

English in product advertisements in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain

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ABSTRACT: This paper reports on a quantitative investigation into the occurrence of English in product advertisements in Dutch-speaking Belgium, French-speaking Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. For each country six issues of *Elle* in 2004 were collected and all ads of half a page or larger were analyzed, for a total of 2,384 different ads. More than two-thirds of those ads contained one or more English words. The actual occurrence of English was low, since 90 per cent of the ads with English were partly in English and partly in the local language, and only 13 per cent of the total amount of the text in those ads was in English. English was especially used for advertising products that can be associated with modernity. Our results regarding the amount of English used and the position of English in the ad do not completely corroborate those of other studies. This could indicate an increase in the use of English in product ads, but it could also be due to the fact that we applied a different research method than had been previously used. The countries we investigated differ considerably in the amount of English used. These differences shed new light on earlier theoretical studies that have compared European countries on the use and status of English.

1. INTRODUCTION

At first sight, there seems nothing remarkable about phrases such as *In touch with your senses*, *Find the comfort of your life*, *The Power of Dreams*, *New: fashion gallery moves to hall 14*, *Two new fragrances for her. for him.*, *Get fabulous*, *Get fresh*, *Get funny*. That is, however, until one realizes that they all occurred in advertisements that appeared in countries in which English is neither the native language nor an official state language. The phrases are quotations from product advertisements that were published in issues of the glossy magazine *Elle* in 2004 in Dutch-speaking Belgium, French-speaking Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, respectively. The use of English in these ads provides support for recent observations about the increasingly frequent use of English

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in Europe. Loonen (1996: 3), for instance, comments that “a language once considered base and worthless now seems to dominate the new Europe”, and his view is supported by the results of surveys of other linguists. Crystal (2003: 88) states that 99 per cent of all European companies say they use English as an official language and that virtually all European scientific societies write their annual reports in English. In addition, Berns (1995), drawing on Kachru’s 1985 model of three concentric Circles of English, classifies Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands as countries in between the Expanding and Outer Circle, in what she calls the “Dual Circle”, which is to say that English is on its way to becoming a second language in these countries. She bases this on the three functional criteria of English provided by Kachru (1985: 16–17) to determine whether a country falls in the Outer Circle: English is used in a variety of settings; it is developing its own norms; and it is used as an intranational language. Berns’ interpretation is partly supported by Graddol (1999: 64), who suggests that it is no longer accurate to regard English on the Continent as a foreign language: “Europe is rapidly integrating and reinventing itself as a multilingual area in which English plays an increasing important role as a second language. In effect, it is becoming more like India as a geolinguistic space.” His theorizing about the changing status of English is founded on answers to questions about the use of English in Europe that were collected in Eurobarometer surveys in 1994 and 1998. These data show that nearly one third of those citizens of the European Union who do not have English as a first language claimed that they could hold a conversation in English. Eurobarometer data collected later show similar results. Thirty-two per cent of the citizens from the 13 EU Member States claimed that they could hold a conversation in English in 2001 (Eurobarometer 55, 2001, annexes: 99) and in 2005, 38 per cent of the citizens of the 25 EU Member States claimed that they knew English well enough to hold a conversation in English (Eurobarometer 243, 2006: 12).

Although the use of English is widespread across Europe, there are remarkable differences between generations and countries. Labrie and Quell (1997) analyzed the differences between age groups in the 1994 Eurobarometer data, and found striking age differences in the answers given to the question as to whether a respondent felt that they were able to speak English: whereas only 11 per cent of the EU citizens older than 55 claimed that they could speak English, 41 per cent of the citizens aged between 15 and 24 claimed that they could do so. This age differentiation indicates that English is playing an increasingly important role in Europe. All Eurobarometer data also show wide variations between the different countries in whether the respondents felt that they could hold a conversation in English. Table 2 shows the data for 1994 (Eurobarometer 41 data, analysed by Labrie and Quell, 1997) and 2005 (Eurobarometer 243, 2006: 13 and annexes: D48b). Graddol (1999) suggests, on the basis of the 1998 Eurobarometer data, that English may already be part way through the process of becoming a second rather than a foreign language in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands.

