

# Radboud University



## Master Thesis

# The Influence of Language (L1/L2) in a Corporate Narrative on Narrative Persuasion for Dutch and German readers

Completed by:

Anika Spring  
student number: 4219090  
Anika.Spring@student.ru.nl  
phone: +49 160 8572812

Supervisor: Frank van Meurs  
Second Reader: Brigitte Planken

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## **Abstract**

The influence of narratives on readers' attitudes and beliefs is well known in the research field of narrative persuasion. However, the influence of language (L1/L2) on narrative persuasion and its underlying mechanisms, transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment, has not yet been researched for a written narrative. The current study addressed this scientific gap by examining the influence of language for Dutch and German readers in a corporate narrative. Corporate narratives have not yet been researched in the context of narrative persuasion and therefore, it will be examined whether they follow the same patterns as non-corporate narratives. A between-subject experiment was set up with 70 Dutch and 70 German participants, who either read the narrative in their native language or English. Results showed that language of the narrative had no influence on transportation, identification narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company and that language proficiency could not predict these variables. The overall levels of the underlying mechanisms were significantly above the mid-point of the scales, which indicates that the corporate narrative is successful in all three languages. Unexpectedly, nationality influenced the level of transportation and narrative understanding, German participants having a higher level for both. Furthermore, enjoyment was the only underlying mechanism that predicted the attitude towards the company in the corporate narrative. These results show that language of the narrative had no influence on how a corporate narrative was perceived and therefore does not have to be taken into account to the same extent as national differences when using a narrative as a tool for international business communication. Furthermore, corporate narratives have been shown to be a successful form of a narrative but also to follow different patterns than non-corporate narratives, with enjoyment being a prominent predictor, which should be paid more attention to in further research.

**Keywords:** narrative persuasion, foreign language, corporate narrative, Dutch, German, English, language proficiency

## **1. Introduction**

Persuading target stakeholders into thinking positively about a company has always been one of the essential aims in marketing communications. As stakeholders, especially consumers, become both more demanding and skeptical about advertising, new ways have to be found in order to still convince the target group of the companies' positive features. Directly advertising a company or a product is often experienced as intrusive and manipulative and thus less likely to evoke a positive attitude or to be remembered (Mehta, 2000). As a consequence, narrative persuasion is an especially interesting field for marketing communications, as narratives are not obviously persuasive, but still affect the attitudes and beliefs of their readers (Beentjes, De Graaf, Hoeken, & Sanders, 2009). It has been shown that readers of a narrative can be transported into a different world and identify themselves with the protagonist(s) of the narrative, which can consequently influence their attitudes and beliefs (De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders, & Beentjes, 2012; Slater & Rouner, 2002). As a consequence, narratives can be seen as a promising external communication tool for companies.

However, companies that want to use narratives for their marketing communication, have to consider that due to globalisation, they increasingly operate not only nationally but also internationally. Hence, there is an ongoing debate whether communication to stakeholders with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds should be standardised or adapted to the different needs and expectations of the stakeholders from different countries (Vrontis, Thrassou, & Lamprianou, 2009; Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Within this framework of standardisation and adaptation, language is an essential factor. Receiving a message not in the native language (L1) but in a second language (L2) has been found to have unfavourable effects on the receiver (Pagani, Goldsmith, & Perracchio, 2015; Dewaele, 2013). With respect to narrative persuasion, the findings from Wissmath, Weibel and Groner (2009), who looked at narrative persuasion in films, suggest that dubbed narratives (voiceover in L1) evoke higher levels of transportation, spatial presence and flow than narratives subtitled in a foreign language (narratives with a mixture of L1 and L2).

However, the influence of language (L1 or L2) has not yet been researched for written narratives, which were suggested to evoke higher imagery than films (Green & Brock, 2000). In addition, the current study will focus on different variables apart from transportation and enjoyment namely identification and narrative understanding. These four variables have been found to be closely interrelated and to be important mechanisms of narrative persuasion. Furthermore, this study will be the first one to research narrative persuasion in combination

with a corporate theme. Thus, the present study aims to make a relevant contribution in the under-researched field of narrative persuasion and the influences of foreign language.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Narrative persuasion*

When narratives are able to influence their readers' real-world beliefs and attitudes, this is referred to as narrative persuasion. According to Beentjes et al. (2009), narrative persuasion can be defined as "the acceptance of attitudes and beliefs as a result of processing stories that are not overtly persuasive [...]" (p. 246). An important feature of narrative persuasion in contrast to more obvious rhetorical persuasion is the role of involvement. Whereas rhetorical persuasion evokes involvement based on personal relation of the reader with the presented content, narrative persuasion is able to influence beliefs and attitudes about concepts the reader is not personally related to (Beentjes et al., 2009). Thus, the influence of narrative persuasion might go beyond rhetorical persuasion and therefore might be more effective (Green & Brock, 2002).

A rich body of literature substantiates the influence of narratives on people's attitudes and beliefs (De Graaf et al., 2012; Hoeken & Fikkers, 2014). An experimental study about health communication by Murphy, Frank, Chatterjee, and Baezconde-Garbanati (2013) showed that participants who were exposed to narrative information compared to a non-narrative format remembered more information and had a more positive attitude towards medical treatments. In addition, Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) created different short stories in which an illness was either the protagonist's own fault or caused by unfortunate circumstances. Results showed that depending on which version was read, the reader had a more positive or negative opinion about people who suffer from this illness.

The far-reaching effects of narrative persuasion in different areas such as health communication or marketing make this research field worthwhile studying. As the narrative in the current study is a corporate narrative, a less frequent studied form of a narrative, narrative persuasion will evolve around a measure which is particularly relevant towards a corporate narrative namely the attitude towards the company.

### *2.2. Attitude towards the company*

As described above, narrative persuasion can change the attitude about something without letting the reader notice that they are obviously influenced (Beentjes et al., 2009). This makes narratives an interesting marketing tool for companies, as they offer the possibility to evoke a

positive attitude about the company in a new and appealing way (Dowling, 2006). There are different corporate narratives that fulfill different functions within the company. A founding narrative is for example used to communicate the company's reasons for existing, convince others to support the company with resources and funds and to evoke a positive attitude towards the company in the mind of the readers (O'Connor, 2002). In this, a corporate narrative follows the patterns of a non-corporate narrative (Dowling, 2006). For example, just like in other narratives, a real problem has to be solved or an antagonist has to be overcome in order for the narrative to reach a fulfilled ending. Corporate narratives have been found to positively influence the attitude towards the company through the mediation of transportation (Escalas, 2004). This suggests that corporate narratives follow the same patterns as narratives dealing with non-corporate themes.

However, corporate narratives have not yet been a subject in the research field of narrative persuasion and foreign language influence. It is essential to address this shortcoming, as in today's globalised world new ways have to be found to attractively convey a company's message and foster a positive attitude without seeming overtly influencing the stakeholders (Metha, 2000). One of the challenges posed for international business communication is the question whether to adapt a company's message towards stakeholders in a different language and to cultural backgrounds or to opt for a standardized approach (Vrontis, Thrassou, & Lamprianou, 2009; Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Pagani, Goldsmith and Perracchio (2015) tested advertisements for German, Italian and Spanish participants and found that advertisements in the native language of the reader were preferred and led to more positive attitudes towards the brand. On the other hand, Backhaus and van Doorn (2007) claimed that different advertisements in different countries might create confusion and a less coherent picture of the company. Furthermore, the financial benefits of a standardised approach have to be taken into account. Examining the influence of language of the narrative in a corporate narrative on the attitude towards the company will add another interesting perspective to this ongoing debate.

It can be expected that the attitude towards the company will be determined by the underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion and thus show similar patterns. In the following, the underlying mechanisms transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment will be described in more detail.

### *2.3. Transportation*

In order for narratives to be able to create or change readers' attitudes, it is essential that the reader is absorbed into the events of the narrative. This convergent mental process is described as a combination of emotions being evoked by a mental imagery and a loss of attention for real world surroundings (Green & Brock, 2002). As the attention of the reader shifts away from the real-world and onto the events happening in the story, it is less likely that the reader disbelieves or opposes the claims of the narrative. Hereby, transportation provides a different way of processing a narrative than cognitive elaboration, which focuses on the strength of the provided arguments rather than the immersion into a narrative (Green & Brock, 2000).

Studies have shown that transportation is a key element of the effectiveness of narrative persuasion (Green & Brock, 2000; Murphy, Frank, Moran & Patnoe-Woodley, 2011). Wong, Lee and Lee (2015) found that when participants were transported into narratives about different tourist destinations, they expressed a powerful intention to visit regardless of the destination described in the narrative.

However, a study by de Graaf et al. (2009) showed that transportation and consequently its positive effects on the effectiveness of narrative persuasion can be hindered when participants were distracted from the narrative. The same effect could appear when narratives are not written in the native language of the reader. As readers do not understand every word or have trouble reading some unknown expressions, transportation into the narrative might be impeded and the loss of attention for real-world surroundings might not take place. An indication of the accuracy of this expectation is demonstrated by the study of Wissmath et al. (2009) who found that a film dubbed and/or subtitled in the native language of the participants evoked a higher level of transportation into the narrative, compared to subtitling in a foreign language (mixing L1 and L2). However, this study did not provide a version only in L2 (without native subtitles) which might even have stronger negative effects on transportation, as full exposure to a foreign language could hinder immersion into the narrative. The current study aims to shed light on these possible influences of a foreign language on transportation for written narratives, as these have not been researched yet.

### *2.4. Identification*

Another underlying mechanism of narrative persuasion is identification, which shares certain features with transportation but goes beyond it by also focussing on a character rather than just the general storyline (Moyer-Gusé, 2008). Identifying themselves with characters of a

narrative means that the readers are able to adopt the perspectives of a character and replace their “personal identity and role as audience member with the identity and role of the character” (Cohen, 2001, p. 251). In other words, identification leads to “an adoption of a character’s thoughts, goals, emotions, and behaviors” (Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004, p. 318). As a consequence, identification with a character in a narrative generates beliefs and attitudes that are in line with the characters’ ones (Igartua, 2010; Hoeken, & Fiekkers, 2014) and decreases counter-arguing (Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010). De Graaf et al. (2012) showed that identification with a character can even shift attitudes of the readers into the direction of the claims generated by the narrative. In a health narrative, participants tended to either adopt a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards euthanasia, in line with the opinion the main character had in their version of the narrative.

It is expected that the language (L1 or L2) influences the way in which readers are able to identify with the characters in a narrative. The reading flow could be disrupted by poor understanding of the second language and thus hinder comprehension of a character’s feelings and motives. Furthermore, it might be possible that the perceived similarity between the reader and the character, which is an important part of identification (Slater & Rouner, 2002), is weakened. The reader might feel distanced if the character expresses him/herself in a second language of the reader (Dewaele, 2004). Although it is expected that identification with the character might be hindered by the use of a foreign language, this has not been scientifically researched yet in the context of narrative persuasion. Thus, the current study aims to address this scientific gap.

### *2.5. Narrative understanding*

The concept of narrative understanding revolves around the level of the reader’s comprehension of the events happening in a narrative (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Narrative understanding is described as a mental model which represents “settings, characters, and situations, and [is] created by combining information from the text with knowledge the reader or viewer already possesses about life in general as well as about the specific topic and genre of the narrative” (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009, p. 322). Furthermore, Busselle and Bilandzic (2008) state understanding a narrative enables identification with its characters and it is expected that high levels of narrative understanding also support the related concept transportation. Thus, narrative understanding might be an essential element in fostering transportation, identification and consequently narrative persuasion.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) name distraction as an example which could negatively affect narrative understanding because it shifts the attention away from the narrative and thus hinders comprehensibility. One possible distraction could be a foreign language, as some words might not be easily understood and have to be thought about in more detail. This, in turn, might lower the reader's attention for the narrative and make it harder to follow the storyline and understand its logical structure.

To date, the possible influence of a foreign language in narrative understanding has not been researched within the field of narrative persuasion. The current study aims to address this scientific gap.

