

Master's thesis International Business Communication

The effect of Standard English and Scottish English in radio commercials for congruent and non-congruent products on young English consumers' response



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Abstract

Research has been done into the effects of language in advertising. In particular, the use of foreign accents and languages has been investigated, and it was found that the choice of accent and/or language has an effect on consumers. Very little is known, however, about the effect of native accents in radio commercials. This thesis aimed to investigate the effect of native English accents in radio commercials of products that are congruent with Scotland and England on young English consumers' attitudes and purchase intention. The aim was to find out whether a native accent influences consumers' response in a similar way a foreign accent or language does; whether it influences attitudes and purchase intention. Four groups of young English consumers participated in the experiment. Participants listened to four commercials of two different products, Yorkshire pudding (an English product) and haggis (a Scottish product). Two commercials were in Standard English and two were in Scottish English. Each group listened to and evaluated one commercial of one product in one of the accents. After the commercials, the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to evaluate the commercials. The experiment aimed to measure four dependent variables: comprehensibility, commercial appreciation, attitude toward the speaker and attitude toward the accent. The results showed that there was little to no effect of accents in radio commercials for (non-) congruent products. A possible explanation for the lack of effect in radio commercials for congruent products could be that the congruence between the accent and product was not strong enough.

Keywords: Accents, advertising, Scottish, Standard English, product congruence

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Introduction

Companies use commercials to advertise their products. In creating these commercials, all kinds of decisions have to be made regarding content and form, but also the language the advertisement will be in. Some scholars have claimed language was a forgotten factor in international companies and deemed not important enough to be part of corporate strategy (Lavric & Bäck, 2009; Welch, Welch & Piekkari, 2005). Additionally, the choice of language also depends on factors such as costs and the building of an international brand (Van Hooft & Truong, 2012; Planken, Van Meurs & Radlinska, 2010). Many global companies, therefore, choose to launch commercials in English that are not adapted to the countries they are broadcast in. Of course, this saves time and money, but it is questionable whether this has a positive influence on consumers. More recently, however, scholars have investigated the effects of language choice in MNCs as well as advertisements, and have found that not choosing the right language leads to barriers to communication (Welch et al., 2005). Although there is research that supports the useful effects of language and foreign accents in advertisements, not much research has been done on the use of native accents in radio advertisements. Therefore, this thesis will investigate the effects of using two native English accents (Scottish and Standard English) in radio commercials for congruent and non-congruent products on young English consumers. Firstly, however, several studies that have been previously conducted on this topic will be examined, and secondly, three theories that are crucial when deciding on a language, dialect or accent for an advertisement will be discussed.

Literature review

Language associations

In addition to costs and brand building, language choice also depends on factors such as the congruence between language and product (Hornikx, Van Meurs & Hof, 2013; Piller, 2001; Domzal, Hunt & Kernan, 1995; Kelley-Holmes, 2005), and the way consumers are characterised (Piller, 2001). Piller (2001) claimed that companies use a foreign language because of the associations that languages evoke. By means of these associations, companies try to construct consumers in a certain way. For instance, according to Piller (2001), a German advertisement using an English sentence tried to imply that the customers buying their products were sophisticated, since their customers were characterised as bilingual (in German and English), and bilingualism was implied to be a sign of sophistication. By using English in their advertisements, the company implied that their customers were sophisticated

people (Piller, 2001). Myers (1994) makes a similar claim in that foreignness suggests exclusiveness, and that languages evoke stereotypes and associations that are linked to a certain country. For instance, Myers (1994) mentions the example of English in a Spanish car advertisement that uses a pair of jeans for comparison. In this case, according to Myer (1994), the English words go with the pair of jeans, which refers to American youth culture.

Language – Product congruence

One step further would be product and language congruence. Several scholars have found that when a product is congruent with a certain language, consumers will project the stereotypes evoked by that language onto the product (Hornikx et al., 2013; Piller, 2001; Domzal, Hunt & Kernan, 1995; Kelley-Holmes, 2005; Leclerc, Schmitt & Dubé, 1994). Subsequently, empirical research has demonstrated that this leads to more positive product attitudes and higher purchase intention (Hornikx et al., 2013). Furthermore, research has shown that product and language congruence works in a similar way regarding accents (Hendriks, Van Meurs & Van der Meij, 2015; Leclerc, Schmitt & Dubé, 1994, as cited in Hendriks et al., 2015). Leclerc et al. (1994) found that brand names pronounced with either a French or an English accent led to different evaluations and perceptions of the product. For instance, attitudes toward hedonic products, often associated with France, were significantly more positive when the brand name was pronounced with a French accent than when it was pronounced with an English accent. This means that accent has an effect on how consumers perceive a certain product or brand. Thus, when choosing a certain accent to advertise products in, the product should be congruent with the country or region where the accent is from, since consumers will associate the product with positive or negative aspects of that country or region (Domzal et al., 1995; Kelly-Holmes, 2005). Advertising a French cheese with a Cockney accent might not work, for instance. However, when advertising a regional product, it might also be an option to use a divergent accent in order to create a surprise effect. The effect of accent-product congruence is further supported by Hendriks et al. (2015). Hendriks et al. (2015) conducted a study in which they tested the effect of foreign accents of Dutch in radio commercials for congruent and non-congruent products. They found that commercials for congruent products influenced consumers' purchase intention and attitude toward the product, and were evaluated more positively than commercials without congruence between product and accent. This supports the idea that product and accent congruence works similarly to product and language congruence. Additionally, they found that foreign-accented commercials were evaluated less positively than non-accented commercials (Hendriks et al., 2015).

