

The Onomastics of Chocolate and Luxury Sweets. A Sociolinguistic Approach

أونوماستيكس الشوكولاتة والحلويات الفاخرة. مقارنة اجتماعية لغوية

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الملخص:

يُعدّ الارتباط بين اللغة والعلامة التجارية — بوصفه ظاهرةً متجذّرة في ثقافات متعددة — من الموضوعات التي حظيت باهتمام واسع في مجالي التسويق وعلم الاجتماع اللغوي، غير أنّ دور علم الأسماء (الأونومستيكس) في تسويق الشوكولاتة الفاخرة ما يزال محدود الاستكشاف. تاريخياً، ارتبطت الشوكولاتة بمكانة رفيعة وحصرية؛ فقد كانت في حضارة الأزتك تقدّم قرباناً مقدّساً، ثم أصبحت في القرن السابع عشر رمزاً للترف في بيوت الشوكولاتة الأوروبية. ومع تطوّر الزمن، استثمرت العلامات التجارية البُعد الأونومستيكي لترسيخ صورة الشوكولاتة كمنتج نخبويّ، مستلهمةً أسماءً من الأساطير، والطبقات الأرستقراطية، والمُشاعِر، والجغرافيا لخلق هالة من الرقي.

تبحث هذه الدراسة في الكيفية التي توظّف بها العلامات التجارية في صناعة الشوكولاتة والحلويات استراتيجيات لغوية لاستدعاء الإحساس بالفخامة والجاذبية الحسية. فمن خلال دمج الأناقة الصوتية، والتشكيليات الصرفية الراقية، والرموز الثقافية، تبني العلامات الفاخرة أسماءً تعزّز مكانتها وقيمتها الإدراكية. تستند الدراسة إلى نظريات علم الاجتماع اللغوي حول المكانة والهيبة في العلامات التجارية، وتُحلّل مجموعة مكوّنة من مئة اسم لمنتجات الشوكولاتة لكشف الأنماط الصوتية والصرفية والدلالية التي تسهم في تحديد موقعها في السوق.

تشير النتائج إلى أنّ السلسلة الصوتية، واللواحق التصغيرية، والإحالات إلى الأصول الأرستقراطية أو الجغرافية تعزّز الصورة النخبوية للعلامة. كما يكشف انتشار الأسماء ذات الأصول الفرنسية والإيطالية

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عن وجود قصدية في الربط بين الشوكولاتة ومكانتها التاريخية في ثقافة الترف والتميز الذواق. وتتناول الدراسة كذلك القوة السيميائية في تسميات الشوكولاتة، حيث تعمل الأسماء بوصفها علامات لغوية للدلالات المتصلة بالمتعة والمكانة.

تقدّم هذه النتائج إضافة إلى مجال الأونومستكس التجاري، إذ توضّح كيف يؤثر النسق اللغوي في إدراك المستهلك وسلوكه الشرائي في الأسواق الفاخرة. وتقرّح الدراسة أن تتناول الأبحاث المستقبلية الاختلافات الثقافية في تسميات الشوكولاتة، والآثار النفسية للخيارات الصوتية والصرفية على تفاعل المستهلك. ومن خلال تفكيك الأنماط اللغوية وراء نجاح العلامات الفاخرة، تُبرز الدراسة العلاقة الدقيقة بين اللغة والهوية التجارية وعلم نفس المستهلك.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تسويق الشوكولاتة – الوجاهة اللغوية – الصرف – علم الأسماء – الجاذبية الصوتية – علم الاجتماع اللغوي.

Abstract:

The relationship between language and branding, deeply embedded in various cultures, has been widely explored in marketing and sociolinguistics, yet the role of onomastics in luxury chocolate branding remains underexamined. Historically, chocolate was associated with prestige and exclusivity, first as a sacred offering among the Aztecs, later as a luxury commodity in 17th-century European chocolate houses. Over time, branding has leveraged onomastics to reinforce chocolate's elite status, with names inspired by mythology, aristocracy, emotions, and geography, crafting an aura of sophistication. This study investigates how brand names in the chocolate and confectionery industry employ linguistic strategies to evoke exclusivity and sensory appeal. By integrating phonetic elegance, morphological sophistication, and cultural symbolism, luxury chocolate brands craft names that reinforce their prestige and desirability. The study draws on sociolinguistic theories of prestige and branding, analyzing a corpus of one hundred chocolate brand names to uncover phonetic, morphological, and semantic trends that contribute to their market positioning. Findings indicate that phonetic smoothness, diminutive suffixes, and references to aristocratic and geographical origins enhance a brand's elite image. The prevalence of French and Italian-derived names suggests a deliberate association with culinary excellence and historical luxury. Furthermore, the study explores the semiotic power of chocolate branding, where names act as linguistic markers of indulgence and status. The research contributes to

the growing field of commercial onomastics, providing insights into how language influences consumer perception and purchasing behaviour in luxury markets. Future research could examine cross-cultural variations in chocolate branding and the psychological effects of phonetic and morphological choices on consumer engagement. By decoding the linguistic patterns behind successful luxury chocolate brands, this study underscores the intricate relationship between language, branding, and consumer psychology.

