

Language choice in job advertising

An experimental study into the effects of language choice
in job titles in Spain and the Netherlands

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Abstract

This study aims to provide new insights into cross-cultural differences in job advertising. Companies are increasingly using English in their job advertisements to increase international consistency and to make a job sound more appealing, more global and more modern. While some research on the effect of English in job advertising has been done, hardly any cross-cultural research exists to compare the effects between nationalities. This study investigated to what extent the use of the English or the native language in job titles affects the attitudes and intentions of Spanish and Dutch jobseekers differently. In an experiment, 70 Dutch and 64 Spanish jobseekers evaluated either job titles in their native language or in English. It was researched whether the participants differed in their attitudes towards the job titles, their perceived globalness of the company, their perceived challenge of the job and their intention to apply for the job. Results showed that the language of the job title mostly affected participants' attitude towards the job title and their perceived globalness of the company. Furthermore, it was found that, although the Spanish and Dutch participants did not differ in their attitude towards English, whether participants had a relatively negative or relatively positive attitude towards English led to differences in the participants' perceived challenge of the job and the perceived globalness of the company. This study thus supports previous research on language choice effects in job advertising and provides new insights into cross-cultural differences between Spanish and Dutch jobseekers.

Key words: job advertising; job titles; language attitudes; language choice

1. Introduction

In the field of international advertising, English is used in many countries where it is not an official language. Research on the occurrence of English in print advertising for example, has shown that 81% of the advertisements in glossy magazines in the Netherlands contain English words, compared to 56% in Germany and 75% in Spain (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Some research over the past few years has focused on the effect of language choice in advertisements. For example, Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008) examined the effect of language choice in advertising for bilinguals and found that using a foreign language (i.e., English) was more effective when luxury goods were promoted. In another study, Lin and Wang (2016) found that, when advertising to monolinguals, English slogans were consistently evaluated more positively than when the local language was used in advertising. These studies show the effect the language choice in an advertisement can have on consumer attitudes. A possible explanation for the positive attitude towards English in advertising can be found in a study conducted by Kelly-Holmes (2000). This study focused on language in intercultural advertising and suggests that foreign languages are associated with certain stereotypical images which can be transferred onto a product or an advertisement in general. In practice this would imply that when consumers have a positive attitude towards the English language, they are more likely to have positive attitudes towards advertisements in which English words or slogans are used. This reasoning also applies to negative attitudes towards a certain language which can be transferred onto a product or advertisement.

The widespread use of English as a lingua franca is not only notable in the increasing use of English in commercial advertising, but also in the use of English in job advertising. For example, Van Meurs, Korzilius and Hollander (2006) researched the use of English in job ads in the Netherlands and found that most of the advertisements in their corpus contained English and some were even completely in English. Specifically, they found that the element job title more frequently contained English than the other job advertisement elements. Since a job title is the appellation indicating the position advertised (Van Meurs, 2010) it gives important information about the rest of the job advertisement. It can be assumed that the job title is the first element a jobseeker will see when reading the job advertisement. This is supported by eye tracking research of De Witte (1989) who found that the job title is the element that makes readers decide to read the rest of the advertisement or not. Therefore, job titles can be regarded as one of the most important elements of a job advertisement. However, while some research

has been conducted on the effect of using English in international product advertising on consumers, less is known about the effect of English job titles in job advertising on jobseekers. Considering the high frequency of English in job advertising nowadays, this is an important field for research. Furthermore, since the goal of job advertising is to recruit new employees, it is important to determine the effects of language choice in the job advertisement. This study investigated the effects of using English or a local language in job titles on jobseekers in a cross-cultural context. Furthermore, this study aimed at contributing to the research field of language choice in job advertising by looking at language attitudes of jobseekers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reasons for using English in job advertising

From the perspective of organizations, several reasons exist for using English in job titles. Those reasons include creating international consistency for multinational companies by using a global language (Larson, 1990). This is supported by Van Meurs et al. (2006) who investigated the use of English in job advertisement and found that English was used to a greater extent in ads from multinational organizations than from local companies. Another reason that is given for the use of English in job titles is to make a job sound more challenging and appealing (Larson, 1990). While research has shown that English more often occurs in advertisements for higher-level and academic jobs (Van Meurs et al., 2007), whether this can contribute to the idea of a more challenging job when the job title is in English has not yet been researched. Van Meurs, Planken, Korzilius and Gerritsen (2015) conducted interviews with Dutch job ad designers to find reasons for using English or the local language in job advertising. In their study, they found that English is mostly used to enhance an organization's image, create a global image, give a job more status and make a job sound more attractive, modern and innovative. Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008) investigated language choice in product advertising and found that English is strongly associated with globalness, prestige and professionalism and is therefore often preferred over the local language. For companies, it might be important to be perceived as being global, since research showed that consumers associate global companies with a higher quality and a higher prestige (Steenkamp, Batra & Alden, 2003). Furthermore, the use of a foreign language in an advertisement might be an effective tool, because it makes an advertisement stand out compared to advertisements published in the local language. (Hornikx et. al, 2004). When a language is less expected in a particular context, its use is likely to attract increased attention focused on the language choice and trigger the associations that are strongly related to that particular language (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). When readers have positive associations with the foreign language used in the advertisement, this might lead to a positive effect on the evaluation of the job advertisement (Kelly-Holmes, 2000). This would imply that if the language of the job advertisement is evaluated positively, those positive associations might be transferred to the job that is advertised.