It seems that there are many choices, and whether to use an accent or not is only one option. Myers (1994) argued that accents are a crucial element of advertising success, as accents are part of an advertisement's meaning, so it is important to carefully consider every option. For instance, Rahilly (2003) found that Northern Irish listeners responded more positively to advertisements with a Northern Irish accent than to advertisements with a Southern Irish accent, knowing the ethnic and political associations they have.

Language and accents in advertisements

Not only is the importance of language recognised by scholars, it is also more and more present in radio and television commercials. Different choices are made regarding language in advertisements as Hendriks et al. (2015) pointed out that marketers often use foreign languages or foreign accents in both radio and television commercials. More and more often, advertisers use accents, ranging from foreign to native accents, in advertisements. Advertisers choose to do so in the hopes of increasing recognition and recall among consumers, positive advertisement evaluations, and also to differentiate themselves from competitors (Reid & Soley, 1981, as cited in Lalwani et al., 2005; Morales, Scott & Yorkston, 2012).

Unfortunately, there are several cases in which advertisers chose a less successful option. Rahilly (2003) pointed out that "judging from the varying degrees of sophistication with which accent features are treated in advertisements" (p. 19), the idea that accent is an important communicative layer in advertising is not recognised by many advertisers. She argues that not much attention is paid to accent features in advertisements (Rahilly, 2003). She gives an example of UK advertisers broadcasting advertisements with Irish actors for the whole of Ireland, not taking into account that the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland have different accents, and also ignoring the fact that every accent comes with different associations (Rahilly, 2003; Myers, 1994). Several scholars have shown that Northern Irish consumers are able to differentiate between Northern Irish English and Southern Irish English, and perhaps more importantly, that they associate the accents with religious views (Gunn, 1994; Milroy & McClenaghan, 1977). Myers (1994) also mentioned that although many advertisements use accents and some intentionally 'foreground the accent as part of their meaning' (p. 96), sometimes the questionable use of a certain accent leads to an almost satirical portrayal of the accent and its speakers. This suggests that advertisers do not always understand the effects of accents. Birch and McPhail (2010) claim that multinational companies need to be aware of the cultural differences between and within countries, but it seems that the UK advertiser in Rahilly's example has failed to acknowledge or recognise such differences in accent, politics and religion between Northern Ireland and the rest of

Ireland. Another example of questionable implementation of an accent is the commercials of Dewar's, featuring an English actress who imitates a Scottish accent (Paskin, 2013). The commercial was criticised by some because the Scottish accent of the actress was deemed fake. The accent could make or break an advertisement, and the failed attempts point to a lack of knowledge concerning the effects of accents in commercials on consumers.

Markedness Model

The choice which language, dialect or accent to advertise in differs per country, and sometimes this choice is easy to make, and sometimes it is not. According to Krishna and Ahluwali (2008), it is more difficult to decide which language or dialect to use in advertisements in bilingual countries; not every language has the same status or evokes the same associations. In a country with only one dominant language like the Netherlands, however, the most likely choice of language in advertisements would be Dutch. But even within one language, several choices can be made regarding dialect and accent. Which language, dialect or accent is chosen depends on the context of the speaker in the advertisement. Someone who is in the company of close friends might opt for a different language use than when he is in a formal business meeting. Myers-Scotton (1998) argues that each speech community has its own norms concerning code choice. Depending on what the social norms are of that speech community (Myers-Scotton calls them rights-and-obligation sets), a code choice is expected (unmarked) or unexpected (marked) (Myers-Scotton, 1983; 1998). An unmarked code choice is the safest choice for a speaker, but a marked code choice bears risk for the speaker (Mey, 2009). The rights-and-obligation sets (RO sets) do not determine the code choice, but do determine which is marked and which is unmarked (Myers-Scotton, 1983). Within the Markedness Model, the speaker rationally chooses a certain code that fits the interaction in order to gain as much as possible from that interaction (Myers-Scotton, 1998; Mey, 2009). Although the model was developed for code-switching, Myers-Scotton (1983; 1998) states that it can be applied to choices at all linguistic levels. In the advertising world, it is important to take into consideration which codes are marked and which are unmarked in the speech community that one is advertising in. For example, a television commercial in the dialect of Limburg (marked code) advertising a non-Limburg product broadcast on Dutch national television would violate the RO set between the consumer and advertiser. Using a marked code, for instance, might lead to an unwanted outcome as the speaker might not gain anything from the exchange. On the other hand, it might be a good tactic to use a marked code for a commercial. Consumers might be pleasantly

surprised by the use of a different code than they are used to, and could see it as a positive feature.

Language Expectancy Theory

It could be argued that since there are so many different linguistic options, a country's dominant language is not the default choice anymore. It is important, however, to take into account how a certain language or accent is perceived by consumers. Edwards claimed (as cited in Edwards & Jacobsen, 1987) that accents are perceived differently and have different associations. For instance, it was found in several studies that foreign accents of English are considered less comprehensible and evoke more negative attitudes than native accents of English (Tsalikis, Deshields & Latour, 1991; DeShields & De Los Santos, 2000). Other studies have also found that foreign accents were evaluated less positively than native accents (Tsalikis et al., 1991; Deshields, Kara & Kaynak, 1995). This is in line with Language Expectancy Theory, which holds that listeners have certain expectations when it comes to the language (including dialects and accents) used by the speaker in a persuasive message (Price Dillard & Pfau, 2002). These expectations are mostly defined by societal and cultural norms, and can be violated both positively and negatively (Price Dillard & Pfau, 2002). If the expectations are violated in a positive way, the listener might exaggerate the positive evaluation of the speaker, whereas if the expectations are violated in a negative way, it might worsen the listener's evaluation of the speaker (Price Dillard & Pfau, 2002). Hendriks et al. (2015) pointed out that the use of a foreign accent would also violate their expectations, and if it were violated in a negative way, it could lead to a negative evaluation. Another example is Tsalikis et al. (1991), who found that a salesperson with a standard American accent was judged more favourably by American consumers than a Greek-American salesperson with a Greek-English accent. It seems that which kind of accent is used matters.