## *2.6. Enjoyment*

Enjoyment can be defined as a “sense of pleasure that one derives from consuming media products” (Raney, 2004, p. 348). Nabi and Krcmar (2004) state that enjoyment goes beyond simply liking the content of a message as the appreciation of experiencing the media consumption plays an essential role. Also, Nabi and Krcmar (2004) showed that enjoyment can support favourable attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, which makes enjoyment relevant to study within the context of narrative persuasion.

Several studies suggest that enjoyment is closely interrelated with the other underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion transportation, identification and narrative understanding. According to Tal-Or and Cohen (2010), people who are more transported into a narrative world will consequently enjoy the content and the whole experience more than people who are not transported into the narrative. Furthermore, Bilandzic and Busselle (2011) found that transportation is one of the mechanisms that foster narrative engagement and consequently enjoyment. In addition, identification with a character of a narrative leads to a feeling of connectedness, which is one of the factors that foster enjoyment (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004). Thus, if highly liked characters experience something positive or highly disliked character experience in turn something negative, the level of enjoyment increases (Raney, 2004).

Moreover, readers need to understand the content and structure of a narrative in order to be able to enjoy it (Busselle and Bilandzic, 2009). This makes narrative understanding another precondition of enjoyment.

As suggested by Green, Brock and Kaufmann (2004), it is important to assess the factors that could hinder enjoyment. One possible factor could be a foreign language. Wissmath et al. (2009) researched the influence of foreign language (dubbing and subtitling) on the level of enjoyment. Although the authors did not find an effect of language on

enjoyment, in contrast, the current study expects that language of the narrative could affect enjoyment. The first reason for this expectation is based on a flaw in the study of Wissmath et al. (2009) where the authors did not use an all L2 version of the filmed narrative. Exposing readers to an all L2 version of a narrative could hinder the comprehensibility, which in turn may impede enjoyment of the content. Furthermore, if something like a foreign language distracts the reader there is not enough cognitive capacity left to focus on the narrative, which in turn could hinder enjoyment of the content (Green, Brock & Kaufmann, 2004). The second reason is based on the link between enjoyment and felt emotion (Raney, 2011) and it has been found that emotions were felt less strong when exposed to a medium in a foreign language (Dewaele, 2013; Puntoni, De Langhe, & Van Osselaer, 2009; Hsu, Jacobs & Conrad, 2015).

Although, the above named reasons lead to the expectation that enjoyment might be hindered by the use of a foreign language, this has not been researched yet for a written narrative including an all L2 version. The current study aims to shed light on the influence of language (L1/L2) on enjoyment for a narrative written either fully in L1 or L2 and thus address the scientific gap.

### *2.7. Language and narrative persuasion*

In today's globalised world more and more texts are presented in the lingua franca English rather than the receivers' native language. Psycholinguistic theory shows that texts in a foreign language are processed differently than words and concepts in a person's first language, which implies that narratives in L2 could be perceived differently than narratives written in L1.

The revised hierarchical model (Kroll & De Groot, 1997) shows that concepts encountered in L2 are processed and stored differently than concepts encountered in L1. Meaning to concepts encountered in L2 is given via an association of the word in the native language. As a consequence, processing an L2 message at the conceptual level is less likely than processing an L1 message conceptually, and this has an effect on how deep the message is stored in memory (Ahn & La Ferle, 2008). Thus, it could be expected that texts in L2 are less likely to be fluently read, as the processing of the L2 words is more complicated.

It has been found that receivers evaluate texts written in a foreign language more negatively than texts in their first language. For example, television advertisements in Italy, Germany and Spain evoked a more positive attitude towards the advertisements and presented brands when they were presented in the native language rather than English (Pagani, Goldsmith, & Perracchio, 2015). An explanation for the negative attitude towards English

could be that words in L2 are perceived as less emotional (Dewaele, 2004; Puntoni, De Langhe, & Van Osselaer, 2009). In a study by Dewaele (2013), participants rated their L1 as more useful, colourful, rich and emotional than their second language. This is supported by Hsu Jacobs and Conrad (2015), who found in their brain activity study that emotionally loaded passages from the Harry Potter books elicited more brain activity when they were written in the first language of the reader.

On the other hand, a few studies published results that oppose the afore-mentioned negative influence of a foreign language on the perception of the reader. Van Meurs, Korzilius, Planken, and Fairley (2007) showed that Dutch participants had a more positive attitude towards job titles in Dutch but still regarded English as prestigious and international. Furthermore, it was shown in a study by Planken, van Meurs and Radlinska, (2010) that English advertisements in glossy magazines led to the same positive evaluation of the advertisement and product/brand than advertisements in the native language of the participants. Thus, it is not yet clear what kind of effect language has on the readers' evaluation of different types of media, such as advertisements, films or narratives.

As a consequence, it is important to examine the influence of language (L1/L2) within the field of narrative persuasion, as it has not yet been investigated in what the actual influence of a narrative in a foreign language would be on transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment. One of the few studies providing results on the under-researched field of influence of foreign language on narrative persuasion is by Wissmath et al. (2009), who looked at the effects of dubbing and subtitling on transportation, enjoyment, flow and spatial presence in a film. The authors found that dubbing resulted in the highest levels of transportation compared to subtitling and dubbing with foreign subtitles (Wissmath et al., 2009). This suggests that texts in a foreign language (dubbing with foreign subtitles) could be a disturbing factor in the process of transportation. Enjoyment was not affected by language of the narrative in the study by Wissmath et al. (2009). However, as mentioned before, the authors did not include an all L2 version which could have stronger effects on enjoyment.

The current study will, in addition to transportation and enjoyment, focus on different variables than Wissmath et al. (2009), namely identification and narrative understanding. These variables are interrelated and have been found to create or change the attitude towards objects and characters presented in the narrative (Beentjes et al., 2009). In order to gain insight into not yet investigated potential effects of L1 versus L2 on written narrative persuasion in a corporate narrative and to address the existing scientific gap, the following research question was developed:

*RQ1: To what extent does language of the narrative (L1 or L2) influence readers' transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company?*

## *2.8. Germany and the Netherlands*

To gain more insight into the potential influence of language (L1/L2) on the underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion in a corporate narrative, the current study will compare this potential influence in two countries. As Beentjes et al. (2009) showed, narrative persuasion that works for participants from one country does not automatically work for participants from another one. Therefore, it is essential to take nationality as a possible influencing factor into account, as it might have an effect on how readers perceive narratives in their own and a foreign language.

In order to look at these possible differences for different nationalities in more detail, the influence of language on narrative persuasion for German and Dutch readers will be examined. The two countries were chosen as both populations have a high enough English level to read a narrative but still significantly differ with respect to English proficiency (EF English proficiency index, 2016; Man, Weinkauff, Tsang, & Sin, 2004). According to EF standards, the Netherlands has a very high English proficiency, being first out of 70 participating countries, while Germans rank ninth with a high level of English proficiency (EF English proficiency index, 2016). This is in line with findings from the Eurobarometer (2012) which showed that Germans estimate their ability to speak another language lower in comparison with their Dutch neighbors. One reason for the very high proficiency of Dutch people could be familiarity with the English language due to constant exposure in their daily lives (Puntoni et al., 2009). As a consequence, the German readers, contrary to the Dutch ones, might have more trouble in understanding the content due to their lower proficiency. As a result, the German readers could get more easily distracted by unknown words or expressions, which could hinder the level of transportation into the narrative, as well as an identification with its characters, the level of narrative understanding, how much they enjoy the narrative and the development of a positive attitude towards the company. Consequently, the current study predicts that the English version of the narrative will evoke higher levels of transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment and consequently a more positive attitude towards the company for Dutch readers in comparison to German ones. For the L1 versions, the current study predicts no differences between the Dutch and the German

readers. As these are only expectations and to date no scientific research exists within this field, the following research question is used to shed light on this point:

*RQ2: To what extent does language of the narrative (L1/L2) influence transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company differently for German and Dutch readers?*

The potential difference between German and Dutch readers with respect to the influence of foreign language narrative on transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company lies, according to the existing literature (EF English proficiency index, 2016; Man et al., 2004), in the different level of English proficiency of the people in these two countries. To further explore this underlying principle, it will be tested whether the level of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company when reading a narrative in English as an L2 can be predicted by the reader's level of English proficiency:

*RQ3: To what extent can English language proficiency predict the level of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company for German and Dutch readers of a narrative in L2?*

As the current study will make use of a corporate narrative, which is a less frequently used form of a narrative, it will be additionally examined whether the same underlying mechanisms as in non-corporate narratives lead to narrative persuasion. In the case of a corporate narrative, beliefs and attitudes will be, as described above, operationalised as the attitude towards the company. Furthermore, the current study is the first one to investigate the possible effects of transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment on the attitude towards the company all together, as in most studies only one or two underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion were examined (e.g. De Graaf et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2013) Thus, it is essential to investigate which underlying mechanisms and to what extent influence the attitude towards the company in a corporate narrative. In order to shed light on this under-researched form of narratives, the following research question was developed:

*RQ4: To what extent can transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment predict the attitude towards the company in a corporate narrative?*

### **3. Theoretical and practical relevance**

Even though the study by Wissmath et al. (2009) found important results for the effect of language of the narrative on the underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion, it also has some shortcomings which will be addressed in the current study. The authors did not include an all L2 version, which makes it difficult to really assess the effects of a foreign language on narrative persuasion. Furthermore, the concepts of identification and narrative understanding, which are deemed to be essential for narrative persuasion (e.g. De Graaf et al., 2012; Bussele & Bilandzic, 2009), were not researched. The current study will address these shortcomings and furthermore add a cross-cultural component by comparing two countries. As the two nationalities (Dutch/German) significantly differ in their English proficiency level which could, as described above, influence the evaluation of a narrative in a foreign language, the current study will make an important contribution to the research fields of both narrative persuasion and foreign language influence. Furthermore, a corporate narrative will be used in the current study, for which four underlying mechanisms and their possible influence on the attitude towards the company will be examined together. In doing so, the current study will be one of the first to determine which underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion might be more influential than others. Findings will not only fill a scientific gap in this under-researched field but also have a practical relevance for the business world. Globally operating companies have to be aware of the possible influence of language (L1/L2) on the receivers of a corporate message (Krishna, & Ahluwalia, 2008). This study will be able to assess whether narratives, which could for example be found on a company's corporate website, are more effective (high level of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and consequently a more positive attitude towards the company) in the native language or a second language of the readers. This new knowledge would be especially useful for multinational companies which have to decide to whether linguistically adapt their marketing communications or whether to go for a standardised approach.

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Materials

In order to address the above mentioned research questions, three versions of a corporate narrative were developed: One version in Dutch (L1), one in German (L1) and one in English (L2). With the help of translation-back-translation (Craig & Douglas, 2005) from native speakers of each language, it was secured that all versions consist of the same content and had the same level of idiomaticity. The original version of the narrative was created in English, checked by a native English speaker and then translated by native speakers into German and Dutch. Other native speakers of Dutch and German translated the narrative back into English. Next, the first English version was compared to the two new English versions, to check if the versions were equivalent enough. Any dissimilarities among the three versions in English, Dutch and German concerning the content, logic or idiomaticity were discussed with native speakers and adapted if necessary. The narrative dealt with a founding story of the imaginary company *Perfect Cereal*. The company was founded by two childhood friends and became successful after solving different problems. The product developed by *Perfect Cereal* was loosely based on mymüsli.com (<https://www.mymuesli.com/>). However, the narrative was not based on the founding story of mymuesli.com but written by the author herself in order to avoid familiarity with the brand and pre-existing attitudes. Food (individually arranged cereal) was chosen as a product in order to be equally appealing for all readers. Additionally, no prior knowledge about technical or other issues was needed to understand what the product was about. The names of the characters (Tom and Oscar) are known in all three languages and place names were left out on purpose in order to avoid place preferences.

A pre-test with four Dutch and seven German native speakers was conducted in order to test whether the native and English versions of the corporate narrative were engaging to evoke high levels of transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment and to evoke a positive attitude towards the company. The pretest revealed that all versions of the narratives were compelling and funny enough but too long to stay focused. After the shortening, based on the indication of the pre-test, the English narrative consisted of 1,187, the Dutch narrative of 1,212 and the German narrative of 1,161 words. All versions can be found in Appendix A.