Keywords: chocolate branding - linguistic prestige - morphology - onomastics - phonetic appeal - sociolinguistics

- Abstract in French:

La relation entre la langue et le branding, profondément ancrée dans différentes cultures, a été largement explorée en marketing et en sociolinguistique. Pourtant, le rôle de l'onomastique dans le positionnement du chocolat de luxe demeure peu étudié. Historiquement, le chocolat a été associé au prestige et à l'exclusivité : d'abord utilisé comme une offrande sacrée par les Aztèques, il est ensuite devenu un produit de luxe dans les maisons de chocolat européennes du XVII^e siècle. Au fil du temps, les stratégies de branding ont exploité l'onomastique pour renforcer le statut élitiste du chocolat, en utilisant des noms inspirés de la mythologie, de l'aristocratie, des émotions et de la géographie, créant ainsi une aura de sophistication. Cette étude examine comment les noms de marques de chocolat et de confiseries de luxe utilisent des stratégies linguistiques pour évoquer l'exclusivité et la sensualité gustative. En intégrant l'élégance phonétique, la sophistication morphologique et le symbolisme culturel, les marques de chocolat de luxe façonnent des noms qui renforcent leur prestige et leur attractivité. Cette recherche s'appuie sur des théories sociolinguistiques du prestige et du marketing et analyse un corpus de cent noms de marques de chocolat afin d'identifier les tendances phonétiques, morphologiques et sémantiques qui influencent leur positionnement sur le marché. Les résultats montrent que la douceur phonétique, l'usage de suffixes diminutifs et les références aux origines aristocratiques et géographiques renforcent l'image élitiste d'une marque. La dominance des noms dérivés du français et de l'italien suggère une association délibérée avec l'excellence culinaire et le luxe historique. Par ailleurs, l'étude explore la dimension sémiotique du branding du chocolat, où les noms

deviennent des marqueurs linguistiques d'indulgence et de statut. Cette recherche contribue au domaine émergent de l'onomastique commerciale et apporte un éclairage sur l'influence de la langue sur la perception des consommateurs et leurs comportements d'achat sur le marché du luxe. De futures recherches pourraient examiner les variations interculturelles dans le branding du chocolat ainsi que les effets psychologiques des choix phonétiques et morphologiques sur l'engagement des consommateurs. En décodant les schémas linguistiques des marques de chocolat les plus prestigieuses, cette étude met en lumière la relation complexe entre la langue, le branding et la psychologie du consommateur.

Mots clés : attraction phonétique - branding du chocolat - morphologie - onomastique - prestige linguistique - sociolinguistique.

- Introduction:

Since the 17th century, chocolate has been closely associated with luxury and exclusivity in various cultures. In Europe, chocolate houses became prestigious establishments where the elite gathered, reinforcing its high-status appeal. These social spaces contributed to the perception of chocolate as an indulgence and a sign of sophistication. For instance, The Aztecs considered cacao a sacred gift, using it in religious ceremonies and even as a form of currency, highlighting its rarity and value. This idea contributed to the modern association between chocolate and exclusivity.

Today, chocolate remains a luxury item, particularly with the growth of artisanal and premium brands. High-end chocolate brands craftsmanship, rare ingredients, and elegant packaging, reinforcing its status as a symbol of indulgence. Initially, chocolate packaging served a purely functional role, preserving freshness. Over time, it has evolved into a powerful cultural and marketing tool, reflecting shifts in design trends, consumer preferences, and branding strategies.

Onomastics is the scientific study of names and naming practices, encompassing various subfields such as toponymy (place names), anthroponymy (personal names), and socio-onomastics (the study of names within their social contexts). This discipline examines the origins, meanings, usage, and typology of names across different cultures and languages (Ainiala, Saarelma, & Sjöblom, 2016). Philosophers and linguists have long debated whether

names carry descriptive meanings or function solely as designators. Frege (1892) distinguished between the sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) of names, suggesting that while names refer to specific entities, they also convey meaning beyond mere designation. This debate has shaped modern onomastic studies by integrating semantics and pragmatics into name research.

A significant theoretical perspective in onomastics is socio-onomastics, which examines how names function in society and how social, cultural, and linguistic factors influence naming practices. This approach considers variables such as ethnicity, religion, gender, and class in name usage. For example, Nyström (2016) highlights how certain names become markers of social identity, and their meanings evolve over time based on cultural trends. The interaction between language and social identity in onomastics reflects broader sociolinguistic theories.

From a branding perspective, commercial onomastics applies linguistic strategies to product and company names. Ainiala, Saarelma, and Sjöblom (2016) note that brand names must be memorable, phonetically distinct, and culturally adaptable to maximize consumer appeal. This subfield intersects with marketing, semiotics, and psychology, as successful brand names create emotional connections and influence consumer behavior. Theories in neuromarketing suggest that phonetic elements in names can enhance brand recall and affect purchase decisions.

