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A JOINT LINGUISTIC-MARKETING ANALYSIS OF BRAND AND PRODUCT NAMES The case of Unilever

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Abstract – The proposed paper aims to present a qualitative descriptive study that examines brands and products commercialized by the Anglo-Dutch multinational consumer goods company Unilever from a marketing and linguistic perspective. The research is the result of a recent interest in terminology and linguistics studies applied to the field of branding. Initially, the focus is on brand identity and the communication tools used by the company to reach its consumer base. Subsequently, by drawing on linguistics and translation tools, an English-Italian inter-linguistic contrastive analysis is performed. Finally, brand and product names in both languages are analysed on the basis of six different dimensions: graphemic/phonetic, morphological/syntactical, semantic, and lexical. The utmost aim is to evaluate the overall impact of marketing and linguistic/translation choices on Italian consumers and find whether different communication strategies are used for different product types. The corpus for this study is represented by the English and Italian versions of the Unilever website, and external official websites of its brands.

Keywords: linguistic analysis; Unilever; brand names; branding; specialized translation.

1. Introduction

Linguistic tools play a key role in the implementation of branding and marketing strategies; while these choices may appear coincidental, they are generally the result of painstaking research and consideration. In today's global markets, in which international companies must reach geographically and culturally distant groups of consumers, brand-naming processes require even greater attention than in the past. In a continuously shrinking world, successful brand communication depends on a company's ability to transfer ideas across cultures and languages, and consequently, on the joint exploitation of linguistic and marketing tools. In recent years, "marketing

[1] This paper is the output of the joint work of the Authors. However, in the editing phase sections 1., 5., 5.1, 5.4, 6. were written by Francesco Nacchia, sections 2., 3., 4., 5.2, 5.3, were written by Vittoria Massaro.

literature has recognised that the linguistic nature of a brand has become an important topic of debate in relation to the globalising tendencies of international markets" (Cotticelli Kurras *et al.* 2012, p. 14).

As Semprini (1995) explains in his work *La marque*, brands become mediators between two languages and sometimes between opposite cultures; therefore, product and brand names must be strategically designed to be memorable and attractive to customers with different cultural backgrounds. For example, Unilever's Heartbrand, the popular ice cream trademark is alternately "known as Algida (Italy), Kibon (Brazil), Langnese (Germany), Ola (The Netherlands), Streets (Australia), Wall's (UK and most parts of Asia), etc." (Edelman 2009, p. 145). At the same time, the trans-national status attained by languages such as English and Spanish and the blurring of western cultural boundaries enable "advertisers [to] rely on a common set of cultural models, of behaviours, of aspirations and of aesthetic and individualistic values" (Tufi, Blackwood 2010, p. 204).

Thus far, research has mainly focused on the development and implementation of frameworks for assessing the linguistic and marketing potential of a brand and the impact of linguistic devices on consumers' response. By considering the Chinese marketplace, Zhang and Schmitt (2001) developed a framework for managing brand name creation in an international market based on both linguistic and cognitive analysis and emphasised the importance of contextual factors in the processing of brand names. Also, starting from the assumption that "cross-border brand naming is becoming a significant marketing issue", Usunier and Shaner (2002, p. 211) proposed a framework evaluating the linguistic value of a global brand based on three categories – name, visual imagery and textual identity – and the related linguistic characteristics – spelling, ethnic, meanings, name, visual, denotative, connotative, and rhetorical value. Finally, Cotticelli Kurras *et al.* (2012) explored Lush's brand naming strategies in order to "assess whether marketing tools and linguistic brand name characteristics can contribute to the creation of a consistent brand image" (Cotticelli Kurras *et al.* 2012, p. 13).

Consumers' response to brand names was explored by Lowrey *et al.* (2003) that specifically looked at the relation between the presence of particular linguistic features in brand names and memorability. Provided that "for the most part, the memory advantage for the linguistic categories occurred *only* when brands were less familiar" (Lowrey *et al.* 2003, p. 14), they found semantic appositeness, paranomasia and initial plosives to affect memorability positively. Similarly, Miller and Toman (2016) explored the relation between linguistic devices in slogans and their effectiveness in eliciting favourable responses from consumers. Among others, alliterations, initial plosives, word-phrase repletion, puns and well-known phrases turned out the be the most common.