### 4.2. Subjects

In total, 146 participants took part in the experiment. As only Dutch or German participants were included in the experiment, two respondents had to be left out of the final analysis as

they indicated to have a nationality other than Dutch or German. Furthermore, four other participants had to be excluded from the analysis as they indicated they either have not read the narrative or were younger than 18 years. Thus, 70 valid questionnaires were collected from Dutch participants and 70 valid questionnaires from German participants. This means that 35 Dutch participants read the narrative in their native language Dutch and 35 in English, and 35 German participants read the narrative in their native language German and the other 35 in English.

The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 73 with a mean of 27 ( $M = 26.64$ ,  $SD = 10.39$ ). Of all participants 75% (105) were female. The level of education ranged from secondary school to a Master's degree at a university, with a Master's degree being the most frequent level (42.1 %). The participant's self-assessed English proficiency ranged from bad to very good, with very good being the most frequent level ( $M = 5.77$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ; on a 7-point scale where 1 is very bad and 7 is very good). The tested English proficiency based on the LexTALE test ranged from 28.00 (which equals a proficiency level of A1) to 60.00 (which equals a proficiency level of C2), with 43.00 and 49.00 (which equals a proficiency level of C1) being the most frequent scores ( $M = 46.48$ ,  $SD = 7.29$ ; on a scoring system where 0 indicates no points and 60 equals a perfect score).

A two-way analysis of variance with nationality (Dutch/German) and language of the narrative (L1/L2) as factors showed no significant effect of nationality ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ) or language of the narrative on age of the participants ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ) and no relation of the interaction between nationality and language of the narrative ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). Hence, the participants' age was equally distributed in each group. A Chi-square showed no significant relation between gender and the four experimental groups (Dutch participants who read the narrative in Dutch, Dutch participants who read the narrative in English, German participants who read the narrative in German and German participants who read the narrative in English) ( $\chi^2(3) = 11.33$ ,  $p = .721$ ). A Chi-square showed no significant relation between educational level and the four experimental groups ( $\chi^2(12) = 16.18$ ,  $p = .183$ ). Furthermore, a two-way analysis of variance with nationality (Dutch/German) and language of the narrative as factors showed no significant effect of nationality or language of the narrative on self-assessed English proficiency ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ) and no interaction between nationality and language of the narrative ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). A two way analysis of variance showed a with nationality (Dutch/German) and language of the narrative as factors showed no significant relation of language of the narrative on tested English proficiency ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). However, the analysis showed a significant effect of nationality on tested English proficiency ( $F(3, 136) = 8.57$ ,  $p$

=.004,  $\eta^2 = .06$ ). Dutch participants ( $M = 48.24$ ,  $SD = 5.90$ ) were shown to have a higher tested English proficiency than German participants ( $M = 44.71$ ,  $SD = 8.12$ ). There was no significant interaction effect found for language of the narrative and nationality ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ).

#### 4.3.Design

A 2 (Language of the narrative Native/Non-native) x 2 (Nationality German/Dutch) between-subject design was used.

#### 4.4.Instruments

An online questionnaire was used to test the five dependent variables transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment. It was made sure that every participant could answer the questions in their native language by developing a German and a Dutch questionnaire. Both questionnaires can be found in Appendix B. Whenever necessary, the questions were adjusted from film or other media to a written narrative.

*Identification* was measured with a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from completely disagree to completely agree) adapted from Cohen (2001). A sample item was “I had the feeling I went through what Tom went through”. Two items “While viewing program X, I felt as if I was part of the action” and “While viewing program X, I forgot myself and was fully absorbed” were left out from the original scale, as they overlapped too much with the transportation scale used for this experiment. The reliability of identification comprising eight items was good ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

*Transportation* was measured with a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from completely disagree to completely agree) adapted from Green and Brock (2000). A sample item was “While reading the story, it was easy for me to imagine that the events were happening there”. The reliability of transportation comprising nine items was acceptable ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

*Narrative understanding* was measured with a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from completely disagree to completely agree) adapted from Bussele and Bilandzic (2009). A sample item was “It was understandable why the characters behaved the way they did”. The item “I think it was hard to understand what happened in the narrative” was added by the author. The reliability of narrative understanding comprising four items was acceptable ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

*Enjoyment* was measured with a 1-item Likert scale (ranging from not at all to very much) adapted from Wissmath et al. (2009). The item was “How much did you enjoy the

story?”. The reliability was not calculated as the scale only had one item, which is adequate to measure enjoyment, according to Wissmath et al. (2009).

*Attitude towards the company* was measured with a 7-point semantic differentials scale (Friendly - unfriendly, positive - negative, appealing - not appealing, interesting - uninteresting, attractive – unattractive, adapted from Matthes, Schemer and Wirth (2007). The reliability of attitude comprising five items was good ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

English proficiency was measured with two different variables namely self-assessed proficiency and a proficiency level measured by a language test the participants were asked to complete. This was done in order to get a realistic and complete picture of the English skills of the Dutch and German participants. *Self-assessed English proficiency* was measured with a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from very bad to very good) adapted from Luna, Ringberg and Peracchio (2008) in which participants indicated their own writing, speaking, listening and reading skills. The reliability of self-assessed English proficiency comprising four items was excellent ( $\alpha = .90$ ). *Tested English proficiency* was measured with the LexTALE test from Lemhöfer and Broersma (2012). Before taking the test, participants received the instruction that they had to determine whether 60 series of letter strings were existing English words or not. If participants were unsure whether a series of letter was an existing word or not, they were advised to indicate “no”. An example of an existing word is festivity and an example of a non-existing word is magrity. Furthermore, participants were informed that it did not matter how fast they completed the test and that the British spelling was used (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012). At the end of the survey, participants could see their individual score (ranging from 0.00 to 60.00).

For all scales with  $\alpha > .70$  composite means were calculated.

#### 4.5.Procedure

All participants of the experiment were contacted online via email or social media, asked to participate in the experiment, and provided with a link to the online questionnaire developed in Qualtrics. The data was collected between 26<sup>th</sup> May and 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Participants were informed about the study without revealing too much information about the actual purpose. The instructions about reading the narrative were kept as neutral as possible, as Green and Brock (2000) found that different types of instructions could influence the way people read a narrative and the level of transportation into the text. For the German version of the questionnaire the instructions were as follows: “Während des Experiments bekommen Sie eine kleine Geschichte über Tom und Oskar zu lesen und werden gebeten im Anschluss einen

kurzen Fragebogen auszufüllen.”. In the Dutch version, the participants were informed like this: “Tijdens het experiment krijgt u een kort verhaal over Tom en Oscar te lezen en daarna wordt u gevraagd om een korte vragenlijst in te vullen.”. The participants were additionally ensured that their data would be kept confidential, their participation was voluntary and it was possible to withdraw from the questionnaire at any moment without negative consequences. After agreeing to these conditions, participants were randomly assigned and exposed to a narrative in either their native language (Dutch/German) or in English. After reading the narrative, participants were asked to answer questions about how much they were transported into the narrative, whether they identified with the character, understood the narrative and its causal relations, whether they enjoyed reading the narrative and how they evaluated the company presented. Furthermore, the level of English proficiency was assessed with the two described measurements. Moreover, questions about the participants’ demographics such as age, gender, nationality and educational level were asked. Lastly, participants had the possibility to leave their email address behind to be able to win a chocolate package. On average, it took participants about 18 to 20 minutes to complete the experiment.

#### *4.6. Statistical treatment*

In order to test whether language of the narrative could have an effect on transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company and whether this possible influence was different for German and Dutch readers, a two-way ANOVA with as factors language of the narrative (Native/Non-native) and nationality (German/Dutch) was carried out. Furthermore, to examine to what extent English language proficiency could predict transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company, a multiple regression analyses with self-assessed and tested English proficiency as predictors was conducted. Lastly, a regression analysis with transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment as predictors, was used to examine whether these variables could predict attitude towards the company in a corporate narrative.

## 5. Results

In the following section, the results will be discussed per research question for each dependent variable.

### 5.1. The influence of language of the narrative and nationality on transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company (RQ1 + RQ2)

Table 1 shows an overview of the means and standard deviations of participants' transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company in function of language of the narrative and nationality.

Table 1. Transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company in function of nationality (Dutch/German) and language of the narrative (L1/L2) (1 = very low, 7 = very high) ( $N = 140$ )

	Dutch		German		Total
	L1	L2	L1	L2	
	$M(SD) n = 35$	$M(SD) n = 35$	$M(SD) n = 35$	$M(SD) n = 35$	$M(SD) n = 140$
Transportation	4.36 (0.79)	4.54 (0.88)	4.90 (0.89)	5.05 (0.77)	4.71 (0.87)
Identification	5.06 (0.84)	5.50 (0.72)	5.38 (1.11)	5.50 (0.95)	5.36 (0.93)
Narrative Understanding	5.53 (0.88)	5.53 (0.88)	6.18 (0.87)	5.66 (1.27)	5.46 (1.01)
Enjoyment	4.60 (1.12)	4.77 (1.06)	4.97 (1.18)	4.80 (1.32)	4.79 (1.17)
Attitude towards the company	5.22 (1.02)	5.55 (1.19)	5.43 (1.00)	5.62 (0.97)	5.46 (1.05)

#### 5.1.1 Transportation

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the narrative and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect of language of the narrative on transportation ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). A two-way analysis of variance showed a significant main effect of nationality on transportation ( $F(3, 136) = 13.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$ ). German participants ( $M = 4.97, SD = 0.83$ ) were shown to be more transported into the narrative than Dutch participants ( $M = 4.45,$

$SD = 0.83$ ). The interaction between language of the narrative and nationality was not statistically significant ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). A one-samples t-test showed that the overall level of transportation was significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ) ( $t(139) = 23.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *5.1.2 Identification*

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the narrative and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect of language of the narrative on identification ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). Additionally, nationality was found to have no significant main effect on identification ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). There was no significant interaction effect found for language of the narrative and nationality ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). A one-samples t-test showed that the overall level of identification was significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) ( $t(139) = 23.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *5.1.3 Narrative understanding*

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the narrative and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect of language of the narrative on narrative understanding ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). Nationality was found to have a significant main effect on narrative understanding ( $F(3, 136) = 5.44$ ,  $p = .021$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ ). German participants ( $M = 5.92$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ) were shown to have a better understanding of the narrative than Dutch participants ( $M = 5.53$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ). The interaction between language of the narrative and nationality was not statistically significant ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). A one-samples t-test showed that the overall level of narrative understanding was significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) ( $t(139) = 25.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *5.1.4 Enjoyment*

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the narrative and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect on enjoyment for language of the narrative ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ) or for nationality ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). Additionally, no interaction was found between language of the narrative and nationality ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). A one-samples t-test showed that the overall level of enjoyment was significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $M = 4.79$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) ( $t(139) = 13.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### 5.1.5 Attitude towards the company

A two-way analysis of variance with language of the narrative and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect on attitude towards the company for language of the narrative ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ) or for nationality ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). No interaction was found between language of the narrative and nationality ( $F(3,136) < 1$ ). A one-samples t-test showed that the overall attitude towards the company was significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) ( $t(139) = 22.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### 5.2. Self-assessed and tested English proficiency as predictors of transportation, identification, narrative understanding enjoyment and attitude towards the company (RQ3)

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of participants' overall self-assessed and tested English proficiency in the English versions in function of nationality. A one-samples t-test showed that the overall level of self-assessed English proficiency was significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $M = 5.77$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ) ( $t(139) = 24.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, a one-samples t-test showed that the overall level of tested English proficiency was significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $M = 46.48$ ,  $SD = 7.29$ ) ( $t(139) = 26.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 2. Self-assessed English proficiency (1 = very low, 7 = very high) and tested English proficiency (0 = very low, 60 = very high) in function of nationality (Dutch/German) ( $N = 140$ )

	Dutch	German	Total
	$M(SD) n = 70$	$M(SD) n = 70$	$M(SD) n = 140$
Self-assessed English proficiency	5.85 (0.87)	5.69 (1.09)	5.77 (0.99)
Tested English proficiency	48.24 (5.90)	44.71 (7.29)	46.48 (7.29)

Several multiple regression analyses were carried out in order to check whether self-assessed and tested English proficiency predicted transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and the attitude towards the company for the participants who read the English version of the narrative. The two measures of English proficiency, self-assessed English proficiency and tested English proficiency, did not have a high enough Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .49$ ) in order to be computed into one variable. To examine whether the two

measures were connected at all, a correlation analysis was carried out. A significant positive correlation was found between self-assessed English proficiency and tested English proficiency ( $r(70) = .61, p < .001$ ). As a consequence, caution has to be paid when examining both measurements for English proficiency in the same regression model, as a high correlation between two predictors makes it difficult to examine which one actually predicts the outcome variable (Field, 2013, pp. 324-326). As for all outcome variables the Collinearity assumption (VIF and Eigenvalue) was not violated, both measures of English proficiency could be placed in the same regression model (Field, 2013, pp. 324-326).

