

**Prospects of the future research.** Non-capital strategies of the foreign expansion of enterprises are applied with different intensity in various countries, industries and economic sectors. It seems legitimate to make further research concerning the possibility of applying non-capital strategies, including the geographic diversity of markets (i.e. possibilities of applying in various countries) and individual industries and economic sectors (i.e. producers of financial consumer goods and supply, as well as widely understood services).

1. Duliniec E.: *Marketing międzynarodowy*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2009. 2. Gorynia M.: *Strategie zagranicznej ekspansji przedsiębiorstw*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2007. 3. Grzegorzczak W.: *Marketing na rynku międzynarodowym*. Oficyna Ekonomiczna. – Kraków, 2009. 4. Rymarczyk J.: *Internacjonalizacja i globalizacja przedsiębiorstwa*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2004. 5. Wiktor J. W., Oczkowska R., Żbikowska A.: *Marketing międzynarodowy. Zarys problematyki*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2008.

UKD 330.014

Andrzej Limański

Silesian School of Economics and Languages

## CULTURAL CONDITIONING IN MARKETING ON FOREIGN MARKETS

© Limański Andrzej, 2009

Культурне середовище є елементом міжнародного оточення, що характеризується дуже широкою, різноманітною сферою впливу на маркетингову діяльність підприємств у галузі споживчих товарів, поставок та послуг. Культура еволюціонує, проте, на даний момент вона є загальною системою для суспільства. Культура проявляється з використанням словесної і невербальної мови, вірування (релігії) і, проявляється в соціальному і економічному житті. Культурне розмаїття ринків є передумовою відмінної концепції міжкультурного маркетингу.

Cultural surroundings is an element of the international surroundings which is characterised by a very wide, diversified scope and the multiple influence on marketing activity of the enterprises in industries of consumer goods, supply, and services. Culture is subject to an evolution, however, at a particular moment it constitutes the shared system for the given society or its distinguished parts. Culture manifests itself with the used verbal and non-verbal language, with beliefs (religion) and with turning towards the products of a foreign social and economic life. Cultural diversity of markets is a premise of distinguishing the concept of cross-cultural marketing.

**Determining the scientific problem.** The corporate strategy on foreign markets is shaped according to diversified factors of the international environment. The variables of cultural environment are treated as one of more difficult to grasp by concerns functioning on foreign markets. Elements of demographic, economic or legal surroundings are relatively easy to identify, since data and the information from the scope of demography, economic indicators or provisions of the law are possible to acquire from resources of various institutions dealing with drawing and processing it. However, the special nature of cultural conditioning causes the problem in determining it and direct taking into account in the activity of the company. It results above all from the nature of culture and practical implications submitted to it. The ambiguity is a feature of comprehending the culture almost from very beginning of introducing it into the

scientific language. The scope of the notion was established depending on the accepted basic elements creating the system for it and the status of elementary components.

**Analysis of the latest research and publications.** The knowledge about the culture treated as the area of the research has been developed from the second-half of the 19th century. According to the definition of one of the first researchers – E.Tylor, culture is “a complicated and interdependent set of elements including the knowledge, beliefs and values, the art, the law, customs and the moral rules and all other types of abilities and customs purchased by a human being as the member of a particular community”<sup>10</sup>. The recalled author emphasised that culture was a general name for the things and phenomena that are peculiarly human.

According to the contemporary conception of G. Hofstede, culture is “a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one group or the category of people from the second one”<sup>11</sup>. It is possible to distinguish three levels of human programming of the mind: human nature (universal and inherited), culture (typical of the group or the category and acquired) and personality (typical of the individual, partly inherited and partly acquired). In A. Kłoskowska’s opinion, culture is “a relatively integrated whole including people’s behaviours, existing according to the patterns of social community’s shared interactions, educated and acquired by means of interactions and containing products of such behaviours”<sup>12</sup>. According to another general definition of J. Szczepański, culture is “the whole of material and immaterial products of human activity, the values and accepted manners that are made more objective and accepted in given communities, passed on to next communities and other generations”<sup>13</sup>. For the purposes of marketing culture is defined as “a set of factors explaining people’s behaviours, including their market behaviours. And so it is a set of values, ideas, attitudes and symbols which determine communication, as well as interpretation and the evaluation of objects and people”<sup>14</sup>.