Table 1 suggests that English is acquiring an increasingly important status in Europe. This is no doubt reflected in the plethora of publications on the use of English in Europe (Berns, 1995; Deneire and Goethals, 1997; Graddol, 1999; Crystal, 2003), especially in organizations in Europe (Vandermeeren, 1999; Nickerson, 2000; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002; Louhiala-Salminen *et al.*, 2005; Nickerson, 2005; Nickerson and de Groot, 2005; Planken, 2005) and also in the ensuing controversy about the use of English (Charles and Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Nickerson, forthcoming), and the reactions, often vehement, of

Table 1. Percentage of respondents in an EU country that felt able to hold a conversation in English according to Eurobarometer data (Eurobarometer 41 and 243)

	1994	2005
Denmark	68	86
Sweden	no data	89
Netherlands	71	87
Germany	35	45
Belgium	34	59
France	30	36
Spain	13	27

the general public to the use of English. Traffic signs with the text *Kiss and ride* have been vandalized in Dutch-speaking Belgium, for instance, because of the use of English, and the Dutch Stichting Nederlands, which is an organization that campaigns for the continued use of Dutch rather than English, demonstrated in September 2002 at Schiphol airport because almost all the signs were exclusively displayed in English. In addition, although the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany do not have a government watchdog organization that seeks to control the use of English, this certainly exists in both France (Académie Française) and Spain (Real Academia Española) (Hilgendorf, 1996: 9). In 1994, for instance the French government passed the Toubon law in France, making it compulsory to provide a translation in French for any foreign language text in advertising; as a result, when the French shoe manufacturer Mephisto advertised in 1999 in France with the slogan *Members of the MEPHISTO movement* and did not provide a translation into French, the manufacturer was fined for this offence in 2001 (Déchamps, 2003; Martin, 2006). In a similar vein, in 2003 the president of the Spanish Real Academia Española, Víctor García de la Concha, declared that the use of unnecessary loanwords from English was reprehensible, and he also drew attention to what he believed to be the equally unnecessary use of English words by managers instead of the 17,000 equivalent Spanish terms available to express the same ideas (EFE – La Vanguardia, 2003).

Even though numerous linguists and the general public seem convinced that English is now being increasingly used in Europe, most notably by those who do not speak it as a first language, there is a pressing need for further empirical investigation to confirm this, most especially in seeking to establish the nature of the differences in the use of English between the different European countries. Much work remains to be done on how often English really is used in a given context or situation in Europe, not only on the basis of observations or of self-reports, but on the basis of sound empirical data. In this paper our intention is therefore to investigate empirically the use of English and the role that English plays in one specific domain, that of product advertisements aimed at young women, in five countries of the European Union: Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, where we expected variations to occur, given the differences in the use of English in these countries as shown by the Eurobarometer data (see Table 1). Moreover, although the study is clearly restricted to the use of English and the role it plays in only one social domain – that of product advertising – we believe that this can be considered as one indication of the penetration of English within society as a whole, since advertising is used across a society and is not the preserve of a specialized group such as airline pilots or academics

who are called upon to use English in their professional communication. And despite the fact that advertising language may be characterized by a certain amount of technical lexis, e.g. in the description of products, or the creative non-standard use of language, e.g. in product names, we can safely assume that a large percentage of the text is written to be comprehensible to the average, non-technical consumer.

In addition, although it may be argued that English is used on occasion as an attention-getter or as an image builder and does not necessarily need to be comprehensible to the target audience, we would contend that this is not generally its primary purpose in advertising. In other words, it is intended to be comprehended by the readers of ads. As we discuss in more detail below, in this respect English is different from the perhaps less familiar languages such as French or German, which may be used specifically to emphasize a particular social stereotype, e.g. French used to promote a sophisticated product such as perfume (*J'adore Dior* for Dior) or German used to emphasize technical excellence (*Vorsprung durch Technik* for Audi). Since product advertising involves large sums of money – both in making and placing the ad and also because manufacturers rely on product advertising to bring about sales – it can therefore be expected that a great deal of attention will be paid to the texts that are incorporated into ads, to ensure that they are effective. We can assume that if advertisers believe that their potential target group will have difficulty in understanding a message presented to them in English, then they will be unlikely to use it. In the remainder of this paper we will first deal with what is already known about the use of English in product advertisements in countries in which English is neither a first nor a second language, together with the suggestions that have been made as to why English is used. At the end of this section research questions (RQs) will be formulated, and we will then present the design of the study, the results and the conclusion and discussion.

2. ENGLISH IN PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENTS

The use of a foreign language in advertisements is probably as old as product advertising itself, and a number of examples date from the very beginning of product advertising. Wustmann (1903), for instance, gives examples of foreign words in German advertisements and Pound (1913, cited in Piller 2003: 171) does the same for the use of Spanish loanwords in trade names in the USA. The use of foreign words in advertising was originally mostly approached from a language purist point of view (Wustman, 1903; Pound, 1913), and it is only recently that attention has been paid to this phenomenon from a non-purist point of view (Piller 2003), i.e. researchers have studied how frequently a given language is used, where, and why, rather than investigating how language purity might be protected. Haarmann (1984) was one of the first sociolinguists published in this field who did not take a purist stance, when he studied the occurrence of a number of European languages in Japanese advertising. In similar studies, Myers (1994: 92–6) discusses the use of French, German, Russian, Maori, Dutch and Japanese in advertisements for native speakers of English, together with the use of English in advertisements for native speakers of Spanish, Dutch and German, and Kelly-Holmes (2005) gives an extensive overview of the use of foreign languages in advertising in Europe.