Overall, onomastics is a multidisciplinary field that intersects with anthropology, history, linguistics, and cultural studies. Whether examining names for identity, history, branding, or literature, the field continues to evolve with linguistic and technological advancements. Modern research incorporates computational approaches, such as AI-driven name analysis and corpus-based studies, expanding the theoretical and practical applications of onomastics (Nyström, 2016, p.63).

This paper explores the role of onomastics in the branding and cultural significance of chocolate and luxury sweets, focusing on the sociolinguistic aspects that influence naming practices. The naming of high-end confectionery products is not arbitrary; rather, it follows specific linguistic, cultural, and commercial strategies designed to evoke prestige, indulgence, and sensory appeal (Ainiala, Saarelma, & Sjöblom, 2016). Names in this category often

reflect notions of heritage, geographical authenticity, and exclusivity, contributing to the perceived quality and desirability of the product (Nyström, 2016). The intersection of linguistic aesthetics, social prestige, and consumer psychology plays a critical role in the construction of these names.

1-1 Theoretical background: Sweets Onomastics

Sweets onomastics is a specialized subfield of onomastics that examines the naming conventions of confectionery products. This study encompasses the linguistic, cultural, and commercial factors influencing how sweets are named. The names of chocolate products have evolved over time, from simple ingredient-based names (e.g., "Dark Chocolate," "Milk & Honey") to evocative names that suggest luxury, sensuality, and emotions. Early European chocolatiers used names referencing noble families or famous places (e.g., "*Chocolat Menier*," one of the first commercial French brands in the 19th century).

From traditional, regionally significant names (e.g., Turkish delight, marzipan, or pralines) to modern, brand-driven names (e.g., KitKat, Snickers, or Ferrero Rocher), the naming of sweets serves both a descriptive and marketing function. The interplay between language, branding, and cultural heritage is particularly evident in this domain, as names often reflect historical roots, geographical origins, or sensory associations meant to appeal to consumers.

Sweets names often exhibit phonetic and morphological patterns that enhance memorability and sensory appeal. Many confectionery names employ alliteration (e.g., "Crunchy Caramel"), rhyme (e.g., "M&M's"), or onomatopoeic elements (e.g., "Pop Rocks") to create a playful and enticing sound. Additionally, diminutives and affectionate suffixes (e.g., "-ette," "-y," "-o") are commonly used to evoke familiarity and pleasure (e.g., "Toffifee," "Smarties"). Linguistically, these naming strategies align with broader advertising and branding trends, which prioritize phonetic simplicity and emotional resonance.

1-2- Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive approach to analyze the linguistic, cultural, and marketing strategies used in naming luxury chocolate and sweets. The

methodology focuses on onomastic analysis, phonetic and morphological examination, and branding strategies to determine how names contribute to the perception of luxury and indulgence in chocolate and confectionery products. The study follows a multi-disciplinary research design, incorporating insights from: Linguistics and Onomastics, Marketing and Branding, Cultural and Historical Analysis.

The study focuses on a purposive sample of luxury chocolate and sweet brands, chosen based on their global recognition, historical significance, and branding strategies. The selection includes: international luxury chocolate brands (e.g., Lindt, Valrhona, Ferrero Rocher, Godiva, Neuhaus), boutique and artisan chocolatiers (e.g., Michel Cluizel, Pierre Marcolini, Amedei), geography-based brands (e.g., Toblerone (Switzerland), Côte d'Or (Belgium), Guayaquil Chocolate (Ecuador)).

Data analysis is based on a phonetic analysis (identifying the use of soft consonants, vowel harmony, and rhythmic structures that enhance brand appeal), a morphological analysis (examining affixation, compounding, and neologisms in brand names) and an etymology and semantic analysis (tracing the origins and meanings behind luxury chocolate brand names).

The study anticipates finding that luxury chocolate brands use phonetic elegance and morphological sophistication to reinforce exclusivity. It is expected that geography-based names (e.g., Swiss, Belgian, or Latin American references) enhance the perception of authenticity and heritage. The research aims to reveal how onomastic choices shape consumer emotions, cultural associations, and market positioning in the luxury chocolate industry.

The objectives of this research could be summarize as follows: to analyze the linguistic strategies used in naming luxury chocolate brands, to examine phonetic elegance, morphological sophistication, and semantic associations in chocolate branding, to explore the role of linguistic prestige in reinforcing the exclusivity of chocolate brands, to identify cross-cultural variations in the use of onomastic elements in chocolate branding, to assess how language choices influence consumer perceptions of luxury and quality.

