mas in memory, including "individuals' perceptions about the kind of people that speak a certain language, the situations and occasions when that language can be cho-sen, the topics for which the language is better suited, beliefs of how the language may be perceived by others, and the meanings that may be communicated by choosing that language" (Luna & Peracchio, 2005b, p. 45). Moreover, foreign language may activate past emotional experiences stored as episodic traces in memory (Puntoni, Langhe, & Van Osselaer, 2009). The valence of activated associations stored in memory will then influence product evaluations. If the triggered attitudes and associations are positive or match the product category, product evaluations are enhanced (e.g., Luna & Perac-chio, 2005a, 2005b; Myers-Scotton, 1999). From the perspective of a bilingual con-sumer, native-language advertisements, for example, may elicit self-referent thoughts about the family or the homeland, which, in turn, may lead to a more positive attitude (Noriega & Blair, 2008). Moreover, when bilingual consumers are confronted with

words in their native language, a higher processing fluency due to an increased accessibility of knowledge may lead to a positive effect of code-switching (Carroll & Luna, 2011).

Table 2-1. Effects of foreign language cues targeting bilingual consumers

Representative publications	Type of language cue	Key insights	Theoretical perspective: Mechanism of influence
Positive effects			
Carroll and Luna (2011)	Native language ads	When an ad is shown in Spanish (English) and the ad's content belongs to a domain most associated with the Spanish language (English language), ad evaluations of Spanish-English Hispanic bilinguals are higher than when the same ad is in English (Spanish).	*Processing fluency*: Increased accessibility of knowledge about content areas in the native language.
Puntoni, De Langhe, and Van Osselaer (2009)	Foreign language slogans	Marketing slogans expressed in consumers' native language (i.e., French/Dutch) tend to be perceived as more emotional than messages expressed in their second language.	*Episodic trace theory*: Foreign language activates past emotional experiences stored as episodic traces in memory.
Noriega and Blair (2008)	Native language ads	A native-language (i.e., Spanish) ad is more likely to elicit self-referent thoughts about family, friends, home, or homeland when the ad refers to a native-language consumption context (e.g., dinner), which, in turn, may lead to more positive attitude measures and behavioral intentions of bilinguals.	*Self-referent processing*: Activation of linguistically matched memories depending on the linguistic diagnosticity of any given association.
Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008)	Mixed language slogans	Higher number of language-related thoughts of Indian students when Hindi words are inserted in English slogans. Consumers tend to use the perceptual associations of languages that are most relevant for evaluating the product category.	*Markedness model*: Language-specific associations are triggered.
Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone (1994)	Native language ads	Positive effect of mixed-language ads on affect toward the ad of bilinguals.	*Sociolinguistic theory of accommodation*: Increased perception of advertiser sensitivity to minority culture and multiple identities of Hispanic consumers.
Negative effects			
Bishop and Peterson (2011); Luna and Peracchio (2005a, 2005b)	Mixed-language message	Lower product evaluations, service quality expectations, and patronage intentions of Hispanic consumers when English words are inserted in Spanish language slogans compared to Spanish words in English language slogans.	*Markedness model*: Activation of the minority-language schemas which contain negative associations.
Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone (1994)	Native language ads	Negative effect of ads exclusively in native language (Spanish) on affect toward the ad of Hispanic consumers in the US.	*Sociolinguistic theory of accommodation*: Activation of language-related inferiority complexes.
Gopinath and Glassman (2008); ——, ——, and Nyer (2013)	Bilingual product packaging	Negative effect of bilingual packaging (English and Spanish) on product evaluation of non-bilingual (US) consumers.	*Stereotypical judgements*: Perception of members of an out-group.

If attitudes and associations triggered by the foreign language are negative, a lower product evaluation results (Bishop & Peterson, 2011; Koslow, Shamdasani, & Touchstone, 1994; Luna & Peracchio, 2005a, 2005b). Negative effects can occur, for example, when language-related inferiority complexes or minority-language schemas, which contain negative associations, are activated. Besides the effects from the perspective of the persuasive process of bilingual consumers, two established studies in academic literature show that targeting minority groups leads to negative effects on product evaluations by the majority group when bilingual product packaging leads to a perception of an out-group (Gopinath & Glassman, 2008; Gopinath, Glassman, & Nyer, 2013). Apart from the findings of these studies, a more detailed examination of language cues pointing to another customer group is missing in academic literature.

Research on foreign language in advertising also refers to **schematic processing** in order to explain a positive effect (Domzal, Hunt, & Kernan, 1995). It is assumed that advertisements with foreign expressions are processed in a more complex manner, since the foreign language may be schema-incongruent, which induces more cognitive effort and elaborate processing in comparison to an advertisement in a known language. Thus, the elaborate schemata are more likely to be used when making brand judgements. A further reason for more complex processing in this context is explained by the **Zeigarnik effect**, which describes a psychological effect regarding the memory of tasks (Zeigarnik, 1999). It is assumed that the recall of an interrupted or unfinished task is better than the recall of a completed or finished task. Incomplete tasks create psychological tension in the human mind, thus tending to be retained in memory better than finished ones. The earlier finding of Heimbach and Jacoby (1972) corresponds to this notion in an advertising context. The authors consider the scenario of hearing the beginning of a message, which leads to the development of a need to hear the rest of it. When consumers are able to complete the message on their own, this positively reinforces the message. Moreover, when consumers try to complete the message, they are actively participating in the message, which further improves learning and memory. A similar positive effect of foreign language on memory can be described by the **script interruption theory** which posits that foreign language elements force a mental interruption in processing (Ray, Ryder, & Scott, 1991). According to this theory, script refers to a schema from memory which is activated. When, for example, an advertisement slogan leads to an interruption of the already activated script, the meaning transferred by the slogan will be remembered better (Harris et al., 1986).

2.3   Positioning a brand as global through foreign language use

In order to benefit from a global image, brands can use words in a global language, either written or spoken, in its communications in order to create perceptions of globalness (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). Many descriptive studies have shown that foreign language is widely used by marketers in their marketing communications as a symbol of globalization (e.g., Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999; Vizcaíno, 2011). In order to create a global image, English is most often adopted, such as in advertisements in French-speaking Switzerland (Cheshire & Moser, 1994), advertisements in magazines in East Asia (Chang, 2008), Japanese television commercials (Haarmann, 1989), Dutch advertising (Gerritsen et al., 2000), or German print ads in newspapers and television commercials (Piller, 2001). Table 2-2 gives an overview of qualitative studies descriptively showing that a foreign language (especially English) is frequently used in marketing communications with the intention to emphasize a global appeal.

Table 2-2. Results of studies analyzing global language cues

Representative publications	Type of language cue	Key insights	Theoretical perspective: Mechanism of influence
De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2015)	Foreign brand names (i.e., English)	An English brand name, which is unknown to consumers, determines perceived brand globalness for high-involvement products.	*Elaboration-likelihood-model*: Brand names unknown to consumers are not linked to existing knowledge structures and are more relevant for central processing of information.
Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer (2013)	Foreign language on product packaging	Positive effect on product evaluations when three languages (i.e., English, Spanish, and French) are depicted on product packaging in comparison to a bilingual packaging (i.e., English and Spanish) in the US.	-
Vizcaíno (2011)	Code-switched ads	Foreign language elements (i.e., English, French and Italian) are inserted within Spanish idioms and proverbs to symbolize globalization in advertising campaigns of a Spanish airline company.	*Symbolic function*.
Chang (2008)	Foreign brand names (i.e., English)	English is often used in advertisements in magazines in East Asia. No effect of an English brand name on the perceived globalness and quality perceptions in an Asian market.	*Cue-utilization theory*: Consumers are influenced by the extrinsic cue "language of the brand" via activation of associations of being global.

Table 2-3. Results of studies analyzing global language cues (continued)

Representative publications	Type of language cue	Key insights	Theoretical perspective: Mechanism of influence
Lee (2006)	Foreign language in television commercials	English is often used in TV commercials in South Korea as an index of modernity which is related to globalization.	-
Martin (2002)	Foreign language used in television commercials	English is often used in television commercials in France to symbolize globalization (IBM and Microsoft commercials), competitiveness and/or superior technology (Renault), a certain lifestyle or "vision of the world" (Colorado Ice Tea), or as an attention-getter (Céline Dion). English is a preferred language among other foreign languages in French advertising when one wants to globalize the product's brand image.	-
Piller (2001)	Foreign language in ads	English is most frequently used in Germany as a foreign language in print ads in newspapers and television commercials.	*Symbolic function* and *Social identity theory.*
Gerritsen et al. (2000)	Foreign brand names (i.e., English)	English is often used in Dutch advertising to give the advertised brand an international image.	-
Cheshire and Moser (1994)	Foreign language used in ads	English is often used in advertisements in French-speaking Switzerland.	*Symbolic function* and *social identity theory.*
Haarmann (1989)	Foreign language used in television commercials	When English is used in Japanese television commercials in a visual setting that is clearly British or American, stereotypes of that country are evoked; in general, however, English triggers more general associations, such as modernity and social advance.	*Symbolic function* and *social identity theory.*

Even though this frequent usage of English may suggest that the use is beneficial for marketers, literature empirically analyzing the effects of English and supporting this assumption is scarce. Contrary to that assumption, Chang (2008) did not find a positive effect of an English brand name on the perceived globalness of a brand or quality perceptions for an Asian market. This is similar to the finding of De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2015). Based on a conjoint analysis, they compared different advertising cues (e.g., advertising copy, brand logo, or spokesperson) and identified which of them more often caused consumers to perceive a brand as global. Even though advertising copy was most important, they found that a global positioning of a brand through English brand names may determine the perceived globalness of a brand, especially for high-involvement products. As the authors used brand names which were unknown to the respondents, the respondents had no access to existing knowledge structures of the brand when evaluating it. Thus, consumers tend to elaborate the given information more on a central route, which explains the stronger effect

for high-involvement products as assumed. Besides using one specific foreign language as an indicator of being global, the literature also suggests that the usage of more than one foreign language may lead to an international brand appeal. Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer (2013) demonstrated a positive effect of three languages on product packaging (i.e., English, Spanish, and French) in comparison to a bilingual packaging (i.e., English and Spanish) in the US, which they explained by the assumption that the third language activates associations that the product is targeting an international market instead of a minority culture. However, the evidence that a perceived globalness drives this effect has not been shown. Furthermore, there have been few empirical studies comparing the effects of using English with local languages in advertising (i.e., slogans or language used in ads) which mainly show no differences in their mode of action regarding preference and attitude toward a language (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010) or even negative effects of English in comparison to the local language with respect to the reflection of product benefits and connotations (Francis, Lam, & Walls, 2002).Academic literature refers to the **semiotics theory** when advertising elements, such as foreign language, are used to associate the brand with a global image. This theory represents the doctrine of signs and their meanings (Mick, 1986). According to this theory, aesthetic signs (e.g., color or shape of product packaging), advertising theme, such as a high-tech theme used by many electronics manufacturers, or verbal sounds (e.g., appropriate language in segmenting markets) can create brand associations and communicate meanings (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). Regarding the latter, the sound of brand names is especially relevant for the context of this paper as it refers to foreign language use in marketing communications. In particular, the symbolic function of foreign language is emphasized in the academic literature in the case of English (Cheshire & Moser, 1994; Haarmann, 1989).

English occupies a special role in foreign language research, since it is not only linked to countries in which English is spoken by the majority of the population as their native language (such as the US or the UK), but it is also associated with concepts like modernity and social advance (Haarmann, 1989; Lee, 2006). Additionally, English is involved in the identity construction of consumers, as it induces a feeling of being a member of a cosmopolitan society or the business elite (Haarmann, 1989; Piller, 2001). Moreover, it is assumed that consumers may make use of English due to its' potential to representatively claim a social identity that is not available in the native language (Cheshire & Moser, 1994). However, with its status as a world language, one

of the main functions of the English language lies in its general symbol of globalization or international appreciation (e.g., Haarmann, 1989; Hornikx & Starren, 2006; Hornikx et al., 2007; Kelly-Holmes, 2000; Piller, 2003). Therefore, the symbolic function of a global language may play the most important role.

Moreover, rather general theorizing, such as the **categorization theory** (Gopinath, Glassman, & Nyer, 2013) or the **cue-utilization theory** (Chang, 2008), is used to explain that associations of a global brand or product persuade consumers when confronted with foreign language in advertising. According to cue-utilization theory, consumers use extrinsic cues, such as the brand name, as surrogate indicators of product quality in order to simplify product evaluations (Cox, 1967). Considering categorization as part of the information processing by consumers in order to differentiate objects (e.g., Medin, 1983), brands using a global language in their advertising may be categorized to be of high quality when consumers have stored in their associative network of memory that global brands usually offer high quality. In accordance with the spreading activation theory of Anderson (1983), when consumers are confronted with the cue of a global language, this automatically triggers associations which are stored in connection with the concept of a global brand.

2.4   Effects of foreign language as an implicit COO cue

The use of a specific COO language for a brand name itself and for slogans or entire advertisements is defined as an unregulated COO strategy (Aichner, 2014). When companies use foreign-sounding brand names in order to benefit from positive stereotypes customers have about the specific foreign country, they follow a foreign branding strategy (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dubé, 1994). This strategy can be pursued even though neither the company nor the product originate from the advertised country (Aichner, Forza, & Trentin, 2017). Thus, not only foreign brands have the ability to benefit from foreign image associations. Local brands can also gain a foreign appeal by using foreign-sounding brand names or using foreign language on product labels, which is especially the case in developing markets (Zhou, Yang, & Hui, 2010).

There are many studies analyzing foreign-sounding brand names or foreign language slogans as an implicit COO cue suggesting a foreign origin of the brand without considering the actual COO (e.g., Aichner, Forza, & Trentin, 2017; Hornikx & van Meurs, 2017; Melnyk, Klein,& Völckner, 2012; Yun, Lee, & Sego, 2002). Table 2-3 provides an overview of these studies, demonstrating the positive effects when the

COO which the foreign language refers to fits the product category. In general, these language cues do not refer to English as a foreign language, as the English language is not linked to one specific country. Therefore, an implicit reference to a COO is difficult. However, Chang's study (2008) demonstrates that English is also able to influence the perception of the origin of a brand.

Table 2-4. Effects of foreign language cues implicitly suggesting a foreign COO

Representative publications	Type of language cue	Key insights	Theoretical perspective: Mechanism of influence
Hornikx and van Meurs (2017); Yun, Lee, and Sego (2002)	Foreign language slogans	Attitudes and intentions are generated similar to those evoked and generated by the corresponding COO.	Consumers link the foreign language to a COO when it is relevant to the advertised product, and, as a consequence, the language evokes associations.
Aichner, Forza, and Trentin (2017)	Foreign brand names	Increased customer willingness to buy and pay if the actual COO (which differs from the implied COO) is unknown.	Cultural stereotypes that are associated with a certain country or culture are triggered.
Salciuviene et al. (2010)	Foreign brand names	Hedonic services are seen as more hedonic when the COO has a hedonic image.	-
Chang (2008)	Foreign brand names	English brand names encouraged participants in East Asia to infer that the product originated from a developed Western country.	*Cue-utilization theory*: Consumers are influenced by the extrinsic cue "language of the brand" via activation of associations of a foreign origin.
Verlegh, Steenkamp, and Meulenberg (2005)	Foreign brand names	Positive impact on purchase intentions and product attitudes when using favorable product-country images.	Associations related to quality and other attributes of products from a specific COO are activated.
Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé (1994)	Foreign pronunciation of brand names	French brand names produce a more hedonic perception and enhance consumers' attitudes toward the brand and the brand name of hedonic products.	Based on a perceptual fit, national and cultural stereotypes (i.e., a network of associations) are triggered.

Furthermore, there are few studies comparing the effect of implicit and explicit COO cues. It is shown that both function similarly in a single cue context regarding the hedonic perception of a product (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dubé, 1994). Moreover, Hornikx and van Meurs (2017) recently demonstrated that the persuasive effects of foreign language and COO are similar regarding quality perceptions, attitudes toward the product, and purchase intentions. However, a difference in consumer reactions between the perceived origin through foreign brand names and classic COO cues such as the "made-in" label is also emphasized in the literature (Thakor & Lavack, 2003). Han and Terpstra (1988) demonstrate that COO cues and foreign brand names differ in their effect on perceptions of quality. On the one hand, COO cues were more persuasive in

comparison to foreign brand names when comparing a US brand (e.g., Ford) with either a Japanese (e.g., Honda) or German (e.g., Volkswagen) brand; on the other hand, the effect was reversed when comparing the same US brand with a Korean brand (e.g., Hyundai).

The effects of implicit COO cues on product evaluations can be explained by the potential of foreign language to elicit associative processes and evoke mental images (Ray, Ryder, & Scott, 1991). Marketers can take advantage of the prestige of a particular foreign language in terms of linguistic borrowing since people associate a foreign language with the national characteristics and traditional products of the country it represents (Domzal, Hunt, & Kernan, 1995). Haarmann (1989, p. 104) speaks of "the right 'stereotype injection'" in multilingual advertising which may transfer to the product. According to Piller (2003), foreign language can be used as a marketing cue that can influence the image or perception of a product or brand by means of creating symbolic meaning. Similarly, Kelly-Holmes (2000, 2005) proposes a **linguistic fetish approach** and argues that a foreign language carries cultural associations and stereotypes which can transfer to the product or brand. Hornikx and Starren (2006, p. 128) and Hornikx et al. (2007, p. 207) take up this approach and integrate it in their "**model of symbolic associations of foreign languages in advertising.**" These authors postulate that, when associations are relevant for the product category or the positive value of it, the product evaluation benefits from the associations the language evokes (Hornikx, van Meurs, & Hof, 2013).

Since a match between the product category and the country to which the language refers has been indicated as a factor in the positive effect of implicit COO cues, several theories dealing with **cognitive consistency, congruity, or categorization** are cited in the literature when explaining the effects of implicit COO cues on product evaluations (e.g., Chao, Wührer, & Werani, 2005; Häubl & Elrod, 1999; Salciuviene et al., 2010). In general, it is assumed that consumers prefer congruity between two elements because this generates less psychological discomfort (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). In contrast, product evaluations are lower for incongruent conditions. Applying categorization theory, D'Antone and Merinka (2015) emphasize a match between the used language and the product category and postulate a congruity mechanism. The higher the congruence between a brand and its origin category, the more consumers categorize the origin of a new brand with the inferred country of the language. Drawing on a combination of **Peircean triadic semiotic theory** (Grayson &

Martinec, 2004) and **consumer learning analogy theory** (Gregan-Paxton & John, 1997), the authors assign foreign language a symbolic role in terms of a code. They assume that, regarding the evaluation of a brand, foreign language causes an iconic attribution process. This means that a foreign-sounding brand name triggers a comparative view analyzing to what extent "the brand is similar to pre-existing knowledge of the country (country-related meaning) or to other exemplar brands of the same origin (brand-related origin)" (D'Antone & Merinka, 2015, p. 719). This leads to a descriptive role of language pointing to the attributes of a product, such as price or visual attributes, whereas "made in" information can be seen as an index with designative and identifying elements resulting in goal-oriented inferences about function due to its perceived origin. Besides a descriptive role of foreign language, the academic literature attributes implicit COO cues to a dual impact on product evaluations (Verlegh, Steenkamp, & Meulenberg, 2005). Apart from acting as an informational cue, an implied COO may also work as a source variable which indicates a high or low COO credibility.

Beyond studies analyzing the effect of implicit COO cues through foreign language regardless of the actual COO, there is much research analyzing incongruence or congruence between the actual COO and the implied COO through a foreign brand name. Table 2-4 provides an overview of these studies.

Results regarding the effects of incongruence or congruence between the actual COO and the implied COO on product evaluations are mixed. Even though there are studies demonstrating that congruity has no effect on attitudes or product perceptions (Hui & Zhou, 2003; Thakor & Pacheco, 1997), there is evidence that congruity between the country associations triggered by the actual and the implied COO leads to positive effects on variables, such as purchase intention, quality perception, or attitude toward the brand (Chao, Wührer, & Werani, 2005; Häubl & Elrod, 1999). In contrast, incongruence between the actual COO and the implied COO mainly leads to negative effects for hedonic products (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dubé, 1994; Melnyk, Klein & Völckner, 2012). In opposition to predominantly negative effects, Salciuviene et al. (2010) found positive effects for utilitarian services due to a boost of excitement.

