

Radboud University



Faculty of Arts
Communication and Information Studies
International Business Communication

Bachelor Thesis

**The Effect of Slogan Translatability in
Slogans for Dutch Consumers**

Marco Furtado Andrade
4.658 words

Abstract

Companies operating across different markets frequently use English as a language in their international advertising slogans. Research on foreign slogans has mainly focused on differences between English or local language slogans in terms of the perception consumers have of slogan difficulty and attitude towards product or brand. This study investigated the effect of slogan translatability on consumers' attitudes towards the slogan and whether consumers use slogan translatability as a criterion to assess slogan difficulty. In a between-subjects design, 105 Dutch respondents evaluated four English slogans that were pretested as translatable or non-translatable. They were prompted to translate a specific word that manipulated slogan translatability (i.e. cognate or non-cognate words) and indicate their attitudes towards the slogan. Results showed slogan translatability had no effect in attitudes towards the slogan but showed the translation of a single word affects consumers' evaluations of slogan difficulty. This provides evidence that, alongside comprehension, the translatability of foreign slogans' content is used to evaluate slogan difficulty.

Keywords: attitudes; cognate and non-cognate pairs; English; foreign slogans; international advertising; translatability.

English in International Advertising

Globalisation is a well-documented phenomenon, which has shaped modern society in many aspects such as how individuals access information, travel or shop but also in how businesses operate and communicate (Levitt, 1983). In fact, by definition, the phenomenon is partially attributed to “the influence of large multinational companies” (*Globalisation*, n.d.). Pushed towards internationalisation, businesses had to adapt their key identity aspects: name, logo and slogan (Kohli & Suri, 2002). Despite this, and as a way to ensure consistent brand identity throughout time, brands appear to change their slogans more frequently than their logo or name (Kohli et al., 2007). As a matter of fact, brands' names and logos constitute the most prominent identity elements of a business but slogans allow a more versatile and diversified communication: they can be easily adapted to different products or markets and “provide a unique and significant contribution to a brand's identity” (Kohli et al., 2007, p. 416). Overall, as globalisation connected businesses to consumers worldwide, communication had to be adjusted: previously aimed at single, isolated markets, brands' elements of communication such as slogans began to be targeted at consumers globally.

For the most part, brands use the same name and logo across markets, but such approach is typically restricted to these brand elements as markets' cultural, economic and social differences entail the need for other elements to be locally adapted (Grigorescu & Zaif, 2017). While a brand name conveys its distinctive identity and a logo visually represents such identity, slogans, on the other hand, make use of language in a more complex manner. Owing to this, using the same slogan in various markets could elicit incoherent interpretations and thus weaken the slogan, which would be harmful to consumers' evaluation of the brand itself (Dahlén & Rosengren, 2005). As one might expect, the fact that international markets differ in aspects such as language, has led to a considerable amount of literature addressing the impacts of such aspects on international marketing (e.g. Larsen et al., 2015; Swift, 1991; van Raaij, 1997; van Zyl, 2003).

Naturally, research has aided businesses to face the challenges that new international marketing strategies pose, particularly concerning which language to adopt for advertising slogans: either a standard language or the local one. Employing a single language in advertising might have initially raised doubts but, with the fast growth of business operations in other countries, English was quickly positioned as a

preferred language (Christiansen, 2015; Crystal, 2003). It could be argued that languages other than English may have taken such a role but as Piller (2003) pointed out, English does not evoke conceptual associations to a specific country whereas e.g. French or Italian are recognised as pertaining to their specific country of origin. To be more precise, with operations and communications materialising across sui generis countries and cultures, English seems to be a language that does not convey cultural or ethnical stereotypes and could prevent possible conflicts. For these reasons, the use of English language in global advertising strategies for non-native English countries appears to be preferred in several countries (see Raedts et al., 2015).

