

THE MAKING OF CORPORATE IDENTITIES THROUGH A PLURAL CORPORATE LANGUAGE

A comparative study
on French and Italian Food companies¹

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ABSTRACT • The present study analyzes the linguistic and cultural dimensions which emerge from international companies working in those economic and social contexts, which are, at present, more cash-like and uncertain. The multilingual communication adopted by such companies is the result of their position on the market and of their own identity and culture. It also reveals an ongoing process of negotiation between several elements: a language identity source, which highlights the origins, history, geographic, social and cultural affiliation (national, regional, and professional), a target otherness, which may be more or less defined (by country or in relation to a universal extent) and which is increasingly multicultural, and a ‘source otherness’, which arises from considering “soi-même comme un autre” to communicate extensively. The present study will shed light on some communicative choices at both language and culture levels in the corporate sites of some Italian and French food companies (Lavazza, Ferrero, Barilla, Lactalis, Fleury-Michon, Bonduelle, Bomgrain). The aim is to identify specific (“connotative”) items that in some way denote cultural permeability, a layer between convention and “hybridization”.

KEYWORDS • corporate language, food companies, corporate identity, multilingual communication, French, Italian.

1. Introduction

THIS STUDY aims to examine the notion of the international company from two different points of view: from that of their cultural dimension and that of their identity. The analysis will be carried out considering the linguistic representations the companies provide in economic and social contexts that have become more cash-like and uncertain. In particular, the study will focus on the reconstruction of the cultural environment of international companies – coming,

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specifically, from France and Italy – which, while remaining a strong expression of the local area and culture, face a global dimension and are confronted with foreign realities. For our present purposes, a number of food companies were considered and selected on the basis of the following criteria: strong affiliation to their local area, strong expression of a national language and culture, corporate culture, participation in the process of internationalization and intercultural remodeling.

The label “international company”, usually considered a non-technical term,² will here be adopted because it offers a wide perspective and, therefore, a range of semantic meanings allowing for the analysis of multinational or grouped companies, international companies, global companies, transnational companies, as well as companies involved in the process of internationalization (D’Iribarne2011). The focus on the international dimension of companies is motivated by the results deriving from the analysis of international marketing practices, which provides descriptions of international companies at all levels and allows us to perceive the challenges resulting from the process of globalization. According to Morin (2009), globalization can be considered as “the ultimate stage of a techno-economic globalism” with a “communication texture” that would serve a world enterprise in the process of affirmation on the market and which is based on a number of standards, and transcultural and ‘mutual’ values.³

The international marketing conception states that world companies are engaged in a relational process with a market which is at once singular and plural. This means that the constraints of the overall global brand (the global product ‘speaks’ the same language, crosses national boundaries and unifies taste, cultures and individuals from different countries) are being challenged by the recognition of diversity (every market is different because associated with its values, preferences, and needs). Communication strategies show the existence of two fundamental dimensions – global and national – which, in turn, are characterized by a wide range of nuanced strategies, which make such twofold subdivision limited:

L’évolution des cultures dans la mondialisation est donc un phénomène complexe qui oscille entre l’universel et le singulier, entre hospitalité et hostilité (Prime, Usunier 2012: 13).

Total, partial and deep adaption, localization, globalization, and standardization are all valid solutions having advantages as well disadvantages, but all showing the communication attitude needed to define strategic position (related to identity and culture) and to display an international vocation.

2. Field of enquiry: Italian and French Food companies

The first step will be to define the field of inquiry. We will then outline the linguistic and cultural communicative choices evident in the corporate websites of Italian and French food companies to identify specific markers, included in the fossilization and hybridization range, inherent to the corporate language.

Corporate communication is characterized by specific communicative protocols and business writing, which are used by international companies for multilingual communication and for representing a specific culture and identity.⁴ In particular, companies from the food

² For a classification of companies according to the process of internationalization see Meier (2006) and Mayrhofer (2011).

³ According to Morin (2009: p. 23), “L’économie doit non seulement être régulée, mais elle doit devenir plurielle”.