Social Identity Theory and Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory

Besides the Markedness Model and Language Expectancy Theory, researchers need to take into account another theory, the Social Identity Theory. Social Identity Theory proposes that an individual is a member of a particular group that share the same attributes (Burke, 2006). Furthermore, a member of a social group will compare the ingroup to outgroups, and will look for dimensions that are favourable to their ingroup compared to other outgroups (Giles & Johnson, 1987). People can have more than one social identity, as they are often part of more than one social group (Burke, 2006). Giles and Johnson (1987) elaborated on this theory with another theory, Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory, which draws heavily on Social Identity Theory. They argue that language can be a dimension of comparison by which an ingroup is

compared to other outgroups (Giles & Johnson, 1987). In order to position their social identity as a positive one compared to an outgroup, they see language as a key marker of their identity, and will use it as a means to favourably position themselves (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Also, when an individual has different social identities for different social contexts, they will never be salient all at once in any given context (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Thus, language is an important marker of social identity. Additionally, it helps people evaluate members of other groups, which is supported by several studies. Brown, Giles and Thakerar (1985) have found that the vocal characteristics of a person, such as accent, help a listener in evaluating the person who speaks (source evaluation). Cacioppo and Petty (1982) agree that the accent, dialect or language of the speaker are important determinants of source evaluation. Listeners, for example, give speakers certain character traits that are associated with that accent group (Anisfeld, Bogo, & Lambert, 1962; Edwards, 1982). Empirical research found, for instance, that Welsh subjects rated Standard English more favourably than their own Welsh accents (Giles 1971; 1973). They associated Standard English more with intelligence, fairness, happiness, and ambition than the Welsh accent. Other studies have also found that standard varieties are often associated with intelligence, industriousness and ambition, but non-standard accents are more socially attractive and are associated with integrity (Edwards & Jacobsen, 1987; Bennett & Loken, 2008). Myers (1994) also argued that accents evoke associations, especially in Britain due to its wide range of geographical accents. In Britain, however, social class is a factor that influences the associations with certain accents (Myers, 1994). Similarly to what was claimed in the aforementioned studies, Myers (1994) also claims that regional varieties of English are associated with stupidity and provinciality, but they do appeal emotionally to consumers who do not have that accent, and are associated with authenticity. Standard English, on the other hand, was associated with wealth and power (Myers, 1994).

Although there are several studies (Hendriks et al., 2015, amongst others) investigating the use of accents in advertisements, most of these focus on differences in accents between non-native speakers and native speakers. The English language, however, has many regional and standard varieties (Scottish, Welsh, Scouse and Geordie, to name a few). Although Rahilly (2003) and Mai and Hoffman (2014) discussed the use of native accents in advertisements, few scholars have investigated whether, and how, a different regional accent influences consumers' attitudes towards certain products, given that the product is congruent with that region. This thesis aims to fill that gap by investigating what the effect is of native accents in radio commercials on young English consumers. Bearing in

mind the theories discussed in the previous paragraphs, this thesis will try to answer the question to what extent native English accents (Scottish and Standard English) in radio commercials for (non-) congruent products have an influence on young English consumers' response.

Main research question:

To what extent do native English accents (Scottish and Standard English) in radio commercials for congruent and non-congruent products have an influence on young English consumers' response?

Research questions:

1. To what extent do native English accents (Scottish and Standard English) in radio commercials for congruent products influence young English consumers' commercial appreciation, attitude toward the speaker, comprehensibility of the advertisement, comprehensibility of the speaker and attitude toward the accent?
2. To what extent do native English accents (Scottish and Standard English) in radio commercials influence young English consumers' commercial appreciation, attitude toward the speaker, comprehensibility of the advertisement, comprehensibility of the speaker and attitude toward the accent?
3. To what extent does type of product (Haggis/Yorkshire pudding) in radio commercials influence young English consumers' commercial appreciation, attitude toward the speaker, comprehensibility of the advertisement, comprehensibility of the speaker and attitude toward the accent?

Method

Research design

The experiment had a 2 (accent: Standard English, Scottish) x 2 (product: haggis, Yorkshire pudding) between-subject design pos-test only with young English participants. The products that were used were congruent with the accents in the commercials (Standard English and Scottish with Yorkshire pudding and haggis respectively).