Standardisation, Adaptation and Bilingualism

Given that English has been shown to evoke concepts such as globalisation or modernity and is often used for such symbolism, one could claim that using English as a standardised language framework would add to more effective slogans and to a better international advertising performance (Hornikx & van Meurs, 2020; Kelly-Holmes, 2005; Piller, 2003). However, this is not always the case and the choice of foreign language also plays a role in the effectiveness of advertising (Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2017; Shoham, 1996). Besides, advertisers should not assume consumers are generally bilingual; this misconception could lead to the development of bilingual advertising that would not be processed by consumers due to their lack of proficiency in the language conveyed. Therefore, the combination of native and foreign languages suggested by Lin et al. (2016) could be a more effective and balanced approach. Ultimately, even though English might be the primary language choice for international advertising messages such as slogans, the effectiveness of its use appears to be erratic.

Although the debate on language standardisation versus adaptation in advertising is not new, the criticism of Ryans et al. (2003) concerning the lack of a consensual theoretical framework, seems to persist. For this reason, researchers often turn to broader theories such as the Global Marketing Strategy (GMS) proposed by Zou and Cavusgil (2002): a strategy conceptualisation accommodating both the standardisation and integration perspectives with a third, configuration-coordination perspective. On the other hand, slogans entirely or partially in a foreign language call for linguistic approaches that go beyond marketing theories. Owing to this, bilingualism theories such as the Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM)(Kroll & Stewart,

1994) provide fruitful insights on the interactions and effects of foreign language slogans on non-native consumers (see Basnight-Brown, 2014 for an overview).

Overall, the RHM links the proficiency increase in a second language (L2) to an increase in translation speed from L2 to native language (L1). Accordingly, it could be assumed that, when compared to a non-proficient L2 English speaker, a proficient L2 English speaker would consider an English slogan to be easy, invest minimal effort processing that slogan and, ultimately, demonstrate better attitudes towards that slogan. Nevertheless, this link between increase in L2 proficiency and increase in translation speed from L2 to L1 “has been reported only for non-cognate translation pairs” (Basnight-Brown, 2014, p. 88), i.e. word pairs that do not have the same linguistic derivation across languages. Owing to this and considering RHM, it appears that further investigating the translatability of foreign slogans accounting for cognates and non-cognates could shed light on how consumers assess L2 slogans and on how such assessment affects consumers’ attitudes towards the slogan.

The Role of Translatability

Drawing from the RHM, the translation from L2 to L1 is part of the processing of L2 utterances and whenever L2 utterances increase in difficulty, the ability to translate L2 concepts to L1 decreases. Therefore, it could be hypothesised that such inverse proportionality could lead to concepts in L2 that are not understood due to the receiver’s difficulty to translate them to L1. This would render the decoding of the L2 message unattainable with the message receiver getting frustrated and abandoning the process (cf. Domzal et al., 1995). In other words, it is likely that a non-proficient L2 consumer, confronted with a failed translation of a foreign slogan, manifests more negative attitudes towards such slogan as a response to the translation difficulty. However, the RHM further suggests the translation to L1 may not be accessed if the message receiver is highly proficient and fluent in L2. As a result, consumers may process and evaluate L2 messages differently depending on their proficiency in the language and whether translation to L1 is accessed or not.

Considering the Netherlands ranks as the country with highest non-native English proficiency in the world, it seems worthwhile to investigate Dutch consumers’ responses to English slogans under the RHM (Education First, 2019). In fact, a substantial amount of literature has focused on Dutch consumers’ responses to slogans either in English or in other foreign languages (e.g. Gerritsen et al., 2000; Hendriks et

al., 2017; Hornikx & Starren, 2006; Hornikx et al., 2010; Hornikx et al., 2013). Findings appear to be consistent: differences in the appreciation of slogans and attitudes towards the slogans or advertisements can generally be attributed to comprehension but more specifically to translation and difficulty; whenever the content of English advertising messages was evaluated as easy or translated more accurately, Dutch consumers' attitudes were more positive. Interestingly enough, translatability has been used as an instrument to assess the difficulty of a slogan but it remains virtually unstudied to what extent consumers themselves use translatability for such difficulty assessment and whether it affects consumers' attitudes towards the slogan.

