

# **The Effect of Translation Quality on Ideal Consumers' Price: Evidence from a Between-Group Design Experiment**

**Chiara Marinelli**

University of Trieste, DEAMS Department, Italy  
chiara.marinelli@phd.units.it

**Marco Balzano**

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Department of Management, Italy  
& SKEMA Business School, KTO Research Center, France  
marco.balzano@unive.it

**Guido Bortoluzzi**

University of Trieste, DEAMS Department, Italy  
guido.bortoluzzi@deams.units.it

*Abstract.* Scholars have proven language quality affects consumers' ideal price. However, research has largely neglected the linguistic quality of products' translated instructions in this process. By building on data collected from an experiment conducted in Italy between 2023 and 2024, the study explores the impact of poorly translated instructions on consumers' perceptions. Results indicate products' instructions poor linguistic quality negatively affects consumers' ideal price. Our implications extend to marketing scholars and practitioners.

*Keywords:* instructions, translation, language quality

## **1 Introduction and study framework**

In international marketing and consumers' behaviour, scholars acknowledge high-quality language is key to effective information provision (Holden and Michailova 2014; Janssens, Lambert and Steyaert 2004). As the poor linguistic quality of information can negatively impact on consumers' perceptions, researchers rely on information processing theories to understand how this occurs (Pedraz-Delhaes, Aljukhadar and Sénécal 2010; Samson and Voyer 2012).

According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model people pay attention to the linguistic quality of products' information asymmetrically, as information processing occurs either through the central or the peripheral routes (Petty and Cacioppo 1984; 1986). However, the linguistic quality of products' instructions and their impact on ideal consumers' price remains under-investigated.

Therefore, the study aims to understand the impact of poor language quality of translated instructions on consumers' ideal price. Following either of the ELM routes, we hypothesize that poor language quality of products' translated instructions negatively affects ideal consumers' price (Dodds, Monroe and Grewal 1991).

## **2 Methodology**

The data collection was conducted in the Italian city of Trieste between 2023 and 2024, gathering 700 in-presence and online participants.

Our dependent variable was operationalized by stimulating respondents' estimations of an ideal price for the research object, a Chinese checkers game, through a random lottery scheme. The independent variable was operationalized as a dummy variable for the poor (1) or well-translated (0) version of Chinese checkers' instructions.

We performed a linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between translation quality and the ideal consumer price, considering demographic and contextual control variables (Allison 1977; 1999).

### 3 Results and implications

The estimated coefficients of the linear regression analysis for the consumers' ideal price confirm the negative impact of the poor translation variable ( $\beta=-0.148$ ;  $p<.01$ ).

Our results support existing research highlighting the relevance of language for consumers' perceptions and purchase decisions (Kacen and Lee 2002). Secondly, extend current marketing literature by exploring the impact of instructions on consumers' perceptions (Gotlieb and Swan 1990). Thirdly, our study reveals useful insights for practitioners by underscoring the strategic importance of products' information linguistic quality, suggesting to exporting businesses to prioritize high-quality translation (Neeley 2012). Overall, by investing in clear communication, companies can affect consumers' price perceptions (Packard and Berger 2020; Sharma and Patterson 1999).

### 4 Conclusion

By leveraging on the ELM, our study highlights the importance of the linguistic quality of translated instructions to consumers' ideal price. We underline the need to deepen current understanding and invite further research on the topic to the benefit of marketing theory and practice.

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