In explaining a positive effect of congruity and a negative effect of incongruence, all studies have in common that they use **congruity theory** (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955) as the underlying theory. It is assumed that the perception of congruent

pieces of information about a particular brand may enhance coherence of the brand's image, resulting in a more positive product evaluation.

Table 2-5. Studies analyzing in-/congruence between the actual and the implied COO

Representative publications	Type of language cue	Key insights	Theoretical perspective: Mechanism of influence
Congruence			
Chao, Wührer, and Werani (2005)	Foreign brand names	Marginally positive effect on purchase intention.	*Congruity theory*: Consumers prefer factors to be congruent.
Hui and Zhou (2003)	Foreign brand names	No effect on product beliefs and global product attitude.	-
Thakor and Pacheco (1997)	Foreign brand names	No effect on product perceptions.	*Congruity theory*: Congruity among different pieces of information about a particular brand may increase the cohesiveness of the brand's image; congruent cues enhance confidence and credibility.
Häubl and Elrod (1999)	Foreign brand names	Positive effect on quality perceptions moderated by the strength of brand-country association.	*Congruity theory/ cognitive consistency theory/ categorization and schema theory*: Congruity among different pieces of information about a particular brand may increase the cohesiveness of the brand's image; lower processing effort.
Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé (1994)	Foreign pronunciation of brand names	No improvement of hedonic perceptions compared to foreign brand names as a single cue.	*Congruity theory*: Congruent associations enhance coherence of brand images and thus lead to more positive product evaluations.
Incongruence			
Melnyk, Klein, and Völckner (2012)	Foreign brand names	Negative effect on purchase likelihood for hedonic products.	-
Salciuviene et al. (2010)	Foreign brand names	Positive effect for utilitarian services.	*Categorization theory*: Consumers recall expectancy-incongruent information better and the novelty of incongruence boosts excitement; incongruity evokes interesting associations.
Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé (1994)	Foreign pronunciation of brand names	Negative effect on hedonic perceptions of the product.	*Congruity theory*: Incongruent brand associations result in less cohesive and more diffuse brand images.

2.5   Discussion and conclusion

This paper provides a state-of-the-art review of foreign language cues in marketing communications and shows that foreign language may play different roles leading to beneficial effects. As a targeting tool, foreign language may persuade bilingual consumers or minority groups in a diversified market place. Furthermore, intentionally used as part of the marketing strategy (e.g., foreign brand names or slogans) foreign language can be seen as an instrument for upgrading/enriching brand images, making a brand appear more global. Finally, acting as an implicit COO cue, foreign language

may trigger positive COO effects. Based on the reviewed literature, the following research gaps can be identified, pointing out potential future research directions.

Academic research on foreign language cues have thus far considered language cues in the form of foreign brand names or language elements as part of the brand image concept (e.g., slogans, foreign language used in television commercials). Moreover, mixed-language messages in terms of code-switching have been considered in respect of targeting bilingual consumers. One possible further object of investigation would be to analyze the effects of foreign language referring to product information on product packaging in the form of a translation of product information in one or more than one foreign language in addition to the native language. Examples for such language cues can be found in practice. Consumers are often confronted with translated product information on product packaging in different languages, as in the case of the packaging used for food or electronic products. Moreover, multilingual labels often appear on clothes and electronic products, typically providing care information or operating instructions in several languages. Even though we find such foreign language cues in practice, this has rarely been addressed in research. There are only two established studies which have already investigated the effects of multilingual communication and product packaging, focusing on the particular cases of ethnic minorities or bilingual consumers. Gopinath and Glassman (2008) and Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer (2013) have shown that bilingual packaging with English and Spanish caused negative effects on product evaluation by non-bilingual (US) consumers. Since there has not yet been sufficient research in connection with a translation of product information in a foreign language, future research should investigate this aspect and, in particular, consider a foreign language which the target group does not speak. When a foreign language is obviously not used to target a specific consumer group which speaks that language, it can be assumed that this leads to completely different effects as the consumers infer something different from the depicted language. One possible and obvious inference could be that consumers think that the product is also sold in the country the language refers to, which makes the language cue a target market reference.

Moreover, analyzing the effects of more than one foreign language on product packaging offers an interesting new area for research. So far, our literature review found only one established study that investigates the effect of two additional foreign languages on product packaging (Gopinath, Glassman, & Nyer, 2013). In this study it

has been shown that depicting Spanish and French in addition to English has the potential to counteract a negative effect on evaluations of US consumers induced by using only one foreign language (i.e., Spanish). However, the driver for this result remains unclear. Therefore, future research could analyze whether displaying more than one foreign language on product packaging may lead to beneficial effects for practitioners and identify drivers (e.g., a raise in the perceived globalness of the brand) and boundary conditions (e.g., product category) for potential positive effects.

In reference to foreign language cues implying a foreign origin, previous research compared the effects of explicit and implicit COO cues. For example, based on the theoretical considerations of D'Antone and Merinka (2015), it can be assumed that explicit COO information is more persuasive in regard to quality perceptions than implicit cues through a foreign brand name, due to its designative role. However, findings in the academic literature show a different picture indicating a higher persuasive impact of implicit COO cues in comparison to explicit COO cues. For one thing, implicit COO cues lead to a more positive attitude toward the advertisement, which is assumed to be the result of associating a higher aesthetic value with the language (Hornikx & van Meurs, 2017). Furthermore, foreign brand names are more effective for hedonic products and overcome the effect of a "made in" label in strength regarding hedonic qualities (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dubé, 1994). The reason for that lies, as assumed, in different associations triggered by the COO or language cue, which are transferred to the product. Aside from these individual results, it remains unclear under which conditions implicit COO cues outperform explicit cues. Therefore, future studies could address this issue and fully investigate the differences regarding the effect of explicit and implicit COO cues.

Previous research in the area of targeted marketing explained the positive effect of code-switching on bilingual consumers by an enhanced elaboration of the foreign language element. This may occur either because the foreign language is perceived to be schema-incongruent or because the foreign language leads to an interruption in processing, according to the Zeigarnik effect (Zeigarnik, 1999) or the script interruption theory (Ray, Ryder, & Scott, 1991). From a theoretical point of view, future research could answer the question of whether foreign language cues also have positive effects based on these theoretical approaches considering other contexts than targeting bilingual consumers or minority groups. Inferring another country of sale through foreign language would be of special interest as a study topic.

Although it is widely accepted in academic literature that consumers use the globalness of a brand as an indicator for quality (e.g., Özsomer, 2012; Özsomer & Altaras, 2008; Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos, 2013), this result has rarely been empirically proved. De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2015) showed that, among other cues, an English brand name may determine the perceived globalness of a brand of high-involvement products. However, there are also opposite results. Chang (2008) showed that an English brand name in East Asia did not enhance the perceived globalness or quality of a brand. This may be explained by the notion that foreign brand names as part of a foreign branding strategy may direct the attention to the origin of the brand instead of the global reach. Therefore, there is reason to believe that foreign brand names are not always suitable to enhance a perceived globalness. Furthermore, the findings of Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer (2013) indicate that the perception of a global brand through the display of multiple languages on product packaging compensates for a negative effect on evaluations by US consumers induced by using a second language to target the Hispanic minority group. However, a positive effect in comparison to a baseline condition is lacking, as well as the evidence of an enhanced perception of globalness. To sum up, even though the academic literature demonstrates a frequent use of foreign language cues by practitioners in order to emphasize the globalness of a brand, empirical evidence that foreign language cues actually enhance the perceived globalness of a brand and, in turn, improve product evaluations has not been fully provided. The translation of product information into a foreign language on product packaging could be of specific relevance in this context. It is assumed that this cue triggers the inference that the product is also distributed to the country the language refers to. Therefore, it might be more suitable to induce associations of globalness in comparison to foreign brand names, as this points to where the product is sold instead of where the brand originates. Thus, future studies should not only investigate whether and under which conditions the perceived globalness of a brand may be raised for the thus far considered language cues, but also take foreign language cues representing a target market reference under consideration. Also, possible differences between foreign language cues should be highlighted.

Findings in the area of foreign language as a global positioning tool are mainly based on qualitative data and descriptive analyses showing that foreign language is widely used. Chang (2008), for example, used a content analysis of advertisements in magazines in order to determine how often English brand names are used in East Asia

and what kind of brands use English brand names (local, regional, or international). Piller (2001) conducted an analysis of which foreign languages are used in Germany in newspaper print ads and television commercials, and Lee (2006) classified 720 advertising spots in Korea according to which language code was used (Korean only or English mixed). Moreover, the descriptive results displayed in Table 3 illustrate that English is frequently used in international advertising. However, studies empirically testing whether foreign language usage may enhance the perceived globalness of a brand or quality perceptions are scarce, and the results are not consistent (Chang, 2008; De Meulenaer, Dens, & De Pelsmacker, 2015). Therefore, empirical studies are needed which more thoroughly investigate this relationship in an experimental approach. In this connection, under which conditions foreign language may enhance the perceived globalness should be examined. Moreover, the research area of foreign language as a global positioning tool mainly considers English as the foreign language. Future research should also consider other foreign languages in this context in order to investigate whether the perceived globalness may also be induced by foreign languages different from English.

From a theoretical point of view, the role of English in marketing communications seems to be quite clear, as scholars widely emphasize its symbolic function being a symbol of globalization or international appreciation (e.g., Haarmann, 1989; Hornikx & Starren, 2006; Hornikx, et al., 2007; Kelly-Holmes, 2000; Piller, 2003). If a brand desires to be perceived as a global player, the use of the English language is said to be beneficial (e.g., Piller, 2001). The widespread use of English by global brands in practice corresponds to this and seems to support the assumption. Therefore, a need for further investigation is not quite obvious at first glance. However, realizing that there are few studies which empirically investigate the effects of English in marketing communications suggests that the role of English in marketing communications should be investigated more thoroughly.

In summation, besides identifying new research topics in existing research areas, this paper advances the research of foreign language cues from a theoretical point of view by highlighting that there is a need for research on the possible impact of language cues in the form of a translation of product information on product packaging, which may trigger the assumption that the product is also sold in the country where the foreign language is spoken.

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3 First study: "Effects of multilingual product packaging on product attitude, perceived quality, and taste perceptions"[1]

Abstract

We examine how an additional foreign language printed on product packaging impacts product attitudes, quality perception and taste perceptions. In our experimental study in which we used beverages as test products we found that adding a foreign language with a low fit to the product category impairs the evaluation of the product. Our results show that even taste perceptions are negatively affected. These results provide new insights on the effects of cues that point to a foreign culture or country and are highly relevant for marketers since today multilingual packaging is ubiquitous.

Keywords: Foreign language

Product packaging

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3.1   Introduction

Today's consumers are confronted with a growing number of products with multilingual packaging. Let us exemplarily look at the German market: Besides product information in German, consumers will find additional foreign languages such as English, French, Spanish, Dutch or Greek on the products they use in their daily lives. A request to the customer service department for the brand Nivea revealed that multilingual product packaging is used because some products such as bath care and soap products are produced in one country and distributed in several other countries. The customer service employee stated that increasingly integrated European and international markets caused the introduction of more international product descriptions on packaging.

From the marketer's perspective, multilingual packaging is an effective cost-cutting tool: one standardized product – also with respect to its packaging – is distributed in a multinational market instead of offering different monolingual versions for every single country or language area. While the cost saving effect of multilingual packaging is obvious, it is rather unclear how foreign languages on product packaging affect consumers' perceptions and product evaluations. Until now, these effects have not been extensively researched. In this paper, we investigate the effect of adding product information in a foreign language on a product's packaging in addition to information in the native language of the country the product is sold in. An additional language can be seen as a cue or hint that points to another country or culture. We argue that its effect may be different depending on the relation or fit of the language to the product category.

This study contributes to the literature by examining a cue pointing to a country or culture, which is less explicit than the well-researched phenomenon of country-of-origin-information. It has hardly been examined how these language cues are processed by consumers and affect product evaluation and purchase decisions. Thus, the phenomenon is interesting from a theoretical perspective. In addition, this topic is highly relevant for practitioners since multilingual packaging is omnipresent in the marketplace. While marketers aim at saving costs, foreign language cues may cause harmful effects that backfire by decreasing the sales of a product. Our findings indicate that this will indeed be the case when the language elicits associations that do not fit to the product category.

In the following sections, we will firstly present theoretical considerations and, secondly, provide an overview of related prior research. Subsequently we will describe our experimental study and discuss the results. It should be mentioned that we do not investigate the special case of foreign language use that is obviously targeting ethnic minorities living in a country. In such cases, different effects might occur.

3.2 Theoretical background

Literature assumes that national and cultural stereotypes can influence the perceptions of objects (Maheswaran 1994). When an individual learns about a foreign country or culture (e.g., through spending holiday abroad, meeting inhabitants from a country, or from other sources of information), s/he is likely to form abstractions of this information into a specific country image (Han 1989) which includes stereotypes (Tucker 1961). According to Fiske and Taylor (1991), stereotypes represent individuals' cognitive associations and expectations about any societal group. Thus, this can also be expected to apply for national or ethnic groups. To show an example, it is often referred to France, which is associated with attributes such as high elegance, sophisticated style, fascination and charm (Haarmann 1989). Similar to brand associations that are transferred to the products that are offered under a common brand name (Aaker and Keller 1990; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994), these country or culture associations can be transferred to a product by using appropriate cues. Such a cue can be a country-of-origin-information, as extensive research has shown (e.g., Bannister and Saunders 1978; Roth and Romeo 1992), but also texts or words in the language of the respective country or culture (Kelly-Holmes 2000; Leclerc et al. 1994). According to Hornikx and Starren (2006) and Hornikx et al. (2007), cultural associations and stereotypes carried by a foreign language can be transferred to products when the language and the product is presented simultaneously. In their "model of symbolic associations of foreign languages in advertising", these authors postulate the following effect: In cases when associations are relevant for the product category or of positive value for it, the product evaluation benefits from the associations the language evokes. In other words, when there is a perceived fit or congruence between the country associations and the product category, a positive effect with respect to product evaluation occurs. This phenomenon has also been termed product-country-match in the country-of-origin-literature (Roth and Romeo 1992). We argue that besides using language cues in advertising

and county-of-origin-information, foreign languages that are printed on product packaging will also elicit the described effect.

Moreover, cognitive consistency theories provide additional support for the notion that a high fit or "consistency" between country and product category associations is favorable (Festinger 1957). Since consumers also tend to make inferences about product quality from a country's image (Han 1989), we do not only propose that a perception of fit positively affects the attitude toward the product, but also quality perceptions. We test:

H_1: When the language on a product packaging refers to a country or culture that fits to the product category, a more favorable attitude towards the product results compared to cases in which the country does not fit to the product category

H_2: When the language on a product packaging refers to a country or culture that fits to the product category, higher quality perceptions result compared to cases in which the country does not fit to the product category

Moreover, research has shown that in the case of food and beverage products, information that is given about the product can also affect the sensory perception, especially the taste of the product (Elder and Krishna 2010; Pechmann and Ratneshwar 1992; Wansink and Park 2002).

Similar to the rationale of well-known dual process models (e.g. the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Petty and Cacioppo (1986)) sensory experiences can be formed either heuristically or more deliberately. Depending on the degree of ambiguity of a taste experience and susceptibility to external influences in forming overall taste perceptions, sensory evaluation is created by top-down or bottom-up processing. According to Elder and Krishna (2010), both processes may occur simultaneously and interact with one another. While bottom-up processing implies that intrinsic cues are processed more automatically with a heuristic character, top-down describes the processing of external information provided about the food in a cognitive manner (Smith and Kosslyn 2007). It is assumed that the impact of extrinsic cues on taste experiences increases with rising ambiguity regarding taste judgments due to a lack of experience with the product (Hoch and Ha 1986). In the top-down context, beliefs, desires, or

expectations are reflected (Lee, Frederick and Ariely 2006). Before trying food or beverage products intrinsic cues are not yet reachable and expectations about the taste or flavor of the product are formed with the help of available extrinsic cues by using knowledge and memories associated with them (Okamoto and Dan 2013). Cognitive aspects are therefore able to moderate the effect of intrinsic cues and shape flavor experiences. To show an example, an experiment conducted by Carling Brewing Company revealed, that the disclosure of a favorite beer brand through labeled bottles led to higher taste ratings in comparison to the evaluation of the same beer, in which the identifying labels were removed in form of a blind test (Allison and Uhl 1964). Moreover, Hoegg and Alba (2007) demonstrated that among other extrinsic cues the reputed region of origin had an impact on perceived taste differences of orange juices even though the same juice was compared.

Therefore, we assume that the positive effect resulting from a high fit between language associations and product category also transfers to consumers' taste perceptions and postulate:

H_3: When the language on a product packaging refers to a country or culture that fits to the product category, better taste perceptions result compared to cases in which the country does not fit to the product category

3.3   Prior research

Several streams of research seem to be relevant for our topic. Firstly, we review studies that provide insights into the effects of multilingual product packaging in general without addressing the effect of fit between language and product category.

3.3.1 Research on multilingual product packaging

To the best of our knowledge, there are two papers on multilingual product packaging. However, they investigate cases were the reason for the additional foreign language is to target an ethnic minority (i.e. Spanish in addition to English to target Hispanics living in the U.S.; Gopinath and Glassman 2008; Gopinath et al. 2013). The authors of these studies showed that adding Spanish in addition to English information on packaging impairs the product evaluation of Non-Hispanic U.S. consumers. (The aim of targeting the minority group was clear to the respondents participating in these

studies.) Another finding was that the negative effect of the Spanish language disappears when the respondents are low in ethnocentrism. The procedure of these studies was as follows: In the first experiment of Gopinath and Glassman (2008), respondents were exposed to different versions of photographs of a refrigerator packaging containing either English only or English and Spanish information (results on product evaluation: M_{Engl}=4.53 vs. $M_{Engl/Span}$=4.12 on a 7-point scale; p<.01). In the second study, Gopinath et al. (2013) supplemented the described design by an additional English/Spanish/French-condition and manipulated photos of microwave packaging as test stimuli. They could replicate the findings described above and additionally showed that the detrimental effect of printing information in Spanish in addition to English is reversed by adding French (means of product evaluation: M_{Engl}=4.23; $M_{Engl/Span}$=3.75; $M_{Engl/Span/Fren}$ =4.29). Since we investigate the use of languages that do not explicitly target ethnic minorities but rather refer to additional markets consisting of other countries, it is questionable if these findings are transferrable to our research question. However, it is interesting that adding French reverses the negative effect found in the English and Spanish-condition. It can be summed up that adding a foreign language on the packaging did not improve product evaluations in any case but adding Spanish in addition to English had a negative effect.

3.3.2 Country-of-origin (COO) research

Since we argue that an additional language on a product packaging represents a cue pointing to a foreign country or culture, the COO literature seems to be relevant for our research as well. However, the aim of a COO information is more evident: It informs the consumer where the product comes from and is therefore often interpreted as a quality signal (Sullivan and Burger 1987; Veale and Quester 2009) what in turn, may not be the case for a foreign language. However, since a COO label is not only expected to trigger inferences about quality but also about national culture, geography and citizens' lifestyles (Kelman 1965), we assume that the findings from the COO literature are at least partially useful with respect to our postulated country/product category fit effects. One major finding of the COO research stream is that positive effects occur if the country of origin fits to the product category, what is found to be the case for German cars or French shoes, to name just two of countless possible examples (e.g., Bluemelhuber et al. 2007; Roth and Romeo 1992).

3.3.3 Research on foreign branding

Another experiment that seems to be relevant addressed the use of foreign branding cues. Leclerc et al. (1994) investigated how French and English brand names affect consumer's evaluation of brands and products. Since a brand name is also a cue consisting of language, the findings may be interesting for our research questions. The authors used brand names that can be pronounced in either French or English (e.g., Verner, Massin, Randal). They found that when the name was pronounced in French rather than English, attitudes toward the brand were significantly more positive for hedonic products (fragrance and nail polish). For utilitarian (foil wrap and gasoline) and so called "hybrid" products (hair shampoo and deodorant), brand attitudes did not differ. A similar second experiment in which the authors compared effects of foreign brand names with those of COO-cues replicated the effects just described and did not find analogous effects of the COO-cues ("made in France" vs. "made in the U.S."). The authors explain this finding with a transfer of positive associations that fit to the product categories. They argue that the stereotype of France and the French culture elicit associations such as aesthetic sensitivity and sensory pleasure that fit to hedonic products. Therefore, these products can benefit from connecting them with the French country stereotype. It is interesting with respect to our study that these authors build this connection by using language cues in form of brand names.