Materials

The independent variables were Accent (two levels: Scottish and Standard English) and Product (two levels: haggis and Yorkshire pudding), and were adopted from Hendriks et al. (2015). A radio advertising agency from Amsterdam/The Hague (Radioheads) made two commercials for each product using a male native speaker of English who was familiar and trained in both a Standard English accent and a standard Scottish accent. Two different accents were used to advertise each product; two commercials were in Standard English and the other two in Scottish. This resulted in four different commercials, i.e. Haggis advertised with a Scottish (ScoHa commercial) and Standard English accent (EnHa commercial) and Yorkshire pudding advertised with a Scottish (ScoYo commercial) and a Standard English accent (EnYo commercial). Both haggis advertisements had the same text, message and voice. Only the music (Scottish national anthem and English national anthem) and the accent differed. The Yorkshire pudding commercials had a different text, message and music than the Haggis commercial, but had the same voice. The Yorkshire pudding commercials differed from each other in terms of accent, but were similar in terms of text, message, music and voice. Transcripts of the radio advertisements can be found in Appendix I. MP3 versions of the radio advertisements can be found in Appendix IV. To decide which products were congruent with the two accents and therefore, which products to use in the actual experiment, a pilot was conducted. Five English subjects were asked to rate the fit between a selection of products and England and Scotland by means of a small questionnaire (see Appendix II). The questionnaire was based on a questionnaire from a pre-test conducted by Hornikx et al. (2007). The results of the pilot indicated that on scale of 1 to 7 (1 = negative, 7 = positive), subjects associated haggis ($M = 6.6$, $SD = .55$) and Yorkshire pudding ($M = 6.8$, $SD = .45$) the most with Scotland and England respectively.

To ensure that the materials used were valid, subjects in the actual experiment were asked whether they thought the commercial was professional and where the speaker was from, the latter item was taken from Rahilly (2003). Also, they were asked to rate the accent strength of the speaker, which was adopted from Hendriks et al. (2015). To see if there were

any differences between the groups in terms of professionalism, a one-way ANOVA was carried out. A one-way ANOVA with as factor Commercial showed no significant main effect of Commercial on Professionalism ($F(3,158) = 1.53, p = .208$). The commercials were rated with a mean score of 3.78 ($SD = 1.55$) on a scale of 1 to 7 (1 = positive, 7 = negative), which was fairly high. In three commercials, the accents were rated as strong: ScoYo commercial ($M = 3.80, SD = 1.57$), ScoHa commercial ($M = 2.60, SD = 1.88$) and EnHa commercial ($M = 2.51, SD = 1.47$). The accent in EnYo commercial ($M = 4.63, SD = 1.71$) was considered neutral. When asked about the speaker's origins, only 10 out of 162 participants filled out the wrong answer.

Subjects

Approximately 200 students were approached, of which 162 agreed to participate in the experiment. Sixty-six were male (40.7%) and 96 were female (59.3%). The subjects were students from the University of Sheffield and were divided into four groups. Each group listened to and evaluated only one commercial. Forty subjects evaluated the Scottish-accented Yorkshire pudding commercial, 42 subjects evaluated the Scottish-accented haggis commercial, 41 subjects evaluated the English-accented Yorkshire pudding commercial and 39 subjects evaluated the English-accented haggis commercial. All except one were native speakers of English and had the English nationality. One subject was a non-native speaker who had attended an international school and was now a full-time student at the University of Sheffield. The age of the subjects ranged between 18 and 25 and the mean age was 20 ($SD = 1.78$). Subjects were also asked to fill in the highest level of education or school they had completed. The majority of the students had completed their A-levels (84.6%). Only 8.6% had completed a Bachelor's degree and 3.7% had completed a Master's degree. Two subjects (1.2%) indicated that they had obtained an Access to Higher Education diploma and one subject did not fill in anything. A Chi-square test showed no significant relation between gender and commercial ($\chi^2(3) = 4.45, p = .217$). Gender was therefore equally divided over the four groups. A second Chi-square test showed no significant relation between education level and commercial ($\chi^2(15) = 13.99, p = .527$). Education was also equally divided over the four groups. A third Chi-square test showed no significant relation between age and commercial ($\chi^2(24) = 29.83, p = .190$). Thus, age was divided equally over the groups. The results of the Chi-square tests indicate that the groups were comparable and could be used in the experiment.

Instruments

The dependent variables measured in the experiment were Attitude toward the accent,

Attitude toward the commercial, Attitude toward the product, Attitude toward the speaker, Purchase intention and Comprehensibility.

Comprehensibility of the speaker. This variable was taken from Hendriks, Van Meurs and De Groot (2015). It consisted of the statement: “I find the speaker easy to understand”. A seven-point semantic differential scale was used.

Comprehensibility of the commercial. This variable was taken from Hendriks et al. (2015) and consisted of the statement: “I find this radio commercial comprehensible”. A seven-point semantic differential scale was used.

Commercial Appreciation. This variable consists of three variables: Attitude toward the commercial, Attitude toward product and Purchase intention. All three variables in turn consist of several items. The attitude toward the commercial was measured using five statements with seven-point semantic differential scales. This variable was adopted from Hendriks et al. (2015). The variable consisted of the items “I believe this radio commercial is nice (r)”, “I believe this radio commercial is captivating”, “I believe this radio commercial is original (r)”, “I believe this radio commercial is attractive (r)”, “I believe this radio commercial is interesting”. The reliability of Attitude toward the commercial comprising five items was acceptable ($\alpha = .71$). Attitude toward the product and the items comprising it were taken from Hendriks et al. (2015). The variable consisted of the statements: “I believe the product is nice (r)”, “I believe the product is captivating”, “I believe the product is original (r)”, “I believe the product is attractive (r)”, “I believe the product is interesting”. All statements were measured using a seven-point semantic differential scale. The reliability of Attitude toward the product was not acceptable ($\alpha = .49$). Purchase intention was measured by means of four different items. One item, “I want to buy this product”, was taken from Hendriks et al. (2015). The other items, “After listening to the radio advertisement, I would inquire about this product”, “I would consider purchasing this product”, and “I will actually purchase this product” were taken from Lalwani (2005). For the items, seven-point Likert scales were used. The reliability of Purchase intention was good ($\alpha = .86$). Because the reliability of Attitude toward product was unacceptable, and to simplify the analysis process, the three variables were taken together and computed into one variable, namely Commercial Appreciation. The reliability of all the items together was good ($\alpha = .83$).