In the end, accounting for translatability based on cognate and non-cognate pairs aims to complement previous literature by revealing how non-native English consumers use slogan translatability as a criterion to evaluate the difficulty of English slogans. Assuming the comprehension of a foreign slogan is affected by an individuals' ability to translate it to L1, such a slogan could be deemed difficult whenever the translation process fails or takes too long to be accomplished and is abandoned. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the correlation between the translatability of slogans containing English-Dutch cognate and non-cognate words and the evaluation of slogans' difficulty by aiming to answer the question:

RQ1: What is the effect of slogan translatability on consumers' evaluations of slogan difficulty?

To highlight the linguistic content of slogans, they will not display any product or image. Although it may seem uncommon – considering slogans are usually displayed alongside e.g. products and/or other branded images – this approach is expected to direct consumers' focus to the text stimuli, forcing them to allocate more attention to the translation task. Such attention should facilitate consumers' ability to identify whether a L1 cognate exists or is absent. Considering Hornikx and Starren (2006) and Hornikx et al. (2010) reported that consumers tend to translate a slogan more accurately when it is perceived as easy, English slogans containing a word without Dutch cognate are expected to be judged more difficult. Hence the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Non-translatable English slogans will be perceived as more difficult than translatable slogans.

Furthermore, if more effort to process a message generally leads to less positive attitudes towards that message (cf. Eagly, 1974), it appears relevant to additionally investigate differences in attitudes towards foreign English slogans based on slogan translatability. This is expressed in a second research question:

RQ2: *What is the effect of slogan translatability on consumers' attitude towards the slogan?*

Given that slogan translatability is expected to influence slogan difficulty and that slogan difficulty has been shown to affect consumers' attitudes (Hendriks et al., 2017; Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2017), it is expected that consumers display contrasting attitudes towards the slogans depending on how translatable their content is. This possibility is articulated in a second hypothesis:

H2: *Non-translatable English slogans will evoke more negative attitudes towards the slogan than translatable slogans.*

In brief, this study sets out to examine the role translatability into L1 plays regarding: 1) how consumers perceive the difficulty of foreign slogans and 2) consumers' attitudes towards foreign slogans. It offers critical insights for the development of English slogans aimed at non-native English-speaking countries by investigating how slogan translatability can aid the marketing objective of slogans to trigger positive attitudes in consumers. A deeper understanding of how translation from L2 to L1 influences the perceptions of foreign language slogans is expected to assist international businesses in creating better standardised or code-switched marketing messages that evoke better attitudes in non-native consumers targeted by global advertising.

Method

Material

Slogans were created through an online slogan maker (shopify.com/tools/slogan-maker) and each slogan contained one specific English word with or without Dutch cognate. Cognate and non-cognate words were chosen by the researcher with two Dutch native researchers. Fictional brand logos were created using an online tool (hatchful.shopify.com) and included in the slogan; other than that, slogans did not display any brand names, products or other cues, thus creating realistic advertising

stimulus while avoiding possible confounds by e.g. brand recall or familiarity (cf. Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017).

Based on a pretest, a total of eight English slogans and eight fictional brand logos were selected for the final questionnaire: four translatable slogans and four non-translatable slogans (see Table 1; see Appendix A). A total of 31 respondents (58% female) with ages ranging from 18 to 36 years old ($M = 22.48$, $SD = 3.51$) and education from high school to master’s degree were randomly assigned to a group with different combinations of eight slogans containing English words with or without Dutch cognates. Respondents had to answer questions about the slogan and its content: first, respondents indicated whether they recognised the fictional logos; afterwards, they were prompted to translate to Dutch a specific word – with or without Dutch cognate – and to evaluate translation difficulty on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = easy, 7 = difficult).

Table 1

Pretested slogans selected for main questionnaire

Slogan group	Slogan number	Slogan
Translatable	1	Get crazy and get ready.
	2	There is nothing like luck.
	3	It’s just fantastic.
	4	An impressive experience.
Non-Translatable	1	Less gobbledygook, more action.
	2	Get giddy and get ready.
	3	For an irenic mind.
	4	For prodigious people.