Note that we refrain from reviewing literature on bilingual advertisements on the reaction of ethnic minorities (e.g., Koslow et al.1994) and on ad processing of bilingual consumers (e.g., Luna and Peracchio 2001) since this research focuses on reactions of special target audiences.

3.4   Experimental study

In our experimental study, we examine the effect of foreign languages printed on product packaging. We used orange juice and tea as test products. English and Spanish were the foreign languages that appeared on the product packaging in addition to the language of the country the experiment was conducted in (German). English represents the language with a high fit to the product category tea and Spanish represents the high-fit language for orange juice. These fit combinations were derived on the basis of pretest results. The respondents in our main study were confronted with the packaging of our test products and tasted the products (i.e. they were served a glass of either orange juice or tea). Subsequently, they evaluated the product. We used a 3

(foreign language: English, Spanish, absent) $\times$ 2 (product category: orange juice, tea) between-subjects factorial design to test our hypotheses.

3.4.1 Pretest to identify language/product category-combinations

To identify language/product category-combinations with a high and low fit, we used a sample of 35 students ($M_{age} = 23.8$ years; 51.4% females) of a German university. For several product categories, we assessed which countries these categories are perceived to be typical for by using a 7-point scale. The scale ranged from "not at all typical" to "very typical". Based on the respondents' ratings, we selected orange juice and tea as test products because in the case of orange juice, perceived typicality for Spain was high and typicality for England was rather low (5.60 vs. 3.66; paired t-test: $t_{(1,34)}=8.923$; $p<.001$). Contrarily, tea was perceived to be highly typical for England and less typical for Spain (6.46 vs. 2.80; paired t-test: $t_{(1,34)}=-4.583$; $p<.001$). Moreover, the pretest aimed at ensuring that the associations evoked by the chosen languages do not differ with respect to their valence in the population of our respondents. Thus, we asked for associations evoked by the languages by using an open-ended question. The results showed that the associations elicited by the languages English and Spanish were predominantly positive. English, for example, evoked associations such as "modern" and "reputable". Examples for associations with Spanish are "exotic" and "melodious". Only very few associations that can be classified to be negative were evoked by both languages English (e.g., "bog-standard") and Spanish (e.g., "problem of understanding").

3.4.2 Creation of test stimuli

In order to create the product packaging for our test products, we used real products and manipulated their packaging. For the orange juice, we designed several versions of a bottle label and stuck it on a plastic bottle of which the original label was removed. To design the label, we used existing labels of the brand "Rauch" and created altered versions in German only, German and English, and German and Spanish. In the bilingual versions, the same product information was given in German and in one of the additional foreign languages. The labels contained basic product information such as "orange juice, with 100% fruit content, no added sugar". Similarly, for the product category tea, carton boxes containing tea bags were created. We altered the

packaging of the German brand "Teekanne" and the box labels contained the information "flavored black tea, fresh – spicy, 20 tea bags in envelopes". Pictures of the packaging labels are presented in Figure 3-1 for the orange juice and Figure 3-2 for the tea bag boxes. Photographs of the manipulated bottles and boxes as they were used in the experiment are depicted in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-1. Examples of test stimuli: labels of orange juice bottles

Figure 3-2. Examples of test stimuli: labels of tea bag boxes
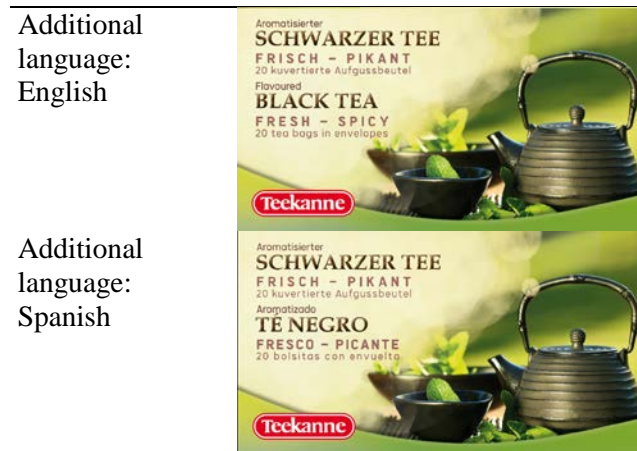
Figure 3-3. Examples of test stimuli: photos of some test products used in the study

Both of the used brands are neither the top-of-the-market brand nor a low-quality brand within the category. Additionally to our reported experimental design, we created two version for each of the bilingual condition that differed with respect to the order of the languages. Since this factor did not turn out to cause any effects, these sub-conditions were collapsed according to the reported experimental design.

3.4.3 Sample, procedures, and measures

We used a sample of 340 students in the field of business administration (M_{age} = 22.79 years; 50% females) and assigned them to the experimental conditions resulting from the language/product-combinations. The experiment was conducted on the campus of a German university. Note that we only selected respondents who reported to speak German as their native language. Interviewers presented the manipulated packaging of one of the test products to the respondents and offered them to try the product. Thus, depending on the condition the respondent was assigned to, s/he was either served a plastic cup of tea or orange juice. In all conditions, the same tea (or orange juice, respectively) was served and the same cups were used. While being exposed to the packaging, the respondents drank from the cup. Subsequently, they evaluated the product. We measured the taste of the product by using the bipolar item "The product tastes very bad/very good." Attitude towards the product was assessed with two bipolar items (The product is… "unattractive/attractive"; "bad/good"; $r=.635$) and quality perceptions with the item "The product is of very low/very high quality". We also assessed several control variables such as consumption frequency in the test product category, language skills and ethnocentrism. For the ethnocentrism construct, we used the 17-item-scale of Shimp and Sharma (1987).

3.4.4 Results

First, we conducted 2-way ANOVAs according to our 3×2 experimental design with the factors language and product category (see results in Table 3-1). We found significant language × product category-interactions for all dependent variables what is in line with our expectations. To test our hypotheses in which a positive effect of fit between language and product category was postulated, we compared the high language-category-fit conditions with the low language-category-fit conditions for each test product separately by using t-tests.

Table 3-1. 3 (foreign language: English, Spanish, absent) $\times$ 2 (product category: orange juice, tea) ANOVA results on all dependent variables

Dependent variable	ANOVA Factors		
	Language	Product	Language $\times$ Product
Attitude towards the product	$F_{(2,334)}=.842$; $p=.432$	$F_{(2,334)}=3.876$; $p=.050$	$F_{(2,334)}=5.307$; $p=.005$
Quality perceptions	$F_{(2,334)}=1.719$; $p=.181$	$F_{(2,334)}=4.875$; $p=.028$	$F_{(2,334)}=3.336$; $p=.037$
Taste of the product	$F_{(2,334)}=.426$; $p=.653$	$F_{(2,334)}=1.863$; $p=.173$	$F_{(2,334)}=3.453$; $p=.033$

The results are presented in Table 3-2 and reveal that a high fit between language and product category leads indeed to higher product attitudes and better taste perceptions for both test products. Therefore, H_1 and H_3 are confirmed. For quality perceptions, this relationship can only be found for one of the two test products (orange juice). Therefore, we can only partially confirm H_2. We found no differences between the compared test conditions with respect to our control variables.

Table 3-2. Results on the hypothesized effects

Dependent variable	Orange Juice			Tea		
	High-fit language (Spanish) n=68	Low-fit language (English) n=68	t-test[a]	High-fit language (English) n=68	Low-fit language (Spanish) n=68	t-test[a]
Product attitude (H_1)	**4.74**[b]	4.28	$t=-2.176$ ($p=.016$)	**5.09**	4.54	$t=2.351$ ($p=.001$)
Quality perceptions (H_2)	**4.82**	4.31	$t=-2.309$ ($p<.001$)	**4.99**	4.71	$t=1.205$ ($p=.12$)
Taste of the product (H_3)	**5.15**	4.72	$t=-1.745$ ($p=.042$)	**5.01**	4.51	$t=1.864$ ($p=.033$)

[a] one-tailed test; [b] Scales range from 1 = low/unfavorable to 7 = high/favorable

3.5 Discussion and implications

Our findings indicate that printing foreign languages on product packaging can affect the consumers' product attitudes, quality perceptions and even taste perceptions. This study revealed that a language that points to a country with a rather low perceived fit to the product category could cause detrimental effects. It is consistent with theoretical assumptions that the weakest effect was observed on quality perceptions, since the language is no clear quality signal like a COO cue but affects quality by a transfer

of associations only. Our results are important for marketers since multilingual packaging is widely used. Printing foreign languages on packaging to sell a standardized product in several countries in order to save costs can backfire since sales might drop in the case of non-fitting languages. On the other hand, marketers may consider using languages as a marketing cue to make a product more appealing to consumers. Adding the right language for a certain product category on product packaging may elicit favorable associations that transfer to the product's evaluation. Since a language is a rather subtle cue, we further assume that it is less likely to be interpreted to be part of a persuasion or manipulation tactic of a manufacturer compared to other, more obvious cues that point to countries or cultures such as cultural symbols, flags or COO-cues. However, this research can only be seen as an initial study examining the phenomenon of language use on product packaging. Further research is necessary which explores the effects of language/category-fit as well as the role of the favorability of country images in general in more depth. Moreover, effects of the number of foreign languages on product packaging are unclear and research has not yet analyzed consumer's inferences resulting from multilingual product packaging.

Acknowledgments

3.6   References

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4 Second study: "Multilingual product information: What consumers infer from additional information in a foreign language and how it affects consumer evaluations"[1]

Abstract

Today, multilingual product information is ubiquitous and disseminated to consumers through a variety of means, such as product packaging. However, few studies have addressed its effects. Drawing on mixed methods research, this paper first investigates what consumers infer from multilingual product information. Second, its downstream consequences are assessed. In a qualitative study, it was revealed that the predominating inference is that the product is shipped to an additional foreign target market. This was confirmed in a quantitative follow-up study. A second quantitative study assessed the consequences of this foreign target market inference on product evaluations. Based on social influence theory, it showed that in cases of high inferred consumer expertise in a foreign market, the related foreign language positively affects product evaluations. The results provide important implications about how to strategically use foreign language in marketing communications and how to avoid undesirable effects of foreign langue use.

Keywords: Foreign language

Multilingual packaging

Reference group influence

Consumer inferences

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4.1   Introduction

In today's globalized markets, consumers are often faced with product information in foreign languages. Typically, these languages are used in addition to the primary native language of the country consumers live in. Packaged consumer goods often display such information. On the packages of foods or cosmetics, information about ingredients and key product features is often given in more than one language. Usually, the packaging and operating instructions of electronic products come in multiple languages. Other examples are the multilingual labels attached to clothes. To begin this study, we presumed that, in many cases, a foreign language indicates that the company ships its products to other countries. When consumers interpret the presence of a foreign language in this way, it serves as an indicator that another nation of consumers buys the same product. Thus, we have argued that multilingual product information can serve as a cue pointing to a foreign target market that is different from the country in which a target consumer is located. To date, researchers have paid little attention to this area. Prior studies on foreign language use in marketing have focused on products marketed in multilingual countries (e.g., Krishna and Ahluwalia 2008) and language targeting minority groups within a country. In this latter area, they analyzed either the reactions of minority groups (e.g., Carroll and Luna 2011; Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994; Noriega and Blair 2008) or the reactions of the majority group in countries in which the minority group lives (e.g., Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013). This research gap is somewhat surprising because of the widespread presence of foreign languages in marketing communications, especially in European countries but also in Asia and other parts of the world where a variety of countries with different native languages are in close proximity.

The aim of this research is twofold. First, it investigates the inferences consumers draw from product information given in a foreign language in addition to the native language of the market they live in. Note that we did not investigate cases in which minority groups within a country are targeted with their own language or in which specifically bilingual consumers are addressed, as previous studies have examined these areas. Additionally, we focused on cases in which one additional language was added to the major native language of the country, as more than one language would likely trigger different mechanisms and, consequently, elicit different effects. It has already been reported that the use of more than one language increases the perception of a brand's globalness (Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013).

Second, it aims to examine the influence of a foreign language on consumers' product evaluations. Our theoretical considerations lead to an important boundary condition determining the direction of that influence, which we describe as the inferred collective expertise of consumers in a foreign target market (from the perspective of the domestic consumers whose reactions were considered). This moderating effect is theoretically developed and empirically investigated.

We apply a mixed methods approach, as such approaches are particularly useful when study variables are unknown such as the inferences consumers may draw from multilingual product packaging (Harrison 2013). We also used a sequential approach, identifying consumer inferences with a qualitative study first. Next, we refined its findings in a quantitative study. In this step, we differentiated between different pieces of information that were given in a foreign language, thereby providing support for the findings of Study 1 and more detailed insights into consumer inferences. In our third step, Study 3 examined the evaluative consequences of multilingual information and tested the full conceptual model in a broad experimental study. In this paper, the three studies will be presented after a brief review of related literature describing the research gap and our theoretical development leading to two hypotheses.

This research contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, it adds to research on multilingual communication and product packaging by examining which inferences consumers draw based on the presence of product information in a foreign language and how this affects their evaluations. More specifically, it demonstrates that the presence of a foreign language is often interpreted as a cue that points to a foreign target market. Surprisingly, although multilingual packaging and labels are omnipresent, scholars have not investigated their effects on consumer inferences, and very little evidence exists indicating how multilingual packaging affects consumers' judgments (Gopinath and Glassman 2008; Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013).

Second, this study contributes to the literature of interpersonal influence by demonstrating that consumers sometimes understand citizens of another country as an expert reference group. This implies that reference customer groups may be qualified by their citizenship instead of, for example, their profession or affiliation with a social group. This finding complements studies on expert reference groups. Until now, expert recommendations have been primarily explored through the consideration of endorser source characteristics (e.g., Ohanian 1990) or in contexts such as online shopping (e.g., Jiuan Tan 1999), word of mouth (e.g., Casaló et al. 2015), and personal selling (e.g.,

Woodside and Davenport 1974). Additionally, we provide insights into the use of reference customers in consumer marketing, which are generally scarce in the literature. Although some forms of using customer references in marketing communications have been investigated, such as providing potential customers with the product reviews of prior customers (Tang 2017), referring to another target group has hardly been studied.

Third, by introducing the concept of the perceived (or inferred) collective expertise of a country's consumers, this research adds to literature on country cues and theories dealing with country image and equity. This concept, which stems from the literature on interpersonal influence, enriches the conceptualization of a country's perceived image.

Additionally, our results are useful to practitioners. Many firms use foreign languages, particularly on product packaging, to standardize their products for sale in foreign markets. A major reason for this practice may be cost savings (e.g., Özsomer and Simonin 2004). However, we assume that it is often not considered how this might affect consumers' evaluations. Our results will help to understand such effects and raise the awareness for them. In addition, our research provides insights into how multinational marketers can purposefully use a foreign language to create a more attractive appearance of their products based on suitable foreign target market references.

4.2   Overview of prior research

In the following section, a brief overview of related literature is presented. There are several literature streams investigating how product evaluations are affected when marketers use foreign languages in their communications. The key results are summarized in Table 4-1 and briefly outlined below, while the explanations refer to Table 4-1.

First, there are studies investigating how foreign brand names influence consumer judgments. Using foreign brand names has been shown to affect consumers in ways similar to country-of-origin (COO) information because such brands typically aim at implying foreign origin (Melnyk, Klein, and Völckner 2012). A key result of the research is that in contexts in which the associations elicited by the foreign language are favorable, evaluative dependent variables, such as attitude and purchase intentions, are positively affected (e.g., Häubl and Elrod 1999; Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994; Verlegh, Steenkamp, and Meulenberg 2005).

Table 4-1. Overview of research on foreign language use in marketing communications

Domain of foreign language use	Function of the language cue	Key results and representative publications
(1) Foreign brand names		
The written brand name or the pronunciation is in a foreign language.	• Suggests a specific COO and elicits the respective country associations.	• Positive impact on product evaluations when using favorable product-country images (Verlegh, Steenkamp, and Meulenberg 2005). • In case of congruity between the country associations triggered by the actual and implied COO, a foreign brand name positively affects purchase intention, quality perceptions, and attitude toward the brand (Häubl and Elrod 1999; Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994); in the case of incongruity, negative effects occur for hedonic products (Melnyk, Klein, and Völckner 2012). • French pronunciation of brand names enhances consumers' attitude and taste perceptions for hedonic products (Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994).
(2) Foreign advertising language		
(a) The slogan of an advertisement is in a foreign language.	• Suggests a specific COO and elicits the respective country associations.	• Foreign language slogans achieve better results regarding quality, attitude, and purchase intention for congruent products (e.g., wine-French) over incongruent products (e.g., beer-French) (Hornikx, van Meurs, and Hof 2013). • Attitudes and intentions are similar to those evoked by the corresponding COO (Hornikx and van Meurs 2017).
	• Targets bilingual consumers and elicits respective country associations.	• Slogans expressed in consumers' native languages tend to be perceived as more emotional than messages in their second language (Puntoni, de Langhe, and Van Osselaer 2008). • Positive effect of Spanish slogans on affect toward the ad in a Hispanic consumers sample (Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994).
(b) Native language advertisements (a foreign language is used throughout the ad).	• Targets bilingual consumers or minority cultures, respectively.	• Associations are evoked in bilinguals that match the language (Noriega and Blair 2008). • Ads are evaluated more positively by bilinguals when the ads' language matches the context (Carroll and Luna 2011). • Negative effect of Spanish ads on affect toward the ad for Hispanic consumers due to language-related inferiority complexes (Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994).
(c) Codeswitching in advertisements (mixing two languages within a sentence of an ad).	• Targets bilingual consumers (e.g., Hispanic inhabitants in the United States; consumers in India fluent in two languages).	• Hispanic consumers react more favorably (e.g., in their product evaluations) when Spanish words are inserted into English slogans compared to when English words are inserted into Spanish slogans (Luna and Peracchio 2005). • Negative/positive effect on advertising effectiveness when the language (i.e., English vs. Hindi) and its triggered associations (sophistication vs. belongingness) do not/do fit the product category (i.e., luxuries vs. necessities; Krishna and Ahluwalia 2008).
(3) Multilingual packaging and product communication		
(a) Multilingual product packaging with one additional foreign language.	• Targets ethnic minority within a country (Hispanic inhabitants in the United States).	• Adding information in Spanish to the English product information on packaging results in negative effects in the consumer product evaluations of the ethnic majority (Gopinath and Glassman 2008).
	• **Targets consumers in an additional foreign target market.**	• **Research gap (present study).**
(b) Multilingual product packaging with several foreign languages.	• Creates a global appeal of the product/brand.	• The negative effect of adding one minority language (i.e., Spanish in the U.S. market) is nullified when a third language (French) is added to product packaging (Gopinath, Glassman and Nyer 2013).

A second domain, in which foreign language use is investigated, is advertising. Foreign advertising language may not only elicit the perception of a product's foreign origin, but is often used to target foreign consumers as a subgroup within a particular country, such as the French-speaking population of Belgium or Hispanics in the United States (e.g., Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994; Noriega and Blair 2008; Puntoni, de Langhe, and Van Osselaer 2008). These studies have generally focused on the reactions of special target groups, such as ethnic minorities or bilingual consumers. Other authors have also found positive effects when consumers perceive a fit be-tween the product category and the country the foreign language references (Hornikx, van Meurs, and Hof 2013). Furthermore, consumers tend to rely on those associations of languages that are perceived most relevant for evaluating the product category (Krishna and Ahluwalia 2008).