Although the study of foreign languages in advertising is certainly not limited to the use of English, English has been studied far more frequently than the use of other languages, probably reflecting the fact that English has been shown to be the most frequently used foreign language in non-Anglophone advertisements (Bhatia, 1992; Martin, 2002). On the

basis of an overview of studies on the use of foreign languages in advertising, Piller (2003: 175) concludes that “English is the most frequently used language in advertising messages in non-English-speaking countries (besides the local language, of course)”. Several studies show that a large number of the advertisements in Europe do indeed contain English. Cheshire and Moser (1994), for instance, found that 31 per cent of product advertisements in two Swiss weekly magazines contained English words and phrases. Gerritsen (1995) studied the use of English in product advertisements in newspapers, news magazines, family magazines and glossy magazines in various European countries. Comparing percentages of pages with advertisements that contained English, she found clear differences between Italy and Spain, on the one hand, and France, Germany and the Netherlands, on the other. The order from low to high was as follows: Italy (6 per cent), Spain (7 per cent), Germany (19 per cent), the Netherlands (19 per cent) and France (22 per cent). Gerritsen et al. (2000) show that one-third of the commercials on Dutch television contain English; according to Martin (2002) 30 per cent of the commercials in France feature some form of English; and Piller (2001) claims that 60–70 per cent of all advertisements seen in 1999 on various German television networks and in two German national newspapers were multilingual, and that English was the foreign language used most often.

The frequent use of English in advertising can sometimes be attributed to the fact that the ads are part of a worldwide campaign. This strategy enables agencies to avoid the additional costs related to the translation and adaptation of the campaign, and to the registration of their trade mark (Jain, 1989; 1993: 620; Floor and Van Raaij, 1989: 213; De Mooij, 1994: 198, 209; Walsh, 1991: 122), and it is also used because the advertisers believe that the whole world can be approached with the same concept (and the same language). Levitt (1983) was one of the first to promote global advertising, on the basis of belief in the convergence of consumer behavior and the globalization of markets. However, a number of researchers have argued against this approach (e.g. De Mooij, 1998; 2004: 300; Kanso, 1992; Zandpour *et al.*, 1994), most notably De Mooij (2001: 14, 27), who shows for instance that even the young are not a homogeneous target group (Berns *et al.*, 2007). It is interesting to note, however, that these discussions have focused on whether different cultures can be approached with the same advertising concept, and have not been concerned with the language that should be used. Not surprisingly, the language that advertisers choose to use in such global campaigns is nearly always English. In addition, when Gerritsen *et al.* (2000) interviewed a group of advertising agencies responsible for making or adapting ads in English about the reasons why English was used, the following three arguments were reported:

English as an international language. English is chosen as a result of the generally held view that English is a global language (Bailey and Görlach, 1986; Crystal, 2003), and because advertisers believe everyone understands English anyway. In the second edition of *Advertising Worldwide*, de Mooij (1994: 288) states, for instance: “In general, the better-educated throughout Europe, as well as the youth, can be reached with English.” She advises, however, that advertisers should use relatively simple English for global advertising “with few words and no colloquialisms, relying heavily on the visual or musical aspects of the message” (p. 205).

Linguistic aspects. The product is originally from the US or the UK and there is no word to describe its characteristics in the target language, or the word in the target language is much longer or more complicated than the English word (Takahashi, 1990: 329; Friedrich,

2002: 22). This holds for example for terms related to information technology such as *local bus* and *bluetooth*.¹ A second linguistic reason for using English could be that the sometimes difficult choice between the formal and informal “second” person pronoun can thereby be avoided. Most European languages have a formal and an informal “second” person pronoun, for example French formal *vous* versus informal *tu* and German formal *Sie* versus informal *du*. Because the informal pronoun is replacing the formal pronoun in more and more situations (Brown and Gilman, 1972), people are often uncertain as to whether to use the formal or the informal pronoun. The use of English solves this problem.