⁴ See for exemple the handbook Union européenne (2011) and Canale (2013). See also Pecchenino, Bonalumi (2002), and the website *Il mestiere di scrivere*, <<http://www.mestierediscrivere.com>>.

sector have a strong cultural identity, at both the individual and the collective levels, which is inherently linked to food. Herein lies the motivation behind our decision to analyze companies in the food sector – with specific reference to France and Italy, where these companies are paramount to the national economy and are also key players on the global markets⁵ – performing a qualitative investigation of their websites.

For present purposes, we have analyzed the websites of Barilla, Ferrero, Lavazza, Lactalis, FleuryMichon, Bongrain, and Bonduelle, in order to gauge their rates of culture specificity, as being linked to both the local economy – to “Made in Italy” or “Made in France” – and the international field. A comparative corpus was collected including web texts from companies with a national dimension, but which are trying to face the international market (Rana, Maina, Panzani, Révillon) with the aim of identifying in their institutional discourse possible alternative forms of targeted communication (see Table 1 and Table 2). These web texts, which can actually be said to constitute institutional discourse-types, have enabled us to select linguistic items (i.e. lexical and discourse items). Such items carry traces of the identity and culture underlying the construction of the companies and their position in a globalised world market. They also represent distinctive signs of new forms of communicative strategies adopted by the companies. The comparison between the data collected from the corporate websites and the local websites sheds light on their respective identity values, which are inherent to the businesses and to how they constitute their foundations and position themselves on the global market.⁶

Table 1. International companies

Food companies	Country	Products	Communication strategies
BARILLA http://www.barillagroup.it/ http://www.barilla.it/	Italy	Pasta, ready-made sauces, bakery products	Corporate: It/En Commercial: It + 24 countries Languages: Italian, English, German, French, Norwegian, Dutch, Hungarian, Greek, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, American English, Turkish, Romanian, Polish, Arabian, Hebrew, Portuguese
FERRERO http://www.ferrero.com/ http://www.ferrero.com/websites/local-countries/Ferrero-country-website	Italy	Nutella, Chocolate, Bakery products	Corporate: It/En Commercial: It + Continents (Europe: 24 countries; America: 6 countries; Asia: 2 countries; Oceania: 2 countries) Languages: Italian, English, German, French, Norwegian, Finnish, Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, Slovenian, Greek,

⁵ Both Italy and France define food as the key sector in their economy and their main export onto international markets. Some important figures regarding this sector are to be found on the Italian Ministero degli Affari Esteri website, platform Infomercatiesteri – Agroalimentare, <http://www.infomercatiesteri.it/settore.php?id_settori=1>; and on the French Ministère de l'économie et des finances, <<http://www.redressement-productif.gouv.fr/semaine-industrie/activites-industrielles/agro-alimentaire>>.

⁶ For present purposes, the texts cover a period of one year (2012-2013) and were taken from various sections of the websites following the reference links provided on the home page (e.g. “About us”, “Products”, “Values”).

			Spanish, Russian, Swedish, Danish, Turkish, Romanian, Polish, Arabian, Hebrew, Portuguese, Ukrainian, American English, Chinese
LAVAZZA http://www.lavazza.com/	Italy	Coffee	Corporate-commercial platform: international (En/Spa); Eu, Middle East, Africa (8 countries); North America (2 countries); Asia Pacific (4 countries); Central and South America (2 countries + international) Languages: English, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, American English, Chinese, Arabian, Hebrew, Portuguese
BONDUELLE http://www.bonduelle.com/	France	Fresh processed vegetables, frozen vegetables, canned vegetables	Corporate: Fr/ International (En) Commercial sites products: 19 countries Languages: English, German, French, Italian, Norwegian, Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, Slovenian, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, Danish, Polish, Lithuanian
BONGRAIN http://www.bongrain.com	France	Cheese and dairyspecialties	Corporate : Fr/En (specific local sites for production and sales: Europe, America, Africa, Middle East, Asia) Languages: French, English, German, Hungarian, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Czech, Romanian (Link sites)
FLEURY-MICHON http://www.fleurymichon.fr/	France	Meatproducts, fishproducts	Corporate-commercial: Fr/En (Local sites in joint-ventures: Canada, Italy, Spain, Slovenia) Languages: French, English, Spanish, Italian, Slovenian
LACTALIS http://www.lactalis.fr/ http://www.gruppolactalisitalia.com/	France	Milk and dairyproducts	Corporate: Fr/En Corporate : Fr/It Languages: French, English, Italian