Among the most important features of culture the following are listed:<sup>15</sup>

- Passing the culture on from the generation to the generation defined as the acculturation (enculturation). This process is called inheriting, but in other sense than genetic inheriting (biological), where the source is limited to parents of a given person (and to ancestors). In case of the national culture a much wider circle, shaped by the present and the past environment, is a source of a given person (public inheriting).

- Purchasing more-than-individual and anonymous features which are possible to find e.g. in the society or its smaller groups (e.g. subcultures), but not assigned to a given specific individual belonging to it. More-than-individual and anonymous features are characteristic of a group, rather than individuals.

- Treating culture as a feature (attribute) of a human kind, and what is more – as its determinant. Humans create the culture, and at the same time they become material for it, as they are shaped and modelled by it.

- The national culture is a complex whole consisting of native and foreign, former and new elements of different origins. They create the structure of internal connections where one element (part) of culture is strongly tied with another one, e.g. the religion and the marriage, the business and the social status. Knowing one feature allows to predict the other, and in consequence the behaviour of representatives of the given culture.

- Basic components of the culture change very slowly. These are values accepted by a lot of generations and passed on from the generation to the generation through the agency of various institutions, like the family and the school. In the same time the wider environment, in which an individual functions, undergoes smaller or greater transformations and changes caused by e.g. economic or political factors. In

---

<sup>10</sup> Karcz K. *Międzynarodowe badania marketingowe. Uwarunkowania kulturowe*. PWE. –Warszawa, 2004. – P. 37.

<sup>11</sup> Hofstede G. *Kultury i organizacje. Zaprogramowanie umysłu*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2000. – P. 40.

<sup>12</sup> Kłoskowska A. *Kultura masowa*. PWN. – Warszawa, 1980. – P. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Szczepański J. *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii*. PWN. – Warszawa, 1970. – P. 78.

<sup>14</sup> Duliniec E. *Marketing międzynarodowy*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2009. – P. 66.

<sup>15</sup> Bartosik-Purgat M. *Otoczenie kulturowe w biznesie międzynarodowym*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2006. – Pp. 21–26.

new conditions the individuals (members of a society) are often forced to accommodate themselves to a new situation.

**Aims of the article.** Culture in many aspects influences the marketing operations of the enterprise on foreign markets. The purpose of the article is to identify and characterise basic cultural conditioning in international marketing, the elements of which can be: verbal and non-verbal language, the religion and turning consumers towards foreign products.

**Basic scientific material of the article.** Language is a basic cultural conditioning (verbal and non-verbal) and it has great significance in the activity of companies in the international environment. Ignorance of language of recipients of the announcement (e.g. during the bargaining with foreign partners or advertising transmissions directed at foreign consumers) results in the impossibility of understanding intentions of the sender, and in extreme cases it can lead to the conflict. An incorrect translation and a misuse of the language are common traps in the activity of companies on foreign markets.

One of main barriers in the international communication of verbal character are problems associated with the equivalence of the vocabulary, relying on the fact that two languages lack equivalent words. Moreover, in every language there are so-called colloquialisms, i.e. words which have different meanings in different subcultures or cultural groups using one language. The effective verbal communication between entities coming from various cultures requires also knowledge and mutual respect of the style of the communication which is characteristic of the other side. There are significant differences in communication between Anglo-Saxon, Romanesque and Oriental styles. Non-disturbance is a distinctive feature of the Anglo-Saxon style, and interrupting somebody in mid-sentence is treated as a very impolite behaviour. In case of the Romanesque style stopping the statement of other person is a common practice that indicates an interest in the discussed issue and the emotional commitment. In case of the Oriental style moments of silence between statements of the interlocutors are treated as showing the respect.<sup>16</sup>