Pretested slogans were selected for the main questionnaire based on two criteria: 1) translation difficulty and 2) percentage of correct/incorrect translations. Translation difficulty was measured with the respective scale and correct transcriptions were pre-defined by two Dutch-native researchers. Translatable slogans were slogans with

lowest translation difficulty scores and highest correct translation percentages; non-translatable slogans were the ones with highest translation difficulty scores and highest percentage of respondents that could not translate or translated incorrectly (see Table 2).

Table 2

Means and standard deviations of translation difficulty and percentages of translation correction for pretested slogans used in main questionnaire (1 = easy, 7 = difficult)

Slogan group	Slogan number	Translation difficulty <i>M(SD)</i>	Percent correct translations	Percent incorrect translations	Percent could not translate
Translatable	1	2.08(1.61)	100	0	0
	2	1.56(0.92)	100	0	0
	3	1.44(1.25)	100	0	0
	4	2.08(1.50)	92.3	7.7	0
Non- -Translatable	1	6.31(1.18)	38.5	15.3	46.2
	2	5.78(1.26)	0	33.3	66.7
	3	6.44(1.10)	5.6	16.6	77.8
	4	6.50(1.47)	0	27.8	72.2

Instruments

The concept of slogan translatability was based on a single word per slogan that either had or did not have a Dutch cognate. Coded as translatable or non-translatable, these words underwent a mixed-assessment by two Dutch-native researchers who also pre-selected two possible correct Dutch transcriptions for each word.

Slogan difficulty was measured with three 7-point semantic differentials anchored by the statement “I think this slogan is” and the scales: “easy–difficult”;

“incomprehensible–comprehensible”; “complicated–simple” ($\alpha = .92$) (based on Maes et al., 1996).

Attitude towards the slogan was measured with five 7-point semantic differentials following the statement “I think this slogan is” with the scales: “not nice–nice”; “engaging–boring”; “not original–original”; “not attractive–attractive”; “interesting–not interesting” ($\alpha = .81$) (adapted from Hornikx & Hof, 2008).

English proficiency of respondents was assessed by means of a LexTALE test – Lexical Test for Advanced Learners of English: a standardised proficiency test which consists of a visual lexical decision task comprising 60 trials (Lemhofer & Broersma, 2012; www.lextale.com).

Design

The research had a between-subjects design with native Dutch respondents exposed to either English slogans only containing words with Dutch cognates (translatable) or to English slogans containing one word without Dutch cognate (non-translatable). Respondents randomly assessed four slogans: four translatable slogans or four non-translatable slogans (based on Hendriks et al., 2017).

Respondents

A total of 105 Dutch respondents assessed the difficulty and translatability of English slogans. Respondents were mostly female (67%) with ages ranging from 18 to 75 years old ($M = 25.08$, $SD = 10.49$) and education from primary school to master’s degree with most of the respondents (93%) having completed secondary or higher education. Concerning English proficiency, respondents’ scores on LexTALE test showed that the majority (91%) had a B2 or higher CEFR English level (cf. Lemhofer & Broersma, 2012).

Two chi-square tests showed no differences between translatable and non-translatable slogan groups in terms of gender ($\chi^2 (1) = 0.08$, $p = .782$) or education ($\chi^2 (4) = 5.24$, $p = .264$); two independent samples t-tests showed no differences between groups in terms of age ($t (101.05) = 0.28$, $p = .781$) or English proficiency ($t (98.23) = 0.85$, $p = .399$).

Procedure

An online platform was used to conduct the pretest and questionnaire (Qualtrics). Respondents were recruited through a link that was published on social media and sent by the researcher directly to family, friends, and colleagues.

The link directed potential respondents to a brief introductory statement about the research. It stated the study required Dutch respondents only and that it was about English slogans which would be shown and should be carefully read. After participation and data collection consent was given respondents were randomly assigned to one group containing either translatable or non-translatable slogans.

In both groups, respondents had to: 1) read the slogans; 2) provide the translation of the cognate or non-cognate word and 3) assess the difficulty of such translation. Afterwards, respondents had to answer questions in randomised order about slogan difficulty and attitudes towards the slogan. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents provided demographic data – age, gender, education, and nationality – and indicated whether they used any translation tools during the questionnaire. The questionnaire took approximately 11 minutes to complete ($M = 12.17$, $SD = 9.11$).