Table 2. (Inter) National companies

Food companies	Country	Products	Communication strategies
MAINA http://www.mainapanettoni.com/	Italy	Cakes (panettone, pandoro)	Commercial: It/En Languages: Italian, English
RANA https://www.rana.it	Italy	Fresh pasta, freshsauces	Commercial-corporate: It (Independent Local sites: France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, UK, Spain) Languages: Italian, French, English, German, Spanish, Luxembourgish
PANZANI http://www.panzani.com/	France	Pasta	Corporate: Fr Commercial: 7 countries + international (all other countries) Languages: French, English, Czech, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Russian, Estonian, Dutch (Flemish), Hungarian
RÉVILLON http://www.revillonchocolatier.fr/	France	Chocolate papillotes	Commercial-corporate: Fr Languages: French

3. Multilingual communication of food companies: which strategies?

We began our analysis by identifying those marketing and policy strategies adopted by various food companies and then by gathering all the language choices implying policy and geographic market representations. This first step demonstrated that companies make communication choices on the basis of their organization, objectives in terms of development and expansion, local identity, in order to understand which way they are to move in order to achieve a position in the global market, and language, with reference to the other languages which could potentially be adopted for communication purposes.

On the Internet, companies present themselves through a language. This language, on the one hand, denotes the geographic identity and, on the other, connotes the cultural identity of companies, thus revealing their unicity.⁷ However, when companies appeal to other markets, it seems clear that there is a need for language varieties,⁸ (e.g. Lavazza in Africa and other countries, Lactalis where the corporate site offers the options Fr/En or Fr/It) since the target markets have their own societies, customers and market coverage. The use of each language corresponds to well-defined choices, which aim to cover geographic areas and sometimes language/culture needs (Belgium: Fr/Nl (Barilla) or Fr/En (Lavazza); Africa: International version but implicitly Fr/En (Lavazza, Bongrain).

Although it is true that the choice of a corporate site reveals an English-like model and attitude as well as an international approach (not for Lactalis Italia), some companies seem to adopt hybrid models. For example, the site by Panzani is French speaking, except for the entry devoted to customers, where the language chosen is English (“Select your country”). Révillon,

⁷ “L’analyse de la manière dont un même message, véhiculant les mêmes valeurs est reçu et prend corps dans des contextes culturels différents laisse voir combien cette unité est à la fois réelle et relative” (D’Iribarne 2009: 157).

⁸ Different options are used to indicate the availability of the site in other languages: verbal signs (version française/anglaise, etc.; country names, abbreviations: It/En) and icon signs (national flags). For practical purposes, we use the abbreviations Fr (French), En (English), It (Italian).

another French-speaking example, again uses the English language for the “Export” section. Rana, which is an Italian speaking site, offers a section called “Ristoranti” in English, French, Spanish, and German probably suggesting that a healthy dose of languages improves the flavour...

Because of the market changes, companies need to revise their internal dynamics by considering external influence, with reference to intercultural management (Meier 2006, Rabassò & Rabassò 2007, Chevrier 2010), and confront themselves with the international environment, where cultural diversity is considered a strong element. The recent economic crisis has led to a change in language policies towards localization as proposed by the European Community.⁹ Furthermore, as Prime and Usunier (2012) state, globalization has led to a confluence from a technical, language, cultural, and ecologic point of view and, at the same time, to new forms of divergence. The global market, then, is the source for new differentiations in mass consumption, where the need for authenticity and an affirmation of national identity is expected.¹⁰

The multilingual enterprise (Lüdi 2010: 12-13) is an “acteur social polyphonique” (Desoutter 2013: 36) and communicates through an individual and a collective voice, which can be considered as a sort of interface between the local and the international language/languages, namely English. This results in specific communicative strategies related to geographic areas, which represent a way to move from ethnocentricity to more flexible geographic boundaries. In this sense, a language is used to communicate in the global market and the approach is based on cross-boundary comprehension.

