A study of Associations Evoked by Direct and Indirect Country of Origin Markers

Een studie naar associaties die worden opgeroepen door directe en indirecte land van herkomst signalen

Annemarie W. de Kroon, BSc

Radboud University

S1012684

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First assessor: Berna Hendriks

Second assessor: Frank van Meurs

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Abstract

The use of foreign language or mentioning a country of origin (COO) creates a link with the country the languages belongs to in the consumers' mind, a link that can be used to transfer associations consumers have with a country to the product advertised. Such an association can be positive when the product is congruent with the country, though is likely to be negative when the product is incongruent with the country. The aim of this study was to find which associations were evoked by indirect COO markers (i.e. a foreign language) and indirect COO markers (i.e. directly mentioning the COO) and how they differ from each other. An experiment was conducted, consisting of a questionnaire in which participants were asked to give their associations with the direct COO marker, indirect COO marker and a general country marker. The questionnaire was filled in by 210 participants, resulting in a total of 2978 associations. These associations were coded and analyzed on category, valence and COO-relatedness, resulting in evidence for differences between the different markers. Differences were found in nine of the eleven categories created by the coders. Indirect COO markers evoked the most positive associations, whilst they also evoked the least COO-related associations. Therefore, businesses would do well to include specifically indirect COO markers, but also direct COO markers, in their advertisements to evoke the most positive associations with a congruent product.

Keywords: Foreign language use, country of origin, advertisements, associations, congruent products, indirect marker, direct marker

Seeing foreign language in advertisements is nothing new for most people. Such use of foreign language can be very effective, as it is said to create a link in consumers' minds to the country that language belongs to. The country that consumers match with that foreign language is often seen as the country of origin (COO) of that product. Foreign language use and country of origin mentions (i.e. 'made in') evoke associations in consumers' minds, positively or negatively. When the product doesn't match the country or languages' stereotypes, such associations are more likely to be negative. The Country Germany and the product oranges, for example, do not match very well as it is Spain who is known to produce oranges.

Most research about mentioning COOs and using foreign language in advertisements seem to concentrate on the effects of COO mentioning and foreign language use, rather than what specific associations they evoke. Directly mentioning a COO or indirectly suggesting a COO by using foreign language might both evoke different associations. This study will therefore aim to find what associations are evoked through direct and indirect COO markers, and how such associations differ from each other.

Foreign language use in advertisements

Foreign language is frequently used in advertisements. In an average commercial break on Dutch television, for example, French, German, and English language can be spotted without any special effort. Kelly-Holmes (2005) describes this kind of advertising as multilingual advertising, 'the appearance of a number of different languages or voices in a market-discourse situation'. The use of a foreign language may lead to a better liking of the advertisement or product (Hornikx & Van Meurs, 2017).

Hornikx, Van Meurs and Hof (2013) use the theory of foreign-language display to explain why foreign languages can be effective in advertisements. The use of a foreign language has a symbolic value, based on what is acceptable for a country to produce according to stereotypes (Kelly-Holmes, 2000). As Kelly-Holmes (2000) mentions in her study, Germans have been assigned the role of engineer and brewer, while the French are seen as the wine experts who are, stereotypically, expected to drink wine. The use of foreign-language display in advertising is thus symbolic in that foreign language words or sentences

are not used to communicate content, but for the associations they evoke (Kelly-Holmes, 2005; Piller, 2003; Ray, Ryder & Scott, 1991).

A foreign language in an advertisement evokes associations with the country where this language is normally spoken (Hornikx, Van Meurs & Hof, 2013). One of the main reasons for using foreign language in advertisements is creating a favorable image of the brand and the product (Piller, 2003). Whenever a product or brand is identified as coming from a specific country, stereotypical country-beliefs are subconsciously transferred to the impressions individuals form about it (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013). The stereotypes people have for different countries influence brand perceptions (Diamantopoulos, Florack, Halkias & Palcu, 2017) that are based on direct experience and through what the media tells people about a country, their residents and their characteristics (Kelly-Holmes, 2005). However, when there is no product context, consumers often link languages to prototypical countries. What consumers think of foreign language use in advertisements usually depends on their knowledge of the country of origin (COO) and their products (Hornikx & Van Meurs, 2017).

The country of origin effect

Extensive research has shown that COO information evokes associations which influence consumer evaluation (Godey et al., 2012; Usunier, 2006; Magnusson, Westjohn, Zdravkovic, 2011; Verlegh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg, 2005). The perceived quality of a product is strongly linked with the country of origin; products from high developed countries are seen as qualitatively better than products from low developed countries (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). A popular advertising strategy is spelling a brand name or using a slogan in a foreign language, even if that is not the actual COO, in the hope that it will evoke positive associations (Melnyk, Klein & Völckner, 2012).