2.2 Effects of English in job advertising

Although organizations might perceive multiple advantages and positive effects of using English instead of their own local language in their product or job advertisements, not all

consumers and jobseekers respond positively to the use of English instead of the local language. Renkema, Vallen and Hoeken (2001) studied the effects of English words and phrases in Dutch job ads on participants' attitude towards the ad, towards the job and towards the organization. Their study showed that the use of English in job advertisements did not lead to a higher association with exclusivity of the job or to a more positive company image by Dutch participants. They also found that ads with English words and phrases were considered to be less natural than ads using the local language. Furthermore, Van Meurs, Korzilius, Planken and Fairley (2004) investigated the effect of English job titles on Dutch and found that the English job titles were in fact evaluated worse than Dutch ones. This finding is supported by research conducted by Van Meurs, Hendriks and Sanders (in press), who compared attitudes of Dutch and Flemish jobseekers towards English and Dutch job titles. The authors also investigated the attitude towards English loanwords of the respondents to find out if nationality was a factor influencing language attitudes. Their research showed that Dutch jobseekers had more positive attitudes towards Dutch job titles than their English equivalents, but that the language used did not influence their intention to apply for the job. These findings were unexpected, since the authors also found that there was no general negative attitude towards English loanwords among the Dutch. A possible explanation for these results could be that people in the Netherlands do not feel threatened by the use of English and therefore do not have negative attitudes towards English in general, or towards English in advertising. However, they might still have a more positive attitude towards their own language because of the easier comprehensibility. That comprehensibility may be a factor influencing attitudes towards English has been confirmed by research conducted by Hornikx, Van Meurs and De Boer (2010) who looked into people's preferences for English versus their local language. The authors investigated if the difficulty of the English language could lead to a preference for English or the local language. Their study showed that Dutch consumers sometimes preferred English over Dutch in product advertising, but only when the English used was easy to understand for those consumers.

2.3 Cross-cultural research on job advertising

Most of the research on the effects of English in job advertisements has been conducted in the Netherlands. Other European countries have been relatively understudied with regard to the effect of English job titles, although there is reason to assume that the attitude towards English of the people in those countries might differ from the attitudes towards English of Dutch jobseekers. One reason that might explain a difference in attitudes towards English in job titles

between Dutch jobseekers and jobseekers in another European country is the difference in comprehensibility of the English language. In a study on the effect of English in print advertising for products in Germany, Spain and the Netherlands it was found that compared to the Netherlands, for example the Spanish have a lower comprehensibility of the English language (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Moreover, according to a study conducted by the European Commission (Eurobarometer Special, 2012), only 22% of people in Spain are fluent enough in English to have a conversation, compared to 90% of people in the Netherlands. This difference in the comprehensibility of English could lead to differences in attitudes towards English job titles too. Another factor that might lead to differences in attitude towards English is the way Dutch and Spanish people are affected by the use of English. For example, Gerritsen et al. (2007) found that the use of English in product advertisements led to a more modern association with the product in Spain, but not in the Netherlands. Previous research into the differences in attitudes towards the use of English in advertisements mainly relates to product advertisements. However, no cross-cultural research has been conducted yet to determine any possible attitude differences towards the use of English in job advertisements for Spanish and Dutch jobseekers. It is perhaps also surprising that no so far research has focused on attitudes of Spanish jobseekers towards the use of English in job advertisements instead of Spanish, since it was found that 87.5% of the job ads on www.monster.es contained at least one English word and 11% of the job ads were completely in English (Van Hooft, 2015). This shows that Spanish job advertisements contain even more English than their Dutch counterparts, since previous research showed that 88.5% of the job ads on the Dutch site www.monsterboard.nl contained at least one English word, but only 4% of the job ads were completely in English (Van Meurs, Korzilius & Hollander, 2006). Therefore it is relevant to determine the effect of English job titles on Spanish jobseekers, since no research has focused on this yet.

2.4 The present study

The studies outlined above have shown the extensive use of English in job titles in Spain and in the Netherlands. Since there are reasons to assume that the attitudes towards the English language between Spanish and Dutch jobseekers differ, it is relevant to research if their attitudes and attentions are affected differently by the use of English in job titles. This results in the following research question: **To what extent does the use of the English or the native language in job titles affect the attitudes and intentions of Spanish and Dutch jobseekers differently?**

A few aspects are considered to be important in determining language effects on attitudes and

intentions of jobseekers and were therefore studied to answer the research question. First of all, the attitude towards the job might be influenced by the language used in the job title. Research into reasons for using English in job advertising has shown that English is used to make a job sound more appealing and attractive (Larson, 1990; Van Meurs et al., 2015). Furthermore, Van Meurs (2010) studied the symbolic meaning of foreign languages in advertising and suggested that the use of a foreign language can affect the attitudes to what is advertised. In job advertising, therefore, attitudes towards the job could be affected by the language used in the advertisement. This leads to the following sub-question:

Sub-question 1: To what extent does the use of the English or the native language in job titles lead to a difference in attitudes towards the job between Spanish and Dutch jobseekers?

A second aspect that was studied is the perceived level of challenge of the job. Previous research has shown that English job advertisements can make a job sound more challenging (Larson, 1990) and that this occurs more often for advertisements for higher-level and academic jobs (Van Meurs et al., 2006). Furthermore, Piller (2001) conducted a study into multilingual advertising and observed that English in advertising is associated with the business elite. Korzilius, Van Meurs and Hermans (2006) looked into the use of English language in job advertisements in the Netherlands and factors on which this may depend. They found that the association of English in advertising with the business elite also applied for job advertisements. According to Hyllegard and Lavin (1992) the attainment of complex or challenging jobs is influenced by the level of education of jobseekers. They argue that for many high-level managerial and administrative positions, organizations expect jobseekers to have a postgraduate degree. This could possibly influence jobseekers' expectations of a job, since highly educated jobseekers are expected to fulfill challenging jobs, they might therefore expect jobs at their educational level to be challenging. This could imply that if a company is striving to recruit highly educated employees they may want to attract them with a job that jobseekers perceive as challenging. Therefore, it seems important to know if the language of the job title affects the way the jobseekers perceive the job that is advertised as challenging. This leads to the following sub-question:

Sub-question 2: To what extent does the use of the English or native language in job titles lead to a difference in the perceived challenge of the job between Spanish and Dutch jobseekers?

