

Advantages of the Use of English in Advertising: Attitudes of Croatian Speakers

Modrić, Marko

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2016

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište u Rijeci, Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:186:572394>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright / Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-12-04**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[Repository of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences - FHSSRI Repository](#)



UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Marko Modrić

Advantages of the use of English in advertising:

Attitudes of Croatian speakers

(MA THESIS)

Rijeka, 2016

UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department of English Language and Literature

Marko Modrić

Advantages of English language in advertising: Attitudes of Croatian speakers

University of Rijeka

(MA Thesis)

Graduate study: English language and literature / Informatics

Supervisor: Dr Branka Drljača Margić

Rijeka, September 2016

Table of contents

1 Introduction	1
2 English in global advertising.....	4
2.1. Standardisation or adaptation	6
2.2. Comprehension and appreciation	8
3 The present study	10
3.1. Aims.....	10
3.2. Research questions	10
3.3. Participants	10
3.4. Research method	12
4 Results	16
5 Discussion.....	25
6 Conclusion.....	29
References	31

Table 1: Age ranges of the participants	11
Table 2: Language proficiency levels of the participants	12
Table 3: Participants' attitudes towards two slogans	19
Table 4: Participants' attitudes towards English and Croatian versions of the same slogan	22

Figure 1: Participants' opinion on the effect slogan has on consumers (More complex slogan) 17

Figure 2: Participants' opinion on the effect slogan has on consumers (Less complex slogan).. 17

Figure 3: Participants attitudes towards the effect of English versus Croatian version of the slogan 23

Abstract

English is most widely used language in modern advertising. Due to importance on a global scale, both political and economic, and association with modernity, urbanisation and quality, its status of the main language of advertising is not surprising. The purpose of this study is to enquire into consumers' attitudes towards the use of English in advertisements (and compare them with those towards the use of Croatian). The data were collected by means of an online questionnaire administered to 77 participants.

The results show that a greater number of the participants favour less complex and easier to understand slogans. The participants attribute to English the characteristics of modernity, elegance and reliability, which confirms the findings gained from previous studies. Finally, the respondents have more positive attitudes towards the use of English in advertisements for international products or companies, while Croatian is seen as more suitable for products meant for the Croatian market and produced in Croatia.

Keywords: English, advertising, attitude

1 Introduction

Throughout the human history, many different languages have become more or less prominent when it comes to their use and prevalence. During the time of colonisation, for example Spanish, Portuguese and French spread around the globe significantly, but none of these languages can be compared to the spread and wide use of English. As Graddol (1996) puts it, it is for the first time in human history that a single language has become so widespread that it can serve as a global lingua franca to speakers of many different languages. The first stages of the spread of English were also a product of colonisation, but today English has found new ways of spreading its influence, mainly through technological developments, economic globalisation and the improved global communications (Graddol, 1996). It is not surprising then to find the term *global language* being used when referring to English in articles, research papers and books.

As Crystal (1997) points out, in order for the language to achieve its global language status, it has to be taken up by other countries around the world where it is not spoken as a native language, and there are two main ways in which this can be done. First way is that the language is made the official language of the country, serving as a “second language”, while the mother tongue has the status of the “first language”, and the second way is that the language acquires priority status in a country’s foreign language teaching, without it gaining the official status (Crystal, 1997). If a language accomplishes both of these things, and English most certainly has, it will inevitably come to be spoken and extensively used by more people than any other language. This shows us just how significant English has become. Loonen (1996: 3), for example, comments that “a language once considered base and worthless now seems to dominate

the new Europe". We can safely, without hesitation, add that English is not dominant only in Europe, but has become dominant on a larger, global scale.

There are various reasons why the rise of English to its global language status has been so successful, but the main reason most definitely is the political and economic power to which it is connected. With this in mind, it should come as no surprise that many people who do not speak English as a first language see it as an opportunity for both their individual position and their countries economy (Graddol, 1996). This view is not surprising if we consider all the benefits of the use of English in the economy and businesses around the world. Its use can raise profits and prominence of companies; it ensures them a place on the global market and enables them to reach almost every corner of the world. The most prominent example of this is the use and usefulness of English in global advertising. Through many studies it has been shown that English is the most frequently used foreign language in advertisements (Bhatia, 1992). Many studies have been conducted to investigate the way English is used in these advertisements, but only a few concentrate on the attitudes of speakers of other languages towards the use of English in advertising. Motivated by studies conducted by Gordenstein Montes (2014) and Hornikx, van Meurs and de Boer (2010), the author aims to enquire into the attitudes of Croatian speakers towards the use of English in advertising in comparison to the use of Croatian in the same advertisements.

The paper is organised in several sections: in the second section, we provide an overview of the position of English on a global scale and in Croatia. The third section focuses on the use of English in global advertising, while the fourth section describes the methodology of the present study. In section five, we look at the results of the study, which are then discussed in more detail

in section six. Section seven contains the concluding remarks and suggestions for further research.