Product image. According to researchers such as Martin (2002; 2006:164), Alm (2003), Piller (2003: 175), Kelly-Holmes (2000; 2005:104), Ustinova and Bhatia (2005), and Lee (2006), English is also used because it is associated globally with a modern way of life. Piller shows that there is a strong tendency to associate consumers described in partly or exclusively English advertisements in Germany “with all or some of the attributes of internationalism, future orientation, success and elitism, sophistication, fun, youth and maleness” (Piller 2001: 173). In her view, English is also used in order to select the target group, along the lines of “If you read English, fine; if not, you are an outsider. Tough luck” (Piller 2001: 168). According to Piller, English therefore generally plays a quite different role from that of the other foreign languages used in advertising, since the primary aim in the use of foreign languages such as French, German and Italian in advertising is to associate the advertised product with the ethno-cultural stereotypes of the speakers of those languages, and subsequently to associate those stereotypes with the product advertised (Piller, 2003: 172; Kelly-Holmes, 2005: 67). An ethno-cultural stereotype of Italians, for instance, is that they have delicious pasta, and by advertising (partly) in Italian, the advertiser hopes that the target consumer will associate that positive ethno-cultural stereotype with the pasta being advertised. Haarmann (1989: 11) found, for example, that the use of French in Japanese advertising was intended to associate the product with “high elegance, refined taste”, and his conclusion is that the target group does not even need to understand the meaning of the French words, as long as they are able to identify the word as being French. Piller is brief and to the point in her discussion of difference between the image that English creates and the image created by other foreign languages: “English is thus not used to associate a product with an ethno-cultural stereotype, but with a social stereotype (. . .) modernity, progress, and globalization” Piller (2003: 175). Therefore we can expect that English will be used most especially in advertisements for products that can be associated with this social stereotype.

In this brief overview our intention has been to show that English is used frequently in product advertisements in a number of European countries, and we have discussed the possible reasons why this is the case. Recent and precise data are lacking, however, and in addition, the findings for the different countries that have thus far been investigated cannot usefully be compared, since the different studies vary too greatly in a number of important ways. These include the selection of media in which the advertisements were published, the selection of the advertisements, the timeframe over which the studies were carried out and the classification of what is English and what is not. In the remainder of this paper we will investigate the use of English as an international or intranational language in product advertising, including whether the way in which it is used shows a sensitivity to the individual local context.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

We studied the occurrence of English in product advertisements in the glossy magazine *Elle* in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. In all five countries we investigated the occurrence of English and the role English plays using the same methodology. The aim of our study was to establish (a) the occurrence of English in advertisements, (b) the role played by English in the advertisements, (c) whether there are differences between the countries in our study in the occurrence of English, and (d) whether these differences corroborate current theories about differences in the status of English in different European countries. We posed the following research questions:

1. What percentage of the ads contains English?
2. What percentage of the ads with English is exclusively in English, and what percentage is partly in English and partly in the local national language?

Since establishing the percentage of ads with English does not reveal how many English words are actually used, we also investigated research questions 3 and 4.

3. How many English words are used in the ads exclusively displayed in English?
4. How many English words are used in the ads partly displayed in English?

One of the criteria that Kachru (1985) uses to determine the status of English in a country is whether its speakers have created nativized varieties of English that do not reflect the norm of a first language variety of English. If they have, then this is an indication that English is in the process of moving in the direction of the Outer Circle. Therefore it was also important to investigate whether only the English associated with the Inner Circle is used in advertising in the countries in our study, i.e. that there is norm referencing to a first-language variety of English, or whether forms of nativized English are also used, i.e. that there is evidence for the development of a national or regional variety of English. As we have discussed above, our point of departure in this respect is that the English used – whether nativized or standardized – will have been created in a purposeful way in order to be comprehensible to the majority of the potential consumers who read the advertising text. Research question 5 was therefore as follows:

5. How many nativized English words are used in the ads with English?

In order to gain a better understanding of the role played by English in ads, we wanted to know in which parts of the ads English most especially occurred. Piller (2001: 162–3) observes, for instance, that whereas the standing information, i.e. the information on where the product can be bought, and the body copy in German advertisements hardly ever contain English, the slogans and headlines very often do. According to her, a foreign language is used particularly in these parts of the texts because it operates as an attention-getter: “A foreign language (. . .) impedes automatic processing and thereby arrests the attention of recipients for a longer time span” (Piller, 2001: 163).

Bhatia (2001) provides what he refers to as a Structural Domain Dependency in the occurrence of English in ads, based on an extensive analysis of product ads in Outer and Expanding Circle countries (China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Russia and Spain). In his corpus of at least 20 ads per country, the occurrence of English in the different parts of an ad was as follows: product name > headline > slogan > body, such that if English occurred in the body of the ad, then it also occurred in the other three parts, and

if English occurred in the product name it did not always occur in the other three parts.² Bhatia summarizes this as follows: “The onset of English penetration begins with naming, and then spreads to other domains. The reversal of this process is not plausible.” This led to research questions 6a, 6b and 6c.

- 6a. Are there differences in use of English between the different parts of the ads?
- 6b. If so, do those differences support the idea that English is most especially used to attract the reader’s attention, i.e. that it occurs more often in prominent parts of the text such as the slogan, headline and product name?
- 6c. If so, are these differences in line with Bhatia’s hierarchy: product name > headline > slogan > body?²

Another characteristic of the texts that can provide some insight into the reason why English is used is the nature of the product that is being advertised. Do our data support the idea that English is used because it associates the product with the social stereotype of modernity, for instance, and not with an ethno-cultural stereotype? This led to research question 7:

- 7. Is English used more frequently in advertisements for products that can be associated with modernity, progress and globalization than it is in advertisements for products that cannot?

