



An update on the roles of culture and language in designing emotion lists: English, Spanish and Portuguese



Hannelize van Zyl^{a,*}, Herbert L. Meiselman^b

^a HEINEKEN, Burgemeester Smeetsweg 1, Zoeterwoude 2382PH, The Netherlands

^b Herb Meiselman Training and Consulting Services, P.O. Box 28, Rockport, MA 01966, USA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an update on a study investigating the effect of culture and language on reported emotions and confirms that both culture and language are important in studying emotions evoked by beverages. In addition, sub-categories of products, such as beverage types have different emotion associations in different cultures. A list of emotions developed for beverages in the UK, US, Mexico and Spain was translated into Portuguese for Brazil and Portugal. An on-line questionnaire combining the emotions selected by the focus groups was then completed by 600 respondents each in Brazil and Portugal where people were asked which emotions applied to their favourite beverage, beer and their least liked alcoholic beverage. Data from the two studies were combined.

Respondents from English speaking countries showed very similar emotional reactions for individual beverage types. Respondents from Mexico and Brazil were more similar to English speaking respondents than to those from Spain and, with the exception of wine, respondents from Portugal were similar to those of Brazil and Mexico in their emotional reactions. Respondents from Spain and Portugal were similar in their emotional reaction to wine. We confirm our conclusion that for products, but certainly for beverages, culture will affect emotion language usage, but even within the same category, the pattern of differences may be different for different products. In designing emotion lists it is therefore important to take both culture and language into consideration and to realize that a list developed in one country for a specific product type is not necessarily suitable in another country or for a different product.

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1. Introduction

In a previous study (van Zyl & Meiselman, 2015) showed that when respondents rated the emotions associated with their favourite beverage, there were more similarities between Spanish speaking respondents from Mexico and English speaking respondents from the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand than between Mexican and Spanish respondents who share the same root language. There was a good level of agreement (67–98% between pairs of countries) among English speaking respondents from different countries regarding the relevance of emotion words for their favourite beverage. It was therefore concluded that respondents from these four English speaking countries had similar emotional responses to beverages and may consume beverages for similar reasons. It was concluded that culture may be more important than language in determining the emotional responses to beverages.

The data suggested that Mexico was more like other New World countries than it is like Spain for emotion terminology related to

respondents' favourite beverage. This paper reports on a further analysis of the language-culture issue, and is meant as a brief update on the previous study, by including data from a subsequent study conducted in Portuguese in both Portugal and Brazil. The objective was to further study comparisons between language in the original "mother" country and language in newer countries and to better understand the impact of culture and language on the emotions elicited by beverage types. Understanding this issue will help in the general understanding of how language and culture contribute to product emotions. Spanish is one of the most commonly spoken languages in the world, based on its widespread use in North and South America; Portuguese is also spoken by more people in America than in Portugal. Both Spanish and Portuguese are among the 6 most commonly spoken languages in the world (Wikipedia).

2. Method

In the first study by van Zyl and Meiselman (2015) a list of 66 terms was compiled from a combination of previously published

* Corresponding author.

lists and focus groups in 4 countries and two languages. In this follow-up study the aim was to reach a balance between starting the entire process from scratch with focus groups in each country or simply translating an existing list. It was decided to translate the long list compiled from focus group results in English and Spanish and then to use on-line research in Brazil and Portugal to identify which of those words are most appropriate for each beverage type in these two Portuguese speaking countries. The decision was based on the fact that the words from the English and Spanish focus groups were not vastly different for beverages in general and that the differences found between countries were related to their use for specific beverages in the on-line study. The list of terms was translated into Portuguese as used in Portugal and Brazil respectively, resulting in 69 word pairs when combining the English, Spanish and Portuguese lists. The 69 word pairs are a result of words with similar meanings. As one English word sometimes had two Spanish counterparts (e.g. *Friendly*: *Simpatico* and *Amable*) and two Spanish words sometimes had one English counterpart (e.g. *Cariñoso*: *Loving* and *Affectionate*) there was a total of 69 word pairs. Thus *Friendly-Amable* is one word pair and *Friendly-Simpatico* is another word pair, while *Loving-Cariñoso* is a pair and *Affectionate-Cariñoso* is a pair. Each respondent only saw terms in their own language (66) and the word pairs were only used for the purposes of data analysis.

2.1. Internet term selection

The objective was to determine which of the 66 terms were most relevant to beverages for Portuguese speaking respondents, with the main focus on which emotions one should study for beverages that are liked, rather than emotions related to a specific beverage type.