As the findings show, only about 35% of announcements are expressed in the verbal form, the remaining 65 % are expressed in non-verbal form. The non-verbal communication is a way of expressing thoughts, feelings, transmitting information using non-lexical elements, like gestures, facial expressions, touch, vocal modulation in the course of the conversation. They can replace the verbal way of communicating by filling it up or enriching it. The meaning of particular elements of the non-verbal communication is different in particular cultures, that is why its knowledge by companies operating on foreign markets is necessary. Correct interpretation of non-verbal announcements contributes to fast comprehension of the form by the recipient under the condition of understanding the intention of the sender.<sup>17</sup>

Gestures constitute the inherent element of the conversation. Using it can cause that the form is interpreted as more emotional, and can shorten the time of the conversation, since one gesture can replace a few or a dozen or so words. Meaning of the same gestures in various cultures is often different. Apart from the gesticulation, other movements of the body influencing the course of communicating between people are important, i.e. affectation and adjustment. Non-verbal behaviours reflecting intensity of felt emotions show affectation (e.g. crossing hands or legs, frequent changes of the position of the body), and non-verbal behaviours helping to synchronise the course of the conversation are called adjusters (e.g. change of the body posture).

Facial expression is another element of the non-verbal communication, including smiling and eye contact. Although in most cultures smile is treated as the indication of the friendship or enjoyment, or as a specific “initiator” of communication, in Far Eastern countries it can be used to conceal embarrassment, sadness or anger (e.g. during the bargaining with Japanese or Chinese contractors). The eye contact should

---

<sup>16</sup> Trompenaars F., Hampden-Turner Ch. *Siedem wymiarów kultury. Znaczenie różnic kulturowych w działalności gospodarczej*. Oficyna Ekonomiczna. –Kraków, 2002. – P. 96.

<sup>17</sup> Bartosik-Purgat M. *Otoczenie kulturowe w biznesie międzynarodowym...*, op. cit., pp. 83-109. See also: H. Mruk (ed.): *Komunikowanie się w marketingu*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2004. – Pp. 282–292.

also take into account the cultural origin of the recipient. In so-called reserved cultures (e.g. South Korea, Thailand) a moderate eye contact is recommended, since the intense one can cause discomfort for the interlocutor. In most Asian cultures too intensive looking straight into eyes for a longer period time may cause shyness, may provoke, and what is more, it can be understood as a sign of the hostility. In so-called expressive cultures the intense eye contact is allowed, since it is treated as the symbol of the respect and the indication of understanding the interviewed person (e.g. Latin American, Mediterranean, Arabic countries).

In diversified international surroundings it is possible to distinguish cultures in which the touch in interpersonal contacts is a common element (so-called contact cultures), apart from shaking hands as the element of greeting and saying goodbye these can be gestures of patting or embracing the interlocutor, as well as limiting the touch to the minimum (so-called noncontact cultures). Representatives of expressive cultures using various components of non-verbal communication belong to the first group. Reserved cultures, in which the touch of the strange person can provoke discomfort, not to say the insult (e.g. can lead to breaking the bargaining), form the second group.

Among the elements of non-verbal communication the following are enumerated: a tone, a speed and a volume of the statement, silence and its meaning in the course of the conversation. Comparing the above mentioned general styles of verbal communication (Anglo-Saxon, Romanesque and Oriental style) lets notice that they differ markedly between themselves also in the layer of the aforementioned non-verbal elements. For example, representatives of the Romanesque style use diversified intonation, their statements are often intertwined with the quiet and very loud tone. They think that a manner of speaking indicates the great commitment to the conversation and issues brought up. In the Oriental style interlocutors apply a levelled vocal modulation and rather quiet manner of speaking which indicates a toned and calm conversation (the Romanesque style can be perceived by them as not very serious). As it was mentioned earlier in the article, silence in the course of conversation is treated differently in particular cultures. In many western cultures silence is treated as awkward and associated with incomprehension, embarrassment or unpleasant feelings, but in Asian cultures it indicates politeness and contemplation, being equally important as the verbal conversation.