If we consider Prime and Usunier’s statement on globalization, based on Calvet’s “gravitational model”,¹¹ language is

un système planétaire, dont le pivot est une langue hypercentrale, aujourd’hui l’anglais, autour de laquelle tournent une dizaine de langues supercentrales, pivots à leur tour de cent ou deux cents langues centrales autour desquelles gravitent enfin cinq ou six mille langues périphériques (Prime, Usunier 2012: 11).

Multilingual communication, as used by food companies, thus suggests that identity language is central to the presentation of the institution on the market. This is the case of the Italian companies Barilla, Lavazza, and Ferrero, which have developed into international companies but whose roots are family based: their products are inherently Italian (i.e. pasta, coffee and Nutella) and firmly culture-specific to a national and local environment.

Italian website	English/International website
LAVAZZA :Oggi Lavazza è il simbolo del caffè	Today Lavazza is the symbol of Italian coffee

⁹ See the ELAN – Effects on the European economy of shortages of foreign language skills in enterprise report at <<https://www.llas.ac.uk/news/2772>>, and the European projects CELAN – Language Strategies for Competitiveness and Employability, <<http://www.celan-platform.eu/>> et DYLAN – Language dynamics and management of diversity, <http://www.dylan-project.org/Dylan_en/home/home.php>.

¹⁰ “(...) on the one hand, we can see how a multinational company defines its corporate identity to reach a global market; on the other, we can perceive how local national consumers expect their traditional models, values and beliefs to be taken into due account and respected.” (Salvi 2013: 17).

¹¹ Calvet’s gravitational model is illustrated in Calvet (1999) and Calvet (2002). In 2005, Calvet observes: “L’organisation mondiale des rapports entre les langues dont veut rendre compte le modèle gravitationnel est en quelque sorte une photographie d’un processus mouvant de rapports de force. L’anglais en est aujourd’hui le pivot, la langue hypercentrale, mais il va de soi que cette situation peut évoluer et qu’une autre langue peut, dans l’avenir, prendre cette place” (Calvet 2005: 2).

italiano nel mondo, veicolo privilegiato del nostro stile di vita e dei valori del nostro paese . Da Torino al mondo Lavazza ribadisce la sua presenza sul territorio torinese (...)	around the world, the privileged beacon of our lifestyle and the values of our country . Lavazza confirms its presence in the Turin area (...)
FERRERO :Oggi molti dei prodotti Ferrero sono “globali”, venduti dovunque. Ma la sua particolarità è il suo essere “glocal” (Pensare globale, Agire locale), cioè una azienda insieme globale e locale, attenta allo sviluppo internazionale, ma anche al suo rapporto con il territorio.	However Ferrero’s distinguishing characteristic is that it is “glocal” (think globally, act locally), a company which is both global and local, which focuses on international development, without losing sight of its relationship with local communities.
BARILLA : Barilla una delle aziende alimentari più stimate nel mondo come espressione del “saper fare” italiano .	Barilla has become one of the world’s most esteemed food companies and is recognized worldwide as a symbol of Italian know-how(...)

This is also the case of companies “finding their way to the global market” such as Rana or Révillon (fresh pasta, chocolate papillottes). One example can be found on the home page of the site from Giovanni Ranaina video showing the Verona Arena, with opera music in the background which users can switch on. To a lesser extent, Bonduelle and Bongrain, foreground their European membership (cf. the video on the site Bonduelle with the title “Nos racines, c’est l’Europe”, available at www.bonduelle.com). On the other hand, Lactalis displays a language approach oriented to a binational communication by presenting the option Fr/En and It/Fr.