### *5.2.1 Transportation*

A multiple regression analysis showed that the variables entered, self-assessed and tested English proficiency, could not explain the variance in transportation ( $F(2, 67) < 1$ ). Neither self-assessed English proficiency ( $B = .14, p = .345$ ) nor tested English proficiency ( $B = -.02, p = .201$ ) were significant predictors ( $F(2, 67) < 1$ ).

### *5.2.2 Identification*

A multiple regression analysis showed that the variables entered, self-assessed and tested English proficiency, could not explain the variance in identification ( $F(2, 67) < 1$ ). Neither self-assessed English proficiency ( $B = .05, p = .731$ ) nor tested English proficiency ( $B = -.00, p = .754$ ) were significant predictors.

### *5.2.3 Narrative understanding*

A multiple regression analysis showed that the variables entered, self-assessed and tested English proficiency, could not explain the variance in narrative understanding ( $F(2, 67) < 1$ ). Neither self-assessed English proficiency ( $B = .28, p = .122$ ) nor tested English proficiency ( $B = -.00, p = .949$ ) were significant predictors.

### *5.2.4 Enjoyment*

A multiple regression analysis showed that the variables entered, self-assessed and tested English proficiency, could not explain the variance in enjoyment ( $F(2, 67) < 1$ ). Neither self-assessed English proficiency ( $B = -.027, p = .895$ ) nor tested English proficiency ( $B = .004, p = .870$ ) were significant predictors.

### 5.2.5 Attitude towards the company

A multiple regression analysis showed that the variables entered, self-assessed and tested English proficiency, could not explain the variance in attitude towards the company ( $F(2, 67) < 1$ ). Neither self-assessed English proficiency ( $B = .14, p = .454$ ) nor tested English proficiency ( $B = -.02, p = .365$ ) were significant predictors.

### 5.3. Transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment as predictors for attitude towards the company (RQ4)

In order to examine whether transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment function as underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion for a corporate narrative, it was tested whether the above mentioned variables could predict attitude towards the company. A multiple regression analysis showed that the four variables entered in the model, transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment, explained 18 % of the variance in attitude towards the company ( $F(4, 135) = 7.18, p < .001$ ). Enjoyment was shown to be a significant predictor of attitude towards the company ( $B = .25, p = .007$ ). This means when enjoyment goes up with one point on the scale used, attitude towards the company goes up with .25, given that that all other variables are kept constant.

However, transportation ( $B = .03, p = .818$ ), identification ( $B = .21, p = .057$ ) and narrative understanding ( $B = -.01, p = .891$ ) were not significant predictors of attitude towards the company. Table 3 shows the regression analysis for the significant predictor of attitude towards the company.

Table 3. Regression analysis for enjoyment as predictor of attitude towards the company ( $N = 140$ ).

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
Enjoyment	.25	.09	.28 *
$R^2$	.18		
$F$	7.18		

\*  $p < .001$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .15$

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

First, this section will restate the purpose of the current study and then summarise the results for each research question. In doing so, the findings will be compared to the existing framework of literature and explanations will be described for unexpected results.

Second, the discussion will focus on limitations of the present study as well as theoretical and practical implications of the results and possibilities to further explore the field of narrative persuasion with future research.

It is well known that narratives are a successful way to influence someone's attitudes and beliefs (e.g. Murphy et al., 2013). However, in today's globalised world narratives are read by people with different linguistic backgrounds and not always in their mother tongue. Thus, the current study attempted to examine how language of the narrative (L1/L2) could influence the underlying mechanisms transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment of narrative persuasion (which was in this case operationalised as attitude towards the company). In doing so, the countries Germany and the Netherlands were compared in order to investigate whether English proficiency could be a predictor of possible differences between the German and Dutch readers with respect to their evaluation of the narrative in a foreign language.

Furthermore, the current study made use of a corporate narrative to examine whether the same patterns could be found as in the literature based on non-corporate narratives. Thus, it was tested whether transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment could predict the attitude towards the company in the corporate narrative in order to make a contribution in the fields of narrative persuasion and foreign language. Moreover, the current study aimed to add another innovative perspective to the ongoing standardisation versus adaptation debate within international communication (Pagani et al., 2015) by examining the influence of language of a corporate narrative.

### *6.1 The influence of language of the narrative on transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company (RQ1)*

The first research question examined to what extent language of the narrative (L1/L2) could influence readers' level of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company. It was expected that readers who read the narrative in their native language would be more transported into the narrative, identify more with the

characters, have a better understanding of the narrative, enjoy reading it more and consequently have a more positive attitude towards the company presented in the narrative. However, these expectations could not be confirmed, as language of the narrative had no influence on the tested variables. This means that it did not matter for the participants whether they read the narrative in their native language or English as a foreign language. This finding is partly in line with existing literature. The findings of the current study are in line with research that has found no differences between the use of English or a native language in advertisements (Planken, van Meurs & Radlinska, 2010). However, it contrasts suggestions in the literature that texts in a foreign language would be perceived as less positive (Pagani et al., 2015), less emotional (Dewaele, 2013,2004; Puntoni et al., 2009) and less easy to cognitively evaluate (Kroll & De Groot, 1997; Ahn & La Ferle, 2008) and thus harder to understand and evaluated as less positive than texts in the reader's native language.

The only study within the field of narrative persuasion by Wissmath et al. (2009), yielded mixed results. As in the current study, Wissmath et al. (2009) did not find any influence of language (dubbing/subtitling) on enjoyment. However, the viewers of the filmed narrative had a lower level of transportation when they were exposed to a version with subtitles in a foreign language. The study by Wissmath et al. (2009) used a film and not a written narrative, which could also have had an influence on the possibility to engage with a narrative in general and thus explain the different findings in comparison to the current study. In the filmed narrative, the L2 version consisted of a voice-over in the native language of the participants in combination with subtitles in a foreign language. The combination of the two languages could have led to a greater distraction from the narrative than when only being exposed to one language at the same time in the written narrative. Consequently, it might be harder to get transported into the narrative world when viewing a film where two languages are combined than when reading a narrative with only one foreign language.

Another possible explanation for the unexpected findings could be that even though the German and Dutch participants significantly differed in their tested level of English proficiency, both groups of participants had a high self-assessed and tested English proficiency. Also, the confidence of the German participants in their own English skills can be found in the fact that they rated themselves to be as good in writing, speaking, listening and reading in English as the Dutch participants. This could imply that all readers had a high enough knowledge of English to comprehend the narrative well enough and did not let the foreign language distract them from engaging with the narrative. As a consequence, readers were able to get transported, identify with the characters, have a high understanding of the

narrative, enjoy reading it and a positive attitude towards the company, regardless of the language of the narrative. This can be seen in the results, where all above mentioned variables were significantly higher than the mid-point of their scales. This means that the narrative was successful regardless of the language of the narrative.

Another explanation might be that attitudes towards English as a foreign language are changing due to constant exposure. People get more used to exposure to a foreign language, especially English, in their daily lives (Puntoni et al., 2009). As a consequence, people might get so habituated to English as a foreign language in their lives that they perceive it more similar to their native language. This could explain why the narratives were equally perceived and evaluated similarly regardless of whether the native or the English version was read.

### *6.2 The influence of nationality on transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company (RQ2)*

The second research question investigated whether nationality (German/ Dutch) could influence the level of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company on the bases of a differing English proficiency. It was expected that Dutch participants, due to their higher English proficiency level (EF English proficiency index, 2016), would have a higher level of the above mentioned variables in comparison to their German counterparts, whereas both nationalities would equally engage with their native version of the narrative.

However, the findings did not support this expectation. For identification, enjoyment and attitude towards the company no differences were found between the two nationalities. As the levels of identification and enjoyment were very high and the attitude towards the company positive, it might be concluded that this narrative has worked for both nationalities with respect to these variables. The English proficiency level was for both nationalities high enough to properly engage with the narrative and could have made the participants perceive the English narrative similar to the narrative in their native language, which might explain why no differences were found between the nationalities for identification, enjoyment and attitude towards the company.

Unexpectedly, the German readers were more transported into the narrative and had a higher narrative understanding for both the German and English version of the narrative. A possible explanation for this finding could be that Germans in general are more used to reading narratives (GfK, 2017). The market research institute GfK found that Germans read more books on a daily basis (50%) than their Dutch counterparts (42%). Furthermore, there

are fewer German non readers (7%) in comparison to Dutch non readers (16%) (GfK, 2017). This higher familiarity with reading and consequently narratives in general might explain why the German participants were more motivated to engage with the narrative and as a consequence were more transported. Also, Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala and Cox (1999) showed that reading amount together with other motivational factors positively influenced the text comprehension of students from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. As a consequence, the higher reading amount (GfK, 2017) and the resulting enhanced text comprehensibility (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala & Cox, 1999) could explain why German participants had a higher narrative understanding than Dutch participants.

Another possible explanation for the found differences between the Dutch and German readers with regard to the level of transportation and narrative understanding, with the German participants having a higher level for both underlying mechanisms, could be that nationalities might generally differ in willingness engage with a narrative. Murphy et al. (2013) found that Mexican and African Americans were more drawn towards a narrative than, a non-narrative form of information giving in comparison with European Americans and also had higher levels of identification and transportation. This indicates that some cultures in general might be more open towards narratives than others. Unfortunately, Murphy et al. (2013) did not give an explanation for the found ethnical differences with respect to transportation. The general trend, however, that nationalities differ in their willingness to engage with a narrative is still an important indication that could partly explain the found difference for transportation and narrative understanding.

A final explanation might be in the fact that the narrative of the current study is a corporate narrative. Green (2004) states that readers who have a higher familiarity with the theme of the narrative might be easier transported due to a higher intrinsic interest into the narrative. Furthermore, familiarity with the theme could lead to less unknown words that might be encountered and make it easier for readers to follow the structure of the narrative, which could foster narrative understanding. As the cultural values of Germans are more concentrated on living for work than working to live (Claes & Gerritsen, 2002, pp. 64-69), they might be more interested in reading a narrative about a company in their free time than Dutch readers. This greater familiarity with the corporate theme and the consequently greater interest could explain why German readers have a better understanding of the narrative and are more transported.

### *6.3 Self-assessed and tested English proficiency as predictors of transportation, identification, narrative understanding enjoyment and attitude towards the company (RQ3)*

In order to see whether self-assessed and tested English proficiency could be an explanation for possible differences between the evaluation of a narrative, it was investigated whether English proficiency could predict the level of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and the attitude towards the company for readers who read the English version of the narrative.

Unexpectedly, English proficiency did not predict the above mentioned variables, which means that the level of English proficiency does not affect how much the readers were transported, identified with the characters, understood the narrative, enjoyed reading it and evaluated the company. A possible explanation could be that the English proficiency levels of both nationalities were, as mentioned before, high enough to properly engage with the English version of the narrative (EF English proficiency index, 2016; Man et al., 2004), which could enable the participants to perceive the narrative written in English similar in a similar way as the narrative written in their native language.