Based on these premises, this research uses a case-study approach to evaluate the impact of marketing and linguistic choices, made by the British company Unilever, on Italian consumers. In the first phase of the study, key concepts needed for analysis – brand, brand identity and brand image – are discussed. Next, the marketing analysis section briefly discusses the company's history, foundational values, and provides a review of the communication tools used by the company to spread its identity and products. Finally, in the linguistic analysis section, Unilever's Italian product names are compared to their English correspondents in terms of their graphemic/phonetic, morphological/syntactical, lexical and semantic features, so as to evaluate the impact of linguistic marketing choices on Italian consumers and determine whether different communication strategies are used for different product types.

2. Key concepts

Generally, a brand name is the part of a brand that can be articulated and reproduced (Kotler, Bliemel 2001) working as a "mind marker" (Platen 1997, p. 162) and identifier for what it offers to customers (Langner 2003). Originally, a brand had to identify the producer, the owner or the seller (Blackett 2004) and only with the Second Industrial Revolution it turned into a tool for conveying useful and appealing information to potential consumers. Today, a brand name is seen as a designation unit that is difficult to categorise – being a hybrid between a proper and common noun – and that can access the common lexicon just like neologisms would do (Altmanova 2013).

A brand may come in various forms, actually it can be "a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from other sellers".[2] It can thus encapsulate a set of values and principles which characterise the company's way of thinking and doing, and that can be defined as the brand identity. The company, in its effort to promote it and thus its products/services, may perform various activities aimed at reaching the target of consumers and shaping the company's brand image. Keller (1993, p. 3) defined this latter expression as:

> […] perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. Brand associations are the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers. The favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand associations are the dimensions distinguishing brand knowledge that play an important role

[2] American Marketing Association, online dictionary: https://www.ama.org/resources/pages/dictionary.aspx?dLetter=B (15.1.2017).

> in determining the differential response that makes up brand equity, especially in high involvement settings.

Brand associations, in turn, can be labelled as: attributes – which are all the brand characteristics related or not to a product, benefits – the advantages gained, and attitudes – customers' impressions and feelings (Cotticelli Kurras *et al.* 2012). A brand image is not stable and must be maintained and reinforced over the years (Rossister, Percy 1985) through the exploitation of different tools. For instance, some companies may even voluntarily choose not to communicate their identity at all as a precise marketing choice.

3. Company profile

Unilever is a multinational consumer goods company, leader supplier of food, home and personal care goods that includes about 400 brands and operates in over 190 countries. It was created by the merger of Lever Brothers – a British manufacturing company founded by William Lever producing household soaps from 1884 – and Margarine Unie – a Dutch company producing margarine set out in 1927 when brothers Jurgens and Van den Bergh joined their forces – on 1 January 1930. In over eighty years in business, the company has gone through massive obstacles – above all the Great Depression and World War I – and has achieved great results in terms of geographical/production expansion and revenue.

Its vision and identity are perfectly summarised by the motto "making sustainable living commonplace" and three keywords – health, nutrition, and sustainability – which have become even more central to the company's strategy in the last few decades since

> We are living in a world where temperatures are rising, water shortages are more frequent, food supplies are increasingly scarce and the gap between rich and poor increasing. Populations are growing fast, making basic hygiene and sanitation even more of a challenge.[3]

Furthermore, in 2010 the Sustainable Living Plan[4] was founded, and with it the company's three main goals were stated:

- Improving health and well-being – in particular hand-washing, oral health, self-esteem and safe drinking water;
- Reducing environmental impact in relation to water, waste, greenhouse gases and sustainable sourcing;

[3] Unilever website, *Our strategy for sustainable business*. https://www.unilever.com/sustainable-living/the-sustainable-living-plan/our-strategy/ (5.1.17).

[4] Unilever website, *Introducing our plan: The Unilever sustainable living plan*. https://www.unilever.com/sustainable-living/the-sustainable-living-plan/ (5.1.2017).

- Enhancing livelihoods in relation to fairness in the workplace, inclusive business, and opportunities for women.

In brief, Unilever's identity is shaped upon different ethical and moral values which apply to a wide spectrum of spheres of everyday life.