A COO-effect occurs when consumers link the associations they have with certain countries with a product. Consumers often use COO to determine the credibility of advertising claims (Verlegh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg, 2005). Germany, for example, is often seen as a reliable, business-like country while France is seen as charming and stylish. Products that seem to be from Germany are therefore often perceived as reliable, whereas products from France are perceived as elegant (Hornikx, Van Meurs & Starren, 2007). A German company that manufactures machines in Brazil will therefore receive more positive

associations if Germany is presented as the COO, rather than Brazil. A Brazilian company claiming in an advertisement that their cars are super reliable is simply not credible to consumers, because Brazil is not known as a car-manufacturing country. Companies could thus use foreign language to suggest a COO other than the actual country where a product is manufactured to evoke positive associations and perceptions of quality (Hornikx & Van Meurs, 2017). Most products are not specifically associated with certain countries, but may be linked to a country because of its natural resources, climate, location, or because of traditional manufacturing knowledge (Usunier & Cestre, 2007). These product-country matches may change consumer perception (Roth & Romeo, 1992).

Congruence between countries and products

However, foreign language does not always lead to positive associations. If the combination country-product is not congruent, positive associations are less likely to occur (Adina, Gabriela & Roxana-Denisa, 2014; Hornikx, Van Meurs & Starren, 2007; Melnyk, Klein & Völckner, 2012). To avoid negative associations, Roth and Romeo (1992) advise, in their study, to conceal or de-emphasize the COO of a product or brand from a COO with an unfavorable product-country image. An example of such a de-emphasized COO is Spanish car-company 'Seat'. In their ads, 'Seat' emphasizes the German origin of their engines and other components, rather than the Spanish COO of the brand, because Germany is seen as the producer of reliable cars (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). Such a strategy can fix a possible mismatch between product-country stereotypes (Roth & Romeo, 1992).

Therefore, if a company wishes to emphasize COO in their advertising, product-country congruence should be taken in to account. Hornikx, Van Meurs and Hof (2013) state that foreign-language display is more effective for congruent products than it is for incongruent products. Oranges said to be from Germany might not sell that well as oranges which are said to be from Spain, simply because Spain is known as a country that produces oranges and Germany is not. Other examples of COOs and products associated with them are France and wine, Germany and beer, and the Netherlands and cheese (Hornikx, Van Meurs & Starren, 2007).

Direct and indirect COO markers

The use of a foreign language in an advertisement might lead to less evoked associations than when the COO is directly mentioned. Hornikx and Van Meurs (2017) conclude that foreign language use in advertisements work because of the underlying connections consumers make between languages, countries and products. An indirect COO cue shows things that are related to the country of origin, like the language, important persons or well-known things (e.g. the statue of liberty) (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013).

Herz and Diamantopoulos (2013) used undirected semi-structured interviews in their study, in which the questions did not mention a COO topic in any way. By not revealing the topic to the respondents, the respondents gave their opinion about a foreign language or country without regarding COOs or saying what they think the interviewer wants to hear, providing a more unbiased perspective into respondents' associations. Some respondents did not mention country-specific associations at all. By using this indirect study design, Herz and Diamantopoulos found that less than a quarter of their respondents mentioned country-specific associations.

However, more than half of Herz and Diamantopoulos' (2013) respondents mentioned country-specific associations in an interview where they were explicitly asked about these associations and COOs. Herz and Diamantopoulos thus suggest that associations are more likely to occur when respondents are faced with direct country of origin cues. A direct COO marker clearly shows the country of origin by displaying the name, the map or the flag of a country (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013). Such direct COO cues might play a role in more deliberate consumer decisions (Diamantopoulos, Florack, Halkias & Palcu, 2017). Furthermore, findings of Diamantopoulos, Florack, Halkias and Palcu (2017) show that sole reliance on direct cues might result in an incomplete view on consumers' associations with COOs.

Relevance and research questions

Despite a large body of research about COOs and foreign language use in advertisements, little seems to be known about the possible differences between direct and indirect COO markers with regard to the associations they evoke, whilst displaying direct markers in a survey or interview could result in more biased associations and indirect markers

could result in fewer results all together and possibly undiscovered associations (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013). However, most studies seem to concentrate on the COO effect in general (Adrina, Gabriela, Roxana-Denisa, 2015; Bilkey & Ness, 1982; Godey et al., 2011; Magnusson, Westjohn & Zdravkovic 2011; Usunier, 2003; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Zhang, 1996; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995), rather than the associations COO markers evoke with congruent products and the differences between direct and indirect COO markers. Studies that focus on COO effects on the evaluation of products often focus on an incongruent product, rather than country-specific congruent products (Verlegh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg, 2005).

In most of the studies, participants are often specifically asked to generate associations, leading to possibly biased answers and the possibility of overlooking the underlying associations participants might have (Hornikx, Van Meurs & Starren, 2007). The associations are often categorized to make assumptions as to whether they affect, for example, purchase behavior (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Hornikx, Van Meurs & Starren, 2007; Hornikx, Van Meurs, 2017). However, we aim to find what associations mean in themselves.

There has been very little empirical research on what specific associations are evoked through direct and indirect COO markers. It is important to address this research gap and find if there are specific differences between associations these direct and indirect COO markers evoke. This study will focus on the different associations direct and indirect COO markers evoke by consumers and how these associations differ from each other. This study will attempt to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

RQ: What associations do direct and indirect COO markers evoke?

SQ1: What are the differences in categories of associations evoked by direct COO markers, indirect COO markers and by general country markers?