Several studies have found that English is associated with globalness and that using English in job advertising can help create a global company image (Van Meurs et al., 2015; Krishna &

Ahluwalia, 2008). Li, Qian, Liau and Chu (2008) investigated the effect of the globalness of firms on their hiring processes and found that firms with a high level of globalness usually provide clear job descriptions and career development programs for their employees. Furthermore, Steenkamp et al. (2003) found that consumers associate global companies with a higher quality and a higher prestige. However, although previous research does not focus specifically on job advertising, it could be argued that it might be important for jobseekers to perceive the company they are applying for as global, since global companies are generally associated with a higher quality and a higher prestige. Additionally, Johansson and Ronkainen (2005) investigated how the perceived globalness of a brand can affect consumers' attitudes towards the brand and concluded that perceived globalness can significantly improve a consumer's attitude towards the brand. Although it has not yet been researched if this also accounts for job advertising, it seems likely that companies do not only want to be perceived as global by consumers, but also by jobseekers. From a company's perspective, it is therefore relevant to know if the language of the job title affects the perceived globalness of the company, leading to the following sub-question:

Sub-question 3: To what extent does the use of the English or native language in job titles lead to a difference in the perceived globalness of the company between Spanish and Dutch jobseekers?

The primary goal of job advertising is to persuade readers to apply for the job (Ryan, Gubern, & Rodriguez, 2000) and therefore it is relevant to know how the language used in job titles affects the reader's intention to apply for the job. Van Meurs (2010) suggested that the use of English may affect potential applicant's behavioral intentions with regard to the job that is advertised. So far, no cross-cultural research has been done to compare how the intentions of jobseekers in Spain and the Netherlands are affected differently by the use of English in job titles, leading to the following sub-question:

Sub-question 4: To what extent does the use of the English or native language in job titles lead to a difference in intention to apply for the job between Spanish and Dutch jobseekers?

Since previous research showed that the comprehensibility of the English language might differ for Dutch and Spanish jobseekers (Gerritsen et al., 2007; Eurobarometer Special, 2012), this could possibly influence attitudes towards the English language. It has already been found that Dutch jobseekers do not have a negative attitude towards English loanwords (Van Meurs et al., in press), but this has not yet been investigated for Spanish jobseekers. Differences in attitudes

towards the English language could explain any possible differences in attitudes towards English job titles. The need to investigate possible differences towards the English language resulted in the following sub-question:

Sub-question 5: To what extent do attitudes of Spanish and Dutch jobseekers towards the English language differ?

In sum, this study investigated if there is a difference in how people from Spain and from the Netherlands react to job titles in their own language and in English and provide insight into the effects of the use of foreign languages in job titles on Dutch and Spanish jobseekers. This research aimed to contribute to the literature on the effect of the use of English in job titles and to help recruiters understand the effects of different languages on jobseekers and be able to choose the appropriate language for their job advertisements.

3. Method

3.1 Design

In an experiment with a 2 (*nationality of participants*: Dutch or Spanish) x 2 (*language of job title*: English or native language) between-subject design, Dutch and Spanish participants evaluated either English job titles or equivalent job titles in their native language (Dutch or Spanish).

3.2 Materials

The independent variables in this study were the nationality of the participants (Spanish or Dutch) and the language of the job title (Spanish, Dutch or English). The job titles were selected on the basis of being relevant to jobseekers in the field of business, management and communication. Job titles were first found in English and were translated and back translated to Dutch. This was individually done by a Dutch student and a teacher of the International Business Communication program. The English job title was then translated and back translated to Spanish by two Spanish teachers with a high proficiency in English. To ensure the job titles covered the same meaning in all three languages, the Spanish job titles were also translated and back translated to Dutch by a Spanish bilingual living in the Netherlands. No specific translation problems were encountered during the translation-back translation process.

The job titles used in this study were **Head of Communications** (in Dutch: *Hoofd Communicatie*, in Spanish: *Responsable de Comunicación*), **Human Resource Director** (in Dutch: *Directeur Personeelszaken*, in Spanish: *Director(a) de Recursos Humanos*) and **Strategic Consultant** (in Dutch: *Strategisch Adviseur*, in Spanish: *Consultor Estratégico*). For all three languages, it was checked if the job title was used in this form on websites in the Netherlands and in Spain. The frequencies of the English, Spanish and Dutch job titles can be found in table 1.

Table 1: Frequency of English job titles and Dutch/Spanish equivalent job titles on Dutch (site:nl) and Spanish (site:be) web pages on 12 August 2017

Job title	No. of web pages .nl	No. of web pages .es
Head of Communications	8,170	62,700
Hoofd Communicatie	91,800	-
Responsable de Comunicación	-	2,720,000
Human Resource Director	1,400	1,620

Directeur Personeelszaken	2,240	-
Director(a) de Recursos Humanos	-	120,000
Strategic Consultant	63,000	14,300
Strategisch Adviseur	170,000	-
Consultor Estratégico	-	51,000

3.3 Participants

This study was conducted with 134 participants from Spain and the Netherlands. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 30 ($M = 22.51$, $SD = 2.00$). In total, 37 men (27.6%) and 97 women (72.4%) participated in this study. A criterion for all the participants was that they had an educational background in communication, business or management so the job titles, and the jobs they represented, that were used in this study were in the field of interest of the participants. In total, 19 (14.2%) participants indicated that they were already graduated, while 115 (85.8%) participants were still enrolled in university.

3.3.1 Spanish participants

Participants included 64 Spanish individuals of whom 18 (28.1%) were male and 46 (71.9%) were female. Spanish participants had an age range from 20 to 30 ($M = 22.55$, $SD = 1.69$).

3.3.2 Dutch participants

Participants included 70 Dutch individuals of whom 19 (27.1%) were male and 51 (72.9%) were female. Dutch participants had an age range from 18 to 30 ($M = 22.47$, $SD = 2.26$).

The two respondent groups did not statistically differ from each other on gender ($\chi^2 (1) = 2.80$, $p = .094$) or age ($F (1, 133) = 1.08$, $p = .384$). Table 2 displays the number of participants in each of the four experimental conditions.

Table 2. Distribution of participants over experimental conditions

Nationality of the participants	Language of the job titles	n
Dutch	English	33
Dutch	Dutch	37
Spanish	English	33
Spanish	Spanish	31
Total		134

3.4 Instrumentation

The dependent variables in this study were: attitude towards the job, perceived challenge of the job, perceived globalness of the company and the intention to apply for the job. Furthermore, the attitude towards the English language was researched to see if and how attitude differences influenced the dependent variables.