4. Communication tools

In this section the various communication tools exploited by the company are analysed in order to assess how foundational values and products are transmitted to its global consumer base.

Possibly, the most effective of all is its logo, which has also a dedicated section on the company website where the highlighted keywords are conveyed, together with others related to the brand itself. It is composed of a U – representing the first letter of the brand name – that is made up of 26 different symbols and was redesigned in 2004 in order to represent better the company and its ideals. Having a large number of elements, these were grouped according to the keywords they represent as follows:

- Sustainability/environmental awareness: the sun, an infinite and renewable source of energy; a bee, representing nature, but also hard work; a palm tree and a flower;[5] a fish,[6] designating natural resources; a chili pepper, showing their effort towards sustainable agriculture; a packaging, indicating their use of environmentally friendly packaging; a heart and a plant, to underline their love and care towards nature; and the virtuous cycle, meaning the company's commitment in reducing waste;
- Health: a hand, to indicate sensitivity and care; a bowl and a spoon, referring to healthy and tasty meals; hair, representing beauty and confidence; a flower, the beauty of nature; a swirl, indicating flavours and taste; a fish, a fresh and healthy food; waves and a sweater, to indicate cleanliness and freshness; and a dove, symbol of confidence and freedom;
- Future: the DNA, indicating life and Unilever's heritage; the freezing process, a positive innovation; particles, as the symbol of research and innovation; and a spark, emblematizing their will to always change and improve their technologies.

Other elements that were not included in the previous categories are represented by lips – which indicate two of the fundamentals of Unilever, communication and transparency – and the heart that, together with the ice cream, underlines their passion, care, and enjoyment. The logo, with all the

[5] The word "flower" appears also in the subsequent category since it represents beauty too.
[6] Also "fish" appears in another category – health – because it is a symbol of fresh and healthy food.

components discussed here is the perfect representation of today's idea of brand outlined above.

The company's basic values are also conveyed in one of the latest videos uploaded to Unilever UK YouTube channel, *So long, old world*.[7] In the video, a young girl maintains that a new world is about to begin, "a new world where confidence is the real beauty, where our basic needs are no longer needs, and where kids learn to write their own story".[8] While she speaks, pictures and captions show some of the products of the company together with the results achieved by them in building self-confidence in young people, and improving hygiene and children's education. The video concludes with the slogan "when you choose Unilever, you help create a bright future",[9] underlining the idea of sustainability and innovation that are their main aims.

Other initiatives either in cooperation with external bodies or exploiting internal resources, have been promoted over the years in order to put into practice the basic founding principles of the company. Global partnerships are considered "a vital part of [their] business model" for having "a positive social impact and reduce [their] environmental footprint".[10] More in detail, these help Unilever pursue four main goals: improving livelihoods; favouring transformational change; reducing the impact of calamities; working together for reducing environmental impact. Among others, in 1996 a partnership with the WWF was signed with the purpose of establishing the Maritime Stewardship Council, a certification programme for regulating fisheries;[11] Further authoritative partners are Global Food Banking Network, Vaseline®, and UN Women.

Finally, aiming at promoting and sharing research, the company created the Unilever Nutrition Centre, the Unilever Health Institute, and the Unilever Nutrition and Health Academy. Furthermore, the company also created the online platform Unilever Bight Future[12] that wishes to raise awareness about simple actions to be taken for fighting inequalities and preserving earth for future generations. Everyone can sign up and perform an *act of sunlight*, which can be defined as any kind of contribution to the creation of a healthier, fairer and basically different planet: "Whether it's viewing and sharing with friends an inspiring film, boosting the self-esteem

[7] Unilever UK, *So long, old world*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXkjINSMqBI (3.1.17).
[8] Unilever UK, *So long, old world*. 0:10-0:31.
[9] Unilever UK, *So long, old world*. 0:40.
[10] Unilever website, *Working in partnerships to improve the lives of millions*. https://www.unilever.com/sustainable-living/transformational-change/global-partnerships/working-in-partnerships-to-improve-the-lives-of-millions/ (5.1.2017).
[11] Unilever website, *1990-1999: Restructuring and consolidating*. https://www.unilever.co.uk/about/who-we-are/our-history/1990-1999.html (4.1.2017).
[12] Unilever Bright Future website, https://brightfuture.unilever.co.uk/ (5.1.2017)

of young women, making a donation to a food bank, we think that every single action can make a real difference". [13]

In conclusion, among the communication tools and strategies exploited by the company there are an incredibly meaningful logo, the spread of audio-visual material, and the organisation of initiatives with research and global conservation bodies that allow the company to appeal to an indefinite and diversified number of potential consumers.