4. Corporate identity: language fossilisation and hybridisation

The multilingual communication adopted by such companies is the result of their position on the market and of their own identity and culture. It also reveals an ongoing process of negotiation between several elements: a language identity source, which highlights the origins, history, geographic, social and cultural affiliation (national, regional, and professional), a target otherness, which may be more or less defined (by country or in relation to a universal extent) and which is increasingly multicultural, and, we will add, a “source otherness”, which arises from considering “soi-même comme un autre” to communicate extensively.

According to Guidère (2008: 44-45), multilingual communication uses “différentes versions étrangères d’un même message” thus enabling us to “concilier les impératifs économiques et le respect des identités culturelles”. Multilingual communication develops through three steps: first, the identification of the recipient, then the definition of a specific language, and, finally, the establishment of a relationship based on common knowledge. This provides a communicative perspective organized around two distinct structures that are reciprocally complementary: the mirror site, guarding the profound and ‘fossilized’ identity of the enterprise, and the kaleidoscope site, projecting towards otherness through forms of cultural adaptation (Guidère 2008). In particular, in our analysis, cultural adaptation was detected in two forms, namely creative and functional, especially in the local sites where examples of communicative strategies are found in the use of more responsive language for the client/consumer.

Corporate sites are rooted in the mirror model, which breaks in the plural identity of its stakeholders. It is also true that in the last few years the language issue has increasingly become a heated debate for those companies that consider themselves international by acting like plurilingual subjects in a multilingual communicative space. For food companies, cultural affirmation and identity plays an important role in the construction of the institutional image because of the specificity of the products they commercialize. Such products convey an

association of ideas, connotations, images, and collective values which are not easily transferable (Galisson 1998; Gambier 2008). The corporate sites examined have revealed language material emerging from quite a formalized code that Antonelli and others call “corporatese” – that is to say, a company language which has

da una parte una formalizzazione esasperata legata a un’idea quasi sacrale dell’ufficialità, dall’altra l’agilità di un pragmatismo teso a creare reddito (Antonelli 2007: 61).

The corpus collected includes several examples of coded language that denotes a web-like style characterized by the recurrence of routinised sentences and fixed phrases:

French Companies	Fr	En
LACTALIS	Lactalis devient le n°1 mondial des produits laitiers, suite à l’acquisition de 83,3% des parts de Parmalat,	Lactalis became the world N.1 on the dairy market, after the acquisition of 83,3% of Parmalat
BONGRAIN	Leader européen et mondial du lait Leader mondial des spécialités fromagères et des pâtes molles à marques	Market leader for cheese specialities, specialist in branded cheeses. Second largest cheese group in France and world number five.
BONDUELLE	1ère marque de légumes Leader mondial du légume prêt à l’emploi	The number one vegetable brand World leader in ready-to-use vegetables

Italian Companies	It	En
FERRERO	A oltre trent’anni dalla sua nascita, Ferrero è un’azienda leader, e non solo in Italia.	Leader numbers Ferrero is one of the largest confectionery groups in the world.
BARILLA:	Barilla è oggi tra i primi gruppi alimentari italiani, leader nel mercato della pasta nel mondo	Barilla is one of the leading Italian food groups, a leader in the markets for pasta worldwide

There are various other examples found in the new “sustainable” discourse¹² of food companies which suggest a high level of standardization in this type of communication:

Companies	Fr	It	En
BARILLA		costruire un’azienda sostenibile. Business sostenibile	Barilla works to implement forms of preventive stakeholders involvement in defining the key elements of its sustainability policy Sustainable business
LAVAZZA		è il primo progetto di CSR (Responsabilità Sociale d’Impresa) interamente realizzato	Tierra is the first CSR project conducted entirely by Lavazza

¹² About the new sustainable discourses see Molino (2013).