2 English in global advertising

Foreign languages have been used in advertisements since the very beginnings of product advertising. Wustmann (1903) and Pound (1913), for example, discuss the use of foreign words in German advertisements and the use of Spanish in advertisements in the United States, respectively.

It is important to understand that foreign languages have a symbolic function in product advertising. According to Kelly-Holmes (2000: 71), “intercultural advertising language now seems to be used for its symbolic value while the communicative or utility value of the particular words has come to be obscured or mystified to the point where it becomes irrelevant. The language appears to achieve value independently and this value is not the product of its communicative value, but rather of its symbolic value in the process of intercultural advertising communication.” She further elaborates that this symbolism makes a product appealing by triggering associations consumers have with the language itself. For example, French is widely used to advertise sophisticated products such as perfumes or other cosmetic products, German is commonly used to emphasise technical excellence, while Italian is usually connected to food or fine dining.

Today, English is the most widely used language in product advertising in non-English speaking countries (Gerritsen et al., 2007) primarily because of its neutrality and familiarity on a global scale. Ustinova (2008) claims that the present use of English forms a new type of bilingualism in which English represents a connection to the world and the global community, while the local language connects the speakers to the local community.

Unlike French, German or Italian, English is not clearly connected to specific cultural stereotypes but has become a symbol for modernity, progress and globalisation. Kachru (1986) defines the symbolic function of English as the modern and prestigious status given to English. Kelly-Holmes (2000) calls this idea the “language fetish” and claims that when English is used in an advertisement, there is a common understanding of the symbolic uses behind that choice. Its use is associated with unconscious associations made about various languages, which advertising recreates and invokes in our consciousness. According to Martin (2007), the mere presence of English in an advert associates the advertised product with modernity, quality engineering, urbanisation, progress, international appeal and other positive concepts, depending on the category of the product and the audience the advertisement targets. Gao (2005) states that the symbolism of modernity is the main reason for using English in advertising in China. Baumgardner and Brown (2012) claim that the uses of English in Iranian advertisements can be linked to modernity, Europeanisation and reliability, while Hsu (2008: 158) offers “internationalism, premium quality and exquisite taste” as reasons for using English in advertisements in Taiwan. It is clear that using English in advertising gives a product or a brand more power in the consumer market. English can be seen as a tool used to give customers the sense that they are using a global brand even when that is not true (Micu & Coulterm, 2010).

Advertisers are intent on using English while marketing their products, but the language that is used should be intelligible. The problem depicted by Bhatia (2006) is that if bilingualism levels in a certain country are at a low rate, the message that is trying to be conveyed through the use of English is in most cases incomprehensible. Although consumers often complain about the lack of intelligibility in advertisements where English is used, advertisers do not seem to take much notice of that. The reason for that is that English compensates for this lack of intelligibility

with its attention-getting function. Only a single English word used in an advertisement can catch the consumers attention, regardless of whether the word is understood by the consumer or not, and maintain the effect on the consumers that the advertisers want to accomplish. Bhatia (2006) claims that this use of English as an attention-getter has become a trend in Japan in recent years.

However, a very small number of studies has examined whether the effect of an advertisement changes according to the level of its comprehension. Hornikx et al. (2010: 175) state that “the dominant framework argues that the comprehension and difficulty of English does not matter because English serves a symbolic function”. In the present study the author will enquire deeper into this question.

2.1. Standardisation or adaptation

Another question that comes into focus when regarding the English language in advertising is whether the language of an advertisement should be standardised. When examining the materials regarding this question, many opposing attitudes can be found. White (2000) claims that the standardisation of language in advertisements brings a lot of benefits to the advertisers. According to Hornikx et al. (2010), this standardisation can provide companies more control over the way they are globally advertised and give them the possibility to fully exploit creative ideas for the advertisements. By standardising the language it uses in its advertisements, a company is able to create a global brand more easily than it would be the case if advertisements were adapted to different markets. This allows them to maintain a similar position of their

product throughout the international market by using same brand names, slogans, logos or headlines. This standardisation of the English language as a language used on a global scale is beneficial not only for advertising but also when it comes to international business communication in general. For example, the use of the English language makes communication between various companies significantly easier and makes certain information about a company, such as an annual report, more accessible to those who require that kind of information (cf. De Groot, 2008; Vandermeeren, 1999).

On the other hand, De Mooij (2005) argues that only through adaptation of the advertisements and the language used in them to the tastes of a specific market can successful marketing be achieved. According to Hornikx et al. (2010), this position is also valid. All cultures across the world have cultural values that are important to them, and it is only natural that an advertisement adapted to reference those cultural values should be more appealing than an advertisement which is generalised for the global market. Hornikx et al. (2010) point out that an advertisement that appeals to cultural values such as independence in the United States will have a greater effect on the consumers than an advertisement standardised to appeal to a cultural value that is far less valued in the said country.