Attitude toward the speaker. Attitude toward the speaker was taken from both Hendriks et al. (2015) and Rahilly (2003). The variable consisted of 11 items, and included the following statements: “I believe this speaker is friendly/sociable/good-natured/honest/helpful/intelligent/trained/reliable/trustworthy”, which were adopted from

Hendriks et al. (2015). The items “I believe this speaker is likeable/persuasive” were taken from Rahilly (2003). To measure the variable, seven-point semantic differential scales were used. The reliability of Attitude toward the speaker was good ($\alpha = .88$).

Attitude toward the accent. This variable was measured by means of five statements that each used a seven-point semantic differential scale. One statement, “I believe the speaker’s accent is irritating (r)”, was taken from Rahilly (2003). The other four statements, “I believe the speaker’s accent is attractive”, “I believe the speaker’s accent is interesting”, and “I believe the speaker’s accent is nice” were taken from Hendriks et al. (2015). The reliability of Attitude toward the accent was acceptable ($\alpha = .77$).

Procedure

Subjects were randomly approached at the Students’ Union of the University of Sheffield in Sheffield over a period of six days between 6th May and 19th May, 2015. They were asked to participate in an experiment for a master’s thesis. In case of participation, subjects were then handed some headphones and a questionnaire (see Appendix III) with an introductory text that explained what was expected of them, after which they listened to the radio commercial.

Afterwards they filled out the questionnaire. The whole process took approximately 5 minutes and the experiments were carried out one at a time. After the experiment, they were thanked for their participation and it was pointed out that the results would remain anonymous.

Participation was voluntary, but if participants were interested, they were offered the opportunity to take part in a raffle; four £10 gift cards were raffled off amongst the participants. Participants could also indicate whether they wanted to be updated on the results of the research.

Statistical treatment. In order to analyse the data, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted.

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether native accents of English (Scottish/Standard English) in radio advertisements for congruent and non-congruent products have an influence on consumers' response. To answer the research questions as outlined in the introduction, a MANOVA was conducted. The MANOVA was carried out for the dependent variables Attitude toward the speaker, Attitude toward accent, Commercial appreciation, Comprehensibility of the speaker and Comprehensibility of the advertisement.

Scottish and English accents in (non-) congruent radio advertisements

A multivariate analysis of variance with as factors Accent and Product showed no significant interaction effect on Commercial appreciation ($F(1,158) < 1, p = .373$) and Attitude toward the speaker ($F(1,158) < 1, p = .485$). It also showed no significant interaction effect on Comprehensibility of speaker ($F(1,158) < 1, p = .583$), Comprehensibility of advertisement ($F(1,158) < 1, p = .566$) and Attitude toward accent ($F(1,158) = 1.99, p = .161$). The results show that, contrary to earlier research, product-accent congruence does not influence young English consumers' response in any way. For means and standard deviations, see tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for interaction effect Product and Accent (Haggis) (1 = positive, 7 = negative).

	Haggis			
	English (<i>n</i> = 39)			Scottish (<i>n</i> = 42)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitude accent	3.96	1.00	3.36	1.17
Comprehensibility speaker	1.74	.97	1.76	1.03
Comprehensibility commercial	1.97	.78	2.00	1.01
Commercial appreciation	4.61	.68	4.3	.85
Attitude speaker	3.39	.88	3.06	1.01

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for interaction effect Product and Accent (Yorkshire pudding) (1 = positive, 7 = negative).

	Yorkshire pudding			
	English (<i>n</i> = 41)		Scottish (<i>n</i> = 40)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitude accent	3.81	1.07	2.73	1.07
Comprehensibility speaker	1.15	.36	1.30	.56
Comprehensibility commercial	1.59	.74	1.78	1.05
Commercial appreciation	4.25	.78	4.17	.68
Attitude speaker	3.22	.93	3.09	.75

Scottish or English accent

A multivariate analysis with as factor Accent showed a significant effect of Accent on Attitude toward accent ($F(1,158) = 24.31, p < .001$). Regardless of product, the Scottish accent ($M = 3.06, SD = 1.16$) was favoured over the English accent ($M = 3.88, SD = 1.03$).

The same MANOVA showed no significant main effect of Accent on Commercial appreciation ($F(1,158) = 2.60, p = .109$). It also showed no significant main effect of Accent on Comprehensibility of the speaker ($F(1,158) < 1, p = .485$), Comprehensibility of the advertisement ($F(1,158) = 4.64, p = .451$), and on Attitude toward the speaker ($F(1,158) = 2.70, p = .102$). For means and standard deviations, see table 3.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for Accent (1 = positive, 7 = negative).