As we discussed above, European countries appear to differ in their use of English. According to Graddol (1999), English may already be part way through the process of becoming a second rather than a foreign language in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands; and according to Berns (1995), Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands can be placed between Kachru’s Expanding and Outer Circle, in what she calls “the Dual Circle”. Recent Eurobarometer data (Eurobarometer 243, 2006: 12–13) support their views. In simple terms, our assumption was that English would be used more frequently in the countries in the Dual Circle (i.e. where English is engaged in the process of becoming a second language), than in those in the Outer Circle (i.e. where English remains a foreign language). This led to research question 8.

- 8. Is the use of English in product ads more frequent in the Netherlands and Germany than in Belgium, France and Spain?

Finally, in the countries in which English may be in the Dual Circle, it seems plausible that the use of English will not be reserved only for the prominent parts of the text, to gain the reader’s attention, but will be used throughout. It also seems plausible that its use will not be restricted to ads for products associated with modernity, progress and globalization, but will also apply to other types of product. This led to research question 9a and 9b.

- 9. Is English used differently in the Netherlands and Germany than in Belgium, France and Spain in:
 - 9a. the parts of the text in which English is used?
 - 9b. the products with which it is associated?

4. DESIGN

Area of research

We carried out our study in five countries within the European Union: Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. We studied both the Dutch- and the French-speaking

part of Belgium. These five countries were chosen because, according to experts on the status of English in Europe (Berns, 1995; Graddol, 1999), English does not have the same status in all of them. Since we might expect that differences in the status of English will be reflected in differences in the use and role of English in ads, it seemed appropriate to study countries in which the status of English was believed to differ. The language skills of our research team were an additional pragmatic factor. We were therefore well equipped to determine which lexical items in the ads were English and which were not (cf. "What is English?", below).

Corpus

We analyzed the advertisements in *Elle*, a glossy magazine targeting more highly educated women with no children, between the ages of 20 and 39.³ *Elle* is published in all the countries in our study. There are two Dutch editions, one for Dutch-speaking Belgium and one for the Netherlands, which differ completely in terms of articles and ads. This implies that the issues of *Elle* from these two countries can be used to test research questions 8 and 9 in the context of differences in the use of English between Belgium and the Netherlands. The same is also true for the two French editions of *Elle*, one for French-speaking Belgium and one for France, that also differ greatly in terms of content and the ads included. Another reason why we chose *Elle* is that young women form the target group, and the results of the Eurobarometer surveys (cf. 'Introduction' above) indicate that the younger generation has a more extensive knowledge of English than the older generation. We believed that there would be more chance of finding ads in English in magazines aimed at a younger generation than in magazines intended for older readers.

In all countries except France, *Elle* appears monthly, and we therefore selected the issues for April, May, June, July, August and September 2004. Since *Elle* is a weekly in France, we selected at random one issue for each of these same months. In total we had six corpora of ads in *Elle* from April through September 2004 for Dutch-speaking Belgium, French-speaking Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.

Advertisements

We studied only advertisements that were at least half a page in size. This allowed us to limit the data in such a way that we could compile a consistent corpus representing all the countries in our project. In addition, many of the advertisements that were less than half a page in size – often one-ninth or one-sixteenth of a page – originated from small organizations and were generally less professional in the way the text was put together. Ads for the magazine itself (e.g. promising a free make up set for every *Elle* subscription bought), or for products that the magazine was promoting (e.g. *Elle*'s own body lotion), were also excluded from the corpora. Finally, if an advertisement occurred more than once in a given corpus, then this ad was only counted once. All the ads in our investigation can be classified as commercial advertising.

Parts of advertisements

We distinguished different parts in the ad as follows: headline, body copy, slogan, standing details, picture, product name. We classified as headline the words that are in the leading

position in the ad and will draw the most attention (Belch and Belch, 2004: 283). We regarded the main part of the advertising message as body copy (Leech, 1966: 59). We defined a slogan as “a short phrase or clause regularly accompanying the name of the product” (Cook, 1992: 231), and we regarded as standing details the information provided on how to buy the product (e.g. retailer’s location, telephone, or fax number, website URL, e-mail address). We regarded a picture as a photograph or drawing included in the advertisement, but we disregarded corporate logos. For instance, a picture in an ad may contain the product, the product’s packaging and a product’s user (Leech, 1966: 59; Nayak, 2002: section 1.1; Gieszinger, 2001: 17–18), and we included in our analysis only those texts within a photograph or other type of illustration that were easily readable. A product name was defined as the name of the product as it appeared in the ad, which could include the brand name only, e.g. *Pepsi*, *Ralph Lauren*, *Blue Band*, plus various forms of hybridization, such as the brand name combined with another name, e.g. *Mona Vifit*, *Bertolli Delicatato*, a combination of the brand name and a product description, e.g. *CoolBest-orange juice*, *Omo Double Action Tablets*, or a product description only, e.g. *2-Action Plaque Remover*.