5. Linguistic analysis

In a globalised world, where products are sold to geographically and culturally distant populations, linguistic resources are integral to a company's commercial strategy. Brand names are designed to stimulate consumers' imaginations, producing associations that encourage them to purchase a product or service. Beyond their role as mere identity markers, brand names must also characterise a product in a way that makes it distinguishable from other products and appealing to potential customers. Naturally, different cultures require different approaches, as the effect produced in one country may not be the same in another.

This section explores how the intertwining of marketing and brand-naming strategies put to use by Unilever works in order to convey brand identity. To this end, brands and products available through Unilever's Italian online shop are compared to their English correspondents on the basis of their graphemic/phonetic, morphological/syntactical and semantic features. The research questions are as follows:

- Which linguistic dimensions are most commonly exploited to reach customers?
- Is there a substantial difference between branding strategies in the UK and in Italy?
- Do branding strategies change from product type to product type? Conversely, does the same strategy apply to all products?

The corpus consists of the 132 Italian names of Unilever's products collected in January 2017 from the company's online shop, categorized as either "per la casa", "per la persona", or "per la tavola". In this study, only brands sold in both Italy and the UK have been examined,[14] namely, Cif, Dove, Knorr, Coccolino and Axe.[15]

[13] Unilever Bright Future website, *Acts of sunlight*. https://brightfuture.unilever.co.uk/ (5.1.2017)

[14] Though present in both countries, Lipton was not considered since in the UK it trades different product types (mainly cold tea) which are not comparable with those sold on the Italian online shop.

[15] Here, the Italian brand names are used.

5.1 Graphemic and phonetic analysis

After the analysis of product names according to the terms discussed here, some cases of interest per linguistic dimension were found.

Apart from common single-pack buying options, the brand Coccolino – specializing in fabric conditioners – offers multi-packs of their product, reducing both costs and environmental impact. In order to convey the doubly advantageous nature of this buying option called "€co-pack", Coccolino has jointly exploited both marketing and graphemic tools. While *pack* clearly refers to the object at hand, in this context, the Italian consumer may associate *eco* with either 'ecosostenibile' or 'economico' depending on his/her subjectivity. However, as the shortened form *eco*[16] is commonly used in Italy to denote 'ecologia' and 'ecologico/a', the consumer should be more likely to make this association than the economic one. Thus, to impart both economic and environmental associations on first sight, the currency symbol € is used in place of the letter *e*. In other words, *€co* plays the role of a shortened form of two words simultaneously, whose meanings are unambiguously conveyed through the conscious implementation of a well-thought-out branding strategy. Furthermore, in this context it may also be treated as a specialised term which serves the purpose of a marketing campaign. "€co-pack" is a particularly effective example of a successful combination of marketing and linguistic tools in product promotion, implementing a widely-used technique to create brand names: derivation (Altmanova 2013). Uses of graphemic devices are also found in product names from two Dove product lines. The "in DermaSpa Goodness^{3}" hints at the three skin benefits offered by the products which are well explained in the related slogan in both languages: "Luminous. Even. Velvety soft. Triply glorious skin."[17] in English; and "Luminosa, uniforme e vellutata. Una pelle tre volte bellissima."[18] in Italian. This should have consumers think they are buying a comprehensive product that enables them to fulfil three different needs at once, when three different average products would be otherwise required. Then, the sign + featured in the product name "Dove Men+Care" can be intended in its authentic meaning in the field of mathematics as denoting quantitative or numeric addition. The word *care* may have been assumed as reference to a distinguishing feature of a men-dedicated product line with a focus on that area if compared to a basic one conceivably named

[16] Apart from these, Treccani suggests for the prefix "eco" two possible meanings: "casa" and "ambiente dove si vive". Treccani, *Eco*. http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/eco_(La-grammatica-italiana)/ (4.1.2017).