In terms of hypotheses we mention H1: Luxury chocolate brands strategically use phonetic and morphological features to create an impression of exclusivity and

sophistication; H2: The frequent use of French and Italian elements in chocolate branding contributes to perceptions of high quality, tradition, and culinary excellence; H3: Phonetic appeal, including rhythm, alliteration, and vowel-consonant balance, enhances brand memorability and consumer preference; H5: The cultural and linguistic preferences of different markets lead to variations in naming strategies and consumer associations with luxury chocolate.

2- (Socio)linguistic Characteristics of Chocolate and Luxury Sweets Naming

The naming conventions of chocolate and luxury sweets frequently employ phonetic elegance, morphological sophistication, and foreign-language elements to enhance their appeal. Many premium chocolate brands, such as Lindt, Ferrero Rocher, and Godiva, incorporate euphonic and exotic elements to create an air of sophistication (Britannica, n.d.). Additionally, French and Italian names, often associated with culinary excellence, are commonly used in high-end chocolate branding (e.g., *Chocolat Noir*, *Gianduja*). These linguistic choices align with broader sociolinguistic theories of prestige, which suggest that certain languages and phonetic structures convey higher status and luxury (Nyström, 2016, p.18).

2.1- Phonetic Elegance and Euphony in Naming

One of the key linguistic strategies in luxury confectionery naming is phonetic elegance, where sounds are carefully chosen to create a sense of sophistication and sensory pleasure. Many premium chocolate brands and sweets employ euphonic structures, which involve smooth, flowing, and pleasing sounds that evoke richness and indulgence. For example, brands like Ferrero Rocher, Lindt, and Godiva incorporate soft consonants (l, m, n, r) and vowel harmony more fluid and luxurious, they evoke a mild, velvety feel, enhancing the perception of smoothness. These phonetic elements contribute to an overall perception of creaminess, smoothness, and richness, aligning with the sensory experience of consuming fine chocolate (Nyström, 2016, p.25). These sounds make the brand name feel gentle, flowing, and luxurious, for instance, *Lindt* – The L and N create a silky sound, evoking a melt-in-your-mouth texture, *Milka* – The M and L sound soft and creamy, reinforcing the

brand's milky smoothness, *Guylian* – The L and N sounds enhance the sensation of delicacy and refinement, *Valrhona* – The L and R sounds suggest a silky, rich, and premium experience; *Belcolade*, *Callebaut*, *Leonidas*, and still there are lots of examples.

Additionally, many chocolate and luxury sweets names use rhythmic repetition and alliteration, which enhance memorability and marketability. For instance, "KitKat" and "M&M's" utilize consonant reduplication, making them catchy and easy to recall. Similarly, "Ferrero Rocher" employs assonance and rolling "r" sounds, which create a rhythmic, refined auditory effect associated with European elegance. These phonetic devices not only reinforce linguistic aesthetics but also serve as powerful marketing tools, making products stand out in a competitive confectionery market.

2-2- Morphological Sophistication and Word Formation

Luxury sweets and chocolate names often demonstrate morphological creativity, involving diminutive endings, foreign borrowings, and affixation to enhance their appeal. Affixation—the addition of prefixes or suffixes—is a common strategy in branding to create sophisticated and luxurious names.

a) Suffixes That Evoke Indulgence and Sensuality. Many chocolate brands use suffixes that imply richness, smoothness, and pleasure. Examples: Lindor (Lindt) – The suffix "-dor" creates a sense of fluidity and opulence (cf. "El Dorado," the mythical city of gold); Raffaello (Ferrero) – The Italian-inspired "-ello" suffix softens the name, making it sound refined and melodious; Chocollissimo – The "-issimo" suffix (superlative in Italian) suggests intensity and luxury, meaning "extremely chocolatey."

b) Prefixes That Emphasize Authenticity and Craftsmanship. Prefixes can enhance the perceived authenticity and premium nature of chocolate brands. Examples: Valrhona – A fusion of "Val" (valley) and "Rhona" (Rhône River), reinforcing French heritage and terroir; CacaoLat – "Cacao" combined with "Lat" (short for lait, French for milk), emphasizing premium dairy-infused chocolate; Neuhaus – The Germanic prefix "Neu-" (new, innovative) gives an aura of reinvention and craftsmanship.

One common strategy is the use of diminutive suffixes to evoke a sense of playfulness and delicacy. For example, names like "Toffifee", "Smarties", and "Raffaello"

incorporate "-ee," "-ies," and "-ello" endings, which contribute to a feeling of warmth and familiarity. Such suffixes are frequently associated with affectionate naming conventions, making products appear more inviting: Cioccolatino, Chocotini -Suffix: *-ini* (Italian diminutive, often used for cocktails); Dulcinea -Suffix: *-inea* (Spanish diminutive from *dulce*, meaning sweet); Cremosito -Suffix: *-ito* (Spanish diminutive for "small and creamy"); Chocolatito -Suffix: *-ito* (Spanish diminutive for "little chocolate"); Bonboncito -Suffix: *-cito* (Spanish diminutive for "little bonbon"); Trufita (Suffix: *-ita* (Spanish diminutive for "little truffle").

