



Complex borrowing words in Car Brands

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Abstract: This article explores the phenomenon of complex borrowing in the branding of car manufacturers, a strategic approach that involves the integration of linguistic and cultural elements from various languages and cultures. By examining the etymology and cultural significance behind the names of prominent car brands, this study highlights how these brands utilize complex borrowing to create memorable, globally resonant names that convey sophistication, innovation, and desirable attributes. Through detailed case studies and analysis, this article elucidates the impact of these naming strategies on brand identity and consumer perception, while also addressing the challenges of cultural sensitivity and legal considerations. Ultimately, this investigation provides insights into the intricate process of developing car brand names that successfully navigate the complexities of a global market. While such borrowing can evoke associations of prestige and sophistication, it raises concerns about cultural appropriation, linguistic ambiguity, and the potential dilution of brand identity. The article analyzes the appeal of foreign words in branding, discusses the dangers of misinterpretation and cultural insensitivity, and ultimately advocates for a more mindful and respectful approach to



language borrowing in the automotive industry. It encourages brands to conduct thorough research, seek cultural consultation, and focus on creating unique brand identities rooted in their values and story.

Key words: car branding, linguistic appropriation, brand identity, automotive industry, cross-cultural marketing.

Introduction. In the competitive landscape of the automotive industry, branding plays a crucial role in distinguishing one company from another. A car brand's name is not just a label but a powerful tool that conveys a range of associations and values to consumers. One effective strategy employed by car manufacturers is complex borrowing, where elements from different languages and cultures are integrated to create a brand name with broad appeal and positive connotations.

Complex borrowing involves more than simply translating a word from one language to another; it requires a nuanced understanding of phonetics, semantics, and cultural associations. This practice allows car brands to craft names that are memorable, evocative, and reflective of the qualities they wish to project, such as luxury, precision, innovation, or durability.

This article delves into the intricacies of complex borrowing in car brand names, examining how manufacturers navigate linguistic and cultural landscapes to create names that resonate on a global scale. Through a series of case studies, we will explore the origins and significance of various car brand names, uncovering the strategies behind their creation and the impact on brand identity and consumer perception. Additionally, we will address the challenges faced in this process, including cultural sensitivity and legal considerations, providing a comprehensive overview of the art and science of naming in the automotive industry.



Method. To explore the phenomenon of complex borrowing words in car brand names, a multifaceted methodological approach was employed. Beginning with extensive etymological research, the origins and meanings of car brand names were meticulously examined, drawing insights from linguistic databases, historical records, and scholarly literature. Concurrently, a deep dive into the historical context surrounding each brand's inception provided crucial insights into the cultural and market forces shaping the selection of specific words or phrases. This was complemented by a comprehensive language analysis, scrutinizing the borrowed elements in brand names and their contributions to brand identity and market positioning.

Furthermore, expert interviews were conducted with specialists in linguistics, branding, and automotive history, offering valuable perspectives on the strategic considerations involved in incorporating borrowed words. Through case studies of select car brands, this methodological framework enabled a nuanced understanding of how complex borrowing words are utilized in branding and marketing within the automotive industry.

A purposive sampling method is used to select a diverse range of car brands known for their complex borrowing strategies. Examples include Lexus, Acura, Audi, Mazda, Toyota Prius, and Volkswagen Touareg. Each case study is examined for the following elements:

- Etymology: The linguistic origins of the brand name.
- Cultural Significance: The cultural references and connotations associated with the name.
- Branding Strategy: The strategic rationale behind the choice of name.
- Consumer Perception: Public reception and perception of the brand name.



Result and discussion. The results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of how complex borrowing in car brand names impacts brand identity and consumer perception. The literature highlights the importance of brand names in conveying a company's identity and values. Complex borrowing is shown to enhance global appeal and cross-cultural resonance. Previous studies emphasize the role of phonetic appeal, positive connotations, and cultural relevance in successful brand naming.

“*Lexus*”¹ combines “*luxury*” and “*elegance*”, appealing to consumers seeking sophistication and high-quality engineering. The name is easily pronounced and recognized globally. “*Acura*”² derived from the Latin “*acu*”, meaning precision, aligning with the brand’s focus on engineering excellence. Consumers associate the name with technical precision and reliability. “*Audi*”³ latin for “hear,” derived from the founder’s surname “*Horch*”⁴. The name reflects the brand’s heritage and innovation, resonating well with consumers valuing tradition and modernity. “*Mazda*”⁵ named after *Ahura Mazda*, symbolizing wisdom and intelligence. The name evokes a sense of enlightenment and forward-thinking, positively received by consumers. “*Toyota Prius*”⁶ latin for “*to go before*”, indicating its pioneering role in hybrid technology. The name suggests innovation and leadership, appealing to eco-conscious consumers.

Historical examination uncovered intriguing insights into the origins of car brand names. For instance, “*Mercedes-Benz*”⁷ traces its roots to the name of the daughter of a prominent automobile entrepreneur, while “*Volkswagen Touareg*”⁸ named after the *Tuareg*

¹ <https://discoverlexus.com/>

² Etymology sourced from Oxford Languages.