Many of the ads with English in our corpora did not contain all of these elements, and we incorporated this into our analysis. For instance, we first investigated how many of the ads with English contained a headline (both with and without English), and we then investigated how many of the total number of headlines in the ads containing English were also presented in English. We therefore looked not only at how often English was used in a given section of the ad, but also at how often it could have been used. This approach, referred to in quantitative sociolinguistics as the “potential of occurrence”, is considered a more reliable method of measuring the occurrence of a phenomenon than simply counting the number of actual occurrences at any given time (Labov, 1966).

Products advertised

In order to investigate the possible relationship between the use of English and the product advertised, we first established what types of product were included across the entire corpus. This revealed that only a limited number of product categories occurred. The following product categories accounted for 2,299 (96 per cent) of the total number of 2,384 ads:

Clothing/shoes/accessories (n = 809)	Cars (63)
Make up/skin treatment (503)	Television and radio broadcasting (47)
Perfume/eau de toilette (277)	Electronic kitchen equipment (38)
Watches/jewelry (185)	Mobile phones (33)
Food/drink (135)	Digital cameras (28)
(Sun)glasses (68)	Interior design (28)
Magazines/newspapers/books (68)	Hotels/travel (15)

Eighty-five advertisements were excluded from the study of the possible relationship between the use of English and the type of products advertised, either because it was not clear what product was being advertised or because there were very few examples of the given product (e.g. gas, electricity, cheques, products associated with illness, condoms).

What is English?

It might seem simple to determine which words in an ad may be considered to be English. However, since English lexical items have been assimilated into so many languages, it is often difficult to say whether a lexical item is still English or whether it has become a part of the local language. We considered a lexical item as English when it met the following two criteria:

1. It occurred in the same meaning in an authoritative English dictionary such as the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2003) or the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2002), or on a UK website via Google.
2. It did *not* occur in the most recent authoritative dictionary of the respective receiving language. For France and French-speaking Belgium this was *Le Petit Robert de la langue française* (2003), for Germany the Duden dictionary *Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (1999), for the Netherlands and Dutch-speaking Belgium the *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse taal* (1999) and for Spain the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (1992, 2003). All the dictionaries referred to were authoritative general or non-specialized dictionaries, i.e. they did not focus on a specific professional domain, since we assumed that the advertising texts in *Elle* (and its readership) would be of a general, non-specific nature.

The word *manager*, for instance, does occur in the Dutch *Van Dale* (1999), but the word *person* does not. In the first instance the lexical item has been assimilated into the “local” language, i.e. Dutch, according to the dictionary, and was not counted as English for the Dutch corpus, whereas in the second instance it has not been assimilated according to the dictionary, and it was therefore considered as an English item. In addition, it was important for our analysis that we could identify whether the English borrowing concerned had retained its original meaning, or if it had taken on a different meaning, as is the case, for instance, with the lexical item *Smoking*, which, as Gerritsen and Nickerson (2004) report, refers to a tuxedo/dinner jacket in the Netherlands. Why such semantic extension occurs is beyond the scope of this paper, but we would contend that it is part of the process of language variation and change that is constantly occurring as languages evolve (see e.g. Aitchison, 2001). We accept that dictionaries do not always entirely reflect a society’s use of and attitude towards language at a given point in time, such that words that do not appear in an authoritative dictionary may still be considered by some native speakers as a part of their language; for example the word *podcast* was only included in the *Oxford Dictionary* in August 2005, when it had already been in general use for several months. Imperfect though it may be, however, we decided that a classification system based on the authoritative dictionaries for each of the five language areas would be the closest that we could come to ensuring consistency and academic rigour in the analysis (cf. ‘Discussion’ below).

Names were counted as English if they had a meaning that was associated with the product. For instance, *Dove* (the name of a product for soft skin) was considered as English, but *Hunter* for a printer was not, as there is no semantic connection between the word *hunter* and a printer. Complete phrases – such as *Your last stop before the top* – were also counted as six English words, despite the fact that *stop* and *top* are also Dutch words. Although the readers of an ad may of course process the word *hunter* and understand its meaning in a different context, not in relation to a printer, there is no (potential for an) additional persuasive element as a result of the semantic connection, as is the case with *dove* and its association with softness and gentleness, and therefore soft skin. Equally, although it may certainly be the case that English-sounding product names that are otherwise

nonsensical, e.g. *twix* for a candy bar, may be effective in promoting a product, these did not form part of our analysis, as we were specifically interested in capturing those English borrowings where the ability to comprehend the word would have an additional persuasive effect.