SQ2: What are the differences in valence of associations evoked by direct COO markers, indirect COO markers and by general country markers?

SQ3: What are the differences in COO-relatedness of associations evoked by direct COO markers, indirect COO markers and by general country markers?

Method

Data about the participants' associations was collected in two different ways: (1) with a specific advertisement setting that contains direct hints to congruent products that fit the countries which were tested, and (2) in an abstract advertisement setting, without hints to any specific products but with indirect references to the countries that were tested. The questionnaires were conducted in Dutch. The countries of origin tested were France, Germany, and Italy, because these countries are physically close to the Netherlands. Despite its physical closeness to the Netherlands, the United Kingdom was not included in this study because the use of English language is usually not associated with a certain country, but rather with its status as a world language (Hornikx, Van Meurs & Starren, 2007). Belgium was also excluded, because the Belgians speak either a language similar to Dutch, or French.

Materials

In this study, the independent variable tested was the COO marker. A distinction between two levels within this variable was made; direct COO markers, and indirect COO markers. The direct COO marker was an origin cue (e.g. "a German company…"), and the indirect COO marker was a language cue (e.g. a French slogan).

The participants were given a questionnaire in which cues were presented in a marketing setting. There was a specific (direct) and abstract (indirect) version of the questionnaire. There was a hardcopy and an online version available from both specific and abstract versions. To enable examination of the influence of the presence of a product on associations, there were no specific products in the abstract version. In both versions, associations with France, Germany, and Italy were tested, as these countries evoke strong stereotypical associations with certain products, and most Europeans would recognize these countries and their languages (Usunier & Cestre, 2007).

The products that were mentioned in the advertisement settings were selected based on their fit with the COOs included in this study. Only congruent products were included, as the products should match the country of origin for a COO effect to appear (Hornikx & Van Meurs, 2017). The selection of products was based on an earlier study by Usunier and Cestre (2007) on associations between products and countries. Results of their study showed, among other things, global product ethnicity scores. Usunier and Cestre (2007) defined products for

which a strong association was found with a single country of origin as global ethnic products. For the countries that were included in this study, Usunier & Cestre (2007) presented the following global ethnic products: France and wine, Germany and beer, and Italy and pasta. These products were used in the specific version of the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were pre-tested on two occasions. The first pre-test was executed to find whether the questions were clear to the participants and if they resulted in usable answers. Nine participants were asked to fill in the specific questionnaire, and nine other participants were asked to fill in the abstract questionnaire. These participants were closely monitored while filling in the questionnaire. The conclusion of this pre-test was that the questions were clear enough; participants had difficulties understanding what was expected of them.

For the second pre-test, a questionnaire with adjustments based on the results of the first pre-test was given to a new selection of participants to find whether the questions were more understandable and if the instructions were clearer. Six participants were given the specific version and six other participants were given the abstract version. The conclusion of the second pre-test was that the questionnaire was sufficient for this study. The questionnaires of the second pre-test were included in the data of this study.

Subjects

A total of 210 Dutch participants took part in this study, 54.8% of whom were students. All participants were adults over the age of 18, whose native language was Dutch. The selection of participants occurred randomly and participation was voluntary. Participants were on average 29.93 (SD = 14.18) years old (range: 18-75); 60 % were woman, and 54.7% was highly educated. Across the two versions of the questionnaire, specific and abstract, the participants did not differ in gender distribution (χ^2 (2) = .968, p = .616), mean age (F(1,208) = 2.564, p = .111), or educational level (χ^2 (2) = 2.272, p = .321).

A repeated measures analysis for familiarity with country as within-subject factor showed a significant difference between the familiarity with the countries (F(1,209) = 23.99, p < .001). Participants were more familiar with Germany (p < .001, Bonferroni correction, M = 4.98, SD = 1.44) and France (p < .001, Bonferroni correction, M = 4.76, SD = 1.46) than with Italy (p < .001, Bonferroni correction, M = 4.17, SD = 1.63). There was no

significant difference between familiarity with Germany and France ($p = .150$, Bonferroni correction).

Across the two manners of distribution of the questionnaires, hardcopy and online, the participants did not differ in gender distribution (χ^2 (2) $= 4.362$, $p = .113$). However, a small significant difference in mean age ($F(1,208) = 4.013$, p $= .046$), and a significant difference in educational level (χ^2 (2) $= 21.413$, $p < .001$) was found across the manners of distribution of the questionnaires.

Design

The study had a 2 (country-of-origin marker: direct, indirect) x 3 (country of origin: France, Germany, Italy) x 2 (setting: specific, abstract) mixed design. The between-subject variables were the COOs and languages tested per questionnaire (i.e. France-French, Germany-German, Italy-Italian), and the setting of the different versions of the questionnaire (i.e. specific, abstract), and the within-subject variables were the COO markers.

All participants filled in an online or hardcopy questionnaire equal in length, elements, and duration. There were three types of the specific questionnaire (A, B and C), and three types of the abstract questionnaire (D, E and F). 41 participants filled in the A-type of the questionnaire, 32 filled in the B-type, 34 filled in the C-type, 41 filled in the D-type, 31 filled in the E-type, and the F-type was filled in by 31 participants. 54.3% of all participants filled in the online questionnaire.