A third area of foreign language use in marketing communication is product packaging and product-accompanying communications media, which transmit product information. These me-dia can be operating manuals, product labels, or displays at the point of sale (be it online or of-fline) that contain product information. The latter are of special relevance to products that come without packaging, such as cars or bicycles, or for which the purchase decision is typically made without consideration of packag-ing cues, such as furniture. To the best of our knowledge, there are only two relevant studies that fall into this category and investigate multilingual prod-uct packaging (Gopinath and Glassman 2008; Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013). The authors inves-tigated how product information in Spanish and English on packaging in the U.S. mar-ket affects the reactions of American consumers. However, in this specific case, the Spanish lan-guage addresses Hispanics living in the United States and has been demonstrated to negatively affect the product evaluations of non-Hispanic Americans because the minority group was asso-ciated with negative characteristics, particularly by ethnocentric individuals (Gopinath and Glassman 2008). In a related study, Go-pinath, Glassman, and Nyer (2013) demonstrated that when French is added to pack-aging as a third language, the negative response is nullified. They argued that the third language created a global appeal, and thus, the packaging was no longer perceived as targeting Hispanics in particular. With respect to the studies' design, the work of Go-pinath and colleagues is probably the most closely related research. However, a signal that minorities are targeted is likely to be interpreted quite differently by consumers compared to the way of language use we investigate, i.e., signaling that other foreign

or international markets are targeted. This perspective of using reference customers, with the foreign language acting as a reference to them, has not specifically been considered by prior research.

4.3   Theoretical background

4.3.1 Foreign language as an implicit reference to a foreign market

When consumers notice that product information is provided in a foreign language, they are likely to make inferences that go beyond the given information to generate a meaningful product evaluation. The literature describes several types of inferences consumers may draw (Kardes, Posavac, and Cronley 2004). First are the two basic inference processes of induction, or generalizing from specific information to general conclusions, and deduction, or drawing specific conclusions from general principles (e.g., Beike and Sherman 1994). Moreover, the information on which the inference is based can either be situationally available (i.e., stimulus based) or retrieved from memory (e.g., Lynch and Srull 1982). In the case we consider, the in-ference is inductive because the presence of the language engenders inferences regarding the more general principle of foreign target markets. Moreover, the inference is stimulus based, since in the first step, the information at hand leads to the conclusion that the product is market-ed in another country. In a second step, consumers use information retrieved from memory to derive a product evaluation; this will be explored in the Section 3.2.

Attribution theory also supports the general proposition that consumers try to infer reasons for the presence of a foreign language instead of only noticing it (e.g., Kelley 1973). This theory claims that people tend to ask why they are seeing something. In other words, it describes the human tendency to assign causes to events or phenomena. We argue that when consumers notice that product information is provided in a foreign language, they likely infer that consumers who speak that language are targeted by the product.

Whether the use of a foreign language is interpreted as a reference to a foreign target market may depend on the context. We assume that when the language does not obviously target ethnic minorities (e.g., Hispanics in the United States) or bilingual consumers, such as those in Belgium or Switzerland (Luna and Peracchio 2005a), a foreign target market interpretation likely results, particularly when the language is

used on packaging or refers to product features rather than being anchored in the brand
name. We hypothesize:

H1. Providing product information in a foreign language in addition to information in
the native language (compared to no foreign language information) will increase
the occurrence of the inference that the product is marketed in a foreign target
market the language refers to.

4.3.2 How referring to a product's foreign target market affects consumer evaluations

From a theoretical perspective, we argue that a reference to a foreign target
market may affect consumer evaluations based on a reference group influence. We
build our research on findings regarding reference group influences and combine them
with the idea of a perceived collective consumer expertise of a nation. Although other
aspects, such as a country's general image and associations, may also play a role in
consumer product evaluations, we focus on the notion of a reference group influence
to explain the expected effects, and we use interpersonal influence theory (Bearden,
Netemeyer, and Teel 1989; Deutsch and Gerard 1955) as a foundation.

In this paper, rather than the influence of an individual, we describe the influence of a group of individuals (i.e., a reference group). Belch and Belch (1995) defined
a reference group as "a group whose presumed perspectives or values are being used
by an individual as the basis for his or her judgments, opinions, and actions" (p. 129).
Based on the literature on reference group influences (e.g., Bearden and Etzel 1982),
we posit that when consumers of a country are used as a reference, their choices and
(implicit) recommendations are likely to influence consumer choices.

Interpersonal influence theory argues that the influence of the interpersonal or
social con-text can be normative or informational (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel
1989; Deutsch and Gerard 1955). Normative influence is based on the desire to behave
in a socially correct or appropriate way, while informational influence is the tendency
to accept information from others as evidence of reality (Deutsch and Gerard 1955).
Since the motivation to use the consumers of a country as a reference group is to detect
the true value of a product, we assign their influence to an informational social influence. Informational influence may occur in two ways: individuals may either search

for information from knowledgeable others or make inferences by observing the behavior of others (Park and Lessig 1977). We posit that inferred foreign target market information has the potential to create both types of influence, though making inferences may be of primary importance. Foreign language interpreted as a reference to a foreign target market indicates that a product is consumed in another country. On an abstract level, this means that the consumption behavior of others can be observed. Consumers in a given country are more likely to be taken as a reference group when they are perceived as experts in a certain domain (Witt and Bruce 1972). The literature on consumer inference making can explain such effects. Kardes, Posavac, and Cronley (2004) argued that consumers' judgments "often reflect reputation effects in which product inferences are made based on knowledge and perceptions of related or relevant entities" (p. 250). Among the examples these authors provided of such entities are COOs and typical users. We argue that the consumers of a foreign target market may be interpreted as typical users.

4.3.3 The moderating role of the inferred collective expertise of consumers in the foreign target market

An important determinant of social influence is the perceived purchase decision expertise of the referent (Witt and Bruce 1972). We argued that a foreign language interpreted as a reference to a foreign target market serves as an indirect product recommendation, which further implies that many consumers value the product. A positive effect is likely to occur in cases when consumers in these markets are considered experts in the product domain, thus representing a kind of expert reference group.

We presume that inferred collective expertise moderates the effect of a foreign language because information must possess some degree of diagnosticity to be used in an evaluation (Kardes, Posavac, and Cronley 2004). Diagnosticity is the degree of information's helpfulness in a judgment or evaluation (Dick, Chakravarti, and Biehal 1990). Therefore, the more a person is perceived to be an expert in a certain domain, the more relevant will be his or her judgment or recommendation in this domain (Cheng and Ho 2015). Bohner, Ruder, and Erb (2002) stated that "a high level of expertise should be highly diagnostic of message validity" (p. 499). Analogously, the higher the inferred collective expertise, the greater the relevance of a cue referring to a foreign target market with respect to product evaluations.

Clearly, not every consumer in a certain country is an expert in every product category with which the country is associated; however, we argue that the perception of a nation's collective consumer expertise exists. We suggest that this is similar to the collective productive competence described in COO literature (Heslop, Lu, and Cray 2008). Generally, the traditions and high levels of expertise required to manufacture products in a specific area spill over into the consumption habits of the same area and may even affect educational systems and training programs.

To provide empirical support for this moderation hypothesis, we can refer to several other research streams (e.g., online shopping or word of mouth) in which the expertise of recommenders or communicators has been investigated. For example, an investigation of the online purchase of a computer showed that referring to an expert (i.e., a "scientist from the Singapore Institute of Technology has (…) approved the product" [p. 169]) yields greater utility as a risk reliever than the use of a common man appeal ("a university student" [p. 169]) or a celebrity appeal (Jiuan Tan 1999). Moreover, the literature on word of mouth communication shows that its effects on judgments (e.g., evaluation of an audio tape) are stronger when provided by an expert (i.e., employee at a radio station) than a non-expert, and information provided by an expert is perceived to be more diagnostic (Bone 1995). Besides, recent research (Lee and Kronrod 2020) analyzing how word of mouth in the form of consensus language (i.e., general agreement among a group of people regarding an opinion, product, or behavior) affects consumer behavior affirmed our assumption. The authors distinguished between weak (e.g., distant friends, acquaintances) and strong (e.g., close friends, family) ties when referring to the source and found weak ties to be more influential than strong ones because they represent a larger and more diverse group, which is associated with greater validity. We argue that the inferred collective expertise of consumers from a foreign target market is similar to consensus language with weak ties. Furthermore, the literature on opinion leaders, who are typically associated with perceived purchase experience (e.g., Jacoby and Hoyer 1981), also supports our argument. Consumers use opinion leaders' product-related experience and knowledge as a product information source, which positively affects their judgments (e.g., Brown and Reingen 1987; Gilly et al. 1998). Taken the considerations about the basic effect of a reference to a foreign target market and the moderating role of the inferred collective expertise of consumers together, we hypothesize:

H2. The presence of product information in a foreign language, which is interpreted

as a reference to a foreign target market, will affect consumer's attitude toward

the product in the following way:

(a) if the inferred collective expertise of consumers in the foreign target market

is high, a positive effect will result; or

(b) if the inferred collective expertise of consumers in the foreign target market

is low, a negative or null effect will result.

Our theoretical model, which is depicted in Figure 4-1, summarizes our predic-
tions.

Figure 4-1. Conceptual Model
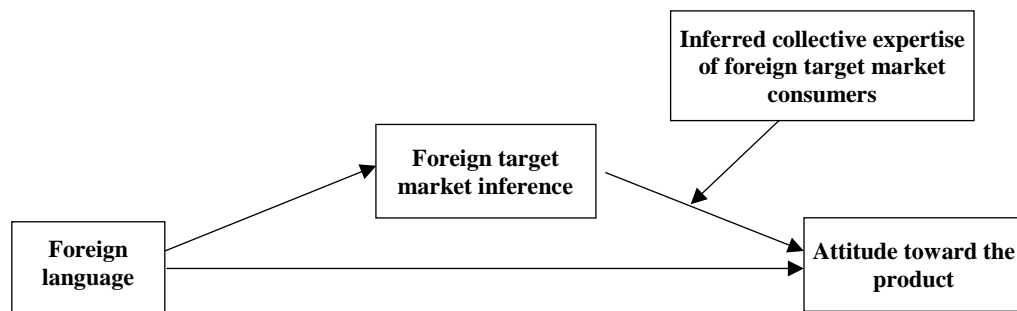
4.4   Method

4.4.1 Research approach

We followed a sequential transformative strategy (Creswell and Creswell
2017) and combined qualitative and quantitative approaches in a mixed methods pro-
cedure. First, we applied an exploratory design (Harrison 2013) in order to examine
the inferences consumers draw from the presence of foreign languages on product
packaging (Study 1). It aimed at investigating to what extent consumers interpret such
language cues as foreign target market information. The findings of this initial quali-
tative study formed the basis of a quantitative follow-up study (Study 2) that used an
experimental approach with different forms of foreign language display; its findings
offer empirical proof for the validity of the initial findings. In a third study, we tested
our full conceptual model and analyzed the downstream consequences of inferences.
More specifically, we investigated the mediating role of foreign target market infer-
ences and the moderating role of the inferred consumer expertise of the foreign target

market's consumers on consumers' attitude toward the product. The effects were replicated across three different product categories to ensure the robustness of our findings.

4.4.2 Consumer inferences resulting from foreign language product information

4.4.2.1   Study 1: Qualitative study on consumer inferences

Study design and stimuli. We used five different products with foreign languages on the packaging. Two of the products were manipulated product stimuli consisting of either a fictitious brand (soap/French) or a real brand that was concealed (crispbread/Swedish). The remaining three products (body wash manufactured by Olay, green tea manufactured by the German organic food brand Alnatura, and Dato detergent manufactured by Henkel) were real products we found in German stores, with the exception of the body wash, which was sold in the United States. French was used to communicate product information on the packaging of all three real products. Although we aimed to use different product/language combinations that met our criteria (e.g., no additional foreign brand name and the use of only one foreign language), French was the most prominent language in the marketplace. We did not use packaging with more than one language or foreign brand names to avoid confusion with cues that signal brand globalness.

Sample, procedure, and measures. We conducted face-to-face interviews with German students regarding the manipulated products ($n = 95$; $M_{age} = 22.5$; 46.9% female) and German and American consumers regarding the actual products ($n = 89$; $M_{age} = 32.8$; 64.0% female). We assessed consumer inferences using an open-ended question: respondents were asked why they thought the foreign language was used on the product. They were allowed to inspect the packaging (with one exception—in the case of the soap, respondents were shown a leaflet depicting the product).

Results. Based on the responses, we derived seven categories of consumer inferences using two independent coders who were blind to the study's goal. All kappa coefficients indicated significant inter-rater agreement and, for the abovementioned primary categories, the intercoder reliability showed an almost perfect level of agreement (Cohen's kappa ranged from .78 to 1.00). Coding discrepancies were discussed and resolved. Table 4-2 depicts the results.

Table 4-2. Consumers' Inferences Made Because of the Presence of a Foreign Language (Study 1)

	Sample	Consumer inferences						
		Foreign target market	Market-ing cue	Foreign origin country	Global-ness	Broader audience	Other reason	Σ^b
Manipulated products								
Crispbread/ Swedish	50 German students	22 (44.0%)	9 (18.0%)	11 (22.0%)	6 (12.0%)	5 (10.0%)	1 (2.0%)	54 (108.0%)
Soap/ French	45 German students	26 (57.6%)	14 (32.1%)	6 (13.3%)	3 (6.7%)	5 (11.1%)	2 (4.4%)	56 (124.4%)
Actual products								
Body wash/ French	24 female American consumers	15 (62.5%)	7 (29.2%)	5 (20.8%)	0 (0%)	3 (12.5%)	2 (8.3%)	32 (133.3%)
Green tea/ French	35 German consumers	12 (34.4%)	9 (25.7%)	10 (28.6%)	5 (14.3%)	2 (5.7%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (108.7%)
Detergent/ French	30 German consumers	11 (36.7%)	6 (20.0%)	11 (36.7%)	3 (10.0%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	32 (106.7%)
Overall	$N = 184$	86 (46.7%)	45 (24.5%)	43 (23.4%)	17 (9.2%)	16 (8.7%)	5 (2.7%)	212 (115.2%)

Notes:
[a] Table contains the absolute number of respondents inferring the reason indicated by the column label with percentages of inferences per product-language combination in parentheses (line by line).
[b] Percentages do not total 100 because respondents were able to report more than one inference.

The results show that the most frequently mentioned reason for the presence of the foreign language was that it referred to another country in which the product was distributed (46.7%), what we refer to as *foreign target market inference* (e.g., "product goes to country where language is spoken"; "to sell it in another country"). Inferences were only assigned to that category when they clearly related to the product's distribution and/or when respondents explicitly mentioned a specific foreign target market or country. Less specific responses were either categorized as *broader audience inference* (accounting for 8.7% of inferences), which only assumed that the language targeted other people without saying that the product was meant to be shipped abroad (e.g., "for people who don't speak English"; "to attract a bigger audience/several nationalities"; "international target group"), or as *globalness* (accounting for 9.2% of the inferences), including responses like "international brand" or "multicultural." The second most common inference was that the foreign language served as a marketing cue to make the product more appealing (*marketing cue inference:* 24.5%; e.g., "to evoke curiosity in the buyer"; "to make people think it's fancy"). The third most reported inference was that the product came from the country where the language is spoken

(23.4%), which was categorized as a *foreign origin inference* (e.g., "the product is
produced in that country"). The remaining responses, which only accounted for 2.7%,
were summarized in an *others* category (e.g., "it's cheaper to have both languages on
the product"; "helpful").

The qualitative study demonstrated that the dominant consumer inference
drawn from the presence of a foreign language is a foreign target market inference.
This inference was most often reported in all product categories. However, other in-
ferences were also reported, and the proportions differ depending on the product con-
text. Consequently, the role of foreign languages as references to foreign markets is
somewhat ambiguous and can be interpreted differently by different consumers. The
documented consumer inferences resulted from a direct question, which is likely to
trigger a more intense and more deliberate processing of the cue than would occur
during an actual purchase. This could have made consumers more suspicious of ma-
nipulative intent. Therefore, we argue that our procedure might have stimulated more
inferences that relate to the cue as a marketing tool (i.e., the language is used to make
the product more appealing) than might have occurred in reality.

4.4.2.2   Study 2: Experimental follow-up study on consumer inferences

Next, we investigated the inferences consumers draw from foreign language
product information more systematically. We also compared the inferences derived
from factual product information, which is our focus, to those derived from other
pieces of information often provided in foreign languages, such as brand names and
slogans.

Study design. Our experimental between-subjects design included the follow-
ing conditions: foreign language product information, a foreign language brand name,
a foreign language slogan, and a foreign language absent condition. We replicated this
design for two product categories: yogurt and reusable water bottle*s*. These categories
are equally relevant to both sexes; the first represents a fast-moving consumer good,
while the second is a more durable product.

Sample and procedure. The data for the two categories were collected in dif-
ferent waves. For yogurt, we surveyed German consumers in a shopping mall in a big
German city (n = 139; M_{age}= 38.17; 48.2% female). They were approached and asked
for their participation. Depending on the condition to which they were randomly as-
signed, they could inspect one version of the packaging, which was a standard-sized

plastic cup. The labels were manipulated according to the experimental design. For the water bottles, we surveyed students on the campuses of two German universities. They were shown a picture of one version of the manipulated bottle packaging, i.e., a cardboard box. The subsample consisted of 155 participants (M_{age}= 23.35; 52.3% female). In total, a sample of 293 participants was established (M_{age} = 30.38; 50.2% female).

Stimuli. The chosen foreign language was Swedish because it is unambiguous with respect to the country it references. Moreover, it seems plausible that this language would appear on the packaging of both test products in the German market. According to our experimental design, we derived four different versions of the test products. In the product information condition, factual product information was provided in Swedish as well as the local language (i.e., German). The information was embedded in a short text and included product features such as "high-quality stainless steel" and "24h cold" for the water bottle and "best ingredients" and "unique manufacturing process" for the yogurt. Pictures of the yogurt cups and bottle packaging used in the product information conditions as well as the texts with the provided information are presented in Appendix B. We used fictitious brand names, and we developed a Swedish counterpart for each in the foreign brand name condition. We used "Milchtraum" and "Mjölkdröm," respectively, for the yogurt (the word translates to "Milkdream"). The water bottle brand was called "Flina" and "Flinå," respectively (the special accent on the last letter is common in Swedish).[1] In the slogan condition, a brand slogan (yogurt: "For conscious enjoyment"; water bottle: "Fill. Pack. Go.") was provided in Swedish, while in the other conditions, it was in German.

Measures. We took up the main inferences identified in Study 1, and for each, we assessed to what extent respondents thought the inferences applied by using a Likert scale ("The foreign language is present because…"; 1 = "completely disagree" to 7 = "completely agree). To assess the foreign target market inference, the above inference statement was completed with "…the product is also marketed in Sweden." For the COO inference, the statement was completed with "…the product is produced in Sweden." For the marketing cue inference, the statement was completed with "…the

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[1] In pretests, the majority of respondents associated the Swedish brand names with Sweden. The word "Flinå" was identified as Swedish by 65.2% of respondents (n = 23 consumers; M_{age} = 29.57; 69.6% female) or at least Scandinavian by another 30.4%. As intended, these associations were much weaker for the German brand name counterpart "Flina" (Sweden: 17.3%; Scandinavia: 8.6%). The same pattern occurred with the yogurt (n = 40 consumers; M_{age} = 36.33; 60% female; Sweden: 77.5%; Scandinavia: 22.5%). Moreover, the German and Swedish brand names were perceived to be similar (7-point Likert-scale; M_{yogurt} = 5.43; $M_{water\ bottle}$ = 5.30).

product is supposed to appeal more attractive because of the language." In addition,
we asked to what extent consumers inferred cost saving reasons due to a standardiza-
tion of packaging, as this question might be of interest to firms. All scales, including
those in the subsequent studies, were seven-point scales.

Results. When inspecting the data (for an overview, see Table 4-3), the mean
values showed that when factual product information was given in a foreign language,
the predominant inference was a foreign target market inference. For both products,
the means ($M_{yogurt} = 4.89$ and $M_{water\ bottle} = 5.59$) were significantly higher than those
representing the other two inferences: foreign origin inference ($M_{yogurt} = 3.54$, $t(34) =$
-3.327, $p = .002$; $M_{water\ bottle} = 4.59$, $t(38) = -2.854$, $p = .007$) and language as a market-
ing cue ($M_{yogurt} = 3.97$, $t(34) = 2.050$, $p = .048$; $M_{water\ bottle} = 4.13$, $t(38) = -3.649$, $p =$
.001). This supports H1. Moreover, the study demonstrates that the inferences were
influenced by the type of information provided in the foreign language. Interestingly,
when a foreign language brand name was used, participants assumed marketing pur-
poses were the predominant reason and not, as the literature suggests, the product's
foreign origin. A foreign language brand slogan did not result in differences in the
investigated inferences. Another interesting finding is that participants did not think of
cost savings as a reason for foreign language information. Over all the conditions, the
means representing this inference were rather low and did not differ between condi-
tions (overall means: $M_{yogurt} = 2.78$; $M_{water\ bottle} = 3.10$).