		da Lavazza ;Tierra!,sostenibilità ed eccellenza	Lavazza ;Tierra! Sustainability and Excellence
BONGRAIN	La diversité des clients, des marchés et des pays de Bongrain SA trouve son écho dans celle des équipes du Groupe. Toutes partagent cependant les mêmes ambitions d'Excellence et de Progrès Durable.		The diversity of the countries, markets and customers served by Bongrain SA is echoed by that of the Group's teams, all of which nevertheless have in common the same goal of excellence and sustainable progress.
FLEURY-MICHON	Entreprise responsable et engagée, Fleury Michon concilie développement économique et progrès sociétal		FleuryMichon's culture puts a premium on people, trust and progress and naturally leads the Company to take an active role in promoting Corporate Social Responsibility

Other examples concern the company's business core (fossilization of metaphors related to the "heart" in French and Italian):

LAVAZZA : Le café est naturellement placé au cœur du monde Lavazza	Coffee is naturally at the centre of Lavazza's universe
LAVAZZA : L'azienda Lavazza è la famiglia Lavazza, da sempre: e fare impresa "con il cuore" , come diceva Emilio Lavazza, è tra i valori fondamentali (...)	The Lavazza company has always been the Lavazza family, and working "with your heart" , as Emilio Lavazza used to say, is a fundamental value of one of the most solid business groups in Italy and around the world.
BONGRAIN : Bongrain SA s'appuie sur un management décentralisé qui place les filiales opérationnelles au cœur du développement	Bongrain SA is based on a system of decentralised management which places the operational subsidiaries at the heart of development
LACTALIS : l'innovation au cœur de la tradition laitière	Innovation at the heart of dairy traditions
FLEURY-MICHON : L'évolution permanente de nos gammes et l'innovation est au cœur de la stratégie du groupe.	—
PANZANI : Depuis toujours, l'innovation est au cœur de son développement. Panzani se développe et innove constamment afin de conserver la place de choix qu'il occupe dans le cœur des Français.	Food, the core of our well being

On the one hand, there is a protocol "language", which is normative, but declined differently in Italy and France (especially in the titles of sections), and which is composed of semantic labels or "quasi" formulae (développement durable/sviluppo sostenibile, environnement/ambiente; code éthique/codice etico, responsabilité sociale/responsabilità sociale d'impresa, RSE/CSR, mission/missione, stratégie/vision/visione etc.). Such linguistic forms lead into a sort of transversal "wooden language" which is grafted onto more rigid formal

elements (eg. norms for writing contents on web sites, and use of specific technicalities). On the other hand, there are more flexible linguistic forms carrying connotative and emotional meaning, which evoke the values of an enterprise and strengthen its cultural identity (Mondo Rana, Ferrero: Azienda Italia, Casa Barilla).

Through corporate communication, the companies must set out their subjectivity and their cultural environment. This means that the companies must explicitly declare their identity in order to be recognised through their values, traditions and objectives (strategy and innovation). They should, therefore, tell us about their development through time (this narrative is usually presented through a saga, history, travel, journey or mapped out path...). It is in this way that companies can make their specific traits emerge. This leads, first, to the enhancement of the rational and emotional sense of belonging to a local area, and, secondly, to a claim to a national and corporate language/culture needed to gain intercultural values and to integrate into the global dimension. Italian food companies display a strong attachment to their national roots by introducing some key words such as familiar values (*valori familiari*), family and local history, as well as references to the local territory (*storia di una famiglia piemontese*), but, at the same time, they make explicit their international vocation by using words such as multinational company (*azienda multinazionale*) and world market (*Barilla nel mondo*):

<p>FERRERO: Ferrero, azienda della tradizione italiana È un assetto basato, oggi come ieri, su solidi valori familiari. In breve, dietro il marchio, i bilanci e l'espansione di un'azienda multinazionale, c'è la storia di una geniale e tenace famiglia piemontese.</p>	<p>In short, behind the trademark, the turnover and the expansion of a multinational company, there is the story of a brilliant and strong-willed Piedmontese family</p>
<p>BARILLA: Da sempre Barilla è una storia di famiglie, una magica unione tra noi che produciamo e le persone che ci scelgono; una storia fatta di tradizione, impegno e passione, capace di raggiungere il cuore della gente. Una passione tutta italiana per una alimentazione gustosa ed insieme equilibrata, che ogni giorno ci accomuna nel desiderio di tradurre questo spirito in prodotti alimentari unici e sempre al passo con le esigenze delle famiglie. Una passione per il piacere, il benessere e la gioia di mangiar bene che, come dimostra il successo di Barilla nel mondo, contagia ogni giorno milioni di persone. Il piacere italiano del mangiar bene</p>	<p>“Where there’s Barilla, there’s home”. Where there’s Barilla, anywhere in the World, there is Italy, there is family, there is community. (Company profiles) Since 1877, Barilla is the italian family company that believes food is a joyful convivial experience, is taste, is a form of sharing and caring. (Company profiles)</p>