When it comes to the standardisation of language, only a few empirical studies have been conducted that show the difference between the use of the English language (standardised language) in advertisements opposed to the use of the local language (adapted advertisements). Shoham (1996) compared English advertisements with Israeli advertisements, but the problem with his study is that the advertisements used differentiated from each other in terms of brands, language and background of the advertisement and the product to such an extent that his findings concerning the preferences consumers had towards the local language instead of English cannot

be attributed to a language effect, but are most likely a result of various other factors. Gerritsen et al. (2007) found hardly any difference between the attitudes of consumers towards advertisements using English and those using Dutch, German and Spanish. Some researchers, such as Puntoni, De Langhe and Van Osselaer (2008), concentrated on the preference of the consumers for advertisements in English and in the local language, while others, such as Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008), focused on investigating the difference in consumers' attitudes towards the advertisements depending on the type of company and of the product advertised. The results of their study showed that consumers in most cases valued English over the local language when the company advertised was an international company and the product advertised was a luxury, while the local language was more valued when the situation was opposite – the company was a local one and the product advertised a necessity.

2.2. Comprehension and appreciation

As it was already stated by various researchers, such as Kelly-Holmes (2000) or Piller (2001), the comprehension of a language used in an advertisement does not affect its appreciation because of the fact that languages are used primarily for their symbolic functions and not their literary form. Haarmann (1989) finds that although Japanese people in general do not understand European languages and can't read them, English, French, German and Spanish were widely used in Japanese advertisements. This in turn means that these languages have certain symbolic value for the Japanese people and it confirms the claim of Piller (2001: 163), who says: "even if the audience does not understand the denotational message of the English

they will recognise that the message is in English, and they will activate their stereotypes about English.” This means that regardless of whether the consumers understand the language used in an advertisement, that language can still be appreciated and valued because of the symbols and stereotypes it evokes in the consumers.

On the other hand, various studies show that comprehension of the language used in the advertisement does affect the appreciation of the advertisement. The incomprehensibility of the language used in the advertisement can lead to frustration among consumers. If consumers spend too much time on understanding the message of an advertisement, their attitude towards the advertisement is likely to be negative. Gerritsen et al. (2000) and Hornikx and Starren (2006) show that easier the language, the more suitable it is for advertisements. In other words, the appreciation of the advertisement rises with its comprehension.

The present study deals with the subject of standardisation versus adaption and the influence comprehension has on appreciation of the advertisement when related to Croatia and Croatian speakers. The specific aims, methods used and results of the study will be discussed in the following sections.

3 The present study

3.1. Aims

The main purpose of this study was twofold. Firstly, the study concentrated on the effect comprehension of language had on the attitudes of the participants towards the advertisements in which the English language was used. The second part of the study enquired into the participants' preferences for the use of English or Croatian slogans in advertisements.

3.2. Research questions

The study was aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. Does the comprehension of the English language used in slogans affect the participants' attitudes towards the slogan itself and their decision whether they would buy the advertised product or not?
2. Does the use of the English language change the way participants look at an advertisement and their attitudes towards the advertised product itself?

3.3. Participants

The data were collected from 77 participants to whom the questionnaire was distributed using social platforms, such as Facebook, or via e-mail. As it was already mentioned, the main goal of this research was to enquire into the attitudes Croatians had towards the use of English in

advertising, and since those attitudes can largely be affected by a person's age and language proficiency, it was very important to conduct the survey among diverse groups of participants.

Table 1 shows the age groups of the participants.

Age range	Number of participants
18-24	13
25-31	46
32-39	7
40-48	11
Total number of participants	77

Table 1: Age ranges of the participants

The fact that the survey was distributed via social platforms resulted in a larger number of younger participants.

As for the participants' language command, Table 2 presents their English proficiency levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). As can be seen in the table, a large number of the participants consider their language proficiency to be either at C1 or C2 level. Participants who classified their language proficiency levels as C1 or C2 were predominantly in the 25-31 age range, while those considering their language proficiency levels to be either A1 or A2 were all in the 40-48 age range.

English language proficiency level	Number of participants
A1 – can understand familiar words and basic phrases	4
A2 – can understand phrases and commonly used words in the field of their interest	1
B1 – can understand the main ideas of standard conversations and texts regarding familiar subjects	13
B2 – can understand longer speeches, lectures and texts, and follow even complex argumentation if the subject is at all familiar	16
C1 – can understand long conversations even when sentences are not clearly connected; can understand long and complex factual or literary texts	20
C2 – can without problems read all kinds of texts, have no problems in understanding any type of verbal communication	23

Table 2: Language proficiency levels of the participants

3.4. Research method

The data were collected by the means of an online questionnaire written in the Croatian language. The survey was distributed to the participants mostly via social platforms such as Facebook or via e-mail. Out of the 125 selected participants 77 participants responded to the

survey. The survey itself was divided into three parts, enquiring into the participants': 1) general information, specifically regarding their age and proficiency in the English language, 2) attitudes towards English slogans of different complexity, and 3) attitudes towards English slogans as opposed to the Croatian ones. . The two slogans in the second part of the survey were:

- 1.) Calvin Klein slogan – “Between Love and Madness lies obsession.”
- 2.) Apple slogan – “Think different.”