### *6.4 Transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment as predictors for attitude towards the company (RQ4)*

In order to examine whether the underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion also work for corporate narratives and if some mechanisms might be more prominent than others, it was tested if the levels of transportation, identification, narrative understanding and enjoyment could predict the attitude towards the company. The findings showed that unexpectedly only enjoyment could predict the attitude towards the company.

The current study found that enjoyment significantly predicted the attitude towards the company. This means that readers, who enjoyed reading the narrative more, also had a more positive attitude towards the company presented in the narrative. This is in line with the study by Nabi and Krcmar (2004) who suggested that enjoyment of a medium can support favourable attitudes.

For transportation, identification and narrative understanding, the findings are not in line with previous literature, in which several studies have found these variables to have an effect on attitude and beliefs of the readers (De Graaf et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2013; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010; Cohen, 2001; Green & Brock, 2000). These divergent findings might be explained by the corporate theme of the narrative, which could require other underlying mechanisms in order to evoke narrative persuasion than in for example health

communication narratives. Corporate narratives could for example be more easily perceived as texts with a persuasive goal than other forms of narratives. As a consequence, enjoyment might have an essential role while reading a corporate narrative as it could overshadow the persuasive goal of the text, which in turn could foster the development of a positive attitude towards a company (Mehta, 2000).

Since the model of the regression analyses only predicted 18% of the variance in attitude towards the company, it might be possible that other mechanisms in addition to enjoyment influence the attitude towards the company in corporate narratives. An interesting variable to further explore what influences the attitude towards the company in corporate narratives, might be felt emotion as it was found to correlate with enjoyment (Raney, 2011). This idea for further research will be explained in more detail in the next section.

### *6.5 Limitations and further research*

The current study carefully decided on its methodological procedure and orientated itself on the ethical standards of this research field by only including grown-up participants in the experiment who were taking part voluntarily and were informed that they could withdraw from the experiment at any time without facing negative consequences. However, the current study still has some limitations which will be discussed in the following.

One limitation deals is the small scale of the current study. Even though important results were found, only two nationalities with both high proficiency levels in English were included. As a greater difference in English skills might have shown results in which language could be an influencing factor. In line with this, another limitation is the use of English as a foreign language in the present study. As English functions as a lingua franca (Puntoni et al., 2009), it is important to assess its influence on narratives. However, as Europe is very multilingual (Eurobarometer, 2012), the influence of another foreign language (L2 or L3) other than English, for example Spanish, would have been an interesting and useful addition. Thus, it is recommended to use other languages and participants with distinctly differing skills in those languages to add to the under-researched field of foreign language influence in narrative persuasion.

Another limitation lies in the participants' demographics as they are predominantly female and have a relatively young mean age of 27. Even though, the gender and age had no effect on the main variables in the present study, it is recommended to try to include more male participants as well as more elderly people in order to create more generalisable results.

In other studies within the field of narrative persuasion, it is common to include a control group of people who have not read the narrative in order to examine whether a exposure to a narrative can influence attitudes or story-consistent beliefs in comparison to the readers' baseline of attitudes and beliefs (De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjes, 2012; Igartua, 2010). Even though this might be complicated in the case of the current study as the attitude was measured towards an imagined company with no pre-existing attitudes, it could have been possible to examine story-consistent beliefs such as friendship and co-operation and compare those to a control group. As this was beyond the scope of the present study it is recommended to be included in further research.

Lastly, it was a flaw of the study not to include more control variables apart from educational level, age and gender, which could have given an empirical explanation for some of the surprising results. Suggestions would be to include measures about the general attitude towards the native and foreign language as van Hooft, van Meurs and Spierts (2017) found that the attitude towards English could predict the attitude towards an advertisement and the presented product.

As the current study found unexpected results that mostly contrast the existing literature in narrative persuasion and as this study is the first one to investigate the influence of language (L1/L2) in a written corporate narrative, more research is needed to add to this interesting research field.

Further research should, as mentioned above, investigate the influence of foreign languages other than English on the level of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company. As this study was the first to investigate the influence of language of the narrative in narrative persuasion and as other people might have differing language skills in other languages, more research is needed to add to this interesting research field.

Furthermore, the relationship between the underlying mechanisms should be clearly established in order to investigate which underlying mechanisms might enhance or hinder each other and which ones are most prominent for different themes in narratives, as was the case for enjoyment in the current study. Thus, it is recommended to further explore the field of narrative persuasion by testing various underlying mechanisms at the same time as Wissmath et al. (2009) did with transportation, enjoyment, spatial presence and flow or the current study with transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company.

Moreover, it could be interesting to directly compare filmed and written narratives in combination with the influence of language of the narrative as Wissmath et al. (2009) found different results with their filmed narrative in comparison to the current study which used a written narrative.

As enjoyment has been proven to be an essential element in fostering a positive attitude towards the company in a corporate narrative, this underlying mechanism should get more attention within narrative persuasion research for narratives with non-corporate themes. The findings of the current study suggest that future research should focus on enjoyment not only as an outcome of narrative persuasion (Green, Brock & Kaufmann, 2004) but also as an underlying mechanism of narrative persuasion. Vice versa, it would be helpful to add other variables to the research of corporate narratives and foreign language influence in order to further explore this under-researched form of narrative. Especially emotion might be promising for further research, as many studies found that language (L1/L2) could influence how emotional a message is perceived to be (Dewaele, 2004, 2013; Hsu et al., 2015; Puntoni et al., 2009).

As this study was the first to examine narrative persuasion within a corporate narrative, it would be interesting to see whether other narrative outcomes than attitude towards the company could be generated through a corporate narrative as well. As Murphy et al. (2013) stated, narratives are not only able to change attitudes but also influence knowledge about the content of the narrative and behavioural intentions. This could be fascinating to examine within the frame of a corporate narrative.

Furthermore, de Graaf, Sanders and Hoeken (2016) claimed that “no studies consistently varied the format in which a narrative was presented between for instance an advertising context with explicit persuasive intent and an entertainment context with implicit persuasive intent” (p. 100). Consequently, it might be interesting to investigate the possible differences between narratives with an entertainment purpose and narratives with the purpose to persuade people. In the context of corporate narratives, this suggestion for further research might be essential as it could help to investigate if corporate narratives are perceived differently than other narratives in general. Even though the corporate narrative used in this study evoked high levels of all underlying mechanisms as well as a positive attitude towards the company, a direct comparison with an implicitly persuasive narrative could reveal any differences with regard to the evaluation of a corporate narrative.

## *6.6 Theoretical and practical implications*

To conclude, the current study was the first to investigate the influence of language of a narrative on the underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion and the outcome variable towards the company in a corporate narrative for Dutch and German readers. Even though the expected results could not be confirmed, the current study has, especially with regard to the unexpected findings, strong theoretical and practical implications.

With respect to theoretical implications, the current study validates the LexTale test (Lemhöfer, & Broersma, 2012) as an appropriate measure for English proficiency. This might be especially useful when testing participants from cultures that are known to show certain patterns in answering questionnaires (Harzing, 2006). An example could be that participants from collectivistic cultures (Claes & Gerritsen, 2002, pp. 48-54) tend to use the answer options in the middle of a scale which elicits many neutral responses (Harzing, 2006). This could be, for example, the case when measuring self-assessed proficiency. In this case the LexTale test might be a convenient alternative as it is immune to culturally influenced answering habits. In the current study, the results of the LexTale test were in line with the proposed English proficiency level in the literature (EF English proficiency index, 2016) which is another indication for the accuracy of the test. Whereas a high self evaluation does not necessarily mean that a text in a foreign language is well understood (Gerritsen, Nickerson, van Hooft, van Meurs, Korzilius, Nederstigt, Starren & Crijs, 2010), a test about the English proficiency might give a better indication of the actual foreign language skills.

Language of the narrative was, contrary to the expectations based on theoretical considerations, found to have no influence on how the readers were transported into the narrative world, identified with the characters, understood the narrative, enjoyed it and what attitude they had towards the company. It can be concluded that narratives can work equally well with respect to the tested underlying mechanisms of narrative persuasion and the attitude towards the company, at least for German and Dutch readers with a high proficiency in English, which enables them to perceive a text in English in a similar way as a text written in their native language.

However, national differences with respect to transportation and narrative understanding lead to the advice for international businesses to adapt their communication to demands from different nationalities. Even if the language is no influencing factor for consumers that are highly proficient in their L2, national differences can still occur, as found in the current study. In countries where the cultural differences are even more apparent than

between Germany and the Netherlands, the preferences might differ more significantly. Thus, it might be better to adapt international business communication to the demands of the different target groups in different countries. For the ongoing debate on standardisation versus adaptation in international business communication, the current research advises to opt for an adaptation approach (Vrontis, Thrassou, & Lamprianou, 2009; Okazaki & Mueller, 2007).

With respect to international business communication, another implication can be made with respect to corporate narratives, as they are not only worthwhile studying within the field of narrative persuasion but also a useful tool within business communication. The levels of transportation, identification, narrative understanding, enjoyment and attitude towards the company were overall above average, which leads to the conclusion that a narrative with a corporate theme can work as well as narratives with a different theme. However, in the current study, only enjoyment is a significant predictor of attitude towards the company in corporate narratives. This implies that not only future research should focus on enjoyment as an outcome of narrative persuasion (Green, Brock & Kaufmann, 2004) but also that businesses that want to make use of a corporate narrative are advised to include narrative elements that foster enjoyment in order to create a narrative that can evoke a positive attitude towards the presented company. As the existing literature suggests that transportation, identification and narrative understanding can be an example of elements that foster enjoyment (e.g. Bilandzic & Busselle, 2011; Nabi & Krmar, 2004; Bussele & Bilandzic, 2009), those elements should be included in further research as well as in corporate narratives for business purposes.

The practical implications of the current study might raise an ethical concern, as people who read narratives do not know that they could be influenced in the same way as when they read an advertisement (Beentjes et al., 2009). Therefore, it is essential to use narrative persuasion either with the aim to help people (e.g. in health communication) or make it apparent to the readers what the aim of the narrative is (e.g. promoting a company) which should raise the consciousness of the reader towards a possible persuasion by the company. Corporate narrative dealing with a founding story of a company, can mostly be found on the company's website, which already should be an indication for a possible persuasive attempt. Taking these ethical standards into account, the current study makes an essential contribution within the research field of narrative persuasion and shows that corporate narratives can be a successful form of a narrative which has, as mentioned above, several implications for international business communication.

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## **Appendix**

### **Appendix A)**

#### **The English narrative                      1,187 words**

##### *All but raisins*

I love camping. When I was small, I often went on holidays with my family and experienced what was magnificent in the world. Always with us was my neighbour and best friend: Oscar. He is the funniest guy I have ever met in my life and was able to do a back flip, which earned him great respect all around the neighbourhood. Time flies: I grew up, finished school and started studying math to become a teacher. The trips with my parents became a thing of the past but, Oscar was still with me every time and in our old rusty car we went to discover the world twice a year. It was one of those legendary trips that started it all!

On our way to the beautiful beaches of France, we listened to a horrible radio spot in which a squeaky voice tried to advertise cereals with raisins as their new flavour. After a vivid discussion, Oscar and I were sure that not only did we want to make better radio ads - Why not also better cereals? Because, I mean honestly: Who would want raisins in their cereals? As Oscar and I share food as passion, it took all the remaining hours to France and the first two days of our journey to discuss what makes a perfect cereal. We thought about bananas, linseeds and blueberries or even cashew nuts combined with mango. For Oscar, it was a mix of fruity and crunchy ingredients, for me chocolate was the most important. Eventually we realised that the perfect cereal was something different for everyone. The idea behind Perfect Cereal was born.

Back home, we presented our idea to family and friends, and luckily everybody was excited about it. In our imagination we had already made one million Euros with this awesome plan. But in practice, it turned out to be more difficult than I had expected. I still had to finish my studies at university and Oscar was stuck in a nine to five job in the next town. We had very little time to work on our idea and no experience in setting up a business. At this time, I also wasn't sure whether being an entrepreneur should really be my aim in life. Could this really work? Honestly, I might have stopped at that point and now be a phenomenal and much-loved teacher, but I didn't take Oscar's enthusiasm into account. In endless meetings at his kitchen table, he convinced me that Perfect Cereal could really work and that our idea was worth fighting for. And to this day, I am still thankful for his pigheadedness.