Statistical Processing

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to assess interactions between the independent variable – slogan translatability – and the dependent variables – slogan difficulty and attitude towards the slogan.

Results

Manipulation Check

An independent samples t-test showed significant differences between translatable and non-translatable slogans regarding translation difficulty ($t(98.19) = 19$, $p < .001$). Respondents who assessed translatable slogans evaluated them as easy to translate ($M = 2$, $SD = 0.92$) and respondents who assessed non-translatable slogans deemed the slogans difficult to translate ($M = 5.59$, $SD = 1.01$) (see Table 3).

Slogan Difficulty

An independent samples t-test showed significant differences between translatable and non-translatable slogans in terms of slogan difficulty ($t(83.55) = 13.70$, $p < .001$).

Respondents that assessed translatable slogans evaluated them as easy ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.76$) whereas respondents who assessed non-translatable slogans evaluated them as difficult ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.10$) (see Table 3).

Table 3

Means, standard deviations and n of slogan difficulty and translation difficulty

Slogan group	Slogan number	Slogan Difficulty $M(SD)$	Translation difficulty $M(SD)$	n
Translatable	1	2.51(1.17)	2.38(1.65)	56
	2	2.56(1.23)	2.09(1.49)	
	3	1.49(0.66)	1.32(0.79)	
	4	2.35(1.16)	2.18(1.70)	
Non- -Translatable	1	4.37(1.77)	5.33(1.71)	49
	2	4.43(1.56)	5.24(1.73)	
	3	5.52(1.01)	6.22(0.85)	
	4	4.80(1.53)	5.55(1.56)	

Attitudes Towards the Slogan

An independent samples t-test showed no significant differences between translatable and non-translatable slogans regarding attitudes towards the slogan ($t(88.09) = 0.39$, $p = .696$). Scores on respondents' attitudes towards the slogans were similar in both translatable and non-translatable slogan groups.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study set out to discover the effects of English-slogan translatability on Dutch consumers' perception of slogan difficulty and attitudes towards the slogan. Results showed that slogan translatability is a criterion used by Dutch consumers to assess slogan difficulty: translatable slogans were evaluated as easy and non-translatable

slogans were deemed difficult. These results answer RQ1 and confirm H1. As for attitudes, no differences were found: both translatable and non-translatable slogan groups showed similar scores in attitudes towards the slogan. These findings answer RQ2 but contradict H2.

Slogan Translatability and Slogan Difficulty

The attempt to link slogan translatability with slogan difficulty was formulated in RQ1 “What is the effect of slogan translatability on consumers” evaluations of slogan difficulty?” and its subsequent H1 “Non-translatable English slogans will be perceived as more difficult than translatable slogans.”. Results showed that consumers use slogan translatability as criterion for assessing the difficulty of English slogans and point to a proportional relationship between the two concepts: when the translation of a single word is more difficult, the difficulty of the entire slogan is assessed as more difficult.

This study adds to the findings of Hendriks et al. (2017) and Hornikx et al. (2010) – but also to those of Hornikx and Starren (2006), although concerning French – by showing that besides comprehension, translatability into native language is also used by Dutch consumers as a criterion to evaluate foreign slogans. On the other hand, the link found between slogan translatability and slogan difficulty contradicts what Hornikx et al. (2010) suggests and supports the findings of Gerritsen et al. (2007) by hinting that the difficulty of an English utterance is indeed of importance for its evaluation. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the use of English in advertising goes beyond its widely known symbolism and may affect other performance aspects of advertising (Kelly-Holmes, 2005; Piller, 2003). In fact, there is evidence indicating a general preference for easy foreign slogans over difficult ones and, in some cases, a preference even over the native language (Hendriks et al., 2017; Hornikx & Starren, 2006; Hornikx et al., 2010). This study did not address preference between languages but based on results, in combination with mentioned literature, it can be argued that whenever foreign slogans are easy to translate to L1, they will be preferred over difficult slogans in the same language. Ultimately, slogan translatability may influence slogan difficulty but, considering Gerritsen et al. (2000) reported Dutch-native consumers misunderstanding ads in Dutch, it appears that the performance of a slogan goes beyond its comprehension or the symbolism of the language it displays.