	Scottish ($n = 82$)		English ($n = 80$)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitude accent	3.06	1.16	3.88	1.03
Comprehensibility speaker	1.54	.86	1.44	.78
Comprehensibility advertisement	1.89	1.03	1.78	.78
Attitude speaker	3.07	.89	3.30	.90
Commercial appreciation	4.24	.77	4.43	.75

Product

A multivariate analysis of variance with as factor Product showed a significant main effect of Product on Commercial appreciation ($F(1,158) = 4.59, p = .034$). Regardless of accent, the commercials advertising Yorkshire pudding ($M = 4.21, SD = .73$) were appreciated more than the commercials advertising haggis ($M = 4.46, SD = .79$). The MANOVA also showed a significant main effect of Product on Comprehensibility of the advertisement ($F(1,158) < 4.64, p = .033$). Subjects considered the advertisements with Yorkshire pudding ($M = 1.68, SD = .91$) more comprehensible than the advertisements with haggis ($M = 1.99, SD = .90$). In addition, the MANOVA showed a significant main effect of Product on Comprehensibility of

the speaker ($F(1,158) = 18.57, p < .001$). The speaker was considered more comprehensible in the Yorkshire pudding advertisements ($M = 1.22, SD = .47$) than in the haggis advertisements ($M = 1.75, SD = .99$). The MANOVA also showed a significant main effect of Product on Attitude toward accent ($F(1,158) = 5.27, p = .023$). In the Yorkshire pudding advertisements ($M = 3.28, SD = 1.19$), the Attitude toward accent was higher than in the haggis advertisements ($M = 3.65, SD = 1.13$). A multivariate analysis of variance with as factor Product showed no significant main effect of Product on Attitude toward speaker ($F(1,158) < 1, p = .605$). For means and standard deviations, see table 4.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations for Product (1 = positive, 7 = negative).

	Haggis		Yorkshire pudding	
	(n = 81)		(n = 81)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitude accent	3.65	1.13	3.28	1.19
Comprehensibility speaker	1.75	.99	1.22	.47
Comprehensibility commercial	1.99	.90	1.68	.91
Commercial appreciation	4.46	.79	4.21	.73
Attitude speaker	3.22	.96	3.15	.84

Conclusion and discussion

The main purpose of the present study was to examine to what extent native English accents (Scottish and Standard English) in radio commercials for congruent and non-congruent products have an influence on young English consumers' response. Similarly to earlier research, which found that accents can make a difference in advertising in terms of effectiveness (Hendriks et al., 2015; Tsalikis et al., 1991), four groups of participants rated four different radio commercials in terms of commercial appreciation, attitude toward the speaker, comprehensibility of the advertisement, comprehensibility of the speaker and attitude toward the accent. In order to examine this, the main research question was split up into three research questions, which will be discussed below.

The first research question dealt with the effect of native accents in radio commercials for congruent products. For all of the dependent variables (commercial appreciation, attitude toward the speaker, comprehensibility of the advertisement, comprehensibility of the speaker, and attitude toward the accent), there were no significant differences between the four radio commercials as the results showed that there was no significant interaction between product and accent. The findings therefore suggest that the different accents in the radio advertisements for congruent products had no influence of any significance on young English consumers. As such, advertising haggis with a Scottish accent did not affect young English consumers any more than advertising haggis with an English accent did. It is interesting to note, though, that the radio commercials were rated as neutral in terms of commercial appreciation. It seems that participants neither liked nor disliked the radio commercials. Their neutral attitude toward the radio commercials in terms of appreciation could be explained by a possible dislike of the products or a neutral attitude toward the products used. Someone who likes haggis might be more inclined to appreciate the radio commercial than someone who dislikes haggis. This is partially supported by the results that showed that both products were rated between a 4 and 5, a neutral attitude. The participants did not particularly like the products, which could partially explain the lack of appreciation for the commercials. The results of the present study regarding product-accent congruence are contrary to the findings of earlier studies. Some scholars found that language-product congruence leads to higher purchase intention and more positive attitudes (Hornikx et al., 2013). Similar results were found by Hendriks et al. (2015), who found that foreign accents influenced consumers' evaluation of radio commercials for congruent products. The radio commercials for congruent products that fitted the language accent were evaluated more positively than radio commercials for non-congruent products (Hendriks et al., 2015). Their findings are the

opposite of the findings of this study, in which no significant differences were found. The question then is why the results are contrary to earlier findings. A possible explanation could be that the circumstances of the study were slightly different. For example, Hornikx et al. (2013) looked at different languages and Hendriks et al. (2015) examined foreign and non-foreign accents of one language (Dutch in their case) in radio advertisements. This study investigated the use of native accents (Scottish and Standard English) of English in radio advertisements, which has not been the focus of many previous studies.

Another reason, and perhaps a more plausible one, might be that not the right English accent was used. In order for the advertisements to have an effect, the accent should be congruent with the product. Although the pilot results indicated that Yorkshire pudding was indeed associated with England, and for that reason, a Standard English accent was used, Yorkshire pudding might be associated even more so with the county of Yorkshire, where its origins lie, rather than England. In that sense, using a Yorkshire accent to advertise a product such as Yorkshire pudding might have more of an effect than a Standard English accent, because product-accent congruence would presumably be stronger. Additionally, it should be noted that the participants were from Sheffield, Yorkshire, and might therefore feel that the accent was unexpected and did not fit the product. With regard to Language Expectancy Theory, a Yorkshire accent would have been the expected accent choice. Because of the possible misfit of product and accent, it could be that the desired associations were not evoked, and that therefore there was no effect. In line with the Markedness Model, the Standard English accent might be a marked code choice, and could therefore violate the RO set between consumer and advertiser. Although violating RO sets can have either positive (surprise effect) or negative results, it seems that in this case, the RO set was violated in a negative way. As a consequence, the effect of the accent might have been reduced.