In the following months, we put our heads together to figure out how our business could work. As we both heard our mothers' voices ringing in our heads "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day", we decided that Perfect Cereal should contribute to a healthy way of living (chocolate officially counts as healthy in small amounts!). Our range of cereals should be organic, without added flavouring or colouring, and consist of ingredients of all kinds. From bananas, sesame and figs to bits of chocolate: You can choose everything for your own perfect cereal!

We had borrowed money from family and friends to open our first storehouse. Unfortunately at the top floor of a building, which meant a lot of stair climbing for us and our first two employees. But apart from that, our business was going well. Our website was finished and Perfect Cereal could finally be ordered online! Our idea that we had worked for all these endless days and nights. Our baby. I was really glad to have started this journey with my best friend.

But then came the shock.

A few months after we started, the orders for Perfect Cereal stagnated. Everyone we had told about the business was very enthusiastic, but so far now we had not managed to properly advertise our product. “Hello. We make cereals. You can choose your own flavours online and we will send them to you”. Apparently this was not enough to work by itself. Our product needed a little help, but there was no budget left due to the high costs for shipping and storage. I could honestly never have imagined how expensive professional advertising is. On the one hand, that might explain the horrible radio commercial that inspired us, but on the other hand, that could also be the end of our dream. How could we not have seen this coming? We were really close to giving up. I clearly remember one of those sleepless nights in Oscar’s small kitchen, where we were discussing all the possible options over a cup of horrible black coffee. I was sitting sunk down on my chair, while Oscar leaned against the wooden table drumming with his fingers against his mug.

Oscar: “But what if we...”

Me:” We have already tried that.”

Oscar: “ Yes I know, Tom, but maybe my uncle can...”

Me:” How? Your uncle has no money left...no one has. Aargh! I still can’t believe that a single advertisement is so expensive to produce! I wish we could just do it ourselves!”

Oscar:” Hmm”

Me: “Do not hmm at me! We have a serious problem besides you lacking skills for making decent coffee!”

Oscar: “I was just thinking... if we cannot fix the advertising problem maybe we should try something else...What if we make our product more visible without really advertising it?”

And this is how we got our first shop. In the end Oscar’s idea was simply brilliant! Luckily, we found a shop close to the city centre for a low rent. Here, we were more visible to everyone. With the new customers who could spontaneously walk into the shop, we were able to reduce our shipping costs and increase our brand awareness. Furthermore, we didn’t have to walk 47 steps to get to our storage room anymore and could store more ingredients at smaller costs. Finally, the sales went up again. Inspired by that, we tried to find more alternative ways to advertise our cereals. We flopped with a giant inflatable cereal bowl, but the stickers with our logo on them turned out to be a huge success.

It took us another few months before we ultimately had enough money to make a real advertisement. And I do not want to brag, but it was really good! The sales reached a new high and everything was fantastic. Well, apart from the little problems every business has like delayed shipping or that your ten employees vote to get raisins into your list of ingredients (apparently there are people who really like that...). In the end, it was all thanks to the stubbornness and creativity of my best friend that our dream came true. And this is not the end, but just the start of our journey! Recently we discovered that food tastes much better at night by a campfire or under the endless blue sky - so why not give wings to our idea? Perfect Cereal to go? Here we come!

Tom

## The German narrative

1,161 words

### *Alles außer Rosinen*

Ich liebe das Campen. Als ich klein war, machte ich mit meiner Familie oft Reisen und erlebte was großartig in der Welt war. Immer bei uns war mein Nachbar und bester Freund: Oskar. Er ist der lustigste Typ, den ich je in meinem Leben getroffen habe und er konnte einen Rückwärtssalto, was ihm großen Respekt überall in der Nachbarschaft verschaffte. Die Zeit fliegt dahin: Ich wurde erwachsen, beendete die Schule und begann Mathe zu studieren, um Lehrer zu werden. Die Ausflüge mit meinen Eltern gehörten der Vergangenheit an, aber Oskar war immer noch jedes Mal bei mir und in unserem alten rostigen Auto wenn wir uns zweimal im Jahr aufmachten, um die Welt zu entdecken. Es war eine dieser legendären Reisen, die alles in Gang setzte!

Auf unserem Weg zu den schönen Stränden Frankreichs hörten wir einen furchtbaren Radiospot, in dem eine quietschende Stimme versuchte, für Müsli mit neuem Rosinengeschmack zu werben. Nach einer angeregten Diskussion waren Oskar und ich sicher, dass wir nicht nur bessere Radiowerbung machen wollten – Warum nicht auch besseres Müsli? Denn, mal ehrlich: Wer will Rosinen in seinem Müsli? Da Oskar und ich Essen als Leidenschaft teilen, dauerte es die restlichen Stunden bis nach Frankreich und die beiden ersten Tage unserer Reise, um zu diskutieren, was das perfekte Müsli ausmacht. Wir dachten an Bananen, Leinsamen und Blaubeeren oder sogar Cashewnüsse, kombiniert mit Mango. Für Oskar war es ein Mix aus fruchtigen und knusprigen Zutaten, für mich war Schokolade das Wichtigste. Letztendlich wurde uns klar, dass das perfekte Müsli für jeden etwas anderes ist. Die Idee hinter *Perfect Cereal* war geboren.

Zurück zu Hause stellten wir unsere Idee Familie und Freunden vor und glücklicherweise waren alle davon begeistert. In unserer Fantasie hatten wir schon eine Million Euro mit diesem super Plan verdient. Aber in der Praxis stellte es sich als viel schwieriger heraus, als ich erwartet hatte. Ich musste noch mein Studium an der Universität beenden und Oskar war in einem nine to five job in der nächsten Stadt gefangen. Wir hatten sehr wenig Zeit, um an unserer Idee zu arbeiten und keine Erfahrung darin ein Unternehmen zu gründen. Zu der Zeit war ich mir auch wirklich nicht sicher, ob es mein Ziel im Leben sein sollte, ein Unternehmer zu sein. Könnte das wirklich funktionieren? Ehrlich gesagt, hätte ich an diesem Punkt vielleicht aufgehört und wäre jetzt ein phänomenaler und beliebter Lehrer, aber ich hatte nicht mit Oskars Enthusiasmus gerechnet. In endlosen Treffen an seinem Küchentisch überzeugte er mich, dass Perfect Cereal wirklich funktionieren könnte und, dass unsere Idee es wert war, dafür zu kämpfen. Und bis heute bin ich ihm immer noch dankbar für seine Dickköpfigkeit.

In den folgenden Monaten steckten wir unsere Köpfe zusammen um herauszufinden, wie unser Unternehmen funktionieren könnte. Da wir beide die Stimmen unserer Mütter in unseren Köpfen klingeln hörten „Frühstück ist die wichtigste Mahlzeit des Tages“, entschieden wir uns, dass Perfect Cereal zu einer gesunden Lebensweise beitragen sollte (Schokolade zählt in kleinen Mengen offiziell als gesund!). Unser Müsliangebot sollte organisch sein, ohne zusätzliche Geschmacks- und Farbstoffe, und aus Zutaten aller Art bestehen. Von Bananen, Sesam und Feigen zu Schokoladenstückchen: Du kannst alles für dein eigenes perfektes Müsli auswählen!

Wir hatten Geld von Familie und Freunden geliehen um unseren ersten Lagerraum zu eröffnen. Unglücklicherweise im obersten Stock eines Gebäudes, was eine Menge Treppensteigen für uns und unsere ersten beiden Mitarbeiter bedeutete. Aber abgesehen davon lief unser Unternehmen gut. Unsere Website war fertig und Perfect Cereal konnte endlich online bestellt werden. Unsere Idee, für die wir all diese endlosen Tage und Nächte gearbeitet hatten. Unser Baby. Ich war sehr froh, diese Reise mit meinem besten Freund begonnen zu haben.

Aber dann kam der Schock.

Ein paar Monate nachdem wir anfangen, stagnierten die Bestellungen für Perfect Cereal. Alle, denen wir von dem Unternehmen erzählt hatten, waren sehr begeistert, aber bis jetzt hatten wir es nicht geschafft unser Produkt richtig zu vermarkten. „Hallo. Wir machen Müsli. Du kannst deine eigenen Geschmacksrichtungen online auswählen und wir schicken sie dir zu“. Scheinbar war das nicht genug, um von selbst zu funktionieren. Unser Produkt brauchte ein bisschen Hilfe aber wegen den hohen Kosten für Versand und Lagerung war jedoch nichts vom Budget übrig. Ich habe mir ehrlich nie vorstellen können wie teuer professionelle Werbung ist. Auf der einen Seite erklärt das vielleicht den furchtbaren Radiospot, der uns inspiriert hat, aber auf der anderen Seite konnte das auch das Ende unseres Traums sein. Wie konnten wir das nicht kommen sehen? Wir waren wirklich nah dran aufzugeben. Ich erinnere mich genau an eine von diesen schlaflosen Nächten in Oskars kleiner Küche, wo wir alle möglichen Optionen bei einer Tasse furchtbarem schwarzen Kaffee diskutierten. Ich saß zusammengesunken auf meinem Stuhl, während Oskar sich gegen den hölzernen Tisch lehnte und mit seinen Fingern gegen seine Tasse trommelte.

Oskar: „Aber was wenn wir...“

Ich: „Das haben wir schon probiert.“

Oskar: „Ja, ich weiß, Tom, aber vielleicht kann uns mein Onkel...“

Ich: „Wie? Dein Onkel hat kein Geld mehr ... niemand hat das. Aaahh! Ich kann es immer noch nicht glauben, dass es so teuer ist, eine einzige Werbeanzeige zu produzieren! Ich wünschte wir könnten es selbst tun!“

Oskar: „Hmm“

Ich: „Hmm mich nicht an! Wir haben einige ernsthafte Probleme, abgesehen von deinen fehlenden Fähigkeiten, anständigen Kaffee zu machen!“

Oskar: „Ich dachte gerade... wenn wir das Werbeproblem nicht lösen können, sollten wir vielleicht etwas anderes probieren... Was wenn wir unser Produkt sichtbarer machen, ohne wirklich dafür zu werben?“

Und so haben wir unseren ersten Laden bekommen. Letztendlich war Oskars Idee einfach brilliant! Glücklicherweise haben wir ein Ladenlokal nahe an der Stadtmitte, für wenig Miete gefunden. Hier waren wir sichtbar für alle. Mit den neuen Kunden, die spontan in den Laden kommen konnten, konnten wir unsere Lieferkosten reduzieren und erhöhten unseren Bekanntheitsgrad. Außerdem mussten wir nicht mehr 47 Stufen laufen, um in unseren Lagerraum zu kommen und wir konnten mehr Zutaten für geringere Kosten lagern. Unsere Verkäufe stiegen endlich wieder an. Dadurch inspiriert, versuchten wir mehr alternative Wege zu finden, um für unser Müsli zu werben. Wir scheiterten mit einer riesigen aufblasbaren Müslichüssel, aber die Sticker mit unserem Logo stellten sich als großer Erfolg heraus. Wir brauchten noch ein paar weitere Monate um endgültig genug Geld zu haben, um eine echte Werbeanzeige zu schalten. Und ich will nicht angeben, aber sie war wirklich gut. Die Verkäufe erreichten einen neuen Höhepunkt und alles war fantastisch. Naja, abgesehen von den kleinen Problemen, die jedes Unternehmen hat, wie verspätete Lieferung oder dass deine zehn Angestellten dafür stimmen Rosinen auf deine Zutatenliste zu setzen (scheinbar gibt es Leute, die das wirklich mögen...). Letztendlich war alles der Dickköpfigkeit und Kreativität meines besten Freundes zu verdanken, dass unser Traum wahr geworden ist. Und das ist nicht das Ende, sondern nur der Anfang unserer Reise! Kürzlich fanden wir heraus, dass Essen viel besser bei Nacht am Lagerfeuer oder unter dem endlosen, blauen Himmel schmeckt - also warum nicht unserer Idee Flügel verleihen? Perfect Cereal to go? Jetzt kommen wir!