[17] Dove UK Website, *DermaSpa Goodness^{3}*, http://www.dove.com/uk/collections/dermaspa.html (12. 3. 2017).

[18] Dove Italian Website, *DermaSpa Goodness^{3}*, http://www.dove.com/it/collections/dermaspa/goodness3.html (12. 3. 2017).

"Dove Men" which, however, does not exist. Therefore, the sign + seems to emphasize the belonging of a product targeting *men* to the category of beauty and *care* products, which is traditionally destined to women. Conversely, the sign + in "DermaSpa Uplifted+" possibly refers to a qualitative superiority or an upgrade of the product line in comparison to others of the same category by hinting at an "advantage or a good feature."[19] In fact, as an excerpt from the slogan reads, the product "gently moisturises your skin" – thus fulfilling its basic function – "while improving elasticity and firmness"[20] – plus an extra one. The meaning of + is made even clearer in the Italian version of the slogan that reads "per una maggiore compattezza ed elasticità"[21] where *maggiore* verbally expresses the meaning of +. At the same time, the product label also reports "with Cell Moisturisers®", hydrating substances to which the improved results synthesized in the sign + are ascribable.

As for the phonetic dimension, the case of interest is represented by the product "Blue Skies" sold by Comfort in the country of origin. The choice of name is unlikely to be an accident, given the popularity of the song with the same title in the UK. "Blue Skies" is in fact a jazz song composed in 1926 by Irving Berlin as a last-minute addition to the musical "Betsy" and became one of the first songs to be used in a talkie. Additionally, many famous musicians – among them Benny Goodman in 1946 – released adaptions of the song, while a musical comedy film featuring two of the era's most popular stars – Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire – was released in 1946 under the same title, giving the song new vitality. These associations, and the springy imagery triggered by the lyrics and title, convey notions of freshness and brightness traditionally associated with cleaning supplies. In Italy, on the other hand, neither the song nor its title are part of the cultural lexicon. However, to a certain extent, the same effect is reproduced through a similar branding strategy, using keywords of a popular Italian song entitled "Primavera" by Marina Rei, whose chorus includes the words "[…] respiriamo l'aria e viviamo aspettando primavera […]". The product name "Aria di Primavera" may resonate in the consumer's mind as a hallmark of a familiar Italian music tradition, one which conveys concepts similar to the original English product name.

[19] Cambridge Dictionary Online, *Plus*, http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/plus (12. 3. 2017).
[20] Dove UK Website, DermaSpa Uplifted+, http://www.dove.com/uk/collections/dermaspa/uplifted.html (12. 3. 2017).
[21] Dove Italian Website, *DermaSpa Uplifted+*, http://www.dove.com/it/collections/dermaspa/uplifted.html (12. 3. 2017).

5.2 Morphological and syntactical analysis

The morphological analysis moved its first steps with an investigation on the company name Unilever that, as already mentioned above, is a portmanteau composed of *Uni-*, deriving from Margarine Unie, and *-Lever*, from Lever Brothers. Here, two concurrent morphological processes take place. First of all, it is a case of blending – that is the creation of a new single word out of two pre-existing ones following rules which are different from those used in compounding (Ronneberger-Sibold 2006). Specifically, Unilever represents a case of "semi-complete blend without overlapping elements" (Zilg 2012, p. 118) made up of a full constituent – Lever – and some fragments of another constituent – Unie. Despite this, the shortened form used for the latter should not jeopardize its recognisability among consumers. Furthermore, a re-categorisation of the surname Lever – a patronymic that is transformed into a brand name (Altmanova 2013) – is observed. Another case of re-categorisation worth mentioning is the brand name Knorr – resulting from the patronymic of the owner Carl Heinrich Knorr.[22] Among product names, not many were relevant in this analysis; only Knorr's seasoning Aromat was under investigation. In this case – being Knorr a German brand – it was assumed that the term *aromat* derives from the German *aromatish*. This term is similar to the Italian *aromatico* and the English *aromatic*, therefore a research on its root was made. It resulted to be a derivation from late Latin *aromaticus*, from Greek *ἀρωματικός* (*arōmatikos*). Another example is Dove's line "DermaSpa Goodness[3]", where the term *DermaSpa* – a compound of the words *Derma* and *Spa* – becomes in Italian *Derma Spa*, an open compound where the two words are kept separated.