The second research question examined whether native accents made a difference in radio commercials, regardless of product congruence. The findings showed that there was a significant difference between the four groups of participants in terms of attitude toward accent. Although both accents were rated fairly high, participants had a more positive attitude toward the Scottish accent than the English accent, when not taking into account which product was advertised. The results are similar to Rahilly's (2003) results, which showed that the Northern Irish accent was preferred over the Southern Irish accent. The results of the present study could possibly be explained by means of the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory, which holds that language is a key marker of social identity and is used to position the speaker favourably (Giles & Johnson, 1987). The north-south divide, and distinction in identity, that

Rahilly (2003) mentions exists in Ireland, also exists to a certain extent in England (Storry & Childs, 2007; Wales, 2006). Regions such as Yorkshire (the county Sheffield is in) are known to have strong identities with distinct accents (Storry & Childs, 2007). The Standard English accent, however, emerged from Southern English (Wales, 2006), and is mostly associated with southerners. It might therefore evoke associations, such as southerners being 'emotionally cold' (Storry & Childs, 2007), that distinguishes them from northerners, which could eventually lead to less positive attitudes. This could explain why they are less fond of Standard English. The reason why they liked Scottish slightly more could be the shared roots regarding their accents (Wales, 2006). Historically, Yorkshire and a large part of southern Scotland belonged to the kingdom of Northumbria, which shared the same dialect, Old Northumbrian (Wales, 2006; Treharne, 2010). According to Wales (2006), Northern English and lowland Scots derive from Northumbrian. The shared roots and accent features could be a reason why the participants had a slightly better attitude towards the Scottish accent, as they might be able to identify more with Scottish than with Standard English.

For the other dependent variables, commercial appreciation, attitude toward the speaker, comprehensibility of the advertisement, and comprehensibility of the speaker, no significant results were found. Apart from the attitude toward accent, the difference in accents did not influence to what extent participants appreciated the commercial. It also did not affect their attitude toward the speaker. Regarding Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory, the expected result should have been a less favourable attitude toward the English speaker, because the accent was evaluated less positively than the Scottish accent. As scholars have pointed out (Brown, Giles & Thakerar, 1985; Cacioppo & Petty 1982), accent could be used to evaluate a source. Logically, a negative accent evaluation would imply a negative source (i.e. speaker) evaluation. The reason this was not the case, could be the fact that both accents were rated fairly high, and therefore the negative associations might have been kept to a minimum and not projected onto the speaker. The comprehensibility of both the speaker and the advertisement were also not affected by the different accents. The results did show that both accents were rated rather high with regard to comprehensibility of the speaker and comprehensibility of the advertisement, despite the fact that there were no significant differences between the groups. One radio commercial, for instance, was not more or less comprehensible than the other radio commercial. The high degree of comprehensibility could be explained by the possible familiarity that the students have with both the Scottish and Standard English accents.

Lastly, this thesis also attempted to find out whether the type of product used in

advertisements had an influence on young English consumers' response. The third and last research question dealt with the effect of type of product. The findings showed that the type of product used in advertisements makes a difference. The radio commercials advertising Yorkshire pudding were appreciated more than the radio commercials advertising haggis. This suggests that participants are fonder of Yorkshire pudding, which could be explained by the fact that the participants were from Sheffield and therefore might have more of an affinity with the product, because it is a local product. Again, however, it must be noted that the difference was small, and both products were rated fairly neutral (haggis: $M = 4.46$; Yorkshire pudding: $M = 4.21$). It seems that participants did not necessarily like the products, which could explain, in part, the lack of effect of the radio advertisements. In addition, the results indicated that the advertisements for Yorkshire pudding were considered more comprehensible than the haggis advertisements. Furthermore, similar results were found for comprehensibility of the speaker. The speaker was deemed more comprehensible in the Yorkshire pudding advertisements than in the haggis advertisements. Lastly, the attitude toward accent was also influenced by the type of product. In the Yorkshire pudding advertisements, the attitude toward the accent was higher than in the haggis advertisements. This confirms the findings that there was no congruence effect in the advertisements, because the attitude toward the accent in both Yorkshire pudding advertisements was higher. This means that the participants preferred both the Scottish and the English accents in the Yorkshire pudding advertisements over both accents in the haggis advertisements. With regard to both Language Expectancy Theory and the Markedness Model, the participants were expected to have a preference for the English accent in the Yorkshire pudding advertisement. However, this is not the case, and it seems that it does not really matter to the participants whether the Yorkshire pudding is in Scottish or in English; there is no difference in attitude toward the accents between English and Scottish. The only difference is that the Yorkshire pudding accents were preferred over the haggis accents, which could possibly be explained by the slighter preference for Yorkshire pudding. Due to this preference, the participants might have rated the accents in the Yorkshire pudding advertisements higher than in the haggis advertisements.

A limitation of the present study is the Standard English accent that was used. A suggestion for further research would be to use a Yorkshire accent that is more congruent with the product. Furthermore, instead of using only two products, future research might use more products and other accents than Scottish and Standard English, as England has many varieties. Additionally, the sample was also rather small and homogeneous. A bigger sample might

result in different outcomes and make results more generalisable. The current sample was homogeneous in the sense that it was made up of students only, therefore consisting of only young and highly-educated people. To get a more diverse and comprehensive picture of the effect of accents on English consumers, people of all ages with different education levels should be included. In order to prevent bias, gender and social class have not been investigated, therefore only a male voice and standard accents were used. Also, the present study investigated the effects of native English accents on English consumers. In future research, the effects of native English on, for instance, Scottish consumers could also be investigated. These aspects could be incorporated into future studies.