Tom

## The Dutch narrative

1,212 words

*Alles behalve rozijnen*

Ik hou van kamperen. Toen ik klein was, ging ik vaak op vakantie met mijn familie en beleefde ik wat geweldig was in de wereld. Altijd bij ons was mijn buurman en beste vriend: Oscar. Hij is de grappigste vent die ik ooit heb ontmoet in mijn leven en hij kon een achterwaartse salto, wat hem groot respect opleverde in de hele buurt. De tijd vloog voorbij: Ik groeide op, maakte de middelbare school af en begon wiskunde te studeren om leraar te worden. De tripjes met mijn ouders waren verleden tijd, maar Oscar was nog elke keer bij me en in onze oude roestige auto gingen we twee keer per jaar de wereld ontdekken. Het was een van die legendarische vakanties waar het allemaal mee begon!

Onderweg naar de mooie stranden van Frankrijk hoorden we een verschrikkelijke radioreclame waarin een piepstemmetje ontbijtgranen met rozijnen als hun nieuwe smaak probeerde te adverteren. Na een levendige discussie waren Oscar en ik er zeker van dat we niet alleen betere radio commercials wilden maken – waarom ook niet betere ontbijtgranen? Want ik bedoel, kom op: wie wil er nou rozijnen in zijn ontbijtgranen? Angezien Oscar en ik een passie voor eten delen, koste het ons de rest van de uren in de auto richting Frankrijk en de eerste twee dagen van onze reis om erover te discussiëren wat de perfecte ontbijtgranen zijn. We dachten aan bananen, lijnzaad en bosbessen of zelfs cashewnoten in combinatie met mango. Voor Oscar was het een mix van fruitige en knapperige ingrediënten, voor mij was chocolade het belangrijkste. Uiteindelijk realiseerden we ons dat de perfecte ontbijtgranen voor iedereen iets anders zijn. Het idee achter Perfect Cereal was geboren.

Eenmaal weer thuis presenteerden we ons idee aan familie en vrienden, en gelukkig was iedereen er enthousiast over. In onze fantasie hadden we al miljoenen euro's verdiend met dit geweldige plan. Maar in werkelijkheid bleek het lastiger dan ik had verwacht. Ik moest mijn opleiding op de universiteit nog afmaken en Oscar zat vast in een nine to five baan in de volgende stad. We hadden heel weinig tijd om aan ons idee te werken en geen ervaring met het opzetten van een bedrijf. In die tijd was ik er ook niet helemaal zeker dat een ondernemer zijn mijn doel in het leven moest zijn. Kon dit echt werken? Eerlijk gezegd zou ik toen misschien wel hebben kunnen stoppen en had ik nu een geweldige en geliefde leraar kunnen zijn, maar ik hield geen rekening met Oscars enthousiasme. In eindeloze vergaderingen aan zijn keukentafel overtuigde hij me ervan dat Perfect Cereal echt zou kunnen werken en dat ons idee het waard was om voor te vechten. En tot op de dag van vandaag ben ik nog steeds dankbaar voor zijn koppigheid.

In de volgende maanden staken we onze koppen bij elkaar om uit te zoeken hoe ons bedrijf zou kunnen werken. Omdat we allebij de stemmen van onze moeders in ons hoofd hoorden klinken, "Ontbijt is de belangrijkste maaltijd van de dag", besloten we dat Perfect Cereal bij moest dragen aan een gezond manier van leven (chocolade telt officieel als gezond in kleine hoeveelheden!). Ons assortiment ontbijtgranen zou organisch moeten zijn, zonder toegevoegde smaken of kleurstoffen, en bestaan uit allerlei ingrediënten. Van bananen, sesam en vijgen tot chocolade stukjes: Je kan alles kiezen voor je eigen perfecte ontbijtgranen!

We hadden geld geleend van familie en vrienden om onze eerste opslagruimte te openen. Helaas op de bovenste verdieping van een gebouw, wat veel traplopen betekende voor ons en onze eerste twee werknemers. Maar afgezien daarvan liepen de zaken goed. Onze website was klaar en Perfect Cereal kon eindelijk online besteld worden! Ons idee waar we voor al die eindeloze dagen en nachten voor gewerkt hadden. Onze baby. Ik was erg blij dat ik deze reis was begonnen met mijn beste vriend.

Maar toen kwam de schok.

Een paar maanden nadat we gestart waren, stagneerden de orders voor Perfect Cereal. Iedereen die we verteld hadden over ons bedrijf was erg enthousiast, maar tot nu toe waren we er nog niet in geslaagd, ons product te adverteren. “Hallo. Wij maken ontbijtgranen. Je kan je eigen smaken online kiezen en wij sturen ze naar je op”. Blijkbaar was dit niet genoeg om vanzelf te werken. Ons product had wat hulp nodig, maar er was geen budget meer over vanwege de hoge kosten voor verzending en opslag . Ik had me eerlijk gezegd nooit voor kunnen stellen hoe duur professionele advertenties zijn. Aan de ene kant zou dit de vreselijke radio commercial kunnen verklaren die ons geïnspireerde had maar aan de andere kant kon dit ook het einde zijn van onze droom. Hoe konden we dit niet hebben zien aankomen? We hadden echt bijna opgeven. Ik herinner me nog duidelijk een van die slapeloze nachten in Oscars keuken, waar we al onze opties bespraken met een kop vreselijke smakende zwarte koffie. Ik zat onderuitgezakt op mijn stoel, terwijl Oscar tegen de houten tafel leunde, trommelend met zijn vingers tegen zijn mok.

Oscar: “Maar wat als we...”

Ik: “Dat hebben we al geprobeerd.”

Oscar: Ja, dat weet ik, Tom, maar misschien kan mijn oom...”

Ik: “Hoe? Je oom heeft geen geld meer... dat heeft niemand. Aargh! Ik kan nog steeds niet geloven dat één enkele advertentie zo duur is om te produceren! Konden we het nou maar zelf doen!”

Oscar: “Hmm”

Ik: “Hmm niet naar me! We hebben een serieus probleem naast het feit dat jij geen behoorlijke koffie kan maken!”

Oscar: “Ik zat net te denken... Als we het probleem van adverteren niet op kunnen lossen zouden wij misschien iets anders moeten proberen... Wat als we ons product zichtbaarder maken zonder het echt te adverteren?”

En zo kregen we onze eerste winkel. Uiteindelijk was Oscars idee gewoon briljant! Gelukkig vonden we een winkel dicht bij het centrum tegen een lage huurprijs. Hier waren we zichtbaarder voor iedereen. Met de nieuwe klanten die spontaan de winkel in konden lopen, konden we onze verzendkosten verlagen en onze merkbekendheid vergroten. Verder hoefden we niet meer 47 traptreden op om bij onze opslagplaats te komen en konden we meer ingrediënten opslaan tegen minder kosten. Eindelijk stegen de verkoopcijfers weer. Hierdoor geïnspireerd probeerden we meer alternatieve manieren te vinden om onze ontbijtgranen te adverteren. We flopten met een enorm opblaasbaar ontbijtgranenbord, maar de stickers met ons logo bleken een enorm succes. Het kostte ons nog een paar maanden voordat we eindelijk genoeg geld hadden om een echte advertentie te maken. En ik wil niet opscheppen, maar die was heel goed! De verkoopcijfers bereikten een nieuwe hoogtepunt en alles was fantastisch. Nou ja, naast de kleine problemen die elk bedrijf heeft zoals vertraagde verzendingen of dat je tien werknemers ervoor stemmen om rozijsen op je lijst van ingrediënten te krijgen (blijkbaar zijn er toch mensen die dat echt lekker vinden...). Uiteindelijk was het allemaal dankzij de koppigheid en creativiteit van mijn beste vriend dat we onze droom is uitgekomen. En dit is niet het einde, maar pas het begin van onze reis! Onlangs hebben we ontdekt dat eten veel beter smaakt in de nacht bij een kampvuur of onder de eindeloze, blauwe lucht – dus waarom zouden we geen vleugels kunnen geven aan ons idee? Perfect Cereal to go? We komen eraan!

Tom

## **Appendix B)**

In both questionnaires, a (R) indicates a reversed question.

### **The German questionnaire**

Liebe Teilnehmerin, lieber Teilnehmer,

Zuallererst vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie im Rahmen meines Masters International Business Communication an der Radboud University.

Während des Experiments bekommen Sie eine kleine Geschichte über Tom und Oskar zu lesen und werden gebeten im Anschluss einen kurzen Fragebogen auszufüllen. Gerne möchte ich Sie darauf hinweisen, dass es keine falschen Antworten gibt, da ich an Ihrer Meinung interessiert bin. Das Ausfüllen der Umfrage dauert ungefähr 15 Minuten. Sie können die Studie leider nicht unterbrechen und zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt fortsetzen, daher bitte ich Sie alles ohne Unterbrechung auszufüllen.

Sie können jederzeit Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie abbrechen, sofern Sie das wollen. Indem Sie die Umfrage vollständig ausfüllen, geben Sie an, dass Sie freiwillig an der Studie teilnehmen und stimmen zu, dass Ihre Antworten verwendet werden dürfen. Ihre Angaben bleiben vollständig anonym und werden nur für diese Studie verwendet. Wenn Sie an der Verlosung des Schokoladenpakets von Lindt teilnehmen wollen, können Sie am Ende der Umfrage Ihre E-Mail-Adresse hinterlassen.

Nochmals vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Anika Spring

## Transportation

Die folgenden Aussagen beziehen sich auf die Geschichte, die Sie gerade gelesen haben. Geben Sie auf einer Skala von 1 bis 7 an wie sehr Sie der Aussage zustimmen. (1= Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu, 7 = Ich stimme komplett zu)

	Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Ich stimme nicht zu (2)	Ich stimme ein bisschen nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Ich stimme ein bisschen zu (5)	Ich stimme zu (6)	Ich stimme komplett zu (7)
Während ich die Geschichte gelesen habe, konnte ich mir einfach vorstellen, dass die Geschehnisse darin passierten.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Während ich die Geschichte gelesen habe, dachte ich an die Geschehnisse, die im Zimmer um mich herum passierten. (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich konnte mir vorstellen, dass ich mich selbst in den beschriebenen Geschehnissen befand.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Während des Lesens beschäftigte ich mich in meinen Gedanken mit der Geschichte.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nachdem die Geschichte vorbei war, war es einfach um nicht mehr an sie zu denken. (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich wollte wissen, wie die Geschichte zu Ende geht.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Die Geschichte hat mich emotional berührt.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich habe über Möglichkeiten nachgedacht, wie die Geschichte anders hätte verlaufen können.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich merkte, dass ich an andere Dinge dachte, während ich die Geschichte las. (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Identification**

Die folgenden Aussagen beziehen sich auf die Geschichte, die Sie gerade gelesen haben. Geben Sie auf einer Skala von 1 bis 7 an wie sehr Sie der Aussage zustimmen. (1= Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu, 7 = Ich stimme komplett zu)

	Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Ich stimme nicht zu (2)	Ich stimme ein bisschen nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Ich stimme ein bisschen zu (5)	Ich stimme zu (6)	Ich stimme komplett zu (7)
Ich war in der Lage die Geschehnisse der Geschichte so zu verstehen, wie auch Tom sie verstanden hat.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich denke, ich habe ein gutes Verständnis vom Tom.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich glaube ich verstehe die Gründe warum Tom tut was er tut.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Während ich die Geschichte las, konnte ich die Emotionen, die Tom schilderte fühlen.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Während ich die Geschichte las, fühlte ich mich als könnte ich in Toms Kopf schauen.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
In zentralen Punkten der Geschichte, dachte ich genau zu wissen was Tom durchmachte.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Während ich die Geschichte las, wollte ich, dass es Tom gelingt seine Ziele zu erreichen.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wenn Tom Erfolg hatte war ich froh, und wenn er scheiterte war ich traurig	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Narrative understanding

Die folgenden Aussagen beziehen sich auf die Geschichte, die Sie gerade gelesen haben. Geben Sie auf einer Skala von 1 bis 7 an wie sehr Sie der Aussage zustimmen. (1= Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu, 7 = Ich stimme komplett zu)

	Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Ich stimme nicht zu (2)	Ich stimme ein bisschen nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Ich stimme ein bisschen zu (5)	Ich stimme zu (6)	Ich stimme komplett zu (7)
Ich konnte den Handlungen und Geschehnissen einfach folgen (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich fand es schwierig den roten Faden der Geschichte zu erkennen.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich musste mich anstrengen, um mich auf die Geschichte zu konzentrieren.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ich fand es schwierig zu verstehen, was in der Geschichte passierte.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Enjoyment

Wie sehr haben Sie die Geschichte genossen?