The participants who filled in a type of the specific questionnaire were presented with direct and indirect country-of-origin markers with hints to congruent products that suit the countries which were tested. The participants who filled in a type of the abstract questionnaire were presented with the direct and indirect country-of-origin markers without hints to any specific products, but with a reference to the countries which were tested.

Instruments

The dependent variables tested in this study were the associations different COO markers evoked. These variables were tested at a nominal measurement level.

The questionnaires provided a brief introduction, followed by mostly open-ended questions. Both versions and all types of the questionnaire contained one question about the participants' associations when presented with a direct COO marker, one question about the

participants' associations when presented with an indirect COO marker, and one question about the participants' basic associations with one of the countries. Those three questions were arranged differently in each of the types of a version. Table 1 provides an overview of the design and the distribution of questions of the types of the specific questionnaire, and table 2 provides this for the abstract questionnaire.

Furthermore, all questionnaires contained some questions about the demographics of the participant (i.e. gender, age, nationality, and educational level), which were in the same order in every version and type. All participants completed the same demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire. In the specific versions of the questionnaire, the first two questions were about congruent products.

Table 1. Design of the specific versions of the questionnaire

	Questionnaire A	Questionnaire B	Questionnaire C
	French – Indirect (i.e. Slogan)	France – Direct (i.e. Origin)	German – Indirect (i.e. Slogan)
Specific	Germany – Direct (i.e. Origin)	Italian – Indirect (i.e. Slogan)	Italy – Direct (i.e. Origin)
	Italy – General associations	Germany – General associations	France – General associations
	Demographic questions	Demographic questions	Demographic questions

Table 2. Design of the abstract versions of the questionnaire

	Questionnaire D	Questionnaire E	Questionnaire F
	Germany – Direct (i.e. Origin)	Italian – Indirect (i.e. Slogan)	Italy – Direct (i.e. Origin)
Abstract	French – Indirect (i.e. Slogan)	France – Direct (i.e. Origin)	German – Indirect (i.e. Slogan)
	Italy – General associations	Germany – General associations	France – General associations
	Demographic questions	Demographic questions	Demographic questions

The specific questionnaire. There were three types of the specific questionnaire; A, B, and C. The order in which the open-ended questions were presented differed per type. All participants were presented with an open-ended question in which an indirect COO marker was used in an advertisement setting. The markers were slogans in the languages of the COOs which were tested. The slogans that were used in the study were based on the English slogan "Enjoy to the max". All slogans were verified by a native speaker of the respective languages. The slogans were:

French: "Profitez au maximum",

German: "Maximaler Genuss",

Italian: "Goditi al massimo".

The open-ended questions with an indirect COO marker were:

"Imagine you are working for an advertising agency. You are designing a new advertisement for a company that wishes to introduce a new - product- to the Dutch market. In the Dutch advertisement, you want to use the following slogan: - slogan-. What more would you emphasize in the Dutch advertisement? What words would you use?"

All participants were presented with an open-ended question in which a direct COO marker was used in an advertisement setting. The markers used were references to the origin (COO) of a particular product. The open-ended questions with a direct COO marker were:

"Imagine you are working for an advertising agency. A - country- company wants to introduce a new –product- to the Dutch market. You want to emphasize the country of origin of the company. How would you recommend this – country- - product- in an Dutch advertisement? What words would you use?"

Questionnaire A was included in Appendix A to illustrate the design of the specific questionnaire.

The abstract questionnaire. There were three types of the abstract questionnaire; D, E, and F. The order in which the open-ended questions were presented differed per type. All

participants were presented with an open-ended question in which an indirect COO marker is used in an advertisement setting. The markers used were references to the use of slogans in the languages of the COOs that were tested. The open-ended questions with an indirect COO marker were:

> "Imagine you are working for an advertising agency. You are designing a new advertisement for a – country- company that wishes to introduce a new product to the Dutch market. In the Dutch advertisement, you want to use a – country- slogan. What more would you emphasize in the Dutch advertisement? What words would you use?"

All participants were presented with an open-ended question in which a direct COO marker was used in an advertisement setting. The markers used were references to the origin (COO) of a product. The open-ended questions with a direct COO marker were:

> "Imagine you are working for an advertising agency. You are designing a new advertisement for a – country- company that wishes to introduce a new product to the Dutch market. In the Dutch advertisement, you want to emphasize the country of origin of the company. How would you recommend this – country- product in an Dutch advertisement? What words would you use?"

Questionnaire D was included in Appendix B to illustrate the design of the abstract questionnaire.

General questions. All groups were presented with an open-ended question to gain insight in the participants' general associations with the different COOs. In all versions and types of the questionnaire, one specific COO was tested with regard to participants' general associations. In every type of a version, one COO was tested. The open-ended question about general associations was:

> "What comes to mind when you think about – country-?"

Furthermore, a question about the participants familiarity about all COOs was included. This was a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 'unknown with' to 'well known with'. The question asked was:

"I know – country- very well"

Lastly, all participants were presented with a set of demographic questions. They were asked about their gender, age, nationality, native language and educational level.