Another morphological trend in chocolate and luxury sweets naming is blending, where words are combined to create novel, evocative names. Examples include "Nutella" (a blend of "nut" and the Italian diminutive "-ella") and "Milka" (a fusion of "milk" and "cacao"). These blends convey essential product characteristics while maintaining phonetic simplicity. The effectiveness of blended names lies in their ability to merge meaning and sound into a cohesive, brand-specific identity.

2-3- Semantic Associations and Luxury Positioning

The semantics of chocolate and luxury sweets names play a crucial role in influencing consumer perception. Many names are designed to trigger associations with indulgence, heritage, and exclusivity. For instance, words such as "rocher" (rock), "noir" (black), and "royale" (royal) are commonly used in chocolate branding to emphasize richness, depth, and high status. The use of French, Italian, and Swiss terminology is particularly prevalent, as these languages are culturally linked to culinary excellence.

Additionally, chocolate names frequently evoke natural and sensory elements to enhance the perception of authenticity and quality. Terms like "velvet," (*Red Velvet cake & chocolates, Velvet Chocolate, Cadbury Velvet, Velvet Truffle, Lindt Velvet*) "silk," (*Dairy Milk Silk* (Cadbury) – a premium line of extra creamy milk chocolate, focusing on its silky texture, *Silk & Cocoa* – used in several artisanal brands for dark and milk chocolates with a smooth consistency, *Chocolate Silk Pie* – a famous chocolate dessert known for its light, silky mousse filling, *Silk Ganache* – found in various luxury chocolate truffle brands, emphasizing silky smooth ganache centers, *Silky Cocoa* (artisanal brands) "crema," (*Crema Cioccolato, Nutella*

Crema, Crema de Cacao, Ferrero Crema Collection, Dolci Crema) and "pure" (*Lindt Excellence 99% Pure Cocoa, Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate, Pure Chocolate, Purely Decadent, Valrhona Pure Origin Collection*). They all suggest texture and refinement, reinforcing the idea that these products are luxurious and high-end. This naming strategy aligns with semiotic theories in branding, which suggest that consumers subconsciously associate certain words and sounds with sensory expectations (Ainiala, Saarelma, & Sjöblom, 2016, p.70).

2-4- Names Related to Geography and Origin

The regions where the finest chocolates are produced are often reflected in brand names. We mention the following examples: *Valrhona* – a blend of "Valley" and "Rhône," referencing France's Rhône Valley, known for wines and premium chocolate; *Toblerone* – derived from "Tobler" (the founder's name) and "Torrone" (a type of Italian nougat); *Ghirardelli* – an Italian name that has become synonymous with premium American chocolate; *Africana* - A classic brand from the communist era, with a strong history in Romania; *Poiana* – One of the most popular chocolate brands in Romania, launched in 1995 and produced by Mondelez. It is known for its milk, hazelnut, caramel and dark chocolate variants.

Many luxury chocolate brands use the names of famous cocoa-growing regions to emphasize authenticity and high-quality cacao sources: *Guayaquil Chocolate* – refers to Guayaquil, Ecuador, one of the most famous cocoa-producing areas; *Madécasse* – named after Madagascar, a region known for its fine cocoa beans with fruity notes; *Scharffen Berger* – German-inspired, but highlights cacao sources from Latin America; *Maranon Chocolate* – named after the Marañón River in Peru, home to rare, fine-flavor cacao (Beckett, 2019, p.22).

Some brands use famous cities, historical sites, or architectural landmarks to convey heritage, elegance, and cultural refinement: *Brussels Chocolate* (Various brands) – highlights Belgium's reputation for fine chocolates; *Vienna Chocolate Café* – inspired by Vienna's historic coffeehouse culture; *Torino* (Piedmont Region, Italy) – Ferrero's *Gianduiotto* chocolates originate from Turin, famous for its hazelnut-infused chocolate; *Callebaut* – named after the Belgian family who founded one of the oldest chocolate companies;

Heidelberg Truffles – inspired by the historic German city, known for fine European confectionery (Terrio, 200, p.52).

Many chocolate brands draw inspiration from landscapes, seasons, or natural beauty to enhance the perception of organic luxury: *Alpine Milk Chocolate* (Milka) suggests Swiss purity and high-quality dairy; *Côte d'Or* means "Gold Coast" in French, referring to West Africa's cacao-growing region; *Blue Mountain Cocoa* inspired by Jamaica's Blue Mountains, known for premium cocoa and coffee; *Rainforest Chocolate* highlights sustainability and tropical cacao farms; *Midnight Cocoa* evokes dark chocolate's deep, rich sensory experience (Leissle, 2018, p.34).

Other luxury chocolate brands evoke exclusivity and paradise-like imagery by using names inspired by tropical islands known for cacao production: *Bali Cocoa* highlights Indonesia's premium cocoa farms; *Tahiti Vanilla Chocolate* emphasizes exotic flavors from Tahitian vanilla and cacao; *Dominican Gold* references Dominican Republic, one of the world's top cacao exporters; *Grenada Chocolate Company* named after the Caribbean island Grenada, famous for sustainable chocolate production; *Trinidad Select* refers to Trinidad & Tobago, home to the rare Trinitario cacao bean (Martin, 2018, p.49).