Religion is the main indicator of the spiritual culture. It is the source of huge differences appearing among various cultures because it requires the compliance with different principles, it influences e.g. consumer behaviours by means of orders and bans. Among the main religions of the world Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism stand out. The acquaintance of values typical of different religions and their geographical distribution on different foreign markets play a significant role for enterprises in creating the right offer allocated for individual markets. The special knowledge of religious conditioning is required during the bargaining with believers of other religions, at drawing up the conception of products allocated for foreign markets (including trademarks and packages), and during preparing guidelines of promotional campaigns by means of different instruments, e.g. advertisements. The ignorance of principles valid in particular religions may increase the probability of making a mistake in various areas of the activity of the company, and can cause tensions and conflicts.<sup>18</sup>

A problem of turning consumers towards foreign products, associated with so-called effect of the country of origin and the phenomenon of the consumer ethnocentrism is expressed in frames of cultural conditioning. The main element of developing consumers' attitude towards a given country is its image. In the international business attitudes towards the country are analysed in the aspect of the tendency for visiting a given country, the purchase of goods and services produced in it or associated with it, investment (both direct and portfolio investment), or making a decision about establishing trade relations with contracting parties settled in it. The image of a country is also created by a store of knowledge concerning a given country, associations and emotions connected with a given country which are rising in the consumer's mind.

---

<sup>18</sup> Bartosik-Purgat M. *Uwarunkowania kulturowe w marketingu międzynarodowym*. AE w Poznaniu. – Poznań 2004. – Pp. 23–30.

It is possible to understand the effect of the country of origin of the product as “the influence of general ideas and opinions about the country on the evaluation of products or/and trademarks coming from it”<sup>19</sup>, or as “the influence of the image of a country on the image, attitudes and the sale with reference to brands or goods produced in it”.<sup>20</sup> The attitude towards a given country can influence positively or negatively consumer behaviours on buying of the product originating in it. The role of the effect of the country of origin of the product in the decision making market is perceived differently by the researchers of the problem. Some claim that consumers in their decisions are guided by rather rational premises, aspiring to maximisation of the benefit and satisfying their needs and desires, and the element of the country of origin in the direct way is treated as a factor of none or minor importance. On the other hand, however, opinions on existing connections of different kinds between the product, intentions of purchasing it and the country of origin prevail, although, the opinions lack agreement as far as the character and power of influence are concerned.

It is possible to systematise diverse opinions justifying the meaning of the country of origin of the product into three basic groups. The first group of researchers claims that the country of origin is only one of many attributes of the product influencing consumers' decisions besides the price or the quality (often having influence earlier than remaining attributes). In the second group it is believed that it is the factor to which it is possible to assign the active role only in the situation of the absence of additional information about the product. The third group supports the opinion that the country of origin can be a significant factor influencing consumer choices only when all the remaining products are identical, and only the country of origin diversifies them.<sup>21</sup>

Taking into account national and cultural distinctions of consumers on particular foreign markets, as well as stereotypes encrypted in their awareness and opinions on given countries, determining so-called level of the consumer ethnocentrism becomes the important issue in the international environment. The knowledge about attitudes of consumers towards enterprises originating in foreign countries and their products constitutes the necessary basis for construction of both strategies of entering the foreign markets, and decisions in relation to the scope of the standardisation of a marketing strategy on foreign markets.

The notion of consumer ethnocentrism comes from the general conception of ethnocentrism which turned up at social sciences at the beginning of the 20th century. W. G. Sumner defined ethnocentrism as “such a way of seeing, in which the own group is the centre, and everything around is judged and classified with reference to it”. It is the attitude consisting in treating the own group as the best and having appropriate standards of behaviours and for judging other groups in a negative way with respect to resemblance and differences between them and the model own group. Things, people and their behaviours are assessed through the prism of their own environment.<sup>22</sup>

The idea of ethnocentrism was implemented by S. Sharma, T. A. Shimp and J. Shin, who characterised its most significant features and carried out the first wider empirical examinations in the USA. According to the recalled authors consumer ethnocentrism is “the belief shared by consumers about discontinuing the purchase of products of foreign countries in the context of the duty and moralities”. Simultaneously they suggested the scale for measuring the level of the consumer ethnocentrism - CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale) which for the first time was applied with reference to the attitude survey of American consumers associated with purchasing domestic and foreign products.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Karcz K., Kędzior Z. *Postawy konsumentów wobec produktów krajowych i zagranicznych (poziom etnocentryzmu i wpływ efektu kraju pochodzenia)*. CBI AE w Katowicach. – Katowice, 1999. – P. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Sikora T. *Efekt kraju pochodzenia w marketingu międzynarodowym*, in: E. Duliniec (ed.): *Marketing międzynarodowy. Uwarunkowania, instrumenty, tendencje*. SGH. – Warszawa, 2007. – P. 97.