Procedure

The participants were approached face-to-face or were invited to participate via a direct message with a link to the online questionnaire. All researchers approached participants in their own social environment, and at the Radboud University.

A coding system was established to code the participants' associations. For every participant, information was available about how the questionnaire was distributed (hardcopy or online), which version of the questionnaire the participant filled in (specific or abstract), the type (A, B, C, D, E, or F), the respondent number, the gender of the participant (male, female or neutral), age, educational level (no education, lowly educated, or highly educated), familiarity with the COOs, and for what type of COO marker the association was given (direct COO marker, indirect COO marker, or general country marker).

The participants' familiarity with the countries was coded based on the answers given on the Likert scales for France, Germany and Italy. For every association was noted for which country the association was given and whether the question included the direct COO marker, indirect COO marker, or the general country marker.

The associations were coded by four coders. As there were around 3000 associations, all coders coded 1500 words. To assure that every association would be coded by two coders, coder one coded associations 1 to 1500, coder 2 coded associations 750 to 2250, coder three coded 1500 to 3000, and coder four coded 2250 to 750.

All associations were coded on language. Apart from the languages of the countries which were tested, the options 'English' and 'combination of languages' were added as possible languages, as some associations were given in English or a combination of languages. All associations were corrected on spelling errors and/or translated to Dutch, to ascertain associations which were the same or highly similar would be seen as the same association.

The associations were categorized in eleven categories. The categories were created using the coding scheme Hornikx, Van Meurs and Starren (2007) used in their study as

guideline. Some categories were partially based on this study; other categories emerged from the data. The categories in which the associations were coded were food, drinks, persons, sports, geography, atmosphere, culture-specific, characteristics, nature, feeling, and origin.

To gain more insights in the types of associations, another layer of categories was added to the data; subcategories. The subcategories were created while coding, and were based on associations which appeared multiple times or which appeared very similarly; they emerged from the data in an iterative process.

Furthermore, the coders coded the associations on whether they were COO-related or not, and on valence (positive, negative, and neutral). Associations were coded as COO-related if they created emotional values which could be associated with heritage and history (Rashid & Barnes, 2018).

The valence of associations was coded based on "how positively or negatively the activated associations are viewed" (Lu, Lord & Yoke, 2015, p. 768). Neutral was added based on Hornikx, Van Meurs and Starren's (2007) experimental study on associations with multilingual advertising, because numerous associations could not be seen as specifically positive or negative.

After all coders coded the associations separately, the categorization of the associations in subcategories was discussed and some changes in categorization or subcategory were made. Subcategories that were given to associations that were only mentioned two or three times were omitted; these associations were then coded in another, fitting subcategory to avoid having too much and too specific subcategories. After discussing the associations and subcategories, the coders agreed on 83 unique subcategories.

Every association was coded by two coders, and the interrater reliability was therefore calculated using Cohen's Kappa. The intercoder reliability was calculated for the variables category, COO-relatedness, and valance. The interrater reliability of the variable 'category' was moderate: $\kappa = .60$, $p < .001$. The interrater reliability of the variable 'COO-relatedness' was acceptable: $\kappa = .79$, $p < .001$, and the interrater reliability of the variable 'valence' was good: $\kappa = .84$, $p < .001$. Because of the high intercoder reliability, the coding of coder one was used as final coding for the variables 'COO-relatedness' and 'valence'.

Statistical treatment

A total of eight statistical tests were conducted for this study. To answer the research question, five frequency analyses were conducted to provide information about the associations in general and the subcategories in which associations were categorized, and three chi-square tests were conducted to determine if there were differences between associations evoked by direct COO markers, indirect COO markers, or general country markers.

Results

This study was set up to provide insight into the associations evoked by direct COO markers, indirect COO markers, and general country markers. The results for associations general country markers, direct COO markers, and indirect COO markers evoke and whether they differ or not will be discussed separately.

A frequency analysis was used to find which associations were mentioned and which associations were mentioned most. Out of 2978 associations, a total of 1146 unique associations were found. When all associations were taken into account, the association 'wine' was mentioned most. An overview of the top most frequently mentioned associations can be found in table 3.

Table 3. The 10 most frequently mentioned associations in 2978 associations

Association	Frequency	Percent
Wine	81	2.7
Pizza	62	2.1
Pasta	59	2.0
Baguette	53	1.8
Sun	49	1.6

To determine in which subcategories associations were categorized most frequently, another frequency analysis was carried out. The most associations were categorized in the subcategory 'features'. An overview of the 5 subcategories in which the most associations were categorized can be found in table 4.

Table 4. The 5 subcategories in which most associations were categorized

Subcategory	Frequency
Feature	236
City	168
Taste	140
Wine	131
Landscape	107

Associations general country markers, direct COO markers and indirect COO markers evoke

A frequency analysis was carried out to determine which associations were evoked specifically by general country markers, and how they were categorized. Out of 2978 associations, 1350 were evoked by a general country marker. The association mentioned most was 'wine'. Table 5 shows an overview of the 5 most frequently mentioned associations that were evoked by general country markers.