0 Überhaupt nicht (1)    0    0    0    0    0    0    0 Sehr (7)

### Attitude towards the company

Meiner Meinung nach ist das Unternehmen *Perfect Cereal* aus der Geschichte:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
Freundlich (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Unfreundlich
Positiv (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Negativ
Ansprechend (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Nicht ansprechend
Interessant (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Nicht interessant
Attraktiv (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Nicht attraktiv

### Self-assessed English proficiency

Wie gut beherrschen Sie die folgenden Fähigkeiten in Englisch (1 = sehr schlecht, 7 = sehr gut)

	Sehr schlecht (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Sehr gut (7)
Lesen (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Schreiben (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hörverstehen (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sprechen (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Tested English proficiency

Ich bitte Sie nun einen kurzen Englischtest auszufüllen.

This test consists of about 60 trials, in each of which you will see a string of letters. Your task is to decide whether this is an existing English word or not. If you think it is an existing English word, you click on "yes", and if you think it is not an existing English word, you click on "no". If you are sure that the word exists, even though you don't know its exact meaning, you may still respond "yes". But if you are not sure if it is an existing word, you should respond "no". In this experiment, we use British English rather than American English spelling. For example: "realise" instead of "realize"; "colour" instead of "color", and so on. Please don't let this confuse you. This experiment is not about detecting such subtle spelling differences anyway. You have as much time as you like for each decision. This part of the experiment will take about 5 minutes. If everything is clear, you can now start the experiment.

	No (1)	Yes (2)
platory (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
denial (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
generic (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mensible (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
scornful (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stoutly (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ablaze (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
kermshaw (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
moonlit (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lofty (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hurricane (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
flaw (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
alberation (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
unkempt (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
breeding (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
festivity (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
screech (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

savoury (18)	o	o
plaudate (19)	o	o
shin (20)	o	o
fluid (21)	o	o
spaunch (22)	o	o
allied (23)	o	o
slain (24)	o	o
recipient (25)	o	o
exprate (26)	o	o
eloquence (27)	o	o
cleanliness (28)	o	o
dispatch (29)	o	o
rebondicate (30)	o	o
ingenious (31)	o	o
bewitch (32)	o	o
skave (33)	o	o
plaintively (34)	o	o
kilp (35)	o	o
interfate (36)	o	o
hasty (37)	o	o
lengthy (38)	o	o
fray (39)	o	o
crumper (40)	o	o
upkeep (41)	o	o
majestic (42)	o	o
magerity (43)	o	o
nourishment (44)	o	o
abergy (45)	o	o
proom (46)	o	o
turmoil (47)	o	o
carbohydrate (48)	o	o
scholar (49)	o	o
turtle (50)	o	o
fellick (51)	o	o
destription (52)	o	o
cylinder (53)	o	o
ensorship (54)	o	o
celestial (55)	o	o
rascal (56)	o	o
purrage (57)	o	o
pulsh (58)	o	o

- |               |                       |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| muddy (59)    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| quirty (60)   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| pudour (61)   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| listless (62) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| wrought (63)  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Nationalität

- Deutsch (1)
- Anders (2)

Was ist Ihre höchste abgeschlossene Ausbildung?

- Hauptschule/ Realschule (1)
- Gymnasium (2)
- Fachhochschule/Ausbildung (3)
- Universität (Bachelor) (4)
- Universität (Master) (5)
- PhD (6)

Geschlecht

- Männlich (1)
- Weiblich (2)

Alter \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail-Adresse \_\_\_\_\_

This is the end of the survey – Thank you very much for talking part! All you data will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions or comments you can always email me via [Anika.Spring@student.ru.nl](mailto:Anika.Spring@student.ru.nl).

### **The Dutch questionnaire**

Beste participant,

Hartelijk bedankt voor uw deelname aan dit experiment voor mijn MA International Business Communication. Tijdens het experiment krijgt u een kort verhaal over Tom en Oscar te lezen en daarna wordt u gevraagd om een korte vragenlijst in te vullen.

Ik wil u er graag op attent maken dat er geen foute antwoorden zijn, omdat ik geïnteresseerd ben in uw mening. Het invullen van de vragenlijst zal ongeveer 15 minuten duren. Helaas is het niet mogelijk het onderzoek te onderbreken en op een later tijdstip af te maken. Daarom verzoek ik uw om alles zonder onderbreking in te vullen. U mag op elk moment met het onderzoek stoppen als u dat wilt. Door de vragenlijst af te ronden, geeft u aan dat u vrijwillig aan het onderzoek deelneemt en toestemming geeft om uw antwoorden te gebruiken. Uw gegevens blijven volledig anoniem en worden allen gebruikt voor dit onderzoek. Als u kans wilt maken op een Tony's Chocolonely pakket, kunt u aan het einde van de vragenlijst uw mailadres invullen.

Nogmaals hartelijk bedankt voor uw deelname!

Met vriendelijke groet,

Anika Spring

### Transportation

De volgende stellingen gaan over het verhaal dat u net hebt gelezen. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 of u het met de stellingen eens bent (1 = helemaal niet mee eens, 7 = helemaal mee eens)

	helemaal mee oneens (1)	mee oneens (2)	enigszins mee oneens (3)	neutraal (4)	enigszins mee eens (5)	mee eens (6)	helemaal mee eens (7)
Terwijl ik het verhaal aan het lezen was kon ik me makkelijk voorstellen dat de gebeurtenissen daarin plaats vonden.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terwijl ik het verhaal aan het lezen was, dacht ik aan de activiteiten die in de kamer om mij heen aan de gang waren. (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik kon me voorstellen dat ik mij zelf bevond in de gebeurtenissen die beschreven werden .	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tijdens het lezen was ik met mijn gedachten met het verhaal bezig.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nadat het verhaal afgelopen was, was het makkelijk om er niet meer aan te denken.(R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik wilde weten hoe het verhaal afliep.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Het verhaal heeft me emotioneel geraakt.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik dacht na over manieren waarop het verhaal anders had kunnen aflopen.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik merkte dat ik aan andere dingen dacht terwijl ik het verhaal las. (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Identification

De volgende stellingen gaan over het verhaal dat u net hebt gelezen. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 of u het met de stellingen eens bent (1 = helemaal niet mee eens, 7 = helemaal mee eens)

	helemaal mee oneens (1)	mee oneens (2)	enigszins mee oneens (3)	neutraal (4)	enigszins mee eens (5)	mee eens (6)	helemaal mee eens (7)
Ik was in staat om de gebeurtenissen in het verhaal te begrijpen net zo als Tom ze begreep.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik denk dat ik Tom goed begrijp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik geloof dat ik de redenen begrijp waarom Tom doet wat hij doet.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Terwijl ik het verhaal las, kon ik de emoties voelen die Tom ervoer.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terwijl ik het verhaal las, voelde ik dat ik echt in het hoofd van Tom kon kijken.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Op belangrijke momenten in het verhaal dacht ik precies te weten wat Tom meemaakte.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terwijl ik het verhaal las, wilde ik dat Tom erin zou slagen zijn doelen te bereiken.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toen Tom succes had was ik blij, en toen hij faalde was ik verdrietig.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Narrative Understanding

De volgende stellingen gaan over het verhaal dat u net hebt gelezen. Geef aan op een schaal van 1 tot 7 of u het met de stellingen eens bent (1 = helemaal niet mee eens, 7 = helemaal mee eens)

	helemaal mee oneens (1)	mee oneens (2)	enigszins mee oneens (3)	neutraal (4)	enigszins mee eens (5)	mee eens (6)	helemaal mee eens (7)
Ik kon de actie en gebeurtenissen makkelijk volgen. (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik vond het moeilijk om de draad van het verhaal te herkennen.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik moest me inspannen om me op het verhaal te concentreren.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ik vond het moeilijk om te begrijpen wat er in het verhaal gebeurde.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Enjoyment

Hoe zeer heeft uw van het verhaal genoten?

0 helemaal niet (1) 0(2) 0 (3) 0 (4) 0 (5) 0 (6) 0heel erg veel (7)

### Attitude towards the company

Naar mijn mening is het bedrijf *Perfect Cereal* uit het verhaal

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
vriendelijk (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	onvriendelijk
positief (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	negatief
aantrekkelijk (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	niet aantrekkelijk
interessant (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	niet interessant
Attractief (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	niet attractief

### Self-assessed English proficiency

Geef aan hoe goed je bent in de volgende vaardigheden in de Engelse taal (1 = heel slecht, 7 = heel goed)

	Heel slecht (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Heel goed (7)
Lezen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Schrijven	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luisteren	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spreken	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Tested English proficiency

Ik vraag je nu een korte test over je Engelse taalvaardigheden in te vullen.

This test consists of about 60 trials, in each of which you will see a string of letters. Your task is to decide whether this is an existing English word or not. If you think it is an existing English word, you click on "yes", and if you think it is not an existing English word, you click on "no". If you are sure that the word exists, even though you don't know its exact meaning, you may still respond "yes". But if you are not sure if it is an existing word, you should respond "no". In this experiment, we use British English rather than American English spelling. For example: "realise" instead of "realize"; "colour" instead of "color", and so on. Please don't let this confuse you. This experiment is not about detecting such subtle spelling differences anyway. You have as much time as you like for each decision. This part of the experiment will take about 5 minutes. If everything is clear, you can now start the experiment.

	No (1)	Yes (2)
platory (1)	o	o
denial (2)	o	o
generic (3)	o	o
mensible (4)	o	o
scornful (5)	o	o
stoutly (6)	o	o
ablaze (7)	o	o
kermshaw (8)	o	o
moonlit (9)	o	o
lofty (10)	o	o
hurricane (11)	o	o
flaw (12)	o	o
alberation (13)	o	o
unkempt (14)	o	o
breeding (15)	o	o
festivity (16)	o	o
screech (17)	o	o
savoury (18)	o	o
plaudate (19)	o	o
shin (20)	o	o
fluid (21)	o	o
spaunch (22)	o	o
allied (23)	o	o
slain (24)	o	o
recipient (25)	o	o
exprate (26)	o	o
eloquence (27)	o	o
cleanliness (28)	o	o
dispatch (29)	o	o
rebondicate (30)	o	o
ingenious (31)	o	o
bewitch (32)	o	o
skave (33)	o	o
plaintively (34)	o	o
kilp (35)	o	o
interfate (36)	o	o
hasty (37)	o	o
lengthy (38)	o	o
fray (39)	o	o

crumper (40)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
upkeep (41)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
majestic (42)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
magrity (43)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
nourishment (44)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
abergy (45)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
proom (46)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
turmoil (47)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
carbohydrate (48)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
scholar (49)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
turtle (50)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fellick (51)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
destription (52)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cylinder (53)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ensorship (54)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
celestial (55)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
rascal (56)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
purrage (57)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pulsh (58)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
muddy (59)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
quirty (60)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pudour (61)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
listless (62)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
wrought (63)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Nationaliteit

- Nederlands (1)
- Anders (2)

Hoogst genoten opleiding (afgerond)

- Middelbare school (1)
- MBO (2)
- HBO (3)
- WO Bachelor (4)
- WO Master (5)
- PhD (6)

Geslacht

- Man (1)
- Vrouw (2)

Leeftijd \_\_\_\_\_  
 Emailadres \_\_\_\_\_

This is the end of the survey – Thank you very much for talking part! All you data will be kept confidential.  
 If you have any questions or comments you can always email me via [Anika.Spring@student.ru.nl](mailto:Anika.Spring@student.ru.nl).