Attitude towards the job title. The participants evaluated all job titles separately. Participants' opinions were measured with semantic scales relating to comprehensibility (I think the job title is incomprehensible – comprehensible, unclear – clear (based on Van Meurs et al., *in press*) and attractiveness (I think the job title is unattractive – attractive, unpleasant – pleasant (based on Van Meurs et al., *in press*). The reliability of 'attitude towards the job' comprising four items was good for the Dutch participants: $\alpha = .82$ and excellent for the Spanish participants: $\alpha = .91$.

Perceived challenge. Participants' opinions about the level of challenge they perceive that comes along with the job were measured with two 7-point semantic scales (A job as ... seems to me to have few responsibilities – many responsibilities, to be low level – high level (based on Van Meurs et al., 2007)). The reliability of 'perceived challenge of the job' comprising two items was acceptable for the Dutch participants: $\alpha = .76$ and excellent for the Spanish participants: $\alpha = .92$.

Perceived globalness. Participants' opinions about the globalness of the company were measured with three 7-point semantic scales (To me, this is a global company/ To me, this is a local company, I don't think foreign jobseekers can work at this company/ I do think foreign jobseekers can work at this company, This company only operates in Spain/Netherlands/This company operates all over the world (based on Steenkamp, Batra & Alden, 2003)). The reliability of 'perceived globalness' comprising three items was good for the Dutch participants: $\alpha = .85$ and acceptable for the Spanish participants: $\alpha = .71$.

Intention to apply. Participants intention to apply for the job was measured with two 7-point Likert scales ('I would like to work in the position of ... in the future' and 'In the future, I will send an application letter to the company that offers a vacancy as ...')(completely disagree – completely agree) (taken from Van Meurs et al., 2004). The reliability of 'intention to apply' comprising two items was excellent for both the Dutch participants: $\alpha = .92$ and the Spanish participants: $\alpha = .97$.

Attitude towards English. Participants' attitude towards English was measured with four 7-point Likert-scale items: 'We must avoid the use of English words when a Dutch/Spanish equivalent is available'; 'English words pollute the Dutch/Spanish language'; 'English words

enrich the Dutch/Spanish language'; 'English words sound attractive' (totally disagree – totally agree) (taken from Hassall et al., 2008). The reliability of 'attitude towards English' comprising four items was good for the Dutch participants: $\alpha = .82$ and acceptable for the Spanish $\alpha = .73$.

Furthermore, the respondents were given some demographic questions. The respondents were asked about their nationality, their gender, their age, their study programme and their (expected) year of graduation. To rule out any effects of English proficiency, the questionnaires were written in the participants' native language. The questions and scales were originally in English and translated and back translated to Spanish and Dutch. For the Dutch version of the questionnaire, this was done by a Dutch student of the International Business Communication program. For the Spanish questionnaire, the English questions were translated and back translated to Spanish by one Spanish teacher with a high proficiency in English. To ensure the scales and questions of the questionnaire covered the same meaning in all three languages, the Spanish questionnaires were also translated and back translated to Dutch by a Spanish bilingual living in the Netherlands. No specific translation problems were encountered during the translation-back translation process. The Dutch version of the questionnaire can be found in appendix A.

3.5 Procedure

This experiment was conducted by means of an online survey where the participants either evaluated English job titles or job titles in their native language. The study had a cross-national aspect, since two different nationalities were involved, i.e. Dutch and Spanish. Respondents were mainly recruited within the researcher's own network or via social networking sites, i.e. Facebook. All respondents received a digital link to the online questionnaire. Before starting the questionnaire, respondents were thanked for their participation. Participants were randomly assigned to the questionnaire containing either English job titles or job titles in their native language. It took approximately ten minutes to complete the questionnaire. Recruitment of the respondents took place in May and June 2017.

3.6 Statistical treatment

A two-way analysis of variance with *nationality of the participants* and *language of the job title* as independent variables was used to analyze the effects on the dependent variables. Furthermore, a one-way analysis of variance with *nationality of the participants* was used to analyze the effect of nationality on the attitude towards English. Finally, a two-way analysis of variance with *language of the job title* and *attitude towards English* was used to analyze the effects on the dependent variables.

4. Results

For all conducted analyses, the outcomes of participants' evaluations of the three job titles were combined. All presented results show participants' opinions towards three job titles (in English or in the native language) combined, not for an individual job title.

4.1 Attitude towards the job title

A two-way analysis of variance with nationality and language of the job title as factors showed a significant main effect of nationality on attitude towards the job title ($F(1, 130) = 14.91, p < .001, \eta^2 = .103$). Spanish respondents were shown to have a more positive attitude towards the job titles ($M = 5.26, SD = 0.95$) than Dutch respondents ($M = 4.72, SD = 0.77$).

Language of the job title was also found to have a significant main effect on attitude towards the job title ($F(1, 130) = 4.86, p = .029, \eta^2 = .036$). Attitudes towards native job titles were shown to be more positive ($M = 5.11, SD = 1.01$) than attitudes towards English job titles ($M = 4.84, SD = 0.75$).

These significant main effects were qualified by a significant interaction between nationality and language of the job title ($F(1, 130) = 6.64, p = .011, \eta^2 = .049$). The difference in attitude towards the job title caused by the language of the job title was only found among Spanish respondents ($F(1, 63) = 9.56, p = .003, \eta^2 = .049$). Spanish respondents were shown to have a more positive attitude towards Spanish job titles ($M = 5.61, SD = 0.97$) than towards English job titles ($M = 4.93, SD = 0.80$). There was no difference in attitude towards the job titles in the two languages of job titles for the Dutch respondents ($F(1, 69) < 1$). Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of the attitude towards the job title for both the Dutch and Spanish respondents.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations (between brackets) for the attitude towards the job title (1 = low attitude, 7 = high attitude)

	Dutch respondents		Spanish respondents	
	$M (SD)$	n	$M (SD)$	n
Native job title	4.70 (0.83)	37	5.61 (0.97)	31
English job title	4.74 (0.70)	33	4.93 (0.80)	33
Total	4.72 (0.77)	70	5.26 (0.95)	64