Table 5. The 5 most frequently mentioned associations in 1350 associations which were evoked by general country markers

Association	Frequency	Percentages
Wine	60	4.4
Pizza	49	3.6
Pasta	44	3.3
Baguette	37	2.7
Sun	34	2.5

To determine which associations were evoked specifically by direct COO markers, a frequency analysis was conducted. 846 associations out of 2978 were evoked by a direct COO marker. The most mentioned association was 'Authentic'. In table 6, an overview of the 5 most frequently mentioned associations that were evoked by direct COO markers can be found.

Table 6. The 5 most frequently mentioned associations in 846 associations which were evoked by direct COO markers

Association	Frequency	Percentages
Authentic	19	2.2
Flag	18	2.1
Origin	12	1.4
Quality	12	1.4
Beautiful	11	1.3

Another frequency analysis was carried out to find which associations were evoked specifically by indirect COO markers. Out of 2978 associations, 764 were evoked by an indirect COO marker. 'Taste' was the most mentioned association. In table 7, an overview can be found of the 5 most frequently mentioned associations that were evoked by indirect COO markers.

Table 7. The 5 most frequently mentioned associations in 764 associations which were evoked by direct COO markers

Association	Frequency	Percentages
Taste	21	2.7
Delicious	12	1.6
Wine	12	1.6
Origin	11	1.4
Tasteful	11	1.4

Categorization of associations evoked by general country markers, direct COO markers, and indirect COO markers

The first chi-square test showed a significant relation between category given and type of COO marker (χ^2 (22) = 357.58, p < .001). There were differences between associations evoked by general country markers, direct COO markers, or indirect COO markers found in nearly all 11 categories, except 'beverages' and 'feeling'. The category 'food' contained more

associations when a general country marker was used (21.1%) than when a direct (11.5%) or indirect COO marker (14.8%) was used. The category 'persons' also contained more associations when a general country marker was used (2.3%) than when a direct (0.5%) or indirect COO marker (0.3%) was used.

The category 'geography' contained more associations when a general country marker was used (21.1%) than when a direct COO marker was used (10.1%), and even less when an indirect COO marker was used (6.0%). The same goes for the category 'Nature'; the category contained more associations when a general country marker was used (7.2%) than when a direct COO marker was used (3.8%), and even less when an indirect COO marker was used (1.0%).

However, the category 'characteristics' contains more associations when an indirect COO marker was used (47.8%) than when a direct COO marker was used (38.3%), and even less when an general country marker was used (28.2%). In table 8, an overview of the categories that differ significantly can be found.

Table 8. The 9 categories containing significant differences

Category	General	Direct	Indirect
Food			
Count	285a	99b	113b
Percentage	21.1	11.5	14.8
Persons			
Count	31a	4b	2b
Percentage	2.3	0.5	0.3
Sports			
Count	40a	5b	9b
Percentage	3.0	0.6	1.2
Geography			
Count	237a	87b	46c
Percentage	17.6	10.1	6.0
Ambiance			
Count	19a	24a, b	23b
Percentage	1.4	2.8	3.0
Culture-specific			

Count	83a	113b	72b
Percentage	6.1	13.1	9.4
Characteristic			
Count	381a	331b	365c
Percentage	28.2	38.3	47.8
Nature			
Count	97a	33b	8c
Percentage	7.2	3.8	1.0
Origin			
Count	6a	72b	47b
Percentage	0.4	8.3	6.2

Valence of associations evoked by general country markers, direct COO markers, and indirect COO markers

A second chi-square test showed a significant relation between valence given and type of COO marker (χ^2 (6) = 162.13, $p < .001$). Differences in valence between associations evoked by direct, indirect COO markers, and general country markers were found. The indirect COO marker resulted in the most positive associations (29.8%), more than the direct COO marker (23.0%). The general country marker resulted in less positive associations (10.4%) than both direct and indirect COO markers. The general country marker also resulted in the most negative associations (3.9%), more than the indirect (0.9%) and direct (0.6%) COO markers.

The most associations were coded neutral. The general country marker resulted in the most neutral associations (85.7%), more than direct COO markers (76.3%). The least associations were coded neutral when an indirect COO marker was used (69.2%). In table 7, an overview of the significant differences in valence of associations can be found.

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Table 9. Differences in valence of general country markers, direct COO markers, and indirect COO markers

Valence	General	Direct	Indirect
Positive			
Count	140a	199b	228c
Percentage	10.4	23.0	29.8
Negative			
Count	53a	5b	7b
Percentage	3.9	0.6	0.9
Neutral			
Count	1157a	659b	529c
Percentage	85.7	76.3	69.2

COO-relatedness of associations evoked by general country markers, direct COO markers, and indirect COO markers.

The last chi-square test showed a significant relation between COO-relatedness of associations and type of COO marker (χ^2 (4) = 86.57, $p < .001$). Differences in COO-relatedness of associations evoked by direct COO markers, indirect COO markers, and general country markers were found. There were more COO-related associations evoked by general country markers (48.3%) than by direct COO markers (36.7%). Indirect COO markers evoked the least COO-related associations (28.5%). The most associations that were not COO-related were evoked by indirect COO markers (71.5%), more than direct COO markers (63.2%). Fewer associations that were not COO-related were evoked by general country markers (51.7%). In table 10, an overview of the significant differences in COO-relatedness of associations is shown.