National identity in French food companies is displayed differently. Well-known companies seem to leave national identity on the background, but they then actually let it emerge by contextualizing their history in a European framework (for example, *our roots in Europe*) as a possible way to open a path in the global market:

- BONDUELLE: Nos racines c’est l’Europe
- BONGRAIN: Actif sur tous les continents, il développe des offres à forte valeur ajoutée adaptées aux habitudes de consommation et aux spécificités de ses différents marchés.
- FLEURY MICHON: La marque Fleury Michon porte en elle les valeurs génétiques de son passé, de son présent et de son avenir.

We believe that our analysis has shed light on some identity categories, such as ‘italianité’, ‘francité’, ‘européité’, ‘méditerranéité,’ which still exist in the food sector as memory traces

promoting mental associations which are sometimes stereotyped and which are considered as essential reference in institutional sites and as specific markers in the versions for the different countries (commercial/marketing sites). Some examples can be found in the use of typical culture-specific conversational formulae:

LAVAZZA: “**Passa da noi a prendere un caffè**”, “**Ti faccio un caffè**”, “**Ce lo beviamo un caffè?**”. Quante volte ogni giorno pensiamo e parliamo del caffè fatto con la moka? È una tradizione così consolidata da essere parte integrante della nostra vita.

Or some slogans and other cultural statements:

BARILLA: Dove c'è pasta c'è...Un mondo d'amore, fantasia e benessere Barilla realizza il suo fatturato nell'area del primo piatto all'italiana Modello alimentare italiano	Always al dente . Always perfect. (Barilla ca) Italian Food Lovers (Barilla Usa) Barilla's turnover is generated in the area of the Italian first course Enjoy the simple meal al fresco (Barilla USA)
FLEURY-MICHON: « L'obsession du bon » fait partie de nos gènes	—

The two companies orient the audience, which identifies itself with different profiles; maybe this represents a first step to the achievement of a mixed identity, which will enable the establishment of a new and “plural” category:

BONGRAIN: Un portefeuille multiculturel de marques ; Culture, éthique et conduite des affaires : les principes fondamentaux autour desquels le Groupe s'est construit et qui ont toujours guidé son action, ont été traduits dans les 19 langues parlées dans l'entreprise .	A multicultural portfolio of brands ≠ Our principles and rules of conduct are included in an Ethical Charter – the Group and its culture – a copy of which is provided to all employees.
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The presence of multicultural elements, such as the use of words in different languages, is an expression of openness to cultural diversity which emerges in the websites of several food companies (especially with reference to brand management and human resources). The choice of certain lexical items featuring language and cultural hybridization is a result of the combination of different linguistic forms (e.g. internationalisms, hybrid forms, code mixing):

LAVAZZA: Caffè, passione ed expertise Apri il primo locale Espression , il conceptstore sviluppato in modo autonomo dall'azienda nel settore coffee-shop , vero e proprio brand builder e vetrina d'eccellenza del marchio Lavazza, per portare la cultura dell'espresso nelle capitali internazionali.	Coffe, passion and expertise ≠ Lavazza opens the first Espression coffee shop — the concept store autonomously developed by the Company in this sector.
LAVAZZA: The Italianexperience. La community Lavazza Storie inconsuete di un'Italia straordinaria ... Vogliamo raccontare e farci raccontare a partire dalle cose semplici e genuine, dall'Italia più vera. Non per leggere il futuro ma per gustare l'italianità a partire da tutti noi, nei suoi valori più sinceri,	The Italian experience. La community Lavazza. Unconventional tales of extraordinary Italian life We want to savour the most sincere values of Italianism and its little daily wonders.