Table 4-3. Inferences resulting from different foreign language cues on packaging
(Study 2)

	Consumer Inferences								
	Yogurt			Water bottle			Overall		
Foreign language condition	Foreign target market	Foreign origin country	Market-ing cue	Foreign target market	Foreign origin country	Market-ing cue	Foreign target market	Foreign origin country	Market-ing cue
Product infor-mation	**4.89**	3.54	3.97	**5.59**	4.59	4.13	**5.26**	4.09	4.05
	$(1.86)_b$	$(1.93)_a$	$(1.76)_a$	$(1.60)_b$	$(1.97)_a$	$(1.98)_a$	$(1.75)_a$	$(2.01)_b$	$(1.87)_b$
Brand name	4.06	4.11	**5.26**	3.56	3.37	**4.60**	3.82	3.74	**4.90**
	$(2.17)_a$	$(1.91)_a$	$(1.62)_a$	$(1.99)_a$	$(2.17)_a$	$(1.75)_b$	$(2.06)_a$	$(2.07)_a$	$(1.71)_b$
Slogan	4.40	4.34	4.51	4.53	4.47	4.32	4.46	4.41	4.42
	$(1.67)_a$	$(1.77)_a$	$(2.01)_a$	$(1.96)_a$	$(1.99)_a$	$(1.80)_a$	$(1.80)_a$	$(1.87)_a$	$(1.90)_a$
Absent	1.97	1.74	2.82	2.69	2.46	3.85	2.36	2.12	3.37
	$(1.55)_a$	$(1.38)_a$	$(1.85)_b$	$(1.44)_a$	$(1.52)_a$	$(1.90)_b$	$(1.52)_a$	$(1.49)_b$	$(1.93)_c$

Notes: Data are mean values with standard deviations in parentheses and gathered using 7-point Likert
scales. High numerical values indicate higher levels of the variables. Means not having the same sub-
scripts within a line (referring to the column yogurt, water bottle, and overall, respectively) are signifi-
cantly different at the p < .05 level. Cell sizes ranged from n = 34 to n = 43.

4.4.3 Study 3: Experimental study on the evaluative consequences of foreign languages

Study 3 aimed to test our full theoretical model, including both the mediating role of consumers' inference of a foreign target market and the moderating role of the inferred expertise of consumers in the foreign target market. To enhance the generalizability of our results, we investigated three different product-language combinations in a European context, i.e., shampoo/Swedish, chocolate/French, and bicycle/Spanish. We selected combinations that possess a moderate degree of perceived fit between the product category and the country to avoid high levels of stereotypical associations, which could have confounded the hypothesized effects.

Study design and sample. Study 3 followed a 2 (foreign language information: absent vs. present) $\times$ 3 (product-language combination: shampoo/Swedish, chocolate/French, bicycle/Spanish) between-subjects-design. In the foreign language present condition, product information in a foreign language was provided in addition to that which was provided in the local language where the study was conducted (i.e., German), while in the other condition, it was not. The different product categories served as a replication factor. With the chocolate category, we included a food product. The shampoo category represented a non-food packaged good, and the bicycle was a more costly and durable product. The data were collected in three separate waves for the three test products, which resulted in three subsamples, each consisting of adult consumers from Germany. Within each wave, participants were randomly assigned to either the foreign language present or foreign language absent condition. We started with the shampoo subsample; participants were surveyed face to face and were presented with a manipulated version of a real shampoo bottle. The survey took place in the entrance hall of a large supermarket in an urban area of Southern Germany. Only females were asked to participate due to expected gender differences regarding preferences and category involvement in the product category. Data for the other two product categories were collected online via social networks. The online surveys were distributed using the survey tool Questback. This procedure resulted in an overall sample of 386 consumers ($M_{age} = 31.12$; 65.3% female). The details for each subsample are provided in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4.   Study and sample characteristics for the three subsamples of Study 3

Product category	Foreign language	Subsample characteristics ($N_{overall}$ = 386)	Test brand	COO information	Category involvement[1]	Product/ country-fit[2]
Shampoo	Swedish	N = 116 (M_{age} = 33.80, 100% female)	*ALENA* (fictitious)	No information	4.72 (1.67)	3.95 (1.36)
Chocolate	French	N = 179 (M_{age} = 32.91; 51.4% female)	Venchoc (fictitious)	Explicitly stated as German	4.78 (1.66)	4.07 (1.52)
Bicycle	Spanish	N = 91 (M_{age} = 27.67; 48.4% female)	Cube (real but not well known)	Explicitly stated as German	4.23 (1.55)	3.38 (1.00)

Notes:
1 Mean values of three 7-point scales (important, interested, relevant) in which 1 = "low" and 7 = "high." Standard deviations in parentheses.
2 Item: "How typical is the product category for the country of […]"; 1 = not typical to 7 = very typical.

Stimuli and procedure. It was important to select product-country combinations that seemed plausible and realistic but did not possess an extraordinarily high fit, such as olive oil and Italy. The reason is that, in such cases, the effect could be strongly driven by stereotypical associations (e.g., Hamzaoui-Essoussi, Merunka, and Bartikowski 2011), which would likely confound our hypothesized effects. Based on this reasoning, we also assessed the product-country fit as a control variable. Another criterion for selecting the product categories was a certain degree of relevance to participants, which we assessed by asking them about their involvement in the categories. We used fictitious or rather unknown brands to avoid confounding effects of prior brand knowledge.

In the shampoo subsample, the test stimuli consisted of shampoo bottles with labels we manipulated according to our experimental design. The labels are depicted in Appendix C1. In the foreign language absent condition, all product information was provided in German only. In the foreign language present condition, most of the information was given in both German and Swedish. For example, the most prominent features on the front label, "Shine & Volume", were provided in German ("Glanz & Volumen") and Swedish ("Glans & Volym"). More detailed information in Swedish was marked with the country abbreviation "SE." Such country abbreviations can be found in real multilingual packaging. During the survey, participants could touch and inspect the shampoo bottle and were told that it was a new product that might be introduced

to the market soon. After inspecting the product, they filled out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire.

For the chocolate subsample, images of the product packaging were created, as depicted in Appendix C2. Here, the additional information was given in French. Only the front side of the packaging used by the fictitious brand Venchoc was shown. The English translation of the information on the packaging is "With crunchy nuts in a delicate milk chocolate—a real enjoyment," though in the experiment, it was either provided only in German or in French and German. The product images were embedded in an online survey. Before seeing the product, respondents received some general information about the survey. Moreover, they read that they would be evaluating a chocolate bar from Germany. By providing this COO information in all conditions, we aimed to prevent consumers from drawing a COO inference based on the foreign language, which could have confounded the target country effect. After seeing the product image, respondents filled out the online questionnaire.

For the bicycle subsample, we designed an informational ad of the kind that might be used in a store or online shop because bicycles usually do not come in packages. This ad depicted the bicycle, brand, and basic product information. The information consisted of five bullet-point product descriptions below the picture. The information included product features such as "lightweight aluminum frame," "Shimano gears," "hydraulic breaks," and "individual color choices." As in the chocolate subsample, participants were told that the bike was produced in Germany to discourage COO inferences. In the foreign language present condition, the same information was given both in German and Spanish (see Appendix C3), while in the control condition, only the German information was given. To induce some relevance of the test product, respondents read a brief scenario that asked them to imagine they were about to purchase a new bicycle. The scenario further explained that the product they would be evaluating was the result of their research; it was within their budget and featured all the characteristics they were looking for. Next, they were shown the test ad. After, they completed the online questionnaire.

Measures. Attitude toward the product was measured using three items ("like," "positive," "high quality"; $\alpha = .876$). To investigate participants' inferences, we assessed whether they assumed that the product was marketed in the country associated with the language. We asked for agreement to statements such as "I assume the product is marketed in [country]" using a 7-point scale (1 = "I do not at all agree" and 7 = "I

totally agree"). Regarding French-language packaging, we assumed that the predominant association of German consumers would be France, although the language is also spoken in other European countries, such as Belgium. Moreover, it is unlikely that consumers in Europe would strongly associate Spanish with South or Central America, as it is the case for U.S. consumers (e.g., Gopinath and Glassman 2008). The Swedish language is rather unambiguous regarding its national and regional associations.

To distinguish the effect of foreign target market information from alternative drivers, we integrated statements referring to inferences we identified in the qualitative study. We measured the perceived globalness using two items ("To me, this is a local/global brand"; "This brand is sold only in Germany/all over the world"; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). Further, in the chocolate and bicycle subsamples, we additionally assessed the inference of the reference country being the country of origin by asking participants to what extent they agreed with the following statement: "I assume the product is produced in [country]"; 1 = "I do not at all agree" and 7 = "I totally agree"). For the inferred collective expertise of foreign target market consumers, we adopted the expertise scale proposed by Ohanian (1990) and used "expert," "experienced," and "knowledgeable" as items (e.g., "Spanish consumers are experts in buying bicycles"; $\alpha = .916$).

We assessed several control variables, one of which was the fit between the product category and the country, as explained above. We asked, "How typical is the product category of [country]?" (1 = "not at all typical" to 7 = "very typical"; Tseng and Balabanis 2011). We also assessed participants' category involvement using "interesting," "relevant," and "important" as items (Zaichkowsky 1985). To account for a potential effect of the participants' skills with the languages used in the study, we included the item "Do you have any skills in [language]?" (1 = "no skills at all" to 7 = "strong skills/fluent"). In the bicycle subsample in which we used a real brand, we assessed brand familiarity to ensure the brand was not well known (one-item 7-point scale ranging from 1 = "not at all familiar" to 7 = "very familiar"). In all cases in which multiple items were used to measure a construct, they were aggregated by calculating their means.

Results. We started with a general inspection of the control variables. Although there were differences in category involvement for the different products ($F(2,380) = 3.54$; $p < .05$), there were no differences in the two language conditions of each category ($F(1,380) = .05$, *n.s.*), nor was there an interaction effect of the two experimental

factors ($F(2,380) = .57$, *n.s.*), as revealed by a 2×3 ANOVA. The same data patterns exist for category/country fit.

Next, we checked participants' inferences depending on our manipulation by conducting a 2×3 ANOVA based on our experimental factors. As expected, the presence of the product information in the foreign language increased the strength of the inference that the product was also marketed in the respective foreign country ($M_{control} = 4.30$ vs. $M_{FL} = 5.22$, $F(1,380) = 26.841$, $p < .001$), which supports H1. The effect does not depend on the product category, as shown by a non-significant interaction ($F(2,380) = .164$, *n.s.*), although the strength of this inference differed in the product categories, as revealed by a main effect ($M_{shampoo} = 4.28$ vs. $M_{chocolate} = 5.07$ vs. $M_{bicyle} = 4.77$, $F(2,380) = 8.510$, $p < .001$).

To test our conceptual model, we calculated a moderated mediation model by using the PROCESS bootstrapping procedure (model 14; n = 1,000; Hayes 2013) with the inference that the product was marketed in the reference country as mediator and the inferred consumer expertise in the country as moderator. We pooled the data across product categories and included the product category as a covariate. The results revealed an index of moderated mediation of .075 with a 95% confidence interval of [.017, .160], indicating that foreign language influences the attitude toward the product via the inference of a foreign target market. The effect becomes more positive the higher the level of inferred expertise of the consumers in the reference country. The coefficients of the model are shown in Fig. 4-2. Note that the product category had an effect in the first step of the model, i.e., on the mediator ($t = -4.123$, $p < .001$), which means that the strength of the target market inference differed for the products. However, it did not have an effect on the dependent variable attitude ($t = .779$, *n.s.*). Additionally, when we added language skills as another covariate to the model, the effects held and language skills did not have any effects.

To further explore the interaction, we tested simple slopes at values one standard deviation above and below the mean of the inferred expertise. Table 4-5 presents the detailed results of these analyses. In addition to the model derived from the pooled data, we also ran the analysis for each product subsample separately to gain more detailed insights. The basic result of the expected mechanism regarding the positively moderated mediation held in all cases. For high levels of inferred consumer expertise in the foreign target market, language exerted a positive effect on attitude in all cases.

There were, however, some differences regarding the effect at the lower levels of inferred expertise. While in the shampoo subsample, the mediation effect even turned negative (β = -.203, 95% CI: [-.455, -.048]), we saw a null effect in the chocolate subsample (β = .024, 95% CI: [-.176, .211]). In the bicycle subsample, the effect was slightly positive but weaker as at high levels of inferred expertise (β = .342, 95% CI: [.021, .262]).

Figure 4-2. The moderating effect of inferred collective expertise in a moderated mediation model (coefficients computed using bootstrapping; Hayes 2013; model 14)

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001
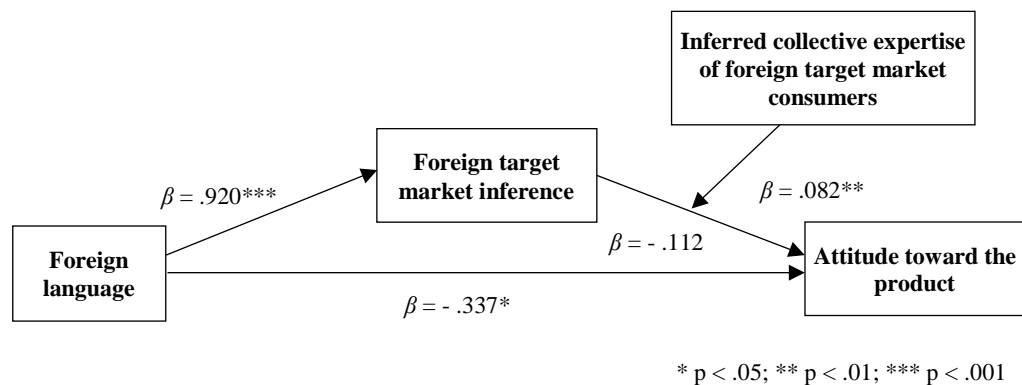
Table 4-5. Bootstrap results of conditional indirect effects at different levels of the moderator

	Level of inferred consumer expertise[a]	Indirect effects of foreign target market inference			
		Effect	SE	CI	Index of moderated mediation and CI
Shampoo subsample	Low (M = 3.35)	.-203	.100	[-.455, -.048]	.234 [.057, .450]
	Average (M = 4.36)	.035	.058	[-.062, .173]	
	High (M = 5.38)	.273	.129	[.076, .603]	
Chocolate subsample	Low (M = 3.07)	.024	.094	[-.176, .211]	.101 [.006, .239]
	Average (M = 4.39)	.157	.075	[.035, .339]	
	High (M = 5.71)	.291	.118	[.100, .555]	
Bicycle subsample	Low (M = 2.75)	.342	.168	[.098, .831]	.130 [.009, .362]
	Average (M = 3.61)	.454	.203	[.124, .965]	
	High (M = 4.47)	.566	.259	[.121, 1.159]	
Overall	Low (M = 3.02)	.125	.059	[.021, .262]	.075 [.017, .160]
	Average (M = 4.20)	.214	.052	[.130, .349]	
	High (M = 5.38)	.303	.076	[.176, .492]	

Notes: M = mean value. CI = 95% confidence interval. SE = standard error.
[a] "low" = mean -1 standard deviation; "average" = mean value; "high" = mean +1 standard deviation.

The results of this model support the combined assumptions of H1 and H2. When we compared the mean values of the attitude toward the product in the two conditions, the data did not reveal a significant difference ($M_{control}$ = 4.66 vs. M_{FL} = 4.54, $F(1,380)$ = .750, *n.s.*), independently of the product categories, as revealed by a non-significant interaction ($F(2,380)$ = .509, *n.s.*). Because of the moderating effect, which determines the effect of the language, a missing main effect does not contradict our assumptions.

Alternative explanation and control variables. In order to rule out alternative explanations of the observed effects, we either integrated perceived globalness or a COO inference as additional mediators in our model when data were available (we assessed the COO inference in the chocolate and bicycle subsamples). The effect of the foreign target market inference held, as the index of moderated mediation remained significant in both cases (model with perceived globalness as mediator [n = 386]: β = .068, 95% CI: [.003, .158] and model with COO inference as mediator [n = 270]: β = .076, 95% CI: [.003, .177]). In the case of a COO inference, a moderation of inferred consumer expertise would have been plausible from a theoretical standpoint. However, we did not find this effect (moderated mediation index for the COO inference: -.015, 95% CI: [-.093, .027]). Although the presence of a foreign language did increase the perceived globalness (β = .501, t = 3.155, p < .01) and the belief that the product originated from the reference country (β = .511, t = 2.254, p < .05), this did not affect the attitude toward the product (perceived globalness: β = -.138, t = -.834, *n.s.*; COO inference: β = .030, t = .180, *n.s.*). It might be interesting to note that the correlation of foreign target market inferences with COO inferences was very low (r = .157). Its correlation with globalness was higher (r = .431). This shows that the concepts are related, though the r coefficient is still low enough to suggest their distinctness.

4.5   Discussion

Using multiple studies, this research investigated consumer inferences and their downstream effects resulting from the provision of product information in a foreign language. Applying a mixed methods approach, we started by qualitatively exploring consumers' inferences (Study 1). In Study 2, we then undertook an experimental investigation into the specific inferences identified in Study 1. Study 3 experimentally investigated the full moderated mediation model, and demonstrated across

three different product categories how consumer evaluations are affected by foreign
language product information.

This research's most important findings are that consumers predominantly in-
fer foreign target markets from product information provided in a foreign language,
and that this inference positively affects product evaluations when consumers perceive
expertise in the foreign target market regarding the product category of interest.

4.5.1 Theoretical implications

First, this study contributes to the literature on multilingual marketing commu-
nications. In this research area, studies have focused on packaging that addresses mi-
nority groups within a country (e.g., Hispanics living in the United States; Gopinath
and Glassman 2008; Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013). In such cases, the foreign
language tends to have a negative effect on the primary target audience (in this exam-
ple, American consumers) because minority groups are often associated with negative
characteristics, particularly by ethnocentric individuals. In contrast, our study found
beneficial effects of referring to consumers who appear competent and thus attractive
in the appropriate context. This finding of language eliciting a specific cultural attrac-
tion extends the literature on multilingual communication to consumers.

Further, our results imply that consumer inference highly depends on the kind
of information provided in a foreign language, what adds a new perspective to existing
research on foreign language in marketing communications. According to prior work,
when a foreign language is anchored in the brand name or used in advertising slogans,
consumers typically conclude that the language refers to the COO, which researchers
call "implicit COO cues" (Melnyk, Klein, and Völckner 2012, p. 23). Contrarily, our
results indicate that when consumers respond to foreign language product information,
which is more functional and informative in nature, they predominantly infer the ex-
istence of a foreign market. Thus, the language points to the destination of a product
instead of its origin.

A second literature stream to which this study contributes concerns reference
customer groups and is part of the interpersonal influence research established by
Deutsch and Gerard (1955). Prior studies have shown that consumers follow the be-
haviors of reference groups that are typically characterized by their profession or con-
sist of individuals with whom consumers are familiar (e.g., neighbors, friends, and
colleagues; Bearden and Etzel 1982; Park and Lessing 1977). Our findings imply that

reference consumer groups can also be defined by their citizenship. They further show that consumers consider the (inferred) purchase behavior of another nation of consumers as an orientation for their own product evaluation and purchase intention.

Moreover, our research expands on studies exploring the influence of expert referents on consumer behavior. These studies are characterized by an investigation of effects of the expertise of an individual who provides a product recommendation. This literature is somewhat fragmented because it relates to various contexts, including word-of-mouth and online reviews (e.g., Casaló et al. 2015; Jiuan Tan 1999). Additionally, advertising literature has examined source expertise and credibility (e.g., Ohanian 1990), and sales literature has analyzed the effects of sales messages (e.g., Woodside and Davenport 1974). Our study adds to these findings by showing that the high perceived expertise of a country's consumers in a certain product domain combined with the suggestion that these consumers purchase a product is interpreted as an expert recommendation and affects consumers' evaluations.