Table 10. Differences in COO-relatedness of general country markers, direct COO markers, and indirect COO markers

COO-related		General	Direct	Indirect
Yes				
	Count	651a	317b	218c
	Percentage	48.3	36.7	28.5
No				
	Count	698a	546b	546c
	Percentage	51.7	63.2	71.5

Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to provide insight into the associations evoked by direct and indirect COO markers. This study focused on the associations direct and indirect COO markers evoke and how these associations differed from each other in category, valence and COO-relatedness.

The results of this study proved that there is a difference in categories between direct and indirect COO markers, and general country markers. There were only two categories out of a total of eleven in which no difference was found between associations evoked by direct COO markers, indirect COO markers, and general country markers. Another difference was found in valence of associations. The indirect COO markers evoked the most positive associations, a result that might be due to foreign language use leading to a better liking of an advertisement, as is stated in Hornikx and Van Meurs' (2017) study. These results suggest that the combination of the foreign language and the product used in the experiment was indeed congruent, and that indirect COO markers might be more successful in evoking positive associations than direct COO markers.

Most associations in general and most COO-related associations were evoked by general country markers, possibly due to the fact that participants were specifically asked for associations with certain countries. These results are in line with those of Herz and Diamantopoulos (2013), who state that participants are likely to mention more associations when they are specifically asked about associations with a certain country.

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Indirect COO markers evoked the least COO-related associations, which is in line with earlier mentioned results of Herz and Diamantopoulos (2013) that associations are more likely to be given when directly asked for them, rather than when indirectly asked. However, generally, the total amount of associations evoked by direct or indirect COO markers was nearly the same, which differs from the results of Herz and Diamantopoulos' (2013) study, as they state that associations are more likely to occur when respondents are faced with direct COO markers, though which concurs with findings stating that sole reliance on direct COO markers might result in incomplete views on participants' associations (Diamantopoulos, Florack, Halkias & Palcu, 2017).

Limitations and future research

Several possibilities remain for refining and expanding the results of this study. Direct and indirect COO markers are subjects of interest in the field of COO-effects and foreign language display, which is important for researchers in advertising, marketing and international businesses. A number of opportunities for future research, inspired by the findings and limitations of this study, will be presented.

In the first place, replications of this study with other countries of origin and participants of other nationalities are necessary to establish the generalizability of the findings, even though the findings of this study were quite generalizable. The current study was limited to only participants with the Dutch nationality and has examined only three countries and three congruent products. Participants from different countries may make different links between products and COOs (Usunier & Cestre, 2007), therefore different countries and different products may provide different insights (Roth & Romeo, 1992), as well as participants with different nationalities. Another suggestion would be to replicate this study with Dutch participants but with different countries, to find if similar associations would be given when countries are used that have less proximity to the Netherlands.

Secondly, the current study showed that indirect COO markers generate more positive associations than direct COO markers. In this experiment, indirect COO markers based on mentioning a foreign language in combination with a product were used. The direct COO markers were based on mentioning a country with a product. However, whether there are differences in the specific effects of the combination foreign language with a product versus

the combination of a COO with a product was not examined in this study, providing opportunities for future research.

A third suggestion for further research is to replicate the current study with a different coding scheme, as the current coding scheme was highly dependent on the subjective interpretation of the coders. To find how many times certain associations appeared, some associations were translated to Dutch. Therefore, the coded associations possibly differed at some points from the original association given or meant by the participant. Further research could concentrate on the amount of associations given in a foreign language or concentrate more on the actual interpretation of the participant, in a different research setting.

A final recommendation for further research is to replicate the study with a visual questionnaire, rather than a textual questionnaire. Indirect COO markers might have a different effect when, for example, pictures of well-known tourist spots or landscapes are used as indirect COO markers (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013), rather than a foreign language. The current study used only textual COO markers and is thereby limited to only one possibility to generate associations which are evoked by indirect COO markers.

Managerial implications

The current study shows that the use of direct and indirect COO markers in advertisements for congruent products presents great opportunities when it comes to evoking positive associations by consumers. Piller (2003) and Melnyk, Klein and Völckner (2012) already stated in their studies that foreign language is mostly used in advertisements to create a favourable image of a brand or product or in the hope it will evoke positive associations. It appears that this is indeed an advisable tactic for brands developing advertisements for their products. This study has proved that indirect COO markers might be more successful in evoking positive associations than direct COO markers, given the country or foreign language fits the product advertised. However, direct COO markers might me more successful in evoking associations which are specifically related to a COO. Businesses may consider this study as support for the use of COO markers, specifically indirect COO markers, in their advertisements for congruent products.
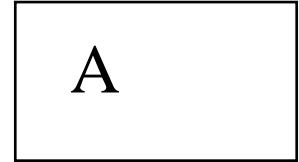
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Appendices

Appendix A – Specific questionnaire, type A

A

INLEIDING

Beste deelnemer,

Bedankt dat je de tijd neemt om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 5 minuten.