Italianize your style Do you speak espresso?	
BARILLA: iPasta	—
FERRERO : Ferrero in the world. Siti country	Ferrero in the world. ≠ Local countries
FLEURY MICHON : l'arrivée de la cuisine italienne haute en couleurs et en saveurs avec Roberta. La Mamma de Room Saveurs met l'accent sur l'art de vivre méditerranéen avec quatre plateaux-repas dont le fameux Bar à Mozzarella.	—
BONGRAIN (marque Ferrari): Bello Gratinato, Sublime Filante, Gusto Intenso, ParmigianoReggiano ...Giovanni Ferrari, héritier d'une famille de fromagers depuis 1823, est reconnu en Italie pour son savoir-faire de producteur affineur de fromages italiens et de sélectionneur des meilleures variétés fromagères.	—

A language which responds to international standards (anglicisms, neologisms), and tends to a layered identity (words reflecting a local cultural know-how, the groups, calques, loans, adaptation, reformulations, circumlocutions, words of “symbolic reservoir”) venturing further into hybridization, maybe a perfect tool for multilingual communication. This language results from a combination of a “continuum” of cultures beyond historical change derived from the tendency to “hybridisation” of the forms of life, thought and creativity, and a process of representational “homogenisation” (Charaudeau, 2009). The analysis of the website texts gathered shows the use of a corporate language which tries to incorporate a representation of the company’s identity. This is evident in the intercultural discourse of Bongrain, which is stereotyped and illustrates the culture of cheese in the world by describing how it is served in 16 different countries:

Bongrain	Fr	En
Voyage au pays du fromage/Cheese traditions	Italie : pâtes et fromages. Parler de l'Italie, c'est évoquer pizzas, pasta(...) Les italiens privilégient les pâtes dures et semi-dures italiennes (...)	Italie: pasta and cheese Talk of Italy evokes pizza, pasta and its countless sauces, risotto (...) Italians prefer hard and semi hard Italian cheeses (...)
	Suisse : Raclette et Fondues. Le fromage est présenté sur un plateau au cours d'un souper léger ou constitue un repas complet sous forme de fondue (...)	Switzerland: Raclettes and fondues Cheese is often served on a board during a light supper (...)
	Royaume Uni Fromage ingrédient plutôt que fromage plaisir... Les anglais utilisent beaucoup de fromage dans la cuisine et la préparation des sandwiches	United Kingdom Cheese is an ingredient rather than for pleasure... the British use a lot of cheese in cooking and in sandwiches (...)

5. Conclusion

This analysis has shed light on some linguistic items that show that the present-day model of communication is moving from standardization, initially considered a good approach and practice, to ‘glocalization’ or adaptation which groups several choices: corporate and commercial in Barilla and Bonduelle, corporate-commercial in Ferrero, Rana, Fleury-Michon, and exclusively commercial, and therefore strongly related to the local territory, in Révillonand Panzani.

This model lies behind the complexity of the multi/intercultural situations of the companies whose roles as international actors (D’ Iribarne 2009) mean that they have to face multiple centrifugal and centripetal forces: on the one hand, there is the search for the perfect language (lingua franca), while on the other hand, there is the reality of language diversity within and without the organization. As Ricœur (2004) suggests, it would be necessary to oppose

à cette idée d’une identité immuable l’idée d’identité narrative: les collectivités vivantes ont une histoire qui peut être racontée, et je ferai du récit l’un des chemins de ce que je viens d’appeler le rayonnement croisé des cultures.

In this way, multilingual corporate communication would eventually show a shift and a new path for verbal identity through a meaningful decline of such linguistic and communicative strategies in order to build new and plural identity models. Such models, therefore, would be the result of the negotiation between tradition and modernity, national and global culture, particular and universal culture, in a cross-cultural perspective.

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