2-5- Foreign-Language Influence and Prestige Branding

A significant aspect of chocolate and luxury sweets naming is the use of foreign-language elements to create an aura of prestige and authenticity. Many luxury brands incorporate French, Italian, German, or Swiss names to reinforce their association with high-quality European chocolate traditions. For example: "Ferrero Rocher" (Italian) evokes sophistication and heritage, "Lindt" and "Toblerone" (Swiss) highlight Swiss chocolate craftsmanship, "Godiva" (Belgian) references historical and noble origins, "Chocolat Noir" (French) emphasizes elegance and purity.

The deliberate use of foreign-language words taps into sociolinguistic prestige theories, which suggest that certain languages are perceived as more refined or elite in specific cultural contexts. By adopting such naming strategies, brands create an implicit "halo effect," where consumers associate the product with tradition, craftsmanship, and superior quality (Nyström, 2016).

Many luxury chocolate brands use names that suggest nobility, refinement, and tradition. For instance, *Godiva* – named after Lady Godiva, a British historical figure associated with sacrifice and nobility, *Ferrero Rocher* – "Rocher" means "rock" in French and references the Lourdes sanctuary, evoking exclusivity, *Lindt Excellence* – "Excellence" suggests high standards and premium quality.

2-6- Playfulness and Consumer Engagement in Naming

While luxury positioning is crucial, some chocolate and sweets brands adopt playful, whimsical names to engage consumers on an emotional level. Playfulness in chocolate and sweets branding creates emotional bonds with consumers by making names fun, interactive, and engaging. Strategies like puns, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and cultural references make products more memorable and enjoyable, ultimately strengthening brand loyalty.

Many mass-market sweets use names that suggest fun, nostalgia, and energy, such as: "*Snickers*" – a playful, slightly humorous name that adds personality; "*Skittles*" – a name that sounds energetic and youthful; "*Twix*" – short, snappy, and phonetically unique.

This approach aligns with psycholinguistic theories, which suggest that short, dynamic names with plosive sounds (e.g., "p," "t," "k") create excitement and stimulate curiosity. These brands often target younger audiences and emphasize the experience of joy and indulgence rather than exclusivity.

Brands often use puns, altered spellings, or unexpected combinations to make their names fun and catchy. For instance, *ChocoLoco* is a fun blend of "Chocolate" and "Loco" (Spanish for "crazy"), implying crazy-good chocolate; *Funky Fudge* uses alliteration and a fun, upbeat tone; *Whoopie Pies* is a playful name that sounds exciting and joyful; *Ooh La La Chocolate* is a whimsical phrase evoking French elegance and indulgence; *Bar None* is a clever pun, suggesting it's the best chocolate bar, bar none (without exception) (Keller 2013).

Some brands choose interactive, descriptive names that make the consumer feel part of the experience: For instance *Eat Me* (chocolate brand) seems a direct, cheeky invitation; *Lickety Split* is a playful reference to quickly eating a dessert; *I Can't Believe It's Not Chocolate!* seems a humorous name that sparks curiosity and amusement; *Choco Bliss*

describes the sensory pleasure of chocolate; *Melty Magic* evokes the melting sensation of premium chocolate (Heath, C., & Heath, D. 2007).

2-7- Names Inspired by Mythology and Literature

Many chocolate brands choose mythological or literary names to create a sense of storytelling and mystery: Nirvana Chocolates – referencing enlightenment and ultimate pleasure, Perugina Baci – *Baci* means "kiss" in Italian, evoking romance and intimacy.

Greek and Roman mythology is a rich source of names associated with gods, goddesses, and legendary figures, evoking power, beauty, and indulgence: *Ambrosia Chocolates* – named after the food of the gods, symbolizing divine indulgence; *Dionysus Delight* – inspired by Dionysus, the god of wine and festivity, suggesting luxury and pleasure; *Aphrodite Truffles* – named after the goddess of love and beauty, reinforcing sensuality and romance; *Herculean Bites* – evokes strength and richness, inspired by Hercules' legendary power; *Olympus Cocoa* – refers to Mount Olympus, home of the gods, symbolizing excellence and prestige.

Egyptian mythology is associated with mystery, royalty, and divinity, making it ideal for luxury chocolate brands: *Ra's Golden Cocoa* – inspired by Ra, the Egyptian sun god, symbolizing radiance and premium quality; *Isis Indulgence* – named after Isis, the goddess of magic and fertility, evoking mysticism and richness; *Pharaoh's Delight* – suggests royal exclusivity and refined taste; *Sphinx Secrets* – a name that adds an aura of enigma and luxury; *Babylonian Bliss* – draws from the grandeur of ancient Mesopotamian luxury (Pinch, 2002).