Sometimes nativization has occurred, i.e. when English lexical items which meet the two criteria mentioned above have adapted to the local language to a certain extent, as in the following examples:

- Words are inflected according to the language of the country, e.g. Dutch *powerfulle* with the Dutch adjective inflection;
- Word are spelt according to the conventions of the local language, e.g. the compound noun *summerlooks*;
- Part of a word is English and part is local language, as in *controlcyclus*, where the first part of the word is in English and the second part in Dutch;
- Lexical innovations consist of a combination of existing English words, but the combination does not exist in English: e.g. *railtender*, *salaryman*.

The examples given above were also counted as English, since the stem occurs in one of the authoritative English dictionaries mentioned above but not in the authoritative dictionaries of the native languages. Since these nativizations may be an indication that a country is in the process of developing its own norm for English, whereby the nativized version comes to replace the original version, we placed them in a separate category and reported on what percentage of the total number of English words consisted of instances of such nativized English. Again, as we have discussed above, the need for a consistent method of analysis across all five language areas in the project meant that we referred exclusively to the respective dictionaries in our classification of such nativizations – although we accept that a dictionary presents a static view of a language at a given point in time, and that variations such as these may be in common use for a period of time before they are included in a dictionary.

Analytical units

There are various ways of establishing how much English occurs in a given text. Martin (2002), for instance, looked at sentences, phrases, lexical items and morphological items. In this study, we restricted the analysis to lexical items. This included not only how many lexical items occurred in English, but also how many lexical items occurred in the local language.

Processing and analyzing the data

All the ads were analyzed independently by two or more researchers, and any differences in the analysis were discussed and resolved. All the ads – including those that did not contain English – were processed using the statistical program SPSS 13. Chi-squared tests were used to investigate whether differences between nominal variables (number of ads with English compared to number of ads without English, number of English words compared to number of words in the native language) were significant; analyses of variances were performed in order to investigate whether countries differed significantly in number of English words used in ads exclusively in English. Since a large number of statistical tests were performed, we selected $p > 0.01$ as the level of significance.

Table 2. Number of ads and number of ads containing English (including nativized English)

	Belgium Dutch-speaking	Belgium French-speaking	France	Germany	Netherlands	Spain	Total
No. of ads	318	308	448	534	325	451	2,384
No. of ads that contain English	233 73%	223 72%	284 63%	307 57%	208 64%	349 77%	1,604 67%

Table 3. Ads exclusively and partly in English (including nativized English)

	Belgium Dutch- speaking	Belgium French- speaking	France	Germany	Netherlands	Spain	Total
No. of ads completely in English	35 15%	25 11%	0 0%	5 2%	31 15%	55 16%	151 9%
No. of ads partly in English	198 85%	198 89%	284 100%	302 98%	177 85%	294 84%	1443 90%

5. RESULTS

Table 2 shows what percentage of the ads contain English for each of the six corpora (RQ 1). It is clear that English occurs very frequently. In nearly all countries more than two-thirds of the total number of ads contained English. However, there are differences between the countries, ranging from as many as 77 per cent for Spain to 57 per cent for Germany. Chi-squared tests showed that the hierarchy between the countries in the occurrence of ads with English is as shown below in (1).⁴

- (1) Spain = Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium > France = Germany = the Netherlands

Table 3 shows how many of the ads with English are exclusively in English and how many are partly in English (RQ 2). The majority of the ads are partly in English. There were no ads exclusively in English in France. This is due to the fact that it is compulsory to provide a translation in French for any foreign language text used in advertising (the Toubon law – see Martin, 2006). The percentage of ads exclusively in English was relatively low in Germany. Chi-squared tests showed the following hierarchy between the countries in the occurrence of ads exclusively in English (RQ 8):⁵

- (2) Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium = the Netherlands = Spain > Germany

Table 4 shows how many English words (including nativized English) were found in ads exclusively in English (RQ 3). There were large variations in the number of English words, varying from ads consisting of only one English word to ads with 110 English words. A one-way analysis of variance with the factor country and the dependent variable number of English words (including nativized English) showed no significant differences between the countries (RQ 8) ($F(4, 146) = 3.08, p = .02$).

Table 4. Amount of English (including nativized English) used in ads exclusively in English

	Belgium Dutch- speaking	Belgium French- speaking	France	Germany	Netherlands	Spain	Total
No. of ads	35	25	0	5	31	55	151
No. of English words	440	336	–	98	588	432	1,894
Mean no. of English words	13	13	–	20	19	8	15
Range of English words	1–63	1–61	–	6–58	3–92	1–110	1–110

Table 5. Amount of English (including nativized English) used in ads partially displayed in English