4.2 Perceived challenge of the job

A two-way analysis of variance with nationality and language of the job title as factors showed no significant main effect of nationality on the perceived challenge of the job ($F(1, 130) = 1.11, p = .293, \eta^2 = .008$). Language of the job title was not found to have a significant main effect on attitude towards the job either ($F(1, 130) < 1$). The interaction effect between nationality and language of the job title was not found to be statistically significant ($F(1, 130) < 1$). Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations of the perceived challenge of the job for both Dutch and Spanish respondents.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations (between brackets) of the perceived challenge of the job (1 = low perceived challenge, 7 = high perceived challenge)

	Dutch respondents		Spanish respondents	
	$M (SD)$	n	$M (SD)$	n
Native job title	5.81 (0.67)	37	5.95 (0.67)	31
English job title	5.81 (0.50)	33	5.89 (0.57)	33
Total	5.81 (0.59)	70	5.91 (0.62)	64

4.3 Perceived globalness of the company

A two-way analysis of variance with nationality and language of the job title as factors showed a significant main effect of nationality on the perceived globalness of the company ($F(1, 130) = 25.41, p < .001, \eta^2 = .164$). Spanish respondents perceived all job titles as more global ($M = 5.14, SD = 0.75$) than their Dutch counterparts ($M = 4.36, SD = 1.17$).

Language of the job title was also found to have a significant main effect on the perceived globalness of the company ($F(1, 130) = 39.53, p = .001, \eta^2 = .233$). Companies that belonged to English job titles ($M = 5.02, SD = 0.78$) were shown to be perceived as more global than when job titles were written in the native language of the respondents ($M = 4.47, SD = 1.21$).

These significant main effects were qualified by a significant interaction effect between nationality and language of the job title ($F(1, 130) = 11.63, p = .001, \eta^2 = .082$). The difference in perceived globalness of the company between the two languages of the job title was found for both the Dutch participants ($F(1, 69) = 39.76, p < .001, \eta^2 = .209$) as for the Spanish participants ($F(1, 63) = 5.36, p = 0.24, \eta^2 = .080$). Dutch respondents were shown to perceive companies that correspond with an English job title ($M = 5.11, SD = 0.84$) as more global than companies using a job title in their native language ($M = 3.70, SD = 1.01$). Spanish respondents

were also shown to perceive companies using an English job title ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 0.74$) as more global than companies that used a job title in their native language ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 0.70$). Furthermore, a difference in perceived globalness of the company between the two nationalities was found when the native language was used in the job title ($F (1, 67) = 32.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .332$). Spanish respondents perceived companies that used Spanish job titles as more global ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 0.70$) than Dutch respondents perceived companies that used Dutch job titles as global ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.01$). Table 5 shows the means and standard deviations of the perceived globalness of the company for Dutch and Spanish respondents.

Table 5: Means and standard deviations (between brackets) of the perceived globalness of the company (1 = low perceived globalness, 7 = high perceived globalness)

	Dutch respondents	Spanish respondents		
	$M (SD)$	n	$M (SD)$	n
Native job title	3.70 (1.01)	37	4.92 (0.70)	31
English job title	5.11 (0.84)	33	5.34 (0.74)	33
Total	4.36 (1.17)	70	5.14 (0.75)	64

4.4 Intention to apply for the job

A two-way analysis of variance with nationality and language of the job title as factors showed no significant main effect of nationality on the intention to apply for the job ($F (1, 130) < 1$). Language of the job title was not found to have a significant main effect on the intention to apply for the job either ($F (1, 130) < 1$). The interaction effect between nationality and language of the job title was not found to be statistically significant ($F (1, 130) = 1.97$, $p = .163$, $\eta^2 = .015$). Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations of the intention to apply for the job for Dutch and Spanish respondents.

Table 6: Means and standard deviations (between brackets) of the intention to apply for the job (1 = low intention, 7 = high intention)

	Dutch respondents	Spanish respondents		
	$M (SD)$	n	$M (SD)$	n
Native job title	4.11 (0.95)	37	3.97 (1.49)	31
English job title	3.72 (1.16)	33	4.14 (0.96)	33
Total	3.92 (1.07)	70	4.06 (1.24)	64

4.5 Attitude towards English

A one-way analysis of variance with nationality as factor showed no significant effect of nationality on the attitude towards English ($F(1, 133) = 1.91, p = .169, \eta^2 = .014$). The Dutch and Spanish respondents did not significantly differ from each other in their attitude towards the English language. Table 7 shows the means and standard deviations of the attitude towards English of the Dutch and Spanish respondents.

Table 7: Means and standard deviations (between brackets) of the attitude towards English (1 = low attitude, 7 = high attitude)

	Dutch respondents ($n = 70$)	Spanish respondents ($n = 64$)
	$M (SD)$	$M (SD)$
Attitude towards English	5.13 (1.25)	5.41 (1.06)

To gain additional insights into the role of the attitude towards English of the participants on the dependent variables, *attitude towards English* was recoded into a two-level variable (high-low). The mean attitude towards English for all participants was calculated ($M = 5.26, SD = 1.17$) and all participants above this mean average were classified as having a relatively positive attitude towards English, while all participants below this mean average were classified as having a relatively negative attitude towards English. Nationality was not taken into account in the following analyses. The means and standard deviations of the attitude towards the job title, the perceived challenge of the job, the perceived globalness of the company and the intention to apply for the job can be found in table 8.

Table 8: Means and standard deviations (between brackets) of the attitude towards the job title, perceived challenge, perceived globalness and intention to apply (1 = low, 7 = high)

Dependent variables	Positive attitude participants		Negative attitude participants	
	English job title ($n = 26$)	Native job title ($n = 45$)	English job title ($n = 40$)	Native job title ($n = 23$)
	$M (SD)$	$M (SD)$	$M (SD)$	$M (SD)$
Attitude towards job title	4.77 (0.84)	5.24 (1.02)	4.88 (0.69)	4.85 (0.94)
Perceived challenge	5.88 (0.66)	6.02 (0.69)	5.83 (0.44)	5.59 (0.54)
Perceived globalness	5.59 (0.75)	4.33 (1.16)	4.99 (0.75)	4.11 (0.89)
Intention to apply	4.10 (1.22)	3.90 (1.30)	3.82 (0.98)	4.34 (1.00)

4.5.1 Effect of attitude towards English on attitude towards the job title

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the job title and the attitude towards English as factors showed no significant main effect of language of the job title on attitude towards the job ($F(1, 130) = 1.98, p = .161, \eta^2 = .015$). There was no significant main effect of the attitude towards English on the attitude towards the job either ($F(1, 130) < 1$). The interaction effect of language of the job title and the attitude towards English was not statistically significant ($F(1, 130) = 2.43, p = .121, \eta^2 = .018$).