In regard to their complexity, the first slogan was deemed difficult, while the second one was seen as easier to comprehend. We opted for slogans rather than for other parts of an advertisement, such as headlines, because, as Piller (2001: 160) explains, “the language used in the slogan of an advertisement becomes the language of the advertisement’s ‘master voice’, the voice that expresses authority and expertise”.

Within the second and third part of the survey, a four-point Likert scale was used in order to compare the participants’ responses. Each slogan was followed by a short set of directions and the following questions investigating attitudes. On a scale ranging from 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 5 (‘strongly agree’), the participants were asked to say to what an extent they agree that the slogans provided are: modern, elegant, urban, nice, clumsy, irritating, strange, corny, reliable and/or quality.

Some of the adjectives were taken from a similar study conducted by Gerritsen et al. (2000). They were mostly chosen because they express the attitudes towards the English language and associations made with the symbolic use of language in advertisements (cf. Kelly-Holmes, 2005; Piller, 2001).

The second part of the survey contained three more questions, two closed-ended and one open-ended question, while in the third part of the survey one of the closed-ended questions was omitted. The first closed-ended question in the second part of the survey was:

1) Are you able to translate the English slogan into Croatian?

Yes_____ No_____ I am not sure_____

The aim of this question was to estimate the participants' comprehension of the presented slogan.

The second closed-ended question was:

2) Do you think that this type of slogan will encourage the customer to buy the product?

Yes_____ No_____

The aim of this question was to test the participants' attitudes towards the effectiveness of the English language in advertising. The last, closed-ended question was simply intended to give the participants the opportunity to elaborate on their response.

In the third part of the survey, the participants were again asked to choose among the above-mentioned adjectives, and the open-ended question gave them a possibility to explain the reasoning behind their answers. This part of the survey contained only one closed-ended question which aimed at examining the participants' preference between the use of English and Croatian in advertisements for the same product or service. The question was as follows:

1.) In your opinion, which version of the slogan is more likely to encourage a customer to buy the product?

English_____ Croatian_____

4 Results

The second part of the present study, which contained two English slogans, aimed to find out whether the complexity of the slogans had an effect on the attitudes of the participants towards the slogan itself and their preference as to whether they would buy the advertised product or not. The findings suggest that the complexity of the slogans has an effect on these matters. When looking at the results, it is clear that the participants had more problems with understanding and translating the more difficult slogan. The majority of participants were able to comprehend and translate both of the slogans but the difference between the participants who were unable to do so for the more difficult one (12%) and those who were unable to translate the second slogan (1,3%) is not negligible. This difference apparently transcribes into the participants' opinions on whether the presented slogans encourage consumers to buy the advertised product. More than half of the participants (57,3%) believe that the more difficult slogan will not encourage the customer to buy the product, while for the easier slogan that number decreases significantly (29,7%), as can be seen in Figures 1 and 2.

Do you think that this kind of slogan will encourage the customer to buy the product?

(74 odgovora)

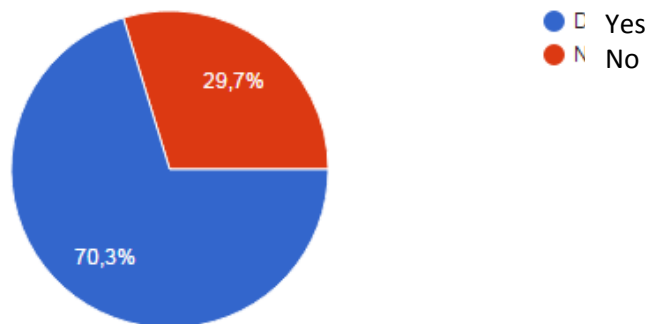


Figure 1: Participants' opinion on the effect slogan has on consumers (More complex slogan)

Do you think that this kind of slogan will encourage the customer to buy the product?

(75 odgovora)

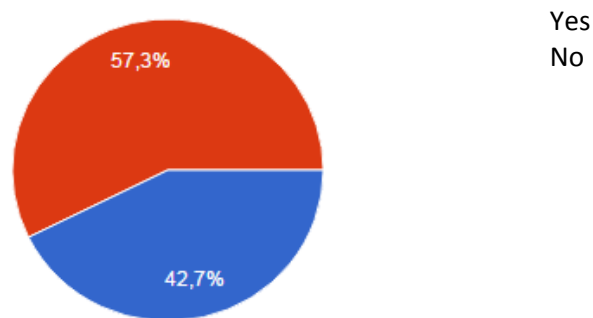


Figure 2: Participants' opinion on the effect slogan has on consumers (Less complex slogan)

Some of the answers participants gave in the open-ended question of this section suggest that the use of complicated language in slogans is far less effective than simple sentences that go straight to the point. When referring to the more complex slogan some of the participants said the following:

The slogan is exaggerated, overblown and too serious to induce anything but laughter. Nonetheless, it is possible that the drama in the slogan will attract certain customers.