Furthermore, we have enriched the country cue literature by demonstrating that targeting a national consumer group can be used as a reference to effectively promote a product to a different national market. Therefore, it is not competence in manufacturing and design but the consumption expertise of a nation that can add value to a product. By introducing the concept of the inferred expertise of consumers in a foreign target market, we have expanded theories regarding country image by showing that a country's perceived image encompasses the consumption expertise of its people. Many researchers describe three dimensions of country image: environmental, product related, and people related (Durand, Turkina, and Robson 2016; Papadopoulos, Banna, and Murphy 2017). The product-related dimension encompasses beliefs about a country performance in a specific product category, such as design, or workmanship. The people-related dimension includes general aspects, such as likeability, trustworthiness, or knowledge, of the citizens of the country. In this context, recent research has also highlighted country stereotypes, which affects the "country reputation for people" in their possible role as export partners (Dimitrova, Korschun, and Yotov 2017, p. 382). Moreover, a people's competence with respect to manufacturing has been emphasized in prior international marketing research (e.g., Heslop, Lu, and Cray 2008). Our results show that the perceived image of a people in their role as consumers exists within the people-related dimension of country image, which builds on prior conceptualizations of country image and country stereotypes.

4.5.2 Managerial implications

Our findings are of managerial relevance for marketers selling products in more than one country. On the one hand, potential negative effects must be considered when using foreign language. In particular, unintended harmful effects may occur in the case of identical, standardized products shipped to several countries to save costs. A typical example are packages that provide information in both English and French because they are marketed in the United States and Canada. Other examples are products that are destined for the European market and include other European languages, such as English, French, German, Italian, Polish, and Hungarian. While cost reduction may be the predominant motive for this practice, the use of foreign languages can affect consumer reactions in an unintended way; further, consumers do not consider cost reduction, as our first two studies revealed. Marketers might use a language that is perceived as a misfit for the product, which could cause negative effects. Additionally, the languages of less-developed countries could lead consumers to infer that the product is destined for a less-developed market and is inferior to a product produced for a highly developed market. Importantly, our findings show multinational companies how to use foreign languages in a favorable way. Foreign languages can be used strategically in marketing communications and may increase product appeal if they points to a nation with high inferred consumer expertise. By doing so, brands may benefit from a country reference without tailoring all brand communications to that country.

4.5.3 Limitations and directions for future research

This research has limitations, some of which may stimulate future research. First, when considering our results, it is important to keep their scope in mind. The interpretation of a foreign language is highly context dependent, as our analysis of prior research demonstrated. Our study was situated in Europe, and our findings therefore represent a European perspective and cannot be generalized to other countries. We would like to illustrate this aspect with some examples: using the same foreign language cues in the United States would likely lead to different results (Spanish, for example, points to Hispanics in the United States, while in Europe, it is likely to be seen as a reference to consumers located in Spain; moreover, when French is used in Europe, few people associate it with Canada, as might be the case in the United States—rather, it is associated with France or another European country in which French is spoken, such as Belgium). Furthermore, we purposely investigated situations

in which there was not much ambiguity regarding which target market the language belongs to. If we had used a foreign language associated with a minority group (e.g., Turkish, as the largest minority population in Germany is of Turkish descent), it would have made a foreign target market inference less likely. Consequently, it remains unclear whether our finding of an effect of foreign target market information holds in cases in which there is a high degree of ambiguity regarding whether the language points to a minority within the country or to a foreign country. Nevertheless, we think that our findings are not only relevant to Europe but to other parts of the world as long as this aspect is considered.

Second, in addition to exploring consumer inferences, we focused on a specific pattern of effects that was built on the idea of reference group influence and theoretically based on work on interpersonal influence. However, other potentially relevant effects were not considered in our investigation but were rather controlled or kept constant, including further moderating variables, such as the fit between the product category and the language (what we kept constant at a medium level) or the perceived relatedness or identification of the consumer with the referenced country (Faraji-Rad, Samuelsen, and Warlop 2015). Further relevant mediating variables could be the associations and stereotypes elicited by the language. In future studies, a more comprehensive model could be tested by simultaneously analyzing different paths of effects. Our findings, together with the literature review we provided, could be a fruitful foundation for such study.

Third, although we demonstrated that the moderated mediation of target market inferences was robust across the three product categories, our study cannot explain why low levels of inferred consumer expertise are negative in some cases and not in others. We can only speculate, but the reason might have to do with category differences regarding the importance of the product information for consumers' evaluations. If there is additional information on product packaging that is not perceived as useful (i.e., nondiagnostic), such as information in an incomprehensible foreign language, a disturbing effect on the processing of useful (i.e., diagnostic) information is likely (Gierl and Huettl 2012). This effect might have been more severe in the shampoo category because participants may have relied more strongly on detailed product information on the packaging than they did in the chocolate category. In the remaining category—bicycles—participants could have been accustomed to engaging in a more

intense information acquisition process and, thus, may have tolerated the presence of nondiagnostic information to a greater extent.

Finally, this research is limited to cases in which one additional foreign language is added to the market's primary native language. Situations in which product information in several languages is provided were not considered. We assume that adding several languages may have different consequences on information processing, and thus, different effects may occur. For example, perceptual fluency could decrease when information in many languages is printed on product packaging. Additionally, other signaling effects could be elicited via, for example, enhanced brand globalness. This topic is particularly relevant because manufacturers often provide user manuals, packaging, or labels in several languages. Further investigation of these aspects is beyond the scope of this research but represents a promising avenue for future research.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Stimuli for Study 1

Example of an actual product (Body wash/French)	**Example of a manipulated product** (Soap/French)

Foreign langue cue on front label (information in French and English):

Foreign langue cue on front label (information in French and German):

Foreign language cue on back label:

Appendix B. Stimuli for Study 2

B1. Example of the manipulated cups of the yogurt (product information condition):

Front side   Back side

Translated language cue:

"Our yogurt is based on a unique manufacturing process. Only the best ingredients are used and our milk comes exclusively from happy cows.

B2. Example of the manipulated packaging of the water bottle (product information condition):

Front side   Back side

Translated language cue:

"No matter where you are going, you can take me with you anywhere at any time. Fill me with a drink of your choice, thanks to high-quality stainless steel I am tasteless and carbon dioxide cannot harm me. Whether you drink tea or ice, I keep your drinks cold for 24 hours or warm for 12 hours. What are you waiting for? Here we go."

Appendix C. Stimuli for Study 3

C1. Manipulated labels of the shampoo bottles:

Foreign-langue-absent condition

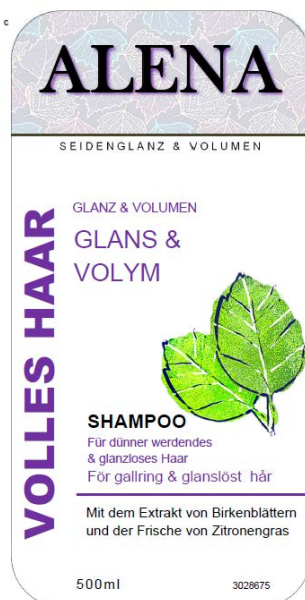Front-side bottle label   Back-side bottle label

Foreign-language-present-condition

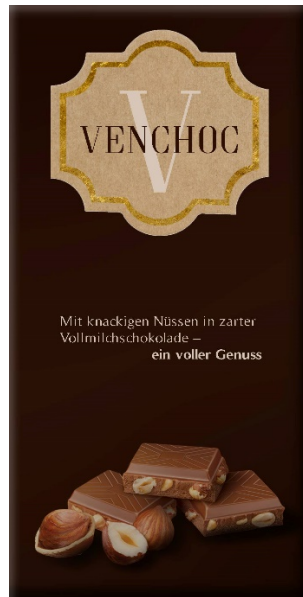Front-side bottle label   Back-side bottle label
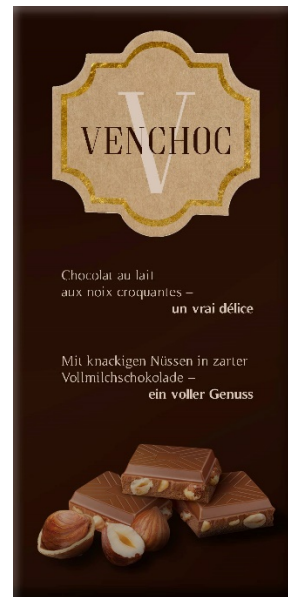
C2. Manipulated packaging of the chocolate:

Foreign-language-absent condition   Foreign language present condition

C3. Manipulated product information for the bicycle (foreign langue present condition):

5   Third study: "Adding value to local brands through foreign language cues"[1]

Abstract

In order to improve the position of local brands in a global market, strategies are in demand which offer brands the possibility of adding value without losing their percept of being local. We investigate a beneficial strategy for local brands maintaining their local image without compromising the authenticity of a brand. It consists of translating product information in a foreign language on product labels, which refer to a reputable country as a target market reference. In order to examine drivers which underlie effects of language cues we conducted surveys in two different countries (Taiwan and Germany). Our findings show that in case of language cues pointing to a rather reputable country evaluations are either positively affected through a rise in brand prestige or because this raised the brand's social signaling value. In contrast, when foreign language is associated with a rather less reputable country negative effects result.

Keywords: Foreign language

Prestige

Social signaling value

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5.1 Introduction

In the context of a more and more global production and competition local brands are struggling to compete with higher-resourced global brands (Ger, 1999). However, in times of scepticism towards global brands and confusion about the origin of a product, the localness of a brand is sometimes advantageous (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2008; Samiee, Shimp, and Sharma, 2005). In order to improve their position in a global context and to reach competitive success it is emphasized that a local brand should strategically built upon their inherent cultural competencies and resources in order to create a unique perceived value. Therefore, strategies are in demand which enable local brands to add value without losing their percept of being local.

One of the major benefits of local brands is, that the localness is associated with authenticity (e.g., Steenkamp & Jong, 2010; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). Moreover, practice has shown, that local brands can benefit from a perceived globalness even though they represent local brands, either through a global market appearance or because they sell in a foreign product category. However, blending a local brand image with global associations harbors the risk of losing authenticity (Zhou, Yang, and Hui, 2010). In this paper, we want to analyze a beneficial strategy for local brands maintaining their local image without compromising the authenticity of a brand. The strategy is depicting product information in another foreign language on product packaging which refers to a reputable country.

Brands use language cues, such as foreign-sounding brand names or slogans as part of their marketing communication strategy in order to elicit a specific brand image either relating to a favorable country-of-origin (e.g., Melnyk, Klein, and Völckner, 2012) or to reach a more general global appearance (e.g., Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra, 1999). However, we want to focus on language cues detached from the actual brand image which work in a more subtle way. On many product packages we find additional product information translated into another foreign language. From a marketing point of view this kind of language cue has not been addressed in academic literature until now. Our assumption is that consumers prominently assume functional reasons when processing language cues which do not obviously target ethnic minorities (e.g., Hispanics in the U.S.) or bilingual consumers (e.g., in Belgium or Switzerland) (e.g., translation of product information in a foreign language is depicted to make the product understandable in another country of sale). Especially when language is used on the packaging and refers to product features instead of being anchored in the

brand name or part of the image concept, it is expected that this represents a foreign market reference from a consumer's point of view.

In a local brand context we investigate the drivers which underlie potential positive or negative effects of language cues pointing to a rather reputable or less reputable country. As serial mediators we examine brand prestige and brand identity expressiveness, which is defined as "the capacity of a particular brand to construct and signal a person's self-identity to himself as well as his social identity to important others" (Xie, Batra, and Peng, 2015). Moreover, we analyze the impact on brand authenticity and the perceived globalness of a brand.

5.2 Theoretical background

5.2.1 Effect of foreign language

Research on multilingual communication shows, that foreign language can be used in advertising in order to achieve different objectives. Besides targeting minority groups or bilingual consumers, academic literature has so far analyzed foreign language especially in the context of foreign branding (e.g., Verlegh, Steenkamp, and Meulenberg, 2005). In this field of research two reasons can be identified why it is beneficial to use foreign brand names. It is shown that a foreign brand name can imply a certain country-of-origin which leads to positive effects on product evaluations (e.g., Melnyk et al., 2012). Another reason for the usage of a foreign brand name is the possibility to position a brand as global since a foreign country-of-origin is emphasized by the language or the symbolic meaning of a specific foreign consumption culture is transferred (Alden et al., 1999; Chang, 2008).

In contrast to foreign branding cues, we assume that translated product information in another foreign language on product packaging represents a language cue which is detached from the actual brand image. In transferring a foreign marketing reference, the focus of evaluation is shifted from the originating country towards a target country. Since the perception of the brand's origin is not influenced by the language cue, we expect that authenticity of a brand is not negatively affected by the assumption that the associated country is another country of sale. However, we do not want to exclude any negative effects from foreign language on brand authenticity in general since authenticity is based on more than just the perception of brand localness.

5.2.2 Brand prestige

Foreign language can elicit associative processes and evoke mental images which may spill over to a brand (Ray, Ryder, and Scott, 1991). Marketers can take advantage of the prestige of a foreign language in terms of linguistic borrowing since people associate a foreign language with the national characteristics and traditional products of the respective country (Domzal, Hunt, and Kernan, 1995). In pointing to a country of sale foreign language establishes a link to another group of buyers as a reference customer group (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). When this reference group is associated with prestige, because the country represents a highly developed or reputable country the perception of brand prestige may be raised. In contrast, we expect negative effects on the perception of prestige when the country is associated with negative aspects. We hypothesize:

H_1: Foreign language pointing to a rather positively/negatively perceived country of sale leads to higher/lower perceived prestige of a brand, which in turn positively/negatively affects product attitude.

5.2.3 Brand social signaling value

Depending on the symbolic meanings implied by brands, consumers use brands to communicate their identity to pursue self-verification or self-enhancement goals (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). The utility derived from the product's ability to enhance the social self-concept is called the brand's social signaling value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). If this value is high, a brand is able to represent a person's desired self and social identity. It is shown that when a brand has a strongly developed global image but also when it is highly associated with the local culture this may increase the identity expressiveness of a brand (Xie et al., 2015). Since prestigious brands are strongly linked to an individual's self-concept and social image, consumers tend to perceive the consumption of prestige brands as a signal of social status (Alden et al., 1999). Thus, we expect that an increased or decreased level of brand prestige will affect a brand's social signaling value positively or negatively. We postulate:

H_2: A higher/lower perceived brand prestige induced by foreign language leads to a higher/lower social signaling value of a brand, which in turn positively/negatively affects product attitude.

Previous research shows that much of the beneficial effects of global brands is based on the status and prestige associated with global reach (Johansson & Ronkainen, 2005). Therefore, one could assume that potential positive effects of foreign language on the prestige and the social signaling value of the brand might be explained by an increased perceived globalness through foreign language. However, the perception of globalness requires the association of an appearance in multiple countries (Xie et al., 2015). Since we focus on language cues which refer to just one particular foreign country we expect that potential positive effects of foreign language on brand prestige are not driven by a perceived brand globalness.

5.3   Empirical study

Sample, design and stimuli. We conducted an online survey in Taiwan (n=90; M_{age}=33.18; 47.80 % female) and Germany (n=105; M_{age}=35.64; 51.4 % female). We applied a between-subjects factorial design with foreign language as the experimental factor and a control condition with no foreign language cue. For each sample we chose a typical existing product with regional uniqueness only produced in the respective country, which is mainly labeled or packaged with local languages. For the Taiwanese sample we used a high-mountain tea of a Taiwanese local brand and for the German sample the chosen test product was a bottle of beer of a German local brand. The brands were rather unknown to the respondents (brand knowledge: $M_{German\ brand}$=1.41; $M_{Taiwanese\ brand}$=2.19) and perceived as rather local (brand localness: $M_{German\ brand}$=4.91; $M_{Taiwanese\ brand}$=4.54). In the control condition we depicted the respective product labeled only in the native language (i.e., German/Chinese). In the experimental condition we added German language elements on the label of the high mountain tea and Chinese characters on the label of the beer bottle. The German language was used in order to detect potential positive effects of foreign language, since Germany as a highly developed country is reputable in Taiwan and has a relatively high affective country image (Wang et al., 2012). In contrast, Chinese language should reveal negative effects, since it is assumed that German consumers mainly associate China with a rather negative image (Kabadayi & Lerman, 2011). Note that the language cue represented a translation of product information provided in addition to the respective native language.

Measures. In order to analyze whether the respondents identified Germany/Taiwan as a country of sale we asked them to what extent they agree that the product is also sold in Germany/Taiwan. Brand prestige was measured by the statement "This brand is very prestigious" adopted from Batra et al. (2000) and brand social

signaling value by two statements ("This brand would improve the way I am perceived"; "This brand would help me feel trendy"; r=.883) adopted from Zhou et al. (2010). The perceived globalness of a brand was assessed by the item "I do not (do) think consumers overseas buy this brand." adopted from Xie et al. (2015). To measure brand authenticity we used a scale applied by Herz and Diamantopoulos (2013) and adapted it to the context of the brand as reference object (i.e., "This brand is authentic"). We assessed product attitude with three item (i.e., "I like the product"; "The product is appealing"; "This product makes me feel positive"). All scales were measured on seven-point Likert-scales. We included several control variables such as product involvement or ethnocentrism. We did not find any differences with regard to these variables across the conditions.

Sequential mediation. In order to test our hypotheses we calculate a moderated mediation model by using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (model 6; Hayes, 2013) and 1,000 bootstrapping samples. Since our postulated assumptions are based on the expectation, that foreign language may point to another target country, we conceptualized the "identification of Germany/Taiwan as country of sale" as a first mediator which has the function of ensuring that the language cue triggered the right inference as a precondition. The perceived brand prestige and the social signaling value of a brand follow as serial mediators. In Figure 5-1 the underlying conceptual model is depicted. At first, we analyzed the assumed positive effect of foreign language in consulting the data of the Taiwanese sample (Panel A). The analysis showed a positive and significant sequential indirect effect from the German language cue to the "identification of Germany as country of sale" to "brand prestige" to "product attitude" (β=.049; $CI_{95\%}$:.0052; .1972). This confirms H_1 in case of a positively perceived country. Moreover, the indirect effect from the German language cue to the "identification of Germany as country of sale" to "brand prestige" to "brand social signaling value" to "product attitude" was significant and positive (β=.022; $CI_{95\%}$:.0031; .1042). Therefore, also H_2 is supported regarding a positively perceived country.

To analyze the negative effect of foreign language cues we consider the data from the German sample with the test product beer and the Chinese foreign language cue (see Figure 5-1, Panel B). We did not find an indirect effect from the Chinese language cue to "brand prestige" to "product attitude" (β=.034; $CI_{95\%}$:-.0175; .1506) as well as no indirect effect from the Chinese language cue to "brand prestige" to "brand social signaling vaue" to "product attitude" (β=.002; $CI_{95\%}$:-.0008; .0226). We

therefore can not support H_1 and H_2 in the case of a negatively perceived country. The identification of Taiwan as country of sale did not cause the negative effects on brand prestige (β=.126; p=.249), even though this inference was triggered (β=.630; p=.027). The Chinese language cue rather directly affected brand prestige negatively (β=-.753; p=.019). Moreover, we found a negative direct effect of the Chinese language cue on product attitude (β=-.407; p=.046).