Deze vragenlijst bestaat uit vijf onderdelen. Het laatste onderdeel bevat een aantal achtergrondvragen.

Instructies:
- **Antwoord in het Nederlands**
- **Denk niet te lang en moeilijk na over je antwoorden**
- **Geef aan wat er het eerste bij je opkomt**
- **Er zijn geen foute antwoorden**
- **Geef zo veel mogelijk antwoorden**

Met dit onderzoek hopen we meer inzicht te krijgen in de verwerking van reclame.

Alvast heel erg bedankt voor je deelname.

Met vriendelijke groet,

A. de Kroon, K. Hesen, K. Bron, L. Willems, L. Abzach, M. van Hoeve, T. Haak

A. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een bedrijf dat een nieuwe wijn op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de Nederlandse advertentie wil je de volgende slogan gebruiken:

"Profitez au maximum"

Wat zou jij nog meer benadrukken in de verder Nederlandstalige advertentie? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

B. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een Duits bedrijf dat een nieuw bier op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de advertentie wil je de Duitse herkomst van het bedrijf benadrukken.
Hoe zou je dit Duitse bier aanprijzen? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

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C. Wat komt er bij je op als je aan Italië denkt? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk antwoorden op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

D. Hoe bekend ben je met de verschillende landen? Omcirkel wat voor jou van toepassing is.

1. Ik ben bekend met Frankrijk: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

2. Ik ben bekend met Duitsland: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

3. Ik ben bekend met Italië: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

E. Achtergrondvragen

Geslacht: _____

Leeftijd: _____

Nationaliteit: _____

Moedertaal: _____

Hoogst afgeronde opleiding: ☐ Geen
☐ VMBO
☐ HAVO
☐ VWO
☐ MBO
☐ HBO
☐ WO
☐ Anders, namelijk: _____

☐ Ja   ☐ Nee
Ben je op dit moment student?

Eventuele opmerkingen: _____

Bedankt voor je deelname. Mocht je meer informatie willen hebben over (het doel van) dit onderzoek informeer bij je onderzoeker of mail naar: *c.hesen@student.ru.nl*

Annemarie, Katrien, Kaylie, Lisa, Liz, Marit en Tessa

Appendix B – Abstract questionnaire, type D

<div style="border:1px solid black; text-align:center; font-size:2em;">D</div>

INLEIDING

Beste deelnemer,

Bedankt dat je de tijd neemt om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 5 minuten.

Deze vragenlijst bestaat uit vijf onderdelen. Het laatste onderdeel bevat een aantal achtergrondvragen.

Instructies:
- **Antwoord in het Nederlands**
- **Denk niet te lang en moeilijk na over je antwoorden**
- **Geef aan wat er het eerste bij je opkomt**
- **Er zijn geen foute antwoorden**
- **Geef zo veel mogelijk antwoorden**

Met dit onderzoek hopen we meer inzicht te krijgen in de verwerking van reclame.

Alvast heel erg bedankt voor je deelname.

Met vriendelijke groet,

A. de Kroon, K. Hesen, K. Bron, L. Willems, L. Abzach, M. van Hoeve, T. Haak

A. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een Duits bedrijf dat een nieuw product op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de advertentie wil je de Duitse herkomst van het bedrijf benadrukken.

Hoe zou je dit Duitse product aanprijzen? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

B. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een Frans bedrijf dat een nieuw product op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de Nederlandse advertentie wil je een Franse slogan gebruiken.
Wat zou jij nog meer benadrukken in de verder Nederlandstalige advertentie? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

C. Wat komt er bij je op als je aan Italië denkt? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk antwoorden op.*

1   _____

2   _____

3   _____

4   _____

5   _____

6   _____

D. Hoe bekend ben je met de verschillende landen? Omcirkel wat voor jou van toepassing is.

1. Ik ben bekend met Frankrijk: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

2. Ik ben bekend met Duitsland: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

3. Ik ben bekend met Italië: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

E. Achtergrondvragen

Geslacht: _____

Leeftijd: _____

Nationaliteit: _____

Moedertaal: _____

Hoogst afgeronde opleiding: ☐ Geen
                                ☐ VMBO
                                ☐ HAVO
                                ☐ VWO
                                ☐ MBO
                                ☐ HBO
                                ☐ WO
                                ☐ Anders, namelijk: _____

                                ☐ Ja   ☐ Nee
Ben je op dit moment student?

Eventuele opmerkingen: _____

Bedankt voor je deelname,

Annemarie, Katrien, Kaylie, Lisa, Liz, Marit en Tessa

Appendix C – Statement of own work

Student name: _____

Student number: _____

PLAGIARISM is the presentation by a student of an assignment or piece of work which has in fact been copied in whole or in part from another student's work, or from any other source (e.g. published books or periodicals or material from Internet sites), without due acknowledgement in the text.

DECLARATION:

a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (http://www.ru.nl/stip/english/rules-regulations/fraud-plagiarism/) and with Article 16 "Fraud and plagiarism" in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's programma of Communication and Information Studies.

b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my own words

c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material andsources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature: _____

Place and date: _____