Too long and too complicated.

I can't imagine a product that could be sold by using this slogan.

The answers regarding the second, less complex slogan were far more positive:

This slogan represents innovation and progress, which are the most important things when it comes to technology.

Short and clear. The slogan awakens something in the customer that makes him want to try something new and be in touch with modernity.

It is implied that the person who buys the product "thinks differently", which makes him or her stand out from the crowd.

The participants' attitudes towards the presented slogans are shown in Table 6. The overall results show that participants have more positive than negative attitudes towards both of the slogans, but the difference between the two presented slogans can be easily perceived. The participants were more inclined to associate positive attributes with the slogan "Think different." than with the slogan "Between love and madness lies obsession". The latter by default attracted a larger number of negative attributes.

We also have to consider that the participants' attitudes towards the slogans were not completely affected by the language itself, but were also impacted by other aspects. The participants can prefer certain slogans because of their content or the way they are structured.

Slogans*	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Modern	2,8%	9,6%	7%	19,2%	28,2%	46,6%	62%	24,7%
Elegant	5,6%	8,2%	18,1%	24,7%	38,9%	43,8%	37,5%	23,3%
Urban	5,6%	8,2%	8,5%	27,4%	40,8%	38,4%	45,1%	26%
Nice	9,9%	6,8%	21,1%	32,4%	38%	43,2%	31%	17,6%
Clumsy	74,6%	45,2%	21,1%	27,4%	2,8%	21,9%	1,4%	5,5%
Irritating	67,6%	64,4%	22,5%	17,8%	8,5%	12,3%	1,4%	5,5%
Strange	72,9%	42,5%	21,4%	27,4%	4,3%	19,2%	1,4%	11%
Corny	56,3%	49,3%	25,4%	23,3%	11,3%	21,9%	7%	5,5%
Reliable	15,9%	24,3%	30,4%	48,2%	34,8%	27%	18,8%	5,4%
Quality	4,2%	6,8%	25,4%	37%	40,8%	45,2%	29,6%	11%

Table 3: Participants' attitudes towards two slogans (*Letters correspond to the following slogans: A="Think different", B="Between Love and Madness lies obsession")

The third part of the study contained both English and Croatian slogans and aimed at exploring the possible change in the participants' attitudes towards slogans provided in English or in Croatian. The main goal was to see if the slogans in two different languages had a different effect on the participants preferences for the product advertised.

The findings of this part of the study suggest that the use of the English language in advertisements, when compared to Croatian, has a more positive effect on the customers. The answers show that English is in most cases connected to modernity, urbanisation, elegance, reliability. The second part of the study involved the following slogans:

1. JYSK – Scandinavian sleeping & living
2. Croatia – Full of life
3. Jana – Water for life

The translations of these slogans are:

1. JYSK – Skandinavski način života
2. Hrvatska – Puna života
3. Jana – Izvor života

When we compare the two versions of the slogans, we see that for the first and second slogan a clear inclination towards the English versions is apparent. For the first slogan, far more positive attitudes were expressed for the English version, especially regarding modernity (61,6%), elegance (51,4%), reliability (56,1%) and quality (57%), as opposed to the Croatian version of the slogan, which elicited the concepts of modernity among 45,2%, elegance in 26%, reliability in 50%, and quality in 47,3% of the participants. Negative attitudes were more frequently expressed for the Croatian version of the slogan, where 48% of the participants considered the slogan clumsy and 45,9% thought it to be strange, as opposed to the English version which was considered to be clumsy by 35% and strange by 32,8% of the participants. The same pattern can also be seen for the second slogan, where participants graded the English version of this slogan as modern (75,6%), elegant (67,5%), urban (70,3%) and a sign of quality (68,5%), while the Croatian version was awarded a lower grade, with 57,5% grading it as modern, 42,5% as elegant, 48,6% as urban and 40,7% of participants as a sign of quality. Negative attitudes were accordingly also much more prominent in the case of the Croatian version, where 36,5% of the participants thought the slogan to be clumsy and 28,8% to be strange, while that percentage

significantly decreased in the case of the English version, where only 15% of participants found it to be clumsy and 13,7% to be strange. The answers to the open-ended questions regarding the first two pairs of slogans further confirmed these numbers. Some of the answers were as follows:

English for some reason sounds more sophisticated.

English makes almost any slogan better.

Croatian consumers are more likely to fall for English slogans.

People usually take things more seriously when they are said or written in English.