4.5.2 Effect of attitude towards English on the perceived challenge of the job

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the job title and the towards English as factors showed no significant main effect of language of the job title on the perceived challenge of the job ($F(1, 130) < 1$). There was a significant main effect of the attitude towards English on the perceived challenge of the job ($F(1, 130) = 4.96, p = .028, \eta^2 = .037$). Respondents with a relatively positive attitude towards English perceived the jobs belonging to the job titles as more challenging ($M = 5.97, SD = 0.69$) than respondents with a relatively negative attitude towards English ($M = 5.74, SD = 0.49$). The interaction effect of language of the job title and the attitude towards English was not statistically significant ($F(1, 130) = 3.12, p = .080, \eta^2 = .023$).

4.5.3 Effect of attitude towards English on the perceived globalness of the company

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the job title and the attitude towards English as factors showed a significant main effect of language of the job title on the perceived globalness of the company ($F(1, 130) = 40.94, p < .001, \eta^2 = .293$). There was also a significant main effect of the attitude towards English on the perceived globalness of the company ($F(1, 130) = 5.90, p = .017, \eta^2 = .043$). These significant main effects were qualified by a significant interaction effect between language of the job title and the attitude towards English ($F(1, 130) = 1.25, p < .001, \eta^2 = .010$).

Companies that belonged to English jobs title were perceived as more global ($M = 5.22, SD = 0.80$) than companies that advertised their jobs with a job title in the participants' native language ($M = 4.26, SD = 1.07$). Respondents with a relatively positive attitude towards English perceived the companies as more global ($M = 4.79, SD = 1.19$) than respondents with a relatively negative attitude towards English ($M = 4.67, SD = 0.90$). The difference in the perceived globalness of the company caused by the attitude towards English was only found when English job titles are used ($F(1, 130) = 9.85, p = .003, \eta^2 = .133$). Respondents with a relatively positive attitude towards English perceived companies that use an English job title as more global ($M = 5.59, SD = 0.75$) than respondents with a relatively negative attitude towards

the English language ($M = 4.99$, $SD = 0.75$). There was no significant difference in perceived globalness of the company for the job titles in the participants' native language ($F(1, 130) < 1$).

4.5.4 Effect of attitude towards English on the intention to apply for the job

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the job title and the attitude towards English as factors showed no significant main effect of language of the job title on the intention to apply for the job ($F(1, 130) < 1$). There was no significant main effect of the attitude towards English on the intention to apply for the job either ($F(1, 130) < 1$). The interaction effect of language of the job title and the attitude towards English was not statistically significant ($F(1, 130) = 3.04$, $p = .084$, $\eta^2 = .023$).

5. Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to determine to what extent the use of the English or the native language in job titles affects the attitudes and intentions of Spanish and Dutch jobseekers differently. The findings of this study show that the attitudes and intentions of Spanish and Dutch jobseekers differ on some aspects, which will be illustrated in the following paragraphs.

First of all, differences were found for the Spanish and Dutch jobseekers in their attitude towards the job titles. Regardless of the language used, Spanish participants had more positive attitudes towards the job titles than Dutch participants. Furthermore, Spanish participants had more positive attitudes towards Spanish job titles than towards English job titles, while the Dutch participants did not show differences in attitudes for job titles in Dutch or in English. These findings provide an answer to sub-question 1, which aimed to determine to what extent the use of the English or the native language in job titles leads to differences in attitude towards the job title between Spanish and Dutch participants. It can be concluded that Spanish and Dutch participants differ in their attitude towards the job title, since it was found that only Spanish participants showed relatively more positive attitudes towards job titles in their native language.

Sub-question 2 aimed to determine the extent to which the use of English or the native language in job titles would lead to a difference in the perceived challenge of the job between Dutch and Spanish jobseekers. It can be concluded that there were no differences between Dutch and Spanish participants regarding how challenging they perceived the job after reading the job title in their native language or in English.

Sub-question 3 aimed to determine to what extent the use of English or the native language in job titles leads to differences in the perceived globalness of the company between Spanish and Dutch participants. Nationality was found to be a factor affecting participants' perceived globalness of the company, as was found that Spanish participants perceived both native and English job titles as more global than Dutch participants. However, both Spanish and Dutch participants perceived English job titles as more global than job titles in their native language. It can be concluded that the Spanish and Dutch participants differed in the overall evaluation of the job titles, but that both nationalities perceived English job titles, and their corresponding companies, to be more global than job titles in their native language.

Sub-question 4 aimed to determine the extent to which the use of English or the native language in job titles leads to differences in the intention to apply for the job. No differences were found for the Spanish and Dutch participants in their intention to apply for the job. It can

be concluded that the Spanish and Dutch participants did not differ in their intention to apply for jobs with the job title in their native language, nor for jobs with an English job title.

Sub-question 5 served to determine differences in the attitude towards English for the Spanish and Dutch participants. It can be concluded that Spanish and Dutch participants did not differ in their attitude towards the English language. To gain more insight into the role of attitude to English in general, that is, regardless of nationality, in the effect of language choice on jobseekers' response, additional analyses were run. It can be concluded that there was no effect of the attitude towards English of the participants on their attitude towards the job title. This indicates that there were no differences in attitude towards the job title between participants with a relatively positive attitude towards English and participants with a relatively negative attitude towards English. The attitude towards English of the participants did also not affect participants' intention to apply for the job. However, the attitude towards English of the participants did affect the perceived challenge of the job, since respondents with a relatively positive attitude towards English were found to perceive the job titles overall as more challenging than respondents with a relatively negative attitude towards English. Furthermore, the attitude towards English of the participants also had an effect on the perceived globalness of the jobs. Respondents with a relatively positive attitude towards English perceived English job titles as more global than respondents with a relatively negative attitude towards English, showing how the attitude towards English affects the perceived globalness of the company. It can be concluded that participants' attitude towards English, regardless of their nationality, affected their perceived challenge of the job and their perceived globalness of the company, but did not affect their attitude towards the job title or their intention to apply for the job.