Figure 5-1. Sequential mediation of brand prestige and brand social signaling value on brand quality

Panel A: Taiwanese sample (high-mountain tea)
n=90

Panel B: German sample (beer)
n=105
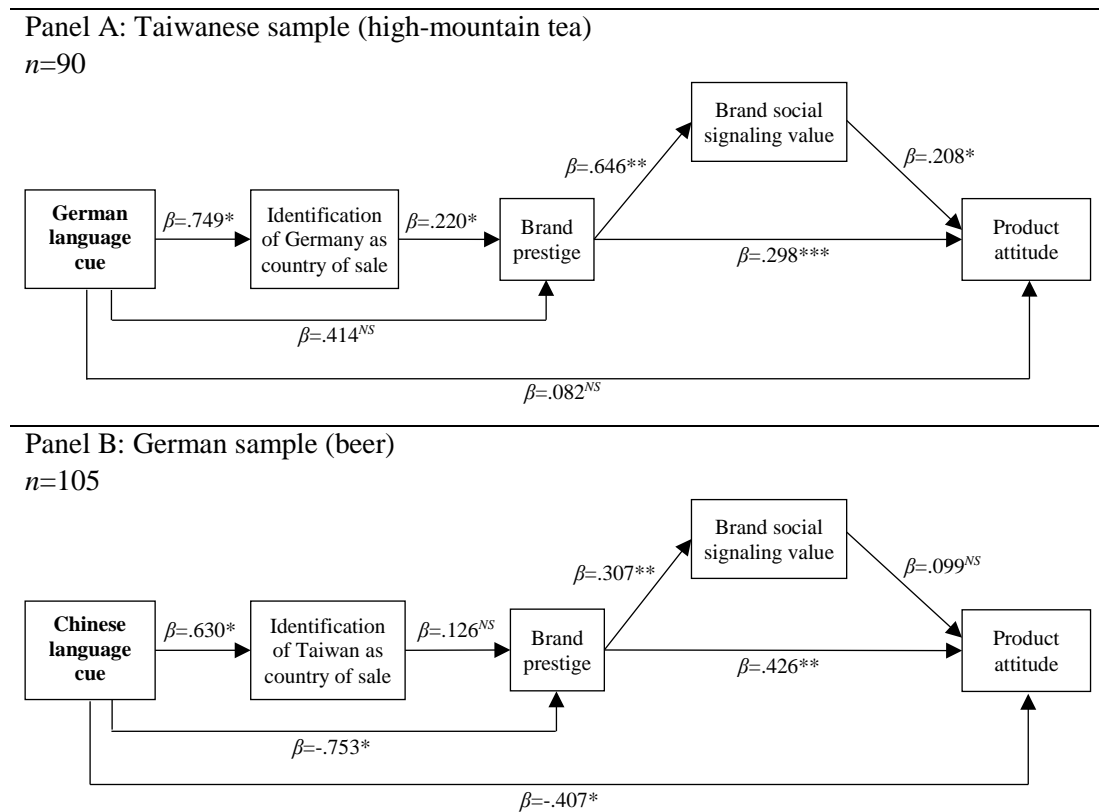
Notes: Coefficients computed using mediated regression models (Hayes 2013: model 6).
^{NS} not significant; ^{c} p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Alternative process variables. We assumed that foreign language pointing to reputable country of sale (i.e., German) does not affect the authenticity of a brand negatively since the local brand image stays the same. Moreover, we expected that an increased perception of brand globalness can be ruled out as a further explanation for a higher perception of brand prestige. In order to preclude these potential side effects, a mediation analysis with perceived globalness and brand authenticity as parallel mediators was conducted using model 4 of PROCESS with 1,000 bootstraps samples (Hayes, 2013). The result showed that, as expected, none of the mediating effects were

significant for product attitude. We therefore can rule out side effects caused by the perceived globalness and brand authenticity in case of a positively perveived country.

To get a deeper understanding of the underlying process which caused the several negative effects of the Chinese language cue, we conducted the same model with perceived globalness and brand authenticity as parallel mediators for the German sample. The results showed that as expected the perceived globalness of the brand was not affected. However, the Chinese language cue decreased brand authenticity (β=-1.033; p=.0007) and in turn negatively affected product attitude (β=-.399; $CI_{95\%}$:-.7087; -.1571). This indicates, that the negative effect of the Chinese language on brand prestige might be explained by a loss of authenticity which is induced by the negative image associated with China. An additional model (model 6; Hayes, 2013) with the identification of Taiwan as country of sale, brand authenticity, and brand prestige as serial mediators confirmed that a negative indirect effect via brand prestige only occurred, when prestige was negatively affected by brand authenticity directly through the Chinese language cue (β=-.175; $CI_{95\%}$:-.3688; -.0662). The identification of Taiwan as country of sale did not have any harmful impact on product and brand evaluations. Finally, a decreased brand authenticity triggered by the Chinese language also directly affected brand quality negatively (β=-.190; $CI_{95\%}$:-.4709; -.0492).

5.4   Conclusion and practical implication

We were able to show that local brands can benefit from a foreign language pointing to a reputable country without affecting brand authenticity negatively. Product attitude is either positively affected through a rise in brand prestige or because an increased brand prestige raised the social signaling value of the brand. In contrast, when foreign language is associated with a rather less reputable country, negative effects occurred. As the underlying mechanism for that we identified a loss in brand authenticity instead of a target market inference. One possible explanation could be that China is often associated with low quality products and counterfeits. Since this represents the opposite of being authentic (Napoli et al., 2014), this may have spilled over and decreased brand prestige as well as product attitude.

We were able to replicate our findings for H_1 and H_2 also for other dependent variables, such as brand-related behavior (i.e., intention to purchase and try the product). However, due to space limitations we are not able to present the results in detail.

A translation of product information in a suitable language will open the possibility of adding value for local brands who do not want to change their whole brand

image. Decisions regarding a foreign brand name are a long-term decision. A reference to foreign target markets via foreign language can be flexibly used when needed and altered for the communication strategies of different target markets.

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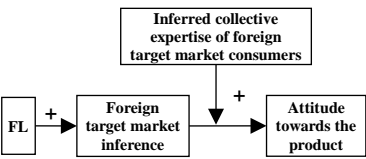
6   Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this doctoral thesis was to thoroughly investigate the effect of multilingual product information on consumers' product evaluations. There was a particular focus on identifying boundary conditions as well as detecting the drivers of a positive or negative influence. The following section summarizes the main findings and the contribution of the four presented research papers. In addition, practical implications are discussed as well as limitations and avenues for future research.

In Chapter 2, a literature review offered a state-of-the-art picture of foreign language research in marketing communications. Based on the different purposes for which a foreign language was used by marketers and the potential effects that are triggered, suggestions for further research in this area were developed. The consideration of foreign language cues that imply another foreign target market was suggested as a new research direction, as it has not yet received attention in the literature.

This identified research gap formed the foundation for the five subsequent studies. They investigated different areas in the application of multilingual product information and showed that depending on the use of the foreign language, it sent certain signals and thereby fulfilled certain functions. Basically, a foreign language provided associations and stereotypical information that built the foundation for an influence. Additionally, a foreign language could trigger a social-signaling effect based on characteristics associated with the consumers in the foreign target market. In the following, the functions fulfilled by the foreign language used in the experimental designs applied in the empirical studies are discussed. Table 6-1 provides an overview of the methodology used, the objectives, and key findings of the empirical studies.

First, Study 1 in Chapter 3 provided a first impression of the influence of multilingual product packaging on consumers' product evaluations. The study placed the focus on the associative function of a foreign language by examining its fit with the product category. A foreign language with either a high or low fit to the product category was depicted on product labels of beverages (orange juice: Spanish/high-fit vs. English/low-fit; tea: English/high-fit vs. Spanish/low-fit), and its effects on product attitude and taste perceptions were assessed. The results showed an interaction effect of the fit to the product category, which answered RQ3 (about the moderating influence of the fit to the product category).

Table 6-1. Overview of the empirical studies and their key findings

		Method	Goal	Results
Paper 2	Study 1	**Experimental design** 3 (FL: English, Spanish, absent) × 2 (product category: orange juice, tea) between-subjects factorial design	Preliminary investigation of the FL product information depending on the fit to the product category.	A high fit between the FL and product category led to higher product attitudes and better taste perceptions in comparison with a low fit for both product categories. For quality perceptions, this relationship was only found for orange juice.
		Mixed-method approach		
Paper 3	Study 2	**Qualitative study** Presentation of five different products of either fictitious or real brands with product information in one additional FL on the packaging (soap/French; crisp bread/Swedish; body wash/French; green tea/ French; detergent/French)	Identification of the consumer inferences resulting from the FL product information.	The dominant consumer inference was a foreign target market.
	Study 3	**Experimental follow-up study** 4 (FL: product information, brand name, slogan, absent condition) × 2 (product category: yoghurt, water bottle) between-subjects factorial design	Empirical investigation of the consumer inferences identified in Study 2 (dependent variables) using different FL displays (independent variable).	Quantitative demonstration that consumers predominantly inferred a foreign target market when product information was given in an FL for both product categories, which was not the case for brand names and slogans in a FL.
	Study 4	**Experimental design** 2 (FL: present, absent) × 3 (product category: shampoo, chocolate, bicycle) between-subjects factorial design	Investigation of the effect of FL product information on product evaluations in a moderated mediation model across three different product categories.	Positive effect based on the following moderated mediation:
Paper 4	Study 5	**Experimental design** 2 (FL: present, absent) × 2 (product category: beer, tea) between-subjects factorial design	Investigation of the effect of the FL product information on product evaluations of local brands using the FL of a rather reputable or less reputable country.	Positive effect based on the following mediations: • FL → foreign target market inferences → brand prestige → product attitude and intention to purchase/try the product • FL → foreign target market inferences → brand prestige → social-signaling value of the brand → product attitude and intention to purchase/try the product Negative effect due to a loss in authenticity independent of a foreign target market inference.

Note: FL = Foreign language

The findings imply that associations linked to the foreign language can be carried over to the product, which in turn might result in a negative or positive effect depending on its fit. This illustrates a rather stereotypical function of a foreign language, which had already been found in the literature, such as in the case of a foreign language used in television commercials (Haarmann 1989) or foreign pronounced brand names (Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994), however, not in the context of multilingual product information. Therefore, the current research adds to the research on foreign language in marketing communications in general.

Second, Paper 3 in Chapter 4 considered less stereotypical cases of product category-foreign language combinations (i.e., a moderate fit-level) that make the considered context more complex. This moves the type of inferences triggered by a foreign language into the spotlight, which was asked in RQ1. Paper 3 investigated the influence of multilingual product information on product evaluations sequentially in a mixed-method approach involving three empirical studies. In the first step, a qualitative study (Study 2) applied an explorative design to analyze consumer inferences resulting from product information in an additional foreign language. Several product-language combinations of either real or manipulated brands were presented (soap/French; crisp bread/Swedish; body wash/French; green tea/French; detergent/French). Answering the first research question, the study revealed that consumers predominantly inferred that the product was shipped to an additional foreign target market. This was quantitatively demonstrated by an experimental follow-up study (Study 3). This study considered a fast-moving consumer good (yoghurt) and a more durable product (water bottle) with Swedish as the foreign language. In a between-subjects design, inferences triggered by multilingual product information were compared with inferences induced by different foreign language cues commonly used in marketing practice (a brand name and a slogan in a foreign language). It was shown that when the product information was given in a foreign language, the predominant inference was a foreign target market across both product categories, which was not the case for a brand name or slogan in a foreign language. This also showed that the inferences differed depending on the way the foreign language was presented, which answered RQ2. In a further step, the downstream consequences of a foreign target market inference were analyzed. Study 4 investigated the effect of multilingual product information on product evaluations in an experimental approach across three different product categories (shampoo, chocolate, bicycle). In order to ensure that the effects were driven by consumers inferring a foreign target market, this inference was

implemented as a mediator in the assessment model, taking up RQ5 (the mediating influence of a foreign target market inference). Moreover, the inferred expertise of consumers in the foreign target market was identified as a moderating variable across all three product categories, addressing RQ4 (the moderating influence of the inferred expertise of foreign target market consumers). The findings of the moderated mediation model in Study 4 demonstrated a positive influence of a foreign target market inference triggered by multilingual product information when the consumers perceived expertise in the foreign target market regarding the product category of interest. The effect was further validated by controlling for the perception of a COO or globalness as alternative drivers (addressing RQ5). The findings of Paper 3 contribute to the existing literature in several ways (which is described in the following section).

In demonstrating that a foreign target market can be implied (depending on how the foreign language is used), the research stream on **multilingual product packaging** is extended. So far, the academic literature has mainly considered foreign language as a tool to target specific consumer groups within a country and that referred to a minority group linked to negative associations (Gopinath and Glassman 2008; Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer 2013). In addition, research on **foreign language in marketing communications in general** is enriched by the new perspective of the transfer of foreign target market information in comparison to the origin of a brand implied by foreign language cues (e.g., Melnyk, Klein, and Völckner 2012). Moreover, there is a contribution to **interpersonal influence research** (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989; Deutsch and Gerard 1955). The identification of the inferred expertise of foreign target market consumers as a boundary condition for a positive influence of multilingual product information implies a social-signaling effect linked to the reference customer group. It was shown that consumers considered the inferred purchase behavior of another nation of consumers as an orientation for their own product evaluation. Prior research has considered reference groups based on their profession or the level of familiarity perceived by customers (e.g., neighbors, friends, and colleagues; Bearden and Etzel 1982; Park and Lessing 1977). The findings of this doctoral thesis suggest that nationality can also form the foundation for a reference group. Further, by demonstrating that the citizens of a country or members of a culture are perceived to be expert consumers in certain domains and can be used by others as references, this thesis contributes to the literature regarding the field of **expert references**. The academic literature has primarily explored the notion of expert recommendations by considering endorser source characteristics (e.g., Ohanian 1990). In addition, it has been

investigated in other contexts, such as Internet shopping (e.g., Jiuan Tan 1999), word of mouth (e.g., Casaló et al. 2015; Wangenheim and Bayón 2007), and personal selling (e.g., Woodside and Davenport 1974). Moreover, the consideration of the inferred collective expertise of a country's consumers enriches the **conceptualization of a country's perceived image** with a concept that stems from the literature on interpersonal influence. A country image is typically described by dimensions that are related to an environment (i.e., beliefs regarding a country's political, economic, social, and technological environment), a product (i.e., beliefs about a country regarding a specific product category, such as reliability, design, or workmanship), and people (e.g., the likeability, trustworthiness, or knowledge of the citizens of the country) (Durand, Turkina, and Robson 2016; Papadopoulos, Banna, and Murphy 2017). In connection with a people-related country image, stereotypical perceptions of people of a specific country are described as reflecting a "cognitive dimension of social perception" (Diamantopoulos et al. 2017, p. 1024). Prior research states in particular regarding this context that the competence of people in a country typically refers to the manufacturing process (Heslop et al. 2004; Heslop et al. 2008). Adding to the conceptualizations of country image and country stereotypes, the results of this doctoral thesis show that the people-related dimension of country image is extended by the perceived image of the people in their role as consumers. To sum up, in addition to enriching the existing literature in several research areas, the findings of Paper 3 make the most important research contribution by adding a social component to the associative process.

Third, Paper 4 shed light on the perspective of local brands. Study 5 investigated whether the use of multilingual product information constituted a beneficial strategy for local brands (addressing RQ6) in an international setting. To this end, surveys were conducted in Taiwan and Germany. Products of local brands were presented that constituted typical existing products with regional uniqueness only produced in the respective country (the packaging of a Taiwanese brand high-mountain tea and a bottle of a German brand beer). The study was linked to the previous work in that it was based on an associative function with the addition of a social-signaling effect. The foreign language used referred to a rather reputable country (i.e., Germany in the case of the Taiwanese sample) or less reputable country (i.e., China in the case of the German sample). This illuminated the associative function, as it manipulated a high or low fit to the product category based on the reputation of the foreign country. In addition, a social-signaling effect linked to the referred customers in the foreign target market was considered, since the mediating effect of the prestige and the social-signaling

value of a brand on product attitude and brand-related behavior was analyzed. Attesting to the robustness of the finding of Study 4 (i.e., the influence of multilingual product information on product evaluations driven by a foreign target market inference), Study 5 replicated a positive influence of multilingual product information mediated by a foreign target market inference in an Asian market environment. Thereby, side effects caused by perceived globalness were ruled out, further addressing RQ5. Study 5 showed that local brands may profit from using multilingual product information on packaging when it points to a rather reputable country in comparison to a less reputable one. Similar to the results in Study 1, the non-fitting foreign language-product category combination (i.e., using the foreign language of a less reputable country) resulted in a detrimental effect. Even though this negative effect was not driven by a foreign target market inference, the authenticity of the local product was diminished, which in turn decreased the product evaluation. This provides valuable insights into the explanation of the driving force of the negative effects of multilingual product information and extends the results of Study 1, which had shown a negative effect based on the associative functioning of a foreign language.

6.1   Practical implications

Following the summary of the results of the four papers included in this dissertation and the contributions to theory, managerial implications can be derived.

The results of this investigation of multilingual product information are relevant for marketers since it is widely used in marketing practice. In order to save costs, practitioners often sell a standardized product in several countries (Samiee and Roth 1992). However, this might trigger unintended harmful effects. Detrimental effects on consumers' evaluations are expected when the foreign language does not fit the product category in the first place or points to a foreign target market that is linked to consumers with perceived low collective expertise. Languages associated with less-developed countries could lead consumers to infer that the product is destined for a less-developed market and is inferior in comparison to a product created for a highly developed market. Altogether, practitioners have to evaluate the pros and cons and should weigh if cost-saving aspects pay off towards the potential negative effects of a foreign language.

In contrast, the results of this dissertation show that marketers can use a foreign language to their advantage. They can benefit from a strategy of implying a foreign target market through a foreign language when they sell in a country that is associated

with a high level of perceived collective expertise in its consumers for the respective product category. In particular, practitioners that have already entered some foreign markets can communicate a foreign target market that is most associated with collective expertise. Moreover, in the context of expanding local brands from emerging markets, using multi-language product information offers a strategic tool to indicate success abroad without losing a beneficial local image.

Note that this managerial relevance applies only to companies that are really selling their products in more than one country. Only in that case do foreign language cues represent a variable that can be influenced by managers since deceptive advertising does not take place.

6.2   Limitations and avenues for future research

Although the research papers in this thesis provide important implications, there are also several limitations that must be mentioned.

First, even though this thesis shows generalized results across country contexts, it must be emphasized that a foreign language remains an ambiguous cue. Several inferences may occur at the same time, and these inferences differ depending on the product category, as demonstrated in the qualitative Study 2. Even though there is empirical evidence that the effect of a foreign language is driven by foreign target market inferences, it is possible that consumers infer something different in other contexts, which might lead to a difference in the impact on product evaluations. This issue of ambiguity of a foreign language, in particular, with respect to the target audience (with a foreign language either pointing to a minority group within the country or a foreign country) has not been addressed.

Second, there are limitations with respect to the underlying mechanism of the effects. The positive effect of multilingual product information could be partly based on a **general country stereotype effect** (Maheswaran 1994; Samiee 1994). Thus, a constraint of this dissertation is that the proportion of the effect that is based on general images and stereotypes conveyed by the foreign language as a country cue cannot be isolated. However, since unconscious processes are involved here, it is hardly possible to account for this by applying explicit measurement techniques. Thus, to differentiate the postulated reference group influence from a general stereotype effect, implicit measurement techniques should be used in future research (Diamantopoulos et al. 2017).

Third, there are issues in connection with the **conceptualization of the inferred expertise of consumers in the target market**, since it cannot be clearly separated from existing research constructs. The evaluations of products from a country are determined by the country's competence to produce desirable products (e.g., technologically advanced) and the competency of the people (e.g., hardworking) (Heslop et al. 2004; Heslop et al. 2008). This competence on the manufacturing side occurs because of the traditions of a geographical region (e.g., Italy is well known for leather, textiles, and shoemakers; France is well known for fashion, cosmetics, and art; Germany is well known for engineers and cars). It can be expected that a country's competence in a product category not only leads to customers' perceptions that companies based in that country are expert suppliers but also that the citizens of that country are expert consumers. Generally, the traditions and high level of expertise that are used during the manufacturing of products spill over to the consumption habits in the respective geographic areas and may even affect educational systems. Therefore, the perceived expertise of customers in a specific country is basically based on the sense of expertise on the manufacturing side identified in the COO literature. Thus, effects triggered by the perception of a foreign target market are theoretically intertwined with effects induced by a COO. In this research in order to deal with this issue, care was taken in order to isolate the influence of the perception of a foreign target market. Effects were validated by excluding COO effects in the empirical studies that tested the downstream consequences of multilingual product information on consumers' product evaluations (i.e., Studies 4 & 5). The effect of a foreign target market inference was differentiated from a COO effect as a possible alternative explanation for the influence by controlling for the perception of a COO as an alternative driver. In each case, it was shown that it was not a COO belief that drove the effect. Moreover, in some cases, the COO information was provided in order to prevent consumers from drawing a COO inference based on the foreign language. In Study 4, in which the product category chocolate was considered, the explicit COO information was provided that the chocolate was sold by a German brand. In Study 5, the COO information was provided implicitly, since the presented brands were well known in their home countries as local brands. However, the effort to isolate the influence of a foreign target market inference as much as possible was at the expense of ecological validity, as it restricted the results to a limited area of the real-world environment and actual purchase situations, which would have been much more complex.