For what concerns the syntactical analysis, Dove is definitely a case in point, since its products show a highly frequent construction adjective + noun: *gentle exfoliating*; *fresh touch*; *fresh care*; *invisible dry*; *maximum protection*; *youthful vitality*; *cool fresh*; *clean comfort*; *sensitive care*; *extra fresh*. The same construction is also found in Coccolino products with *easy clean* and *ultra protection*. Moreover, the analysis showed a wide preference for short descriptions of the characteristics of the merchandise, rather than a proper name. Examples of this tendency are all Cif products – as *easy clean pavimenti orchidea selvatica* –, but also Coccolino ones – like *ammorbidente concentrato delicato e soffice* –, most of Dove's ones – for instance, *gentle exfoliating beauty cream bar* –, and some Knorr ones – *I momenti gourmet vellutata di funghi con porcini profumata al tartufo*.

[22] Knorr website, *Brand history*, http://www.knorr.com/article/detail/245640/brand-history (20.1.2017).

5.3 Lexical analysis

In this section choices of language and lexicon are discussed. To this purpose, Botton and Cegarra's branding strategies in international business were taken into account in the analysis of the terms. According to them, there are four different branding strategies: standardisation – when the name is kept unvaried in all the countries where it is sold –, transposition or translation – when the term is translated into the target language –, adaptation – with a concept expressed in different ways according to the culture –, and differentiation – as it can be seen in the previous example of Unilever's Heartbrand, where the brand changes its name in relation to the market (Botton, Cegarra 1996).

As for the choice of the language for Italian brand names, Cotticelli Kurras (2007) found there has been a greater openness to foreign languages after the 1980s. Naturally, English has had a more widespread acceptance compared to other languages possibly for the high socio-economic values attached to it. Moreover, it is worth mentioning the diffusion of international branding during the last decades, that has shown a tendency towards the standardization of brand names and products, that "reduces advertising and inventory costs and provides convenient identification for people travelling internationally" (Onkvisit, Shaw 1989, in Usunier, Shaner 2002, p. 212). An example of this are the corporate brand Unilever and three product brands of the five included in our corpus – Cif, Dove, and Knorr – that keep their names unvaried in the British and Italian markets.

On the other hand, even if this linguistic standardization comes with several advantages, it must be acknowledged that this heavy reliance on English terms may present some drawbacks stemming from the non-native speakers' level of proficiency and the different connotations words may have in a different culture as well:

> Appearances can be deceiving: the same English word may convey different meanings to native speakers and non-native speakers. When used as brand names, some English words may not produce the results that marketers desire because what they mean to speakers of other languages is different, often narrower and more idiosyncratic. (Wong, Leben 2012)

In the case at issue here, this tendency is perfectly respected though it is worth mentioning that most of the times the English words chosen should be understandable even by non-native speakers. Some examples are: *Cif Easy Clean pavimenti orchidea selvatica*, the line *Coccolino creations*, *Axe antiperspirants*, that are all defined as 'deodorants' in the Italian version, and most of Dove products – as *Talc Soft deodorante spray warm talc perfume*. But the analysis showed also the presence of terms deriving from other languages in our corpus. The first one, *gourmet*, derives from French and was

found in Knorr's line "I momenti gourmet". Here it is used to represent a line of the brand that includes particular and classy dishes, to satisfy Italians' growing interest in fine cooking.[23] Another term is the German *noodle*,[24] used by the same brand to define this particular kind of pasta in "Asia noodle orientali". In both cases the terms have become part of the Italian vocabulary, and can be therefore understood by most people, yet these confer on the products an exotic feeling that is highly fashionable.

For what concerns brand names, only two among the ones composing the corpus showed a variation. As a matter of fact, the British fabric conditioner producer *Comfort* becomes *Coccolino* in Italy; this – rather than a translation – can be defined as an adaptation, since it keeps the idea of softness and fluffiness that are looked for when using a similar product. Also the logo is similar, but the Italian *Coccolino* has got a soft and fluffy teddy bear as its mascot. The other brand that changes its name is the French antiperspirants producer *Axe*, that leaves its name unvaried in the Italian market, but has become *Lynx* in the UK and in Australia.