<sup>21</sup> Gardeła A., Budzanowska M. *Rola kraju pochodzenia produktu w kształtowaniu postaw konsumentów*, in: *Przegląd Organizacji* 2002, nr 6, Pp. 28–30.

<sup>22</sup> Szromnik A. *Etnocentryzm konsumencki – istota i uwarunkowania rozwoju*, in: *Marketing i Rynek* 1998, nr 11, p. 9. See also: Figiel A. : *Etnocentryzm konsumencki. Produkty krajowe czy zagraniczne*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2004. – Pp. 15–22.

<sup>23</sup> Figiel A. *Etnocentryzm konsumencki...*, op. cit. – Pp. 33–37.

Ethnocentric attitudes of consumers in practice are manifested by consistent and deliberate preferring domestic products than foreign ones. Ethnocentric consumer perceiving the country of origin of the product as the feature marking it, is actively seeking the information allowing to distinguish, whether the product is produced in the country or whether it is imported. Having the possibility of choice, consumers recognise the superiority of domestic products over foreign products, no matter if domestic products are better than foreign and whether they suit consumers' needs. In their proceedings the ethnocentric consumers are driven by not only a rational affection (economic), but also emotional, not to say moral.

Two groups of factors influence the level of the consumer ethnocentrism: psycho-social (openness for the strange culture, patriotism, conservatism, collectivism/individualism) and demographic (age, sex, education, profits). Cultural diversity in a given country and the openness for a strange culture limit the ethnocentric tendencies. Patriotism, meaning the devotion to the country, is associated with a widely understood ethnocentrism, because it acts as a defence mechanism for a given social group, the region or the country, and hence it may influence consumer behaviours. Conservatism, meaning the attachment to the tradition which survived the attempt of changes, as well as the dislike for changes, is treated similarly. Also collectivism and individualism are elements belonging to the group of psycho-social factors. Collectivist cultures, in contrast with individualistic, are much more ethnocentric which results from their detailed characteristics: identification with the group and a sense of responsibility for the remaining members, which leads to subordinating purposes of the individual to purposes of the group. In the analysis of the consumer ethnocentrism demographic factors stay in the close relationship with psycho-social factors. A good example here could be the older people, generally characterised by a high level of ethnocentrism and high rate of conservatism. Yet demographic factors remain important on account of their connection with marketing activities on foreign markets (e.g. in the market segmentation).<sup>24</sup>

A consumer internationalism is in contradiction with an ethnocentric attitude. Internationalist consumers, similarly as ethnocentric, seek the information about the origin of a product, but consciously and consistently they prefer foreign products to domestic products. Conviction that foreign products are superior can have two sources. Firstly, it can result from comparing the features of domestic and foreign products in the process of using them, which is based on objective criteria. Secondly, it may be an effect of the belief that having and using foreign products is an indicator of the potential and the position of the individual, the prestige and the membership of a particular group (demonstration and imitation effect), especially when the access to such goods is limited.

It is also possible to talk about cosmopolitan consumers (consumer cosmopolitanism) who in contrast with ethnocentric and internationalist consumers do not pay much attention to such features as the country of origin while purchasing a product. Decisions of cosmopolitan consumers are based on rational premises without any appeals to emotional or moral aspects characteristic of the ethnocentrism. They compare all the products available on the market objectively and choose the one which, in their view, will bring the greatest profits. And so the consumer cosmopolitanism is a sign of taking care of self-interests from using the product, essential for satisfying a defined need.