The results as described above indicated that there was little to no effect of native accents in radio commercials for congruent and non-congruent products. As this study contrasts earlier studies, it suggests that accents in advertising need more investigating to fully understand the effects on consumers. This is highlighted by the fact that, though the exact same voice and accent were used in both English commercials, one English accent was perceived less strong than the other English accent. This reflects the complex nature of the effects of accents and how accents are perceived by the listener. Thus, the findings of the present study imply that the effects of accents in advertisements are not that clear-cut, and need further examination as they contradict previous studies. A practical implication of the findings is that advertisers, therefore, should remain cautious when implementing native accents of English into their radio advertisements in England.

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Appendix I. Transcripts of radio advertisements.

Radio advertisement 1: English and Haggis

“Hello I’m James. We English argue about a lot of things. Football, for instance. My favourite club is this, no my favourite club is that, and all that nonsense. But there is one thing we unanimously agree on. That is, delicious, premium haggis from Grants. So, when you’re in England, find a supermarket and ask for haggis from Grants.”

Radio advertisement 2: Scottish and haggis

“Hello I’m Fraser. We Scottish argue about a lot of things. Tartan, for instance. I like green tartan, no I like red tartan, and all that crap. But there is one thing we all unanimously agree on. That is, delicious, premium haggis from Grants. So, when you’re in Scotland, find a supermarket and ask for haggis from Grants.”

Radio advertisement 3: English and Yorkshire pudding

“Hi mum, this is William speaking. I bought myself this radio airtime to apologise to you. For a year now, when I visit you in London and we eat your Yorkshire pudding together, I always say to you: ‘Mum, your Yorkshire pudding is the best in the world’. And then, you always start crying. But a year ago, I discovered original mix for Yorkshire puddings from Golden Fry, light and delicious original Yorkshire pudding’s mix from Golden Fry. This is better than yours, mum. Sorry. I still love you though, mum. I still love you.”

Radio advertisement 3: Scottish and Yorkshire pudding

“Hi mum, this is Alex speaking. I bought myself this radio airtime to apologise to you. For a year now, when I visit you in Glasgow and we eat your Yorkshire pudding together, I always say to you: ‘Mum, your Yorkshire pudding is the best in the world’. And then, you always start crying. But a year ago, I discovered original mix for Yorkshire puddings from Golden Fry, light and delicious original Yorkshire pudding’s mix from Golden Fry. This is better than yours, mum. Sorry. I still love you though, mum. I still love you.”

Appendix II. Pilot

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in this small pilot. Please rate the following products on whether you think they have a good fit with England and Scotland. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers, and all answers will remain anonymous. The results will solely be used for research purposes.

I think the fit between whisky and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between haggis and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between Athol brose and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between oatcakes and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between Scotch pie and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between ale and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between shepherd's pie and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between cider and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between fish and chips and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between Yorkshire pudding and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between whisky and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between haggis and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between Athol brose and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between oatcakes and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between Scotch pie and England is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between ale and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between shepherd's pie and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between cider and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 very good fit

I think the fit between fish and chips and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit **0** **0** **0** **0** **0** **0** **0** very good fit

I think the fit between Yorkshire pudding and Scotland is a:

Very bad fit **0** **0** **0** **0** **0** **0** **0** very good fit

End pilot.

Appendix III. Questionnaire

Dear participant,

You have agreed to participate in an experiment, which will be used for a master thesis.

Please listen to the radio commercial and fill in the questions about the radio commercial by ticking the boxes.

There are no wrong or right answers, and all answers will remain anonymous. Your answers will be used for research purposes only, and will only be reviewed by the researchers conducting this experiment. The experiment will take approximately 5 minutes of your time.

Thank you for participating in this experiment.

I think the speaker is from:

- England
- Scotland
- Ireland
- Wales

I find the speaker:

Easy to understand Not easy to understand

I find this radio commercial

Comprehensible Not comprehensible

Professional Not professional

I believe this radio commercial is:

Not nice Nice

Captivating Boring

Not original Original

Not attractive Attractive

Interesting Not interesting

I believe the product is:

Not nice Nice

Captivating Boring

Not original Original

Not attractive Attractive

Interesting Not interesting

I believe this speaker is:

Friendly Not friendly

Sociable Not sociable

Good-natured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not good-natured
Honest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not honest
Helpful	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not helpful
Likeable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not likeable
Intelligent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not intelligent
Trained	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not trained
Reliable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not reliable
Trustworthy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not trustworthy
Persuasive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not persuasive

I believe the speaker's accent is:

Irritating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not irritating
Attractive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not attractive
Interesting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not interesting
Nice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not nice
Strong	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not strong

After listening to the radio advertisement, I would inquire about this product:

Very unlikely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Very likely
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I would consider purchasing this product

Very improbable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Very probable
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After listening to the radio commercial, I want to buy this product:

Definitely not	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Definitely
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------

I will actually purchase this product:

Very impossible	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	very possible
-----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

I think the speaker's background is working class:

Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No
-----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

I think the speaker's background is middle class:

Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No
-----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

I think the speaker's background is upper class:

Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No
-----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Age:

.....

Gender:

Male/Female

Please indicate the highest degree or level of school you have completed:

0 No school completed

0 GCSEs

0 A levels

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Ph.D
- Trade/technical/vocational training
- Other:

You have now completed the questionnaire!

After all the results have been collected, four £10 vouchers will be raffled off among the participants.

Please fill in your name and email address if you are interested in the raffle:

Email address:

.....

Name:

.....

Would you like to be updated on the results of this research?
Yes/No

All the data collected will remain anonymous.

Thank you again for participating.

Have a nice day!

Kind regards,

Rosa Hendriks
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Appendix IV. MP3 versions of the radio commercials