The third pair of slogans presented in this part of the study gave a completely different set of results, i.e. the English and Croatian versions of the slogan switched places. The Croatian version of the slogan was perceived far more positively, as the participants connected it with modernity, urbanisation, elegance and quality – attributes that are usually associated with the English language. On the other hand, the use of the English language was perceived to be clumsy and corny (see Table 4).

Likert scale	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Modern	8,1%	2,7%	33,8%	19,2%	33,8%	27,4%	24,3%	50,7%
Elegant	11%	2,7%	27,4%	16,2%	45,2%	29,7%	16,4%	51,4%
Urban	19,2%	8,1%	31,5%	20,3%	32,9%	31,1%	16,4%	40,5%
Nice	13,9%	4,1%	25%	9,6%	38,9%	37%	22,2%	49,3%
Clumsy	37,8%	71,2%	29,7%	20,5%	21,6%	8,2%	10,8%	0%
Irritating	51,4%	75,3%	27,8%	16,4%	16,7%	5,5%	4,2%	2,7%
Strange	54,2%	75,3%	23,6%	19,2%	16,7%	4,1%	5,6%	1,4%
Corny	43,1%	64,4%	22,2%	15,1%	23,6%	13,7%	11,1%	6,8%
Reliable	8,3%	11%	30,6%	20,5%	44,4%	35,6%	16,7%	32,9%
Quality	11%	8,2%	30,1%	13,7%	38,4%	37%	20,5%	41,1%

Table 4: Participants' attitudes towards English and Croatian versions of the same slogan (*Letters correspond to the following slogans: A="Jana – Water for life", B="Jana – Izvor života")

Apart from the difference in attitudes that can be observed in this pair of slogans, when compared to the first two pairs, a significantly different result was also obtained from the question regarding the participants preference between the two versions of the slogan. When asked which version of the slogan would in their opinion more successfully encourage the consumer to buy the advertised product, the majority of participants answered Croatian, as can

be seen in Figure 3, while in the previous two examples the percentage went in favor of English, more specifically, 77,3% in the first example and 88% in the second one.

In your opinion, which version of the slogan is more likely to encourage a customer to buy the product?

(74 odgovora)

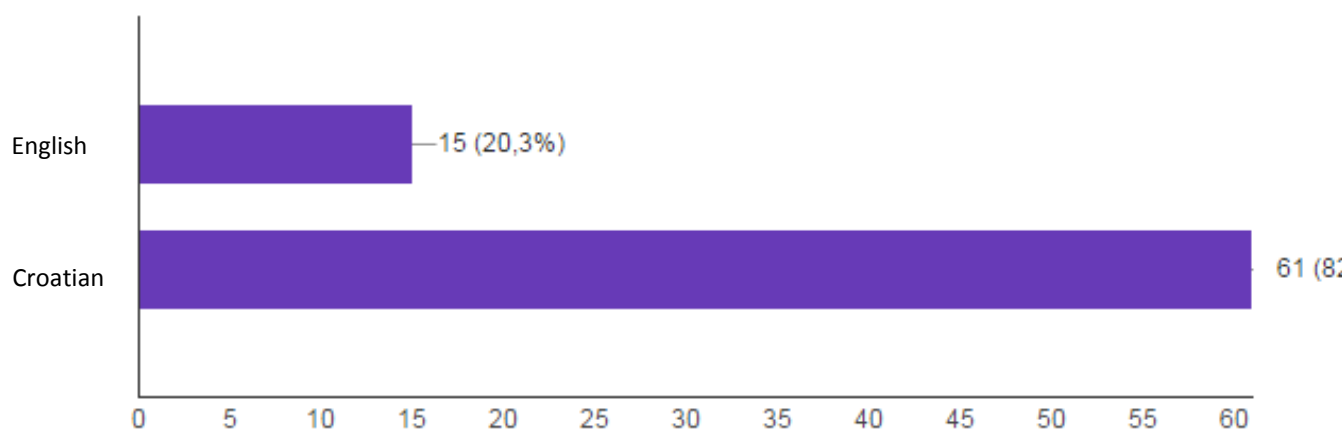


Figure 3: Participants attitudes towards the effect of English versus Croatian version of the slogan

Some of the participants' additional comments were:

Croatian slogan sounds better than the English one. It is more suitable for the product.

Croatian slogan sounds more elegant. The use of the preposition for in the English slogan is a bit annoying.

I think the product is mostly sold in Croatia, so let's say the Croatian slogan is more appropriate.

The reasons for this difference between results regarding the presented examples will be discussed in the following sections.

5 Discussion

The dominance of the English language in international advertising should and does raise a great number of questions, most importantly to what extent the use of English in advertising is effective, or more precisely, how well it is received and which effects its use has on the consumers. Answering these questions can greatly benefit advertisers and others involved in the field of marketing.