Fourth, future research could further investigate additional drivers of foreign language. These could include, for instance, a consensus inference (i.e., a heuristic cue referring to other, or many other, customers who like the product; Moscovici 1980). The literature on the effect of consensus information shows that referring to the consumption decisions or recommendations of many other consumers can favorably affect consumer judgments (e.g., Freling and Dacin 2009). In the case of foreign target market information, there is reference to a nation of consumers, which also might refer to a large number of consumers. Therefore, future research should examine to what extent foreign target market information is perceived to be a consensus claim.

Fifth, the identification of consumers with a foreign target market might play a role. Similar to concepts like self-identification with a brand (e.g., Park, Eisingerich, and Park 2013) or self-brand connection (Escalas and Bettman 2003), consumers may feel a perceived connection between themselves and a country. There likely must be at least a certain level of such connection for a foreign target market to be persuasive, and the more consumers identify with a foreign target market, the more they will be influenced by it, just as the persuasiveness of advice from others increases with increasing perceived similarity to the source (Faraji-Rad, Samuelsen, and Warlop 2015). Therefore, an investigation of the impact of perceived connectedness on the effects induced by the perception of a foreign target market is suggested.

Finally, future studies could investigate another issue that was not addressed in this doctoral thesis, namely the use of more than one foreign language. In this case, marketers refer to several foreign target markets, which might change the effects considerably. In particular, the perception of being global will probably be enhanced, since global brands are associated with an appearance in multiple countries (Xie, Batra, and Peng 2015), which is not the case when using one foreign language, as was demonstrated in Studies 4 and 5. This may positively affect consumers' evaluations, as prior studies have demonstrated (e.g., Davvetas et al. 2015; Holt et al. 2004). Future research could investigate whether there is a relationship between the amount of displayed foreign language and perceived globalness. In this connection, the finding of Gopinath, Glassman, and Nyer (2013) already offers a suggestion. They found a negative effect of a foreign language pointing to a minority group (i.e., Hispanics in the U.S.) was nullified when a third language was added to the product packaging of refrigerators. They assumed that a raised perception of globalness was the reason for that.

6.3 Conclusion

To sum up, this doctoral thesis demonstrated that multilingual product information affects consumers' product evaluations depending on its fit to the product category. More importantly, it has shown that a foreign language can transfer the information of a foreign target market. This affected product evaluations positively in cases in which the consumers perceived an expertise existing in the foreign target market regarding the product category of interest. This influence represents a new effect in the international marketing literature and extends the research on multilingual marketing communications. Moreover, the notion of an inferred collective expertise of consumers in a foreign country contributes to the literature in the field of social influence and expert references. In addition, it adds to the conceptualizations of a country image and country stereotypes. By examining the influence of multilingual product information in several product categories and in applying a mixed-method approach, practitioners are provided with a better understanding of the effects of foreign language strategies. The findings provide particularly valuable implications for practitioners in the global market, including local brands, on how to strategically use multilingual product information in order to benefit from it or to avoid unintended detrimental effects.

7 Full list of references

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Acuity Information Systems Private Limited, Neu-Delhi, Indien

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- Identifizierung potenzieller Märkte
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Publikationen

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- Hüttl-Maack, V., Schwenk, J. (2016): Effects of Multilingual Product Packaging on Product Attitude, Perceived Quality, and Taste Perceptions, in: Verlegh, P., Voorveld, H., Eisend, M. (Hrsg.): Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI), Gabler, S. 351-363.
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- Huettl, V.; Schwenk, J. (2014): Does Your Product Speak the Right Language? Effects of Multilingual Product Packaging, in: Proceedings of the 13th ICORIA: International Conference on Research in Advertising, June 2014, Amsterdam.

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DEUTSCH

Der Einfluss mehrsprachiger Produktinformationen auf die Produktbewertungen von Verbrauchern: Eine Untersuchung von grundlegenden Effekten, Rahmenbedingungen und Treibern
Zusammenfassung der Dissertation

Johanna Juliana Schwenk

Heutzutage scheinen mehrsprachige Produktinformationen allgegenwärtig zu sein, so werden sie Verbrauchern auf verschiedenste Weise dargeboten, beispielsweise auf Produktverpackungen. Eine umfassende Literaturübersicht im Bereich des internationalen Marketings zeigt jedoch, dass nur in wenigen akademischen Studien bisher untersucht wurde, wie Verbraucher dies bewerten und wahrnehmen. Bisher wurden die Schlussfolgerungen, die Verbraucher aus mehrsprachigen Produktinformationen ziehen, in der Literatur nicht untersucht.

Es wird angenommen, dass in vielen Fällen mehrsprachige Produktinformationen darauf hinweisen, dass das Produkt in einem Land verkauft wird, in dem die Fremdsprache relevant ist. Wenn Verbraucher zu dem Schluss kommen, dass das Produkt in einem anderen Land verkauft wird, trägt die Fremdsprache die Botschaft, dass eine andere Nation von Verbrauchern dasselbe Produkt kauft. Diese Dissertation basiert auf der Vorstellung, dass eine Fremdsprache als Hinweis auf einen ausländischen Zielmarkt dienen kann, in dem sich ein Zielverbraucher befindet. Diese Annahme fand in der Literatur bisher keine Berücksichtigung.

Neben der Prüfung dieser Annahme sollte in dieser Dissertation untersucht werden, ob und unter welchen Bedingungen mehrsprachige Produktinformationen, die auf einen ausländischen Zielmarkt hindeuten, Produktbewertungen von Konsumenten beeinflussen und auf welche Weise dies erfolgt. Für diese Untersuchung wurden fünf empirische Studien durchgeführt. Diese untersuchten verschiedene Anwendungsbereiche mehrsprachiger Produktinformationen und zeigten, dass eine Fremdsprache je nach Verwendung bestimmte Signale senden und damit bestimmte Funktionen erfüllen kann. Fremdsprache kann Assoziationen auslösen und stereotype Informationen bereitstellen. Darüber hinaus kann Fremdsprache eine soziale Signalwirkung haben, die auf Merkmalen basiert, die mit den Konsumenten im ausländischen Zielmarkt assoziiert werden.

Zunächst lieferte eine erste Studie einen Eindruck davon, wie sich mehrsprachige Produktverpackungen auf die Produktbewertung von Konsumenten auswirken. Der Schwerpunkt lag auf der assoziativen Funktion der Fremdsprache, indem der Fit der Fremdsprache mit der Produktkategorie untersucht wurde. Die Ergebnisse implizierten, dass Assoziationen, die in Verbindung mit der Fremdsprache stehen, auf das Produkt übertragen werden können, was je nach Stärke des Fits zu einem positiven oder negativen Effekt auf die Produktbewertung führt. Dies zeigte eine eher stereotype Funktion der Fremdsprache, die in der Literatur bereits angesprochen wurde, beispielsweise bei Fremdsprachen in der Fernsehwerbung und fremd klingenden Markennamen (jedoch noch nicht im Kontext mehrsprachiger Produktinformationen). Diese Studie ergänzt damit die Forschung zu Fremdsprachen in der Marketingkommunikation im Allgemeinen.

In weiteren empirischen Studien wurden weniger stereotype Produkt-Land-Kombinationen (mit moderatem Fit) berücksichtigt, was den betrachteten Kontext komplexer machte. Dies legte den Fokus auf die Art der durch die Fremdsprache ausgelösten Inferenzen. Ein explorativer Ansatz war der Ausgangspunkt der Untersuchung. In einer qualitativen Studie wurde untersucht, welche Schlussfolgerungen Verbraucher aus mehrsprachigen Produktinformationen ziehen. Die Studie zeigte, dass Verbraucher überwiegend zu dem Schluss kamen, dass das

Produkt in einem weiteren Zielmarkt verkauft wird, und bestätigte die eingangs getroffene Annahme. Dies wurde quantitativ durch eine experimentelle Folgestudie bestätigt und von anderen in der Praxis gebräuchlichen Sprachreizen unterschieden. In einem weiteren Schritt wurden in einem Experiment die nachgelagerten Konsequenzen einer ausländischen Zielmarkt-Inferenz analysiert. Dabei wurde die wahrgenommene Expertise der Konsumenten im ausländischen Zielmarkt als moderierender Faktor identifiziert. Die Ergebnisse zeigten, dass sich mehrsprachige Produktinformationen positiv auswirken, wenn ein ausländischer Zielmarkt in Verbindung mit einer Expertise der Verbraucher in Bezug auf die relevante Produktkategorie wahrgenommen wird. Dies impliziert eine soziale Signalwirkung von Fremdsprache basierend auf der Referenzgruppe, auf die verwiesen wird. Es wird gezeigt, dass Konsumenten das abgeleitete Kaufverhalten einer anderen Nation von Verbrauchern als Orientierung für ihre eigene Produktbewertung heranziehen.

Abschließend beleuchtete eine internationale empirische Studie die Perspektive lokaler Marken. Es wurde untersucht, ob die Verwendung mehrsprachiger Produktinformationen eine vorteilhafte Strategie für lokale Marken darstellt. Sowohl die assoziative Funktion als auch eine sozialer Signalwirkung wurden aufgegriffen und miteinander kombiniert. Die Studie replizierte einen positiven Einfluss mehrsprachiger Produktinformationen in einem asiatischen Marktumfeld, wenn sich diese auf einen angesehenen ausländischen Zielmarkt bezog (Fit-Kombination) und bestätigte damit die Robustheit des Befundes. Unabhängig von einer ausländischen Zielmarkt-Inferenz zeigte sich außerdem ein negativer Effekt, wenn sich die Fremdsprache auf ein weniger angesehenes Land bezog (Non-Fit-Kombination). Die soziale Funktion einer Fremdsprache äußerte sich in dem Zunutze machen des Prestiges einer Konsumentengruppe, auf die sich die Fremdsprache bezog, welches auf die Marke übertragen wurde.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Dissertation sind von theoretischer und praktischer Relevanz. Sie tragen zur Literatur bei, indem sie die Forschung, welche sich mit Fremdsprachen in der Marketingkommunikation beschäftigt (insbesondere im Bereich der mehrsprachigen Produktverpackung) sowie den Forschungsbereich des zwischenmenschlichen Einflusses erweitern und bereichern. Die praktische Relevanz richtet sich an Vermarkter, die Produkte in mehr als einem Land verkaufen. Mögliche negative Auswirkungen der Verwendung von Fremdsprachen müssen berücksichtigt werden, wenn beispielsweise identische standardisierte Produkte aus Kostengründen in mehrere Länder geliefert werden. Die Ergebnisse veranschaulichen nicht nur, wie unbeabsichtigte schädliche Auswirkungen vermieden werden können, sondern zeigen auch multinationalen Unternehmen, wie sie mehrsprachige Produktinformationen zu ihrem Vorteil einsetzen können. Fremdsprachen können strategisch in der Marketingkommunikation und zur Steigerung der Produktattraktivität eingesetzt werden, wenn sie auf eine Nation von Konsumenten mit hoher wahrgenommener Expertise hinweisen. Auf diese Weise können Markenführer von einer Länderreferenz profitieren, ohne die gesamte Markenkommunikation auf dieses Land zuzuschneiden.

13.10.2020, UPM

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13.10.2020, Böblingen

Datum, Ort   Johanna Schwenk (Doktorandin)

The impact of multilingual product information on consumer evaluations: An assessment of basic effects, boundary conditions, and drivers
Summary of the dissertation

Johanna Juliana Schwenk

Today, multilingual product information is seemingly ubiquitous as it is disseminated to consumers in a variety of ways, such as in product packaging. A comprehensive review of the literature in the field of international marketing shows, however, that only a few academic studies have so far examined how consumers rate and perceive it. To date, the inferences consumers obtain from multilingual product information have not been examined in the published literature.

It is believed that in many cases, multilingual product information indicates that the product is sold in a country in which the foreign language is relevant. When consumers come to the conclusion that the product is being sold in another country, the foreign language carries the message that another nation of consumers is buying the same product. This dissertation is based on the notion that a foreign language can serve as an indication of a foreign target market, which is another country in which a target consumer is located. This assumption has so far not been taken into account in the published research.

In addition to the investigation of this assumption, the aim of this dissertation was to determine whether and under what conditions multilingual product information suggesting a foreign target market influences consumers' product evaluations and how this is done. Five empirical studies were used for the investigation. These studies examined different areas of application of multilingual product information and showed that, depending on its use, a foreign language may send certain signals and thereby fulfill certain functions. Associations and stereotypical information can be provided through a foreign language. In addition, a foreign language can have a social signal effect based on characteristics associated with the consumers in the foreign target market.

First, an initial study provided an impression of how multilingual product packaging affects consumer product evaluations. The focus was on the associative function of the foreign language by examining the fit of the foreign language with the product category. The results implied that associations related to the foreign language could be transferred to the product, which, depending on the degree of fit, led to a positive or negative effect on the product evaluation. This showed a rather stereotypical function of the foreign language, which had already been addressed in the literature, for example, with foreign languages in television advertising and foreign-sounding brand names (but not yet in the context of multilingual product information). This study thus complements the research on foreign languages in marketing communication in general.

In additional empirical studies, less stereotypical product-country combinations (with a moderate fit) were considered, which made the considered context more complex. This put the focus on the type of inferences caused by the foreign language. An exploratory approach was the starting point of the investigation. A qualitative study examined which inferences are drawn by consumers from multilingual product information. The study showed that consumers predominantly concluded that the product would be sold in a further target market and confirmed the assumption made at the beginning. This was demonstrated quantitatively by an experimental follow-up study and differentiated from other language stimuli that are commonly used in practice. In a further step, the downstream consequences of a foreign target market inference were

analyzed in an experiment. The perceived expertise of consumers in the foreign target market was identified as a moderating factor. The results showed that multilingual product information had a positive effect when a foreign target market was perceived in connection with consumer expertise regarding the relevant product category. This implies a social signal effect of the foreign language based on the reference group that is being referred to. It is shown that consumers viewed another nation's inferred purchasing behavior of consumers as a guide for their own product evaluation.

Finally, an international empirical study shed light on the perspective of local brands. It investigated whether the use of multilingual product information represented an advantageous strategy for local brands. Both the associative function and a social signal effect were taken up and combined. The study replicated the positive influence of multilingual product information in an Asian market environment when it related to a reputable foreign target market (fit combination) and thereby confirmed the robustness of the finding. In addition, regardless of a foreign target market inference, a negative effect was shown if the foreign language related to a less reputable country (non-fit combination). The social function of a foreign language manifested itself in the use of the prestige of a consumer group to which the foreign language referred, which was transferred to the brand.

The results of this dissertation are of theoretical and practical relevance. They contribute to the literature by expanding and enriching research that deals with foreign languages in marketing communication (especially in the area of multilingual product packaging) as well as in the research area of interpersonal influence. The practical relevance is for marketers who sell products in more than one country. The possible negative effects of using foreign languages must be taken into account, for example, if identical standardized products are delivered to several countries for cost reasons. In addition to illustrating how to avoid unintended harmful effects, the results also show multinational companies how to use multilingual product information in a favorable way. Foreign languages can be used strategically in marketing communication and to increase product attractiveness if they point to a nation of consumers with a high level of perceived expertise. In this way, brands can benefit from a country reference without tailoring all brand communication to that country.

13.-10.2020, Ulm

Date, place   Prof. Dr. Verena Hüttl-Maack (supervisor)

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Anlage 3

Eidesstattliche Versicherung über die eigenständig erbrachte Leistung

gemäß § 18 Absatz 3 Satz 5 der Promotionsordnung der Universität Hohenheim für die Fakultäten Agrar-, Natur- sowie Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften

1. Bei der eingereichten Dissertation zum Thema

The impact of multilingual product information on consumer evaluations:

An assessment of basic effects, boundary conditions and drivers

handelt es sich um meine eigenständig erbrachte Leistung.

2. Ich habe nur die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt und mich keiner unzulässigen Hilfe Dritter bedient. Insbesondere habe ich wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus anderen Werken übernommene Inhalte als solche kenntlich gemacht.

3. Ich habe nicht die Hilfe einer kommerziellen Promotionsvermittlung oder -beratung in Anspruch genommen.

4. Die Bedeutung der eidesstattlichen Versicherung und der strafrechtlichen Folgen einer unrichtigen oder unvollständigen eidesstattlichen Versicherung sind mir bekannt.

Die Richtigkeit der vorstehenden Erklärung bestätige ich. Ich versichere an Eides Statt, dass ich nach bestem Wissen die reine Wahrheit erklärt und nichts verschwiegen habe.

Böblingen, 13.10.2020

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Unterschrift

UNIVERSITÄT HOHENHEIM

KO-AUTORENERKLÄRUNG *DECLARATION OF CO-AUTHORSHIP*

(Für kumulative Dissertationen)

Name des Kandidaten:
(Name of the candidate)

Johanna Juliana Schwenk

Titel des Artikels (*Title of the article*):

Effects of Multilingual Product Packaging on Product Attitude, Perceived Quality, and Taste Perceptions

☐ nicht eingereicht (*not submitted*)

☐ eingereicht bei (*submitted to*):

☑ Zur Veröffentlichung angenommen oder veröffentlicht in (*accepted for publication or published in*):

European Advertising Academy's "Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI)"

Arbeitsanteil des Kandidaten an vorgenanntem Artikel *Quantification of candidates contribution to the article (overall)*:

☐ hat zur Arbeit beigetragen/has contributed to the work (<1/3)

☑ hat wesentlich zur Arbeit beigetragen/has made a substantial contribution (1/3 to 2/3)

☐ hat einen Großteil der Arbeit allein erledigt/did the majority of the work independently (>2/3)

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3.
4.

Hiermit bestätige ich die Richtigkeit des oben beschriebenen Arbeitsanteils des Kandidaten.
I hereby confirm the candidate's contribution as quantified above.

Stuttgart, 07.10.2020
Ort, Datum *Place, Date*

Unterschrift Ko-Autor *Signature Co-author*

UNIVERSITÄT HOHENHEIM

KO-AUTORENERKLÄRUNG *DECLARATION OF CO-AUTHORSHIP*

(Für kumulative Dissertationen)

Name des Kandidaten:
(*Name of the candidate*)

Johanna Juliana Schwenk

Titel des Artikels (*Title of the article*):

Multilingual Product Information: What Consumers Infer from Additional Information in a Foreign Language and How It Affects Their Evaluations

- ☐ nicht eingereicht (*not submitted*)
- ☑ eingereicht bei (*submitted to*):
- ☐ Zur Veröffentlichung angenommen oder veröffentlicht in (*accepted for publication or published in*):

Journal of Business Research

Arbeitsanteil des Kandidaten an vorgenanntem Artikel *Quantification of candidates contribution to the article (overall)*:

- ☐ hat zur Arbeit beigetragen/has contributed to the work (<1/3)
- ☑ hat wesentlich zur Arbeit beigetragen/has made a substantial contribution (1/3 to 2/3)
- ☐ hat einen Großteil der Arbeit allein erledigt/did the majority of the work independently (>2/3)
- ☐ federführender Autor/lead author

Ko-Autoren *Co-authors* (Name und Kontaktdaten/*full name; contact*):

1.	Prof. Dr. Verena Hüttl-Maack, Institut für Marketing & Management, Lehrstuhl für Marketing & Konsumentenverhalten (570E)
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_____
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(Für kumulative Dissertationen)

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(*Name of the candidate*)

Johanna Juliana Schwenk

Titel des Artikels (*Title of the article*):

Adding Value to Local Brands through Foreign Language Cues

☐ nicht eingereicht (*not submitted*)

☑ eingereicht bei (*submitted to*):

☐ Zur Veröffentlichung angenommen oder veröffentlicht in (*accepted for publication or published in*):

European Marketing Academy Conference (EMAC) 2018

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