2-8- Names Based on Emotions and Symbolism

Using emotionally evocative and symbolic names is a powerful branding strategy in the luxury chocolate and sweets industry. These names are designed to create emotional connections with consumers, enhancing the perception of indulgence, romance, nostalgia, or happiness.

Here are several categories and examples of chocolate and confectionery names that rely on emotions and symbolism. Chocolate is often associated with love, passion, and

intimacy, making romantic-themed names highly effective (Aaker, 1997, p.349): *Baci* (Perugina) – Italian for "kisses," reinforcing the idea of love and affection; *Amour Chocolat* – French for "Chocolate Love," evoking passion and indulgence; *Passionfruit Truffles* – uses "Passion" to suggest both intense flavor and romantic appeal; *Chérie* (Lindt) – French for "darling" or "sweetheart," symbolizing affection; *Sweetheart Kisses* – a name that combines romance and the joy of chocolate; *Dove* – a simple yet powerful name evoking delicacy and refinement; *Délice* – means "delight" in French, a term widely used in the luxury sweets industry.

Luxury chocolates often use words that suggest pure joy, delight, and celebration: *Joyfills* (Oreo) – highlights happiness and satisfaction in a playful way; *Happiness Bites* – suggests every bite brings joy; *Dulce Encanto* – Spanish for "sweet enchantment," emphasizing delight; *Bonheur Chocolat* – French for "Happiness Chocolate", reinforcing positive emotions; *Glee Truffles* – "Glee" evokes carefree happiness and excitement (Solomon, 2018, p.33).

Chocolate is a sensory experience, and many brands use names that suggest texture, aroma, and taste: *Silk & Cocoa* – "Silk" suggests smoothness and refinement; *Meltaway Bliss* – "Meltaway" evokes the feeling of chocolate dissolving in the mouth; *Luscious Truffle* – "Luscious" emphasizes rich, indulgent texture; *Whisper of Vanilla* – "Whisper" creates an image of delicate, subtle flavors; *Decadent Delight* – Reinforces the idea of intense indulgence (Heath, C. & Heath, 2007).

2-9- Minimalist and Modern Names

Minimalist and modern brand names use clean, simple, and sleek wording to create a sophisticated, premium, and timeless identity. These names often feature short, powerful words, avoiding excessive ornamentation while still conveying luxury, purity, and high quality.

Below are key characteristics and examples of minimalist and modern naming strategies in chocolate and sweets branding: *Noir* French for "black," often used for dark chocolate, evoking mystery and elegance; *Pure* reinforces the idea of high-quality, natural ingredients; *Noble* suggests refinement and exclusivity; *Velvet* conveys smoothness and

indulgence; *Aura* implies a subtle, premium, and almost mystical quality (Kapferer, J. 2012); *Xoco* a stylized variation of the word "chocolate," inspired by its Aztec roots.

Some brands use simple shapes and abstract concepts to convey a modern, artistic feel: *Oblong* – a shape-based name that suggests elegance and refinement; *Prism* – evokes light reflection and purity; *Halo* – suggests perfection and purity; *Ellipse* – a continuous, flowing form, reinforcing smooth textures; *Dot* – a micro-branding name that feels minimal yet impactful (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007).

Using numbers or letters in a brand name adds a technical, refined, and futuristic aesthetic: Lindt 70% Excellence – Uses a cocoa percentage to emphasize purity and strength; Cocoa 42 – A modern take on a scientifically measured cocoa content; X3 Chocolate – Suggests a triple intensity or exclusive chocolate experience; Gâteau 5 – "Cake 5" creates a clean, contemporary look; Bite 22 – A minimalist name that combines a sensory action (bite) with a sleek number (Keller, 2013).

Minimalist names often use one-syllable words that sound crisp, bold, and modern: Zest – Conveys energy, freshness, and citrus-like vibrancy; Lume – Inspired by "luminous," suggesting radiance and refinement; Crisp – Highlights a crunchy, satisfying texture; Bloom – Evokes growth, freshness, and natural ingredients; Nox – Latin for "night," perfect for dark chocolate branding (Plag, 2003, p.100).

Minimalist and modern chocolate brand names are clean, memorable, and sophisticated. By using single-word names, numerals, short syllables, nature themes, or abstract concepts, these brands create a premium, timeless identity that aligns with luxury trends.

When it comes to Onomastics of Luxury Desserts and Pastries we can envisage:

a) French Names and Refinement: Many desserts carry French names due to their association with culinary elegance: *Éclair* – meaning "lightning" in French, referencing how quickly it is eaten; *Macaron* – derived from the Italian word "maccarone" but now synonymous with Parisian luxury; *Opéra* – a sophisticated cake inspired by the Opéra Garnier in Paris.

b) Italian Names and the Evocation of Tradition. Italian desserts often have names that suggest passion and culinary artistry: Tiramisu – means "pick me up," evoking the

pleasant effect of coffee and mascarpone; Panna Cotta – literally "cooked cream," a simple yet elegant name; Zabaione – a traditional dessert made with eggs, wine, and sugar, named from an Italian dialect.

c) Names Inspired by Symbols and States of Being. Some pastries and luxury sweets are named after elements that suggest exclusivity: Red Velvet – evoking luxury and sensuality; Black Forest – referencing both the German region and the visual contrast of the cake; Millefeuille – meaning "a thousand leaves," a poetic name for a layered pastry.