The findings suggest that less complex slogans are better appreciated than more complex slogans. The difference in perception was bigger than revealed by previous studies (cf. Gordenstein Montes, 2014; Hornikx et al., 2010). The results of these studies show that the differences between easy and difficult English slogans are rather small, with difficult slogans being graded as neither negative nor positive and easy slogans graded as just slightly more positive (Hornikx et al., 2010). The results of the present study show significant differences. Hornikx et al. (2010) claim that one of the possible explanations for such a small difference between less and more complex slogans could be that the difficulty of the English used in the slogan is not the only aspect which affects appreciation, but rather that appreciation is impacted by a combination of the characteristics of the slogan and the difficulty of language. The same explanation can be used for the results gained from this study. Attitudes towards a slogan, regardless of its complexity, depend on its various characteristics, which means that the results could vary depending on the slogans used in the survey. It is quite possible that by using two different slogans we would get different results.

Another thing we need to take into consideration is the popularity of the brand and the product which is advertised. Consumers' attitudes towards advertisements which advertise

brands and products which are popular on a global scale can differ significantly from attitudes they have towards advertisements which advertise unknown products. The advertisements themselves do not have to differ significantly in terms of their structure or the language used in their slogans or other parts of the advertisement to lead to different attitudes among consumers. If the advertised product is globally popular, consumers' attitudes towards it are largely positive. These positive attitudes will most probably be reflected in their attitudes towards the advertisement which advertises the product. Conversely, if consumers have no information and knowledge about the product, they are far more likely to be neutral about the product itself, the advertisement which advertises it and the language used in that advertisement.

Neither the results gained in this study nor the results gained in studies conducted by Hornikx et al. (2010) and Gordenstein Montes (2014) provide a definitive answer to the question of the impact of comprehension on the appreciation of English slogans, but seem to suggest that positive views are primarily oriented towards less complex English slogans.

In the second part of the study, the participants' preferences as to English or Croatian slogans were tested. The results gained from this part of the study were somewhat surprising. Out of the three provided pairs of slogans, the participants held that the English version of the slogan in the first two examples was more likely to encourage customers to buy a product. Such results are expected if we take into consideration the symbolic power the English language has in modern advertising. These results also support the findings of Gordenstein Montes (2014), who found that the majority of participants feel that there is a certain inclination of participants towards purchasing a product advertised in English. However, it is interesting that both in the present study and the study conducted by Gordenstein Montes (2014) a large number of participants explained their answers in a manner that was not related to the slogan itself. Some participants

claimed that slogans in general had little or no effect on their inclination to buy the advertised product. Others, however, stated that various characteristics of the slogan influenced their appreciation for the product. In other words, the overall appeal of the slogan is as important as the language used in it.

The surprising thing about the results gained within this part of the study refers to the findings related to the third example of English and Croatian slogans, as they are opposite to the results gained from the first two examples. In this case it was not English, but rather the Croatian slogan that was considered more attractive. A larger number of the participants associated the Croatian version of this particular slogan with modernity, elegance, reliability and quality, something that is usually reserved for English slogans and advertisements in general. The participants explained that the Croatian slogan was more acceptable because the product advertised was a local product, manufactured and mostly sold in Croatia. The use of English slogans in advertisements for international products is deemed more appropriate to consumers than their Croatian translations, which is corroborated by a number of studies, including the present one. Conversely, consumers believe that products which are not intended to be distributed internationally should be advertised using the language of the market they are intended for, which is not necessarily English. The results of this part of the survey indicate that the product and the brand advertised significantly influence the consumers' attitudes towards an advertisement and the language used.

Finally, the findings of this study confirm that English possesses symbolic value which is recognised by consumers and which significantly increases its appeal and the rate of its use in today's global advertising. The results of the study confirm the results of various studies mentioned earlier in this text, such as that conducted by Hernikx et al. (2010). The symbols of

modernity, urbanisation, globalisation or reliability are obviously generally connected with the English language and are not just limited to a certain group of people.

6 Conclusion

A number of factors influence how the consumer sees and experiences the advertisement. In addition to investigate the attitudes towards English, the consumer's attitudes towards the product and their attitudes towards the brand itself should not be ignored. Only by gaining insight into all of these aspects and by comparing the information gained from various studies can we truly get an image of the effectiveness of the English language in advertising and the attitudes consumers have towards it.

The large majority of the studies conducted so far have analysed slogans. A suggestion regarding further research is to extend the scope to other parts of an advertisement and to further look at the effectiveness of English in advertising. The language used in other parts of an advertisement, such as its body, differs significantly from the language used in slogans. It is quite possible that the attitudes consumers have towards advertisements which use the English language in their slogans will not be the same as attitudes they have towards those advertisements which use English in the body of the advertisement. Hence, it would be necessary to carry out more studies on consumers' attitudes towards the use of English in other parts of an advertisement.