Slogan translatability and Attitudes Towards the Slogan

RQ2 was answered – “What is the effect of slogan translatability on consumers’ attitude towards the slogan?” – but contrary to expectations, H2 was rejected – “Non-translatable English slogans will evoke more negative attitudes towards the slogan than translatable slogans”. While other literature on foreign language advertising investigated attitudes towards the ad, the product, the brand or the language (e.g. Gerritsen et al., 2000; Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hendriks et al., 2017; Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2017), this study focused solely on attitudes towards the slogan. Because of this, results are not directly comparable with previous research. Nevertheless, it is possible that the absence of significant differences in attitudes reside in how the slogans were developed – abstract utterances without displayed products or other elements rather than a fictional brand logo – or in the fact that attitudes were compared between slogans in the same language.

Limitations and Future Research

This study builds on the findings of Hendriks et al. (2017) and complements the growing body of literature on factors affecting the performance of foreign slogans (Dass et al., 2014; Gerritsen et al., 2000; Hendriks et al., 2017; Hornikx et al., 2010; Kohli et al., 2007; Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2017). Although relevant, findings should be interpreted with caution as they are hindered by limitations in the experimental setup.

First, and perhaps the biggest shortcoming of this study, relates to the differences between slogans: slogans were not equal pairs and differed in several aspects rather than just a single word. Differences in length, content and meaning compromise not only the reliability of how the slogan translatability construct was operationalised but also the validity of the interaction with slogan difficulty. Nevertheless, statistical analyses conducted with the only slogan pair included in the main questionnaire – get giddy and get ready vs. get crazy and get ready – showed identical results. For this reason, findings are meaningful but future research on international advertising messages should consider using identical pairs of slogans accounting for length, meaning, language, difficulty, translatability, and stylistic devices.

A second limitation concerns the fact that slogans were only accompanied by a fictional brand logo. Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008) showed that the type of product being advertised can affect slogans in native or English language and Geuens and De

Pelsmacker (2017) stated “new brand names or logos can evoke undesired responses or associations” (p. 86). Although the latter issue was accounted for by pretesting false logo recognition, the former was not. Given no statistically significant differences were found on attitudes towards the slogan, it can be reasoned that slogans’ performance is mostly affected by the elements that complement it rather than the slogan itself. This claim is supported by previous studies which showed differences in attitudes based on product category, product necessity or on product-language congruency (Hornikx & Hof, 2008; Hornikx et al., 2013; Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). Upcoming studies on foreign slogans should therefore consider to explore the product aspects previously mentioned in combination with others that can affect the effectiveness of foreign slogans such as the brand’s country of origin or the country in which the advertising messages are promoted; it could be equally beneficial to investigate how identical slogans perform under fictional and real brands.

A third shortcoming is connected to perceived and actual comprehension which were not measured. Even though results showed that slogan translatability influences slogan difficulty, it is uncertain to what extent respondents understood the slogans. As a result, even though slogans included words from the 5.000 most common English words and respondents’ proficiency was high (91% with B2 CEFR English level), differences in slogan difficulty could reside in words other than the manipulated cognate or non-cognate words. As a matter of fact, 54% of pretest respondents attempted to translate the word without Dutch cognate in the slogan “less gobbledygook, more action”, with 38% successfully transcribing it. This hints context can aid the comprehension of utterances in L2 even when there is no matching cognate concept in L1 to be accessed. Owing to this, future studies could benefit from measures of perceived and actual comprehension and proficiency, not only in L2 but also in L1, and examine the effects of those variables on slogan effectiveness.