6. Discussion

This paper contributes to existing cross-cultural research on the effect of language choice in job advertising. The analyses revealed that Spanish and Dutch jobseekers were affected differently by the language choice in the job titles in their attitudes towards the job title and their perceived globalness of the company. Other aspects, such as the intention to apply for the job and the perceived challenge of the job were not affected differently for Spanish and Dutch jobseekers by the language used in the job title. The results of the present study are not completely in line with previous research. Lin and Wang (2016) found that, in product advertising, English slogans were evaluated more positively than slogans in which the local language was used. The results in the present study indicate that this is not necessarily true for job advertising. Although no differences were found between job titles in English or in the participant's native language for Dutch participants, Spanish participants had a more positive attitude towards job titles in their native language. This result is surprising, since the Spanish participants were shown to have relatively positive attitudes towards the English language. Renkema et al. (2001) found that Dutch participants found ads with English words and phrases to be less natural than ads using the local language. It could be possible that this also accounts for Spanish jobseekers, which might explain why participants had more positive attitudes towards the Spanish job titles. That Spanish job titles possibly feel more natural to Spanish jobseekers can be supported by the frequency of the English and Spanish job titles on Spanish websites, since the job titles that were used in this study were more commonly used on Spanish websites in the Spanish form than in the English form. Furthermore, Van Meurs (2010) suggested that the use of a foreign language can affect the attitudes to what is advertised, and although this is supported for the Spanish participants, this is not supported for the Dutch participants in the present study. This can possibly be explained by previous research into the effect of language choice in job advertising, which suggested that reactions to English versus Dutch job titles are highly dependent on the individual job title (Van Meurs et al., 2007; Van Meurs et al., in press). Since the present study does not look at differences for individual job titles, it is possible that differences exist at the level of the individual job title, but this does not show when participants' evaluations of the job titles were combined.

A second important aspect that was studied was the perceived level of challenge of the job. Neither the Spanish nor the Dutch participants perceived the job as more challenging when presented with job titles in English (versus in their native language), which contradicts previous

literature that suggested that using English job titles can make a job sound more challenging (Larson, 1990). These contradicting results may be explained by the educational level of the participants of the current study. According to Van Meurs et al. (2006), English is used more often in advertisements for higher-level and academic jobs. Since the participants in the current study are all highly educated university students, it could be possible that they are more frequently confronted with English job titles than lower educated jobseekers, and are therefore less affected by the language used in the job title.

The results of the present study showed that both Spanish and Dutch participants perceive companies that correspond with English job titles as more global than when the job titles used were written in their native language. This finding confirms previous research that suggested that using English in job advertising can help create a global company image (Van Meurs et al., 2015). Furthermore, Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008) found that companies often prefer the use of English over the local language in product advertising, because it was found that consumers strongly associate the English language with globalness. The results of the present study confirm that this does not only account for consumers, but also for jobseekers. It was found that jobseekers, like consumers, associate English job titles with a global company. Since previous research by Steenkamp et al. (2003) found that global companies are associated with high quality and high prestige, the results of the present study imply that companies that want to create a global image might benefit from using English job titles. Furthermore, Van Meurs et al. (2006) found that English was used to a greater extent in ads from multinational organizations than from local companies, which could explain why all participants in the present study associated English job titles with globalness and international operating companies. However, the Spanish and Dutch participants differed on one aspect of globalness, namely that the Spanish participants perceived both native and English job titles as more global than the Dutch participants. It is a surprising result that the Spanish participants perceived companies that use English job titles as more global than the Dutch participants, since previous research showed that English in job advertising more often occurs in Spain than in the Netherlands (Van Meurs et al., 2006; Van Hooft, 2015). A possible explanation for this result could be that, since the Spanish population showed to have a lower comprehensibility of the English language than people in the Netherlands (Gerritsen et al., 2007; Eurobarometer Special, 2012), Spanish participants are therefore less familiar with the English language. Since people in the Netherlands showed to have a relatively high comprehensibility of the English language, it might be possible that using the English language feels more natural to them. This line of reasoning is supported by Admiraal, Westhoff and De Bot (2006) who suggested that having

foreign language skills are very important in the Netherlands, since English plays a big role in their international business communication. The current study also showed that Spanish participants perceived companies that used job titles in their native language as more global than that Dutch participants perceived companies that correspond to Dutch job titles as global. This could possibly be explained by the nature of the language itself, since Spanish is the official language in twenty-one countries, while Dutch is only the official language in three countries (Pool, 1991). This implies that people from twenty-one different countries can apply for a job with a Spanish job title, which could cause Spanish participants' to perceive companies that use Spanish job titles as more global than Dutch participants perceived companies that used Dutch job titles as global.

Previous research on the effect of the language used in job advertising on the intention to apply showed that for Dutch jobseekers, their intention to apply was not influenced by the language of the job title. This is supported by the results of the present study, which showed that the language of the job title did not affect the intention to apply for the job for both the Spanish and the Dutch participants. However, Dutch respondents showed a little higher intention to apply for jobs with a job title in Dutch, while Spanish respondents had a little higher intention to apply for jobs with an English job title. This finding supports previous research of Van Meurs et al. (2007) where it was found that Dutch jobseekers evaluated jobs English titles worse than job titles in their native language.

Although previous research showed reasons to assume that attitudes towards English might differ between Spanish and Dutch jobseekers, this is not the case in the current study, since both respondent groups had relatively positive attitudes towards the English language. A possible explanation for the lack of difference in language attitudes may be the similar personal characteristics the two groups shared. Both respondents groups had similar educational backgrounds and were all young, highly educated jobseekers. These results correspond with previous research, since Van Meurs et al. (in press) already showed that Dutch jobseekers have relatively positive attitudes towards the English language. Support for the positive attitude towards English among the Spanish respondents can be found in a study by Huguet, Lapresta and Madariaga (2008) who found that families with high professional and educational status are generally more positive towards the English language. Since all Spanish respondents in the present study are highly educated, this might explain their positive attitude towards English.