**Conclusions.** Because of the fact that differences between individual foreign markets concern cultural conditioning in many cases it is possible to speak about the development of the concept of cross-cultural marketing. The culture influences behaviours of consumers and enterprises as collective entities, and hence it creates the framework of choice of marketing plans in the international and global environment.

Cross-cultural marketing is included in a sub-global strategy, consisting in designing marketing strategies (modules) with a determined degree of the standardisation, and using them in individual regions (groups of countries). In case of cross-cultural marketing the base of distinguishing (segmentation) the market are the criteria of the cultural membership, rather than the nationality. The enterprise offering particular products seeks for resemblance and universally shared cultural values for target sections of

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. – Pp. 39–43.

consumers. Parallel using standardised and diversified needs and aspiration appearing on different markets and in various cultures is a main principle of the above action. Resemblance is noticed in sources of consumer behaviours which have such a universal character (e.g. objectivity of emotion, instincts or motivation) that they can be a base of formulating the uniform marketing-mix structure. However, the symbolism of these emotions in particular countries and cultures can differ which results in the need to adapt many activities e.g. advertising, to the local character. Enterprises applying this kind of a marketing strategy simultaneously use shared and distinct requirements of individual markets which leads to creating uniform, basic programmes of action, however adapted for the accomplishment in specific conditions. This is the principle of the global thinking, but local action on the international market.

**Prospects of the future research.** The influence of culture as conditioning marketing activity can be analysed from different dimensions, constituting areas of the potential research. Firstly, research may concern culturally conditioned relations between the enterprise and its current and potential consumers – individual consumers, where cross-cultural communication seems particularly interesting. Secondly, the research may concern culturally conditioned relations between enterprises operating on the market, both between the enterprise and its current and potential institutional consumers (business-to-business relations), as well as between enterprises acting as part of the sector (competitors, intermediaries, suppliers, etc.). And thirdly, culturally conditioned relations as part of transnational corporations having branches in various countries and employing workforce from different nationalities and cultures seem interesting. The recalled third area of research is included in the conception of cross-cultural management referring to organisational behaviours in international arrangements.

1. Bartosik-Purgat M. *Otoczenie kulturowe w biznesie międzynarodowym*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2006.
2. Bartosik-Purgat M. *Uwarunkowania kulturowe w marketingu międzynarodowym*. AE w Poznaniu. – Poznań, 2004.
3. Duliniec E. *Marketing międzynarodowy*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2009.
4. Figiel A. *Etnocentryzm konsumencki. Produkty krajowe czy zagraniczne*. PWE.– Warszawa, 2004.
5. Gardela A., Budzanowska M. *Rola kraju pochodzenia produktu w kształtowaniu postaw konsumentów*, in: *Przegląd Organizacji* 2002, nr 6.
6. Hofstede G. *Kultury i organizacje. Zaprogramowanie umysłu*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2000.
7. Karcz K. *Międzynarodowe badania marketingowe. Uwarunkowania kulturowe*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2004.
8. Karcz K., Kędzior Z. *Postawy konsumentów wobec produktów krajowych i zagranicznych (poziom etnocentryzmu i wpływ efektu kraju pochodzenia)*. CBIe AE w Katowicach. – Katowice, 1999.
9. Kłoskowska A. *Kultura masowa*. PWN. – Warszawa, 1980.
10. Mruk H. (ed.) *Komunikowanie się w marketingu*. PWE. – Warszawa, 2004.
11. Sikora T. *Efekt kraju pochodzenia w marketingu międzynarodowym*, in: Duliniec E. (ed.): *Marketing międzynarodowy. Uwarunkowania, instrumenty, tendencje*. SGH. – Warszawa, 2007.
12. Szczepański J. *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii*. PWN. – Warszawa, 1970.
13. Szromnik A. *Etnocentryzm konsumencki – istota i uwarunkowania rozwoju*, in: *Marketing i Rynek* 1998, nr 11.
14. Trompenaars F., Hampden-Turner Ch. *Siedem wymiarów kultury. Znaczenie różnic kulturowych w działalności gospodarczej // Oficyna Ekonomiczna*. – Kraków, 2002.