Lastly, although RHM’s assumptions regarding cognates and non-cognates propelled this study, collected data revealed a misfit of the model with the study’s goal. Respondents’ young age and high proficiency level suggest English as L2 was acquired early and might be a dominant language; the RHM accounts for proficiency but fails to do so for language dominance or for translation pairs that represent different concepts across languages. Because of this, Brysbaert and Duyck (2010) suggested to dismiss the RHM while Kroll et al. (2010) defended a modified version of it. Considering that beyond cognate and non-cognates pairs, words between languages can converge or

diverge in meaning, orthography or phonetics, the Multilink Model of Bilingualism seems promising and should be considered for future studies (Dijkstra et al., 2012; Dijkstra & Rekké, 2010). Either regarding RHM or other bilingualism models, research on international advertising should bear in mind that more important than a single theoretical framework, “Theories can (and should) be borrowed from other fields and adapted to advertising” (Laczniak, 2015, p. 432). For this purpose, a meta-review is proposed; currently virtually inexistent, such compilation of theories used in the field of advertising would allow scholars to have a more accurate perception of flawed or inconsistent theories and, ultimately, to conduct more fruitful and reliable research.

To conclude, upcoming research on international advertising in general – and on foreign slogans in particular – would benefit of factorial designs with covariance of variables regarding the slogan, the ad, the brand, the product and the target audience of the advertising message. Only under such comprehensive analysis solid predictors of slogan effectiveness can be exposed and it can be additionally countered that “slogan development has been mainly a hit or miss process, done in the absence of a guiding framework.” (Kohli et al., 2007, p. 421).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Despite its limitations, the relevance of this study or the field of international advertising is twofold. First, by showing L2-proficient speakers use the translatability of single words into L1 as the smallest unit to assess the difficulty of a foreign utterance. Second, by suggesting slogans without a recognisable brand or other typical advertising elements (e.g. product or images) may be ineffective to achieve the goals of persuading consumers or affecting their attitudes (cf. Dahlén & Rosengren, 2005). Findings can assist advertisers to develop more effective standardised or code-switched international advertising; when creating slogans for non-native markets, advertisers should consider – and ideally, pretest with target audiences – to what extent the slogan can be translated to local language. In addition, the fact that non-cognate words increase slogan difficulty suggests that such words should be avoided in utterances aimed for international markets. Altogether, this study enriches literature on slogans and factors that affect their success (e.g. Dass et al., 2014; Kohli et al., 2007; Kohli et al., 2013) while it reasserts the need for a consistent theoretical framework on advertising.

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Appendix

Figure 1

Pretested translatable slogan (1) included in the main questionnaire.



Figure 2

Pretested translatable slogan (2) included in the main questionnaire.



Figure 3

Pretested translatable slogan (3) included in the main questionnaire.



Figure 4

Pretested translatable slogan (4) included in the main questionnaire.



Figure 5

Pretested non-translatable slogan (1) included in the main questionnaire.



Figure 6

Pretested non-translatable slogan (2) included in the main questionnaire.



Figure 7

Pretested non-translatable slogan (3) included in the main questionnaire.

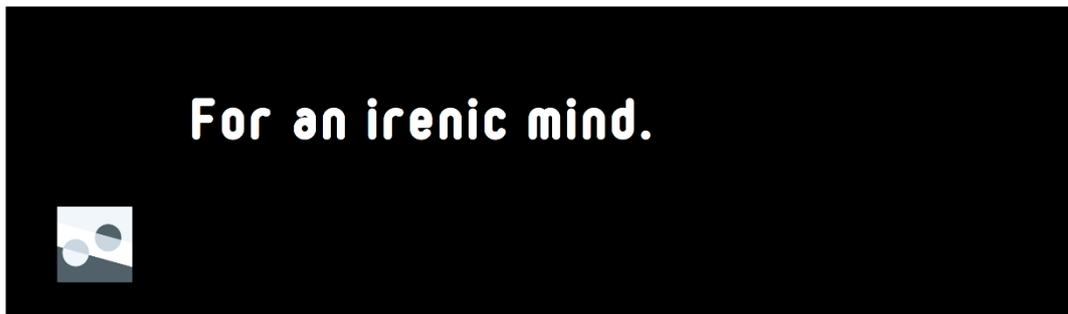


Figure 8

Pretested non-translatable slogan (4) included in the main questionnaire.