Many sweets derive their names from historical figures, regional specialties, or folkloric traditions. For example, Madeleine cakes are named after a French pastry chef, while Dobos Torte reflects the legacy of Hungarian confectioner József Dobos. Certain sweets carry geographic indicators, reinforcing cultural authenticity (e.g., Belgian chocolate, Swiss Toblerone, Neapolitan ice cream). Additionally, sweets names often reflect colonial trade histories, as ingredients such as cocoa, sugar, and vanilla were introduced to European markets through global commerce. These historical influences demonstrate how sweets onomastics intersects with sociocultural evolution and globalization.

3- Branding and Commercial Strategies in Sweets Onomastics

The confectionery industry strategically employs onomastics to create strong brand identities and consumer loyalty. Brand names such as Hershey's, Ferrero Rocher, Lindt, and Milka capitalize on euphony and prestige associations to convey luxury and quality. Others, like Skittles, Twix, and KitKat, use short, playful, and phonetically distinct names that are easy to remember and market internationally. The use of foreign-language elements in confectionery branding (e.g., "Raffaello" for Italian elegance or "Kinder" for German precision) further enhances product positioning in global markets.

Sweets names are designed to trigger positive emotions and sensory expectations in consumers. Words associated with indulgence, joy, and nostalgia are frequently incorporated (e.g., "Heavenly Chocolate," "Joy Bar," "Candy Bliss"). Studies in neuromarketing suggest that phonetic elements in sweets names can enhance perceived taste and purchase intent by activating pleasure-related cognitive associations. For instance, soft consonants (e.g., "Lindt" and "Milky Way") evoke creaminess, while hard consonants (e.g., "Crunch" and "Snickers")

suggest texture and satisfaction. This strategic phonetic design plays a key role in consumer engagement and brand differentiation.

Luxury chocolate packaging follows neuromarketing principles to create an immediate, subconscious association with quality and exclusivity (Underwood, 2003). Here are some of them:

- a. Matte vs. Glossy Finishes: Matte textures and dark color schemes (e.g., black, deep brown, gold) are often associated with premium quality and exclusivity (Hennigs et al., 2013).
- b. Structural and Tactile Design: Rigid, box-style packaging with magnetic closures or gold embossing enhances haptic engagement and perceived value (Kapferer, 2012, p.54).
- c. Minimalist Typography & Visual Cleanliness: Luxury chocolate brands often omit excessive visual elements, using minimalist design to suggest exclusivity (Leissle, 2018, p.74).

Luxury chocolate brands (e.g., *Alter Eco*, *Green & Black's*) incorporate sustainable materials without compromising exclusivity and they highlight bean-to-bar transparency, often including certifications (Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance) on the packaging to reinforce both ethical integrity and high-end appeal (Hennigs et al., 2013, p.203).

4-Conclusion

Nowadays, many luxury chocolate brands prioritizable and aesthetically appealing packaging, aligning with modern consumer values. Anyway, chocolate has had a maintained its status across different historical and cultural contexts, from ancient civilizations to modern premium brands.

The chocolate and luxury sweets industry uses evocative names inspired by mythology, geography, the senses, and emotions. French and Italian dominate this domain, suggesting tradition and refinement. There is a growing trend toward minimalist and modern names that reflect contemporary style.

The linguistic characteristics of chocolate and luxury sweets naming reveal a complex fusion of phonetics, morphology, semantics, and socio-cultural influences. Through euphonic design, morphological creativity, prestige associations, and sensory semantics, brands craft names that enhance desirability and align with market positioning. Whether evoking heritage, indulgence, or playfulness, the strategic use of language in confectionery

branding plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perception and engagement. As globalization and AI-driven branding evolve, future trends in chocolate and sweets onomastics may incorporate hyper-personalization, cross-cultural influences, and algorithmic name generation, ensuring continued innovation in this fascinating linguistic domain.

As consumer preferences shift toward health-conscious and sustainable products, sweets onomastics is evolving to reflect these values. Names such as "Nature's Bites" or "Organic Bliss" highlight natural ingredients and ethical sourcing. Furthermore, increasing awareness of cultural sensitivity in branding has led to renaming efforts, such as Mars Inc. discontinuing "Uncle Ben's" and Nestlé renaming "Red Skins" and "Chicos" due to their problematic historical connotations. The future of sweets onomastics will likely see a rise in personalized, AI-generated names, allowing consumers to engage with branding through interactive and customizable experiences.

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