6.1 Limitations and suggestions for future research

The present study has a number of shortcomings which must be considered in future research.

First of all, this study did not look at attitudes and intentions towards the job titles used for the questionnaire separately. Conclusions were drawn about all three English job titles together and all three job titles in the respondents' native language together. Therefore it was impossible to distinguish any differences caused by the nature of the job title. It could be possible that a specific job title did not appeal to a respondent which lead to lower attitudes and intentions. In future cross-cultural research this should be taken into account to be able to draw more concrete conclusions. Furthermore, this study focused on young and highly educated jobseekers only, without considering the rest of the population in Spain and in the Netherlands. It might be possible that differences exist between jobseekers from different age groups and from different educational levels. Further research taking those demographic characteristics into account is therefore highly recommended. Another factor that might influence the effect of English in job titles is participants' knowledge of the English language. This study did not include questions to measure respondents' level of English. Although it could be argued that highly educated people should have an adequate knowledge of English, without testing respondents' actual level, it is hard to draw any conclusions about the influence of this factor. Future research should include questions to measure the respondent's level of English to be able to see if this causes any differences in attitudes and intentions. Another interesting field of further research could be the relationship between the perceived globalness of the company and jobseekers' attitudes towards the job in general. It is suggested that jobseekers' might associate globalness with high prestige and high quality, but research has only confirmed this for consumers attitudes towards brands, not for job advertisement. Although the present study shows that jobseekers perceived companies that use English job titles as more global, it has not yet been researched if and how this affects their attitudes towards the job or towards the company in general.

6.2 Practical implications

The current study aimed at contributing to existing cross-cultural research on the effect of language choice in job advertising. Since the goal of job advertising is recruiting new employees, the results of this study also have practical implications for recruiters. First of all, if a company wants to create a global company image, the results of the present study show that using English job titles instead of the native language might contribute to a higher perceived globalness of the company, since both Spanish and Dutch jobseekers were shown to associate English job titles with a global company. Second of all, when recruiting Spanish jobseekers, it should be taken into account that Spanish participants in the present study showed more positive attitudes towards Spanish job titles than towards English job titles. The present study showed

that the job titles used were more often found in the Spanish form than in the English form on Spanish websites. This means that if recruiters consider it important that Spanish jobseekers have a positive attitude towards the job title, they might want to choose Spanish job titles over English job titles. Last of all, it was suggested that companies that want to attract highly educated employees, may want to emphasize the challenge of a specific job. The results of the present study show that the use of English job titles does not influence jobseekers' perceived challenge of the job, meaning that this is not a factor recruiters necessarily have to consider in their job advertisements. This also accounts for the intention to apply for the job, since the results of the present study showed that jobseekers' were not affected differently by the language used in the job title.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire (in Dutch)

Beste deelnemer,

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan mijn afstudeeronderzoek. Voor dit onderzoek ben ik op zoek naar studenten en young professionals met een achtergrond in communicatie, marketing, management, bedrijfskunde of een soortgelijke studie.

Mijn naam is Shirley Tielen en ik ben studente binnen de Masteropleiding International Business Communications aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen.

In dit experiment krijgt u 3 vacature titels te zien, waarna er een aantal vragen over gesteld zullen worden. Ik ben benieuwd naar uw mening, dus uw antwoord kan niet fout zijn.

Het onderzoek duurt ongeveer 5 tot 10 minuten. Uw antwoorden worden anoniem verwerkt en uitsluitend voor dit onderzoek gebruikt.

Als u vragen heeft, kunt u contact met mij opnemen via shirley.tielen@student.ru.nl

Vacature titel 1: Head of Communications

Questions for attitude towards the job title

Ik vind deze vacature titel..

Onbegrijpelijk o o o o o o Begrijpelijk

Onduidelijk o o o o o o Duidelijk

Onaantrekkelijk o o o o o o Aantrekkelijk

Onaangenaam o o o o o o Aangenaam

Questions for perceived challenge of the job

Naar mijn mening, heeft een functie als 'Head of Communications':

Weinig verantwoordelijkheden o o o o o o Veel verantwoordelijkheden

Naar mijn mening, is een functie als 'Head of Communications':

Van een laag niveau o o o o o o Van een hoog niveau

Questions for perceived globalness of the company

Ik denk dat het bedrijf dat deze baan aanbiedt

Een wereldwijd bedrijf is o o o o o o Een lokaal bedrijf is

Alleen in Nederland actief is o o o o o o Wereldwijd actief is

Ik denk NIET dat buitenlandse werkzoekenden bij het bedrijf dat deze baan aanbiedt kunnen werken o o o o o o Ik denk WEL dat buitenlandse werkzoekenden bij het bedrijf dat deze baan aanbiedt kunnen werken

Questions for intention to apply for the job

In de toekomst zou ik graag willen werken in de positie van Head of Communications

Helemaal niet mee eens o o o o o o Helemaal mee eens

In de toekomst zal ik een sollicitatiebrief sturen naar het bedrijf dat een vacature aanbiedt voor Head of Communications

Helemaal niet mee eens o o o o o o Helemaal mee eens

Questions for attitude towards English

We moeten het gebruik van Engelse woorden vermijden wanneer een soortgelijk Nederlands woord beschikbaar is

Helemaal niet mee eens o o o o o o Helemaal mee eens

Engelse woorden vervuilen de Nederlandse taal

Helemaal niet mee eens o o o o o o Helemaal mee eens

Engelse woorden verrijken de Nederlandse taal

Helemaal niet mee eens o o o o o o Helemaal mee eens

Engelse woorden klinken aantrekkelijk

Helemaal niet mee eens o o o o o o Helemaal mee eens

Demographic questions

Wat is uw nationaliteit? _____

Wat is uw geslacht?

- Man
- Vrouw

Wat is uw leeftijd? _____

Graag invullen wat van toepassing is:

- Ik ben student
- Ik ben afgestudeerd

Wat studeert u? _____

In welk jaar verwacht u af te studeren? _____

Wat heeft u gestudeerd? _____

In welk jaar bent u afgestudeerd? _____