On-line research was conducted with 600 respondents each in Brazil and Portugal. Respondents were recruited in three age

groups (legal drinking age – 29, 30–45 and 46–55) with 50% male and 50% female in each. All respondents were specifically recruited to be native Portuguese speakers and drinkers of several types of beverages.

As in the previous study, questions were posed to respondents sequentially and it was not possible to return to earlier questions to modify responses. First, respondents were asked to imagine having their favourite beverage. There were no instructions regarding the type of beverage or frequency of use. While this was not stated in the questionnaire, it should be kept in mind that a favourite beverage is not necessarily the one consumed most often. Respondents were asked to indicate for each of the terms, whether their favourite beverage made them feel more like that, less like that or if the term was not applicable. Respondents were not asked to scale the intensity of the emotions they experienced as the objective was not to compare beverages. In the next question respondents were asked to indicate whether or not the beverage contained alcohol and then to choose from a list to identify the beverage they imagined. Subsequently, respondents were asked to imagine that they were having a beer and to indicate, for each of the 66 terms, whether beer made them feel more like that, less like that or if the term was not applicable. There was no instruction regarding the type or brand of beer, leaving respondents free to imagine their favourite style and brand of beer. Respondents who had already identified beer as their favourite beverage were not asked this question to avoid duplication. In the final part of the questionnaire respondents were asked to identify their least liked alcoholic beverage from a list. Respondents who had identified beer as their least liked beverage were not asked the last question as they had already identified their emotions related to beer. All other respondents were asked to imagine having their least liked alcoholic beverage and to indicate, for each of the 66 terms, whether that beverage made them feel more like that, less like that or if the term was not applicable.

Table 1
Distribution of favourite and least liked beverage as identified by respondents.

	Australia (%)	New Zealand (%)	UK (%)	USA (%)	Spain (%)	Mexico (%)	Portugal (%)	Brazil (%)
<i>Favourite beverage</i>								
Alcohol free beer	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.5	4.2	1.0	0.8	1.5
Alcopops	1.0	0.2	3.5	0.3	2.3	2.3	0.5	4.3
Beer	25.9	25.3	27.2	29.2	31.4	34.2	35.6	48.3
Bourbon	8.6	11.5	1.5	2.0	1.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
Cachaça	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.2	0.7
Cider	4.0	2.0	10.0	0.7	0.7	0.5	1.8	0.3
Coffee	9.6	10.8	7.3	5.4	7.0	8.1	7.0	5.8
Flavoured water	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.5	0.2
Gin	1.5	2.2	2.2	2.6	3.1	0.7	2.0	0.0
Juice	2.7	3.8	2.8	2.3	4.7	6.5	6.3	7.8
Other	6.6	8.5	4.7	7.6	5.9	3.2	8.5	1.7
Soft drink/soda	7.0	3.8	5.3	11.1	14.7	5.3	6.8	3.2
Tea	5.1	6.2	8.2	4.5	4.2	2.8	6.0	1.0
Tequila	1.2	1.2	0.5	4.1	1.3	7.3	0.0	0.8
Vodka	6.6	6.8	7.2	10.1	4.9	6.0	4.7	4.0
Water	2.0	0.5	1.2	3.1	2.6	1.5	4.3	2.0
Whisky	6.3	4.7	3.5	5.1	6.0	10.8	3.2	4.0
Wine	11.6	11.3	14.3	11.4	6.0	7.1	10.7	14.3
<i>Least liked beverage</i>								
Alcopops	10.0	10.2	10.5	8.8	6.9	13.8	6.0	2.5
Beer	11.5	10.4	9.0	11.4	4.6	12.1	7.5	6.3
Bourbon	7.8	10.4	8.0	9.8	10.1	8.6	5.7	3.5
Cachaça	–	–	–	–	–	–	16.7	32.0
Cider	10.3	8.3	5.7	8.1	7.2	13.8	5.0	7.0
Gin	16.8	16.5	17.2	13.1	15.2	8.5	11.0	10.0
Other	8.0	6.2	6.5	8.8	3.9	4.1	4.3	6.5
Tequila	9.3	10.4	10.9	12.6	15.4	7.1	5.2	5.3
Vodka	6.8	6.0	5.7	7.3	14.1	13.8	8.7	6.5
Whisky	12.3	12.2	21.9	13.1	19.0	11.1	24.2	17.0
Wine	7.3	9.5	4.7	7.3	3.8	7.1	5.7	3.3

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