The use of slogans that advertised popular and well-known brands and products proved to be a limitation of this study. It is highly likely that the participants' attitudes towards the chosen slogans were influenced by their opinions and attitudes towards the product itself. Thus, in future research, it would be necessary to investigate the participants' attitudes towards advertisements for less known products. In this way, the interference of the participants' attitudes towards the

product with their attitudes towards the slogan would be reduced, and the respondents would have an opportunity to express their views related to the slogan itself.

References

- Baumgardner, R., Brown, K. (2012). English in Iranian magazine advertising. *World Englishes*, 31 (3), pp. 292-311.
- Bhatia, T. K. (1992). Discourse functions and pragmatics of mixing: Advertising across cultures. *World Englishes*, 11, pp. 195-215.
- Bhatia, T., Ritchie W. (2006). *The Handbook of Bilingualism*. Blackwell Publishing,
- De Groot, E. B. (2008). English annual reports in Europe: A study on the identification and reception of genre characteristics in multimodal annual reports originating in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom. Utrecht: LOT.
- De Mooij, M. (2005). *Global marketing and advertising: Understanding cultural paradoxes* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gao, L. (2005). Bilinguals' creativity in the use of English in China's advertising. *Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism*. 828-837, Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Gerritsen, M., Korzilius, H., Van Meurs, F., & Gijssbers, I. (2000). English in Dutch commercials: Not understood and not appreciated. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 40, 17-31.
- Gerritsen, M., Nickerson, C., van Hooft, A., van Meurs, F., Nederstigt, U., Starren, M., Crijins, R. (2007). English in product advertisements in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. *World Englishes* (26) 3, 291-315.

- Gordenstein Montes, A. (2014). "The use and perception of English in Brazilian Magazine Advertisements." *Arizona State University*
- Graddol, D., "Global English, global culture?" In David Graddol and Sharon Goodman (eds.), *Redesigning English: new texts, new identities*, Routledge, London/New York, 1996, pp. 181 - 218
- Hornikx, J., & Starren, M. (2006). The relationship between the appreciation and the comprehension of French in Dutch advertisements. In R. Crijns, & C. Burgers (Eds.), *Werbestrategien in Theorie und Praxis: Sprachliche Aspekte von deutschen und niederländischen Unternehmensdarstellungen und Werbekampagnen* [Advertising strategies in theory and practice: Linguistic aspects of German and Dutch organizational representations and advertising campaigns] (pp. 129-145). Tostedt, Germany: Attikon
- Hornikx, J., van Meurs, F., de Boer, A. (2010). English or a local language in advertising? *The Journal of Business Communication*, 47 (2), 169-188.
- Hsu, J. (2008). Glocalization and English mixing in advertising in Taiwan its discourse domains, linguistic patterns, cultural constraints, localized creativity, and sociopsychological effects. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 3 (2), 155–183.
- Kachru, B. B. (1986). *The alchemy of English: The spread, functions, and models of nonnative Englishes*. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.
- Kelly-Holmes, H. (2000). Bier, parfum, kaas: Language fetish in European advertising. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 3, 67–82.
- Kelly-Holmes, H. (2005). *Advertising as multilingual communication*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Krishna, A., & Ahluwalia, R. (2008). Language choice in advertising to bilinguals: Asymmetric effects for multinationals versus local firms. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35, 692-705.

- Loonen, P. (1996). English in Europe: from timid to tyrannical. *English today*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 3-10
- Martin, E. (2007). “”Frenglish” for sale: multilingual discourse for addressing today’s global consumer.” *World Englishes*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 170-188
- Micu, C., Coulter, R. (2010). Advertising in English in nonnative English-speaking markets: The effect of language and self-referencing in advertising in Romania on ad attitudes. *Journal of East-West Business*, 16, 67–84.
- Piller, I. (2001). Identity constructions in multilingual advertising. *Language in Society*, 30, 153–86.
- Pound, L. (1913). Word-coinage and modern trade-names. *Dialect Notes*, 4, 29–41.
- Puntoni, S., De Langhe, B., & Van Osselaer, S. M. J. (2008). Bilingualism and the emotional intensity of advertising language. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35, 1012-1025
- Shoham, A. (1996). Effectiveness of standardized and adapted television advertising: An international field study approach. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 9, 5-23.
- Ustinova, I. (2008). English and American Culture Appeal in Russian Advertising. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 3 (1), 77–98.
- Ustinova, I., Bhatia, T. (2005). “Convergence of English in Russian TV commercials.” *World Englishes*, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 495-508
- Vandermeeren, S. (1999). English as a lingua franca in corporate writing. In F. BargielaChiappini & C. Nickerson (Eds.), *Writing business: Genres, media and discourses* (pp. 273-291). Harlow, UK: Longman.

White, R. (2000). International advertising: How far can it fly? In J. P. Jones (Ed.), *International advertising: Realities and myths* (pp. 29-40). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Wustmann, G. (1903). *Allerhands sprachdummheiten. All manner of linguistic stupidities.* Leipzig: Grunow.