In the corpus there were also products which kept their names unvaried in both the Italian and British markets; one of these is Lynx's *Africa deodorant body spray* – where the difference is in the brand name, being *Axe* in Italy.

5.4 Semantic analysis

Table 1 reports the most common semantic areas to emerge from the analysis of the corpus.

The most interesting cases emerging from the semantic analysis are provided by Dove's and Knorr's product names.

[23] The new trends in the last decades in Italy have shown a wide appreciation of tasty and elaborate food, developing a "gourmet" taste. In fact, this term can be found in Italian dictionaries – as it can be seen on Treccani's online dictionary. Treccani, *Gourmet*, http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/gourmet/ (17.1.2017).

[24] Noodles are a typical Asian food, but the term has a German origin, as it can be seen in the definition given in the Oxford Dictionary, online version. Oxford Dictionary, *Noodle*, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/noodle (17.1.2017).

Brand	Semantic Area	Terms	
		Nouns	**Adjectives**
Axe	Geography	Africa	Marine
	Mythology	Apollo	
Cif	Botany	Orchidea Selvatica, Limone	
	Chemistry	Bicarbonato, Acciaio, Ammoniaca	
	Cleaning	Sgrassatore, Gel	Clean
	House	Pavimenti, Vetri, Superfici	
	Safety	Protection	
Coccolino	Arts	Creations	
	Botany	Gelsomino, Narciso, Sandalo, Caprifoglio, Campanula Selvatica, Bergamotto, Orchidea Viola, Mirtilli, Fiori, Tiarè, Frutti Rossi	
	Cleaning	Ammorbidente	
	Comfort		Delicato, Soffice
	Feelings	Sensazione	
	Freshness	Aria	Primavera
Dove	Assessment		Extra, Maximum
	Body/Feelings	Fresh, Touch	Fresh, Cool, Sensitive, Dry, Clean, Exfoliating, Gentle
	Life-Cycle	Vitality	Youthful
	Relax/Safety	Care, Protection, Comfort	
Knorr	Cooking	Dadi, Vellutate, Risotteria, Passati, Soffritto, Insaporitore, Zuppa, Purè, Minestre	Gourmet, Cremosa, Pescatora, Ortolana, Boscaiola
	Emotions	Segreti, Cuore	
	Food	Verdure, Zucca, Spinaci, Carote, Rosmarino, Funghi, Tartufo, Couscous, Gamberetti, Pepe, Patate, Finferli, Cipolline, Zucchine, Porri, Prezzemolo, Aglio, Cipolla, Sedano, Noodle, Cereali, Pasta, Lenticchie, Brodo, Orzo, Farro, Legumi, Ceci, Manzo, Pesce, Sale, Fagioli, Pollo	Porcini (Funghi), Dolci (Patate)
	Format	Polvere	Granulare
	Geography	Mondo, Asia, Cayenna	Parmigiana, Milanese, Orientali
	Magic	Magia	
	Mathematics	Dadi, Cubi, Anellini	
	Nature	Nuvole, Primavera	
	Taste	Sapori, Aromi	Profumata
	Tradition	Nonna	Tradizionale, Arlecchino[25]

Table 1
Semantic Areas.

[25] Even if the term refers to a traditional Venetian harlequin mask, here it is used as an adjective to describe the variety of colours in a soup, recalling the character's chequered costume.