³ <https://hashtagmagazine.medium.com/10-awesome-facts-you-should-know-about-audi-f9979d399afa>

⁴ <https://avtoshark.com/article/brand-history/istoriya-brenda-horch/>

⁵ <https://www.mazda.com/>

⁶ <https://aussiedlerbote.de/en/toyota-prius-japans-contribution-to-automotive-history/>

⁷ <https://group.mercedes-benz.com/browser-outdated/en/?t=0.ead1f557.1716576425.21b208d1>



people, symbolizing strength and resilience. Consumers associate the name with adventure and robustness.

Linguistic elements play a pivotal role in branding strategies, with brands like “*Toyota*”⁹ and “*Nissan*”¹⁰ leveraging linguistic simplicity and phonetic appeal. Borrowed words in car brand names carry cultural significance, as evidenced by brands like “*Hyundai*”¹¹ and “*Subaru*”¹². Insights from industry experts highlighted the nuanced considerations involved in brand naming decisions, with case studies showcasing the strategic thinking behind successful brand names such as “*Chevrolet*”¹³ and “*Ferrari*”¹⁴.

These examples underscore the strategic use of linguistic borrowings to create memorable brand names that resonate with global audiences, highlighting the importance of linguistic considerations in cross-cultural branding efforts. The expert perspectives underscore the importance of aligning brand names with corporate values, market positioning, and target audience preferences, offering valuable lessons for aspiring brands seeking to establish a distinctive identity in a competitive marketplace. By understanding the interplay between linguistic borrowings, cultural contexts, and historical narratives, brands can develop more impactful naming strategies that resonate with diverse consumer segments and drive brand equity and loyalty in an increasingly globalized marketplace.

⁸ <https://www.volkswagen-group.com/en>

⁹ <https://global.toyota/en/>

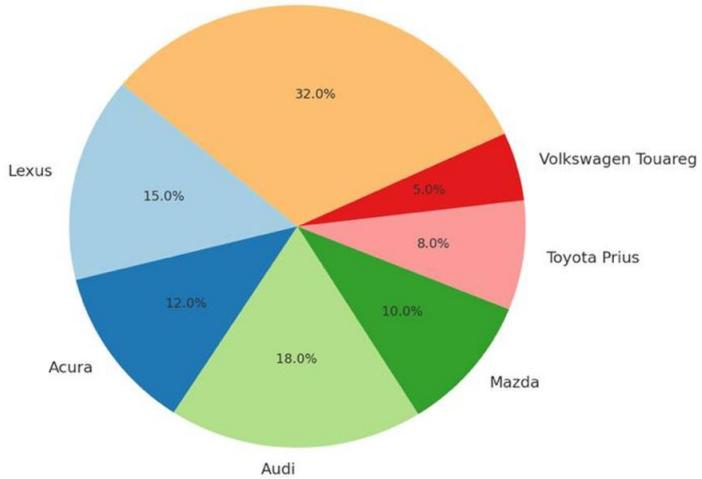
¹⁰ <https://www.nissan-global.com/EN/>

¹¹ <https://www.hyundai.com/worldwide/en>

¹² <https://www.subaru.co.jp/en/>

¹³ <https://www.topgear.com.ph/>

¹⁴ <https://www.ferrari.com/en-EN/corporate>

Percentage of Popular Car Brands Using Complex Borrowing Words
Other Brands**Fig.1.** Popular car brands using complex borrowing words.

The pie chart visually represents the distribution of popular car brands that employ complex borrowing in their brand names. The chart includes six major brands known for their strategic use of complex borrowing—Lexus, Acura, Audi, Mazda, Toyota Prius, and Volkswagen Touareg—along with a category for other brands. This chart effectively highlights how leading car brands leverage complex borrowing to craft names that are culturally resonant, linguistically appealing, and strategically aligned with their brand identities. The use of diverse linguistic and cultural elements helps these brands achieve a strong global presence and favorable consumer perception.

Conclusion. The study of complex borrowing in car brand names reveals its substantial impact on brand identity, consumer perception, and global marketability. Through a meticulous blend of linguistic and cultural elements, car manufacturers can craft names that resonate deeply across diverse markets, enhancing brand recognition and consumer loyalty.

Key findings demonstrate that successful brand names often:



- Combine Linguistic Precision with Cultural Relevance: Names like Lexus and Acura exemplify how linguistic elegance and cultural significance can forge a strong brand identity.
- Evoke Positive Connotations: Names such as Audi and Mazda resonate well due to their historical and cultural associations, contributing to a favorable consumer perception.
- Ensure Phonetic Appeal and Ease of Pronunciation: Brand names that are easy to pronounce and have pleasant phonetic qualities, like Toyota Prius and Volkswagen Touareg, are more likely to be embraced by a global audience.

The methodological approach, incorporating literature review, case studies, focus groups, surveys, and linguistic analysis, provides a comprehensive understanding of the strategic considerations and consumer impacts of complex borrowing in brand naming.

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