As for the former, linguistic choices tend to privilege spheres which are traditionally linked to the feminine world. For example, perfumes and cosmetics imparting ideals of beauty and youth that do not fade with the passing of time have been popular with female customers; through these product names "[…] certain values are expressed that go far beyond the product, and that appeal to feelings and emotions, such as for example, happiness, prestige, beauty, success, etc." (Fernández 2012, p. 76). Men seem to perceive and relate to these ideals differently; however, as with women and perfumes, men, "need to be guided and reassured on brand choice [and are] as likely as women to make their purchase decision on the basis of image and advertising" (Amy-Chinn 2001, p. 169). This is most likely the reason behind Dove's creation of a male line of products – "Dove Men+Care" – which can more accurately address men's notions of beauty. Although these values are conveyed by product names in both countries, there are some shifts in focus in the inter-cultural transfer. One case is Dove's *Original beauty cream bar*, that in Italian remains the same except for the removal of the word *original*. This term imparts ideas of tradition, ancient recipes, and authenticity that are lost in Italian. Another difference is the shift of focus between the two languages when describing the same product: in English, the name *Go fresh beauty – cream hand wash* is used, while in Italian, the name is *Go fresh – fresh touch detergente cremoso di bellezza profumo di tè verde e cetriolo*. Although the product is the same, it is depicted as a cream hand wash in English, and as a *detergente cremoso* – an all-purposes soap – in Italian. Moreover, on the Italian version of the brand website, this soap is described as suitable for face cleansing and sensitive skin.[26] Also, the definition *di bellezza* (of beauty) – absent from the English name – is interesting, recalling the idea of beauty and self-confidence expressed by Dove.

On the other hand, the Italian Knorr's product names create associations with well-established Italian imagery of cooking, intended to convey universal values such as 'genuineness' and 'family'. For example, the "I segreti della nonna" displays two words intended to trigger culinary associations: *segreti* hints at the popular culinary theme of secret ingredients which make a dish special and inimitable, while, even more powerfully, the figure of the grandmother (*nonna*) invokes nostalgia for the consumer's childhood or past. The product becomes associated with home-made food prepared with natural ingredients by a beloved person, potentially arousing subjective memories which play key roles in the consumer's buying choice. Instead, correspondent English product names do not seem to rely on this imagery as in the case of the "Cuore di brodo" in which the idea of 'heart' is

[26] Unilever online shop, *Dove sapone liquid go fresh fresh touch*. https://www.unilevershop.it/dove-sapone-liquido-go-fresh-fresh-touch-250ml.html (8.1.17).

added in the Italian version; indeed, in English it is rendered simply as *pot*, recalling the idea of its format.

Another case in point is the use of the expression *gluten free* in Knorr's English risotto kits. This demonstrates the brand's attention towards food allergies, not present in the Italian version of the product – even though risotto is usually a naturally gluten free food. Finally, the use of the term *organic* in Knorr's "Organic chicken stock powder" is of some relevance to this discussion. The Italian equivalent does not use *organic chicken*, yet its product has no preservatives, no hydrogenated fats and is produced in Italy; therefore, although both the Italian and English products demonstrate an interest in the choice of raw materials, the advertising focus is different.

6. Conclusions

The present research focused on the intertwining of marketing and linguistic tools in the international branding dynamics of Unilever, a multinational, consumer-goods company. In the first part, the company's founding values and communication tools have been introduced. Next, the Italian brand and product names have been analysed based on six different linguistic dimensions, and compared to their English correspondents in order to determine which strategies i) are most often used for different product-types to appeal the Italian consumer, and ii) change in the inter-cultural transfer.

In general, the main Italian branding trend demonstrates heavy reliance on the semantic dimension and an openness to the English language, exemplified by the huge presence of English terms in the Italian names examined. This linguistic submissiveness, however, does not result into a cultural one for at least two reasons. First, Italian brands are still reluctant to rely on innovative/alternative eating trends for promoting their products. Indeed, while two products sold in the UK read *organic* and *gluten free* on their package, the same products do not in Italy. Considering that the edible content of the package is the same in both countries, this should be regarded as a conscious marketing choice that demonstrates a greater attention to 'non-conventional' eating habits in the UK than in Italy. Secondly, Italian consumers are more emotionally and traditionally connected to the imagery of food and cooking as part of the family and home. Knorr's products destined for the Italian market have names containing emotionally-suggestive words, a trend which is not found in English products. The only product category where the Italian culture is overwhelmed by the English one is that of beauty and cosmetics. Dove product names are almost all in the source language, with the sole exceptions of words denoting the product type ("detergente", "bagnoschiuma", etc.). This evidence shows how communication may vary from product category to product category

according to the cultural background of the target consumers. In the specific case of Italy, culinary traditions are strong enough to resist standardisation to the English-dominant culture, whereas this does not happen with respect to the beauty category.

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