	Belgium Dutch- speaking	Belgium French- speaking	France	Germany	Netherlands	Spain	Total
No. of ads	198	198	284	302	177	294	1,443
No. of words	11,518	12,379	17,358	14,899	14,484	19,466	90,104
No. of English words	1,606	1,707	1,221	2,134	1,956	2,886	11,510
	14%	14%	7%	14%	13%	15%	13%
Mean no. of English words	8	9	4	7	11	10	8
Range of English words	1–87	1–99	1–51	1–107	1–169	1–344	1–344

Table 6. Amount of nativized English used in ads exclusively and partly in English

	Belgium Dutch- speaking	Belgium French- speaking	France	Germany	Netherlands	Spain	Total
No. of ads	233	223	284	307	208	349	1604
No. of English words	2,046	1,893	1,221	2,232	2,544	2,886	11,510
No. of nativized English words	167	97	67	266	144	115	856
	8%	5%	5%	12%	6%	4%	7%

Table 5 shows the amount of English (including nativized English) used in ads partially displayed in English (RQ 4). It is clear that the amount of English varied considerably in all the different countries, ranging from 1 to 344 English words. With the exception of France, the percentage of English words compared to the total number of words in the advertisements varied between 13 per cent and 15 per cent for all of the countries in the study. In France this percentage was considerably lower, at 7 per cent. Chi-squared tests showed the following hierarchy between the countries in the amount of English used in ads partly in English (RQ 8):⁶

(3) Spain > Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium = Germany = the Netherlands > France

Table 6 shows the percentage of nativized English words in ads exclusively in English and ads partially displayed in English (RQ 5). This special type of English (cf. “What is English?” above) was included in all the analyses shown above; but we were also interested

Table 7. Part of text where English occurs in ads partially displayed in English

Country	No. of ads partially displayed in English	Headline*	Body copy*	Slogan*	Standing info.*	Picture*	Product name*
Belgium Dutch-speaking	198	70/127 55%	84/130 65%	37/77 48%	112/163 69%	64/96 67%	70/177 39%
Belgium French-speaking	198	63/148 42%	77/126 61%	34/80 42%	101/152 66%	80/112 71%	99/168 59%
France	284	43/187 23%	73/173 42%	30/125 24%	184/247 74%	98/155 63%	100/277 36%
Germany	302	81/215 38%	111/174 64%	53/115 46%	188/255 74%	91/145 63%	169/276 61%
Netherlands	177	47/133 35%	91/121 75%	52/87 60%	120/146 82%	58/96 60%	49/133 37%
Spain	294	68/204 33%	121/197 61%	44/122 36%	180/234 77%	111/148 75%	111/233 48%
Total	1443	372/1014 37%	557/921 60%	250/606 41%	885/1197 74%	502/752 67%	598/1264 47%

*The number after / indicates how often the part of the ad occurred and the number before / indicates how often that part contained English

in what percentage of the total number of English words consisted of nativized English, since the use of nativized English might be an indication that a country is developing its own variant of English. Our findings show that the percentage of nativized English is low, varying from 5 to 12 per cent. Chi-squared tests showed the following hierarchy between the countries in the occurrence of nativized English (RQ 8):⁷

(4) Germany > Dutch-speaking Belgium > French-speaking Belgium = France = Netherlands > Spain

Table 7 shows where English occurred in the ads partially displayed in English (RQ 6a). In order to calculate the percentages of the use of English in, for example, headlines in Dutch-speaking Belgium, we first counted how often headlines occurred in the ads partly in English in Dutch-speaking Belgium, and we then investigated how many of those headlines contained English. There were, for instance, 127 headlines in the 198 ads partially displayed in English in Dutch-speaking Belgium, and 70 of those 127 headlines (55 per cent) contained English. Table 7 shows that in almost all of the countries under investigation, English is used least frequently in headlines and slogans and most frequently in standing information (RQs 6b and 6c). Since there were no obvious differences between the countries in the parts of the ads where English was used (RQ 9a), we performed chi-squared tests for the totals only in order to find out whether English occurred in some parts of the ads more often than in others. These tests showed the following hierarchy in the occurrence of English in the different parts of the ads.⁸

(5) Standing information > picture > body copy > product name > slogan = headline

Table 8. Product and use of English

	Total no. of ads for the product category	No. of ads partially displayed in English in the product category	No. of ads exclusively in English in the product category	Total no. of ads with English
Television and radio broadcasting	47	41	1	42(89%)
Mobile phones	33	27	2	29(88%)
Hotels/travel	15	13	0	13(87%)
Make up/skin treatment	503	410	2	412(82%)
Digital cameras	28	23	0	22(82%)
Watches/jewelry	185	110	20	130(70%)
Interior design	28	19	0	19(68%)
(Sun)glasses	68	41	4	45(66%)
Electronic kitchen equipment	38	25	0	25(66%)
Perfume/eau de toilette	277	143	37	180(65%)
Clothing/shoes/ accessories	809	418	82	500(62%)
Cars	63	39	0	39(62%)
Food/drinks	135	55	2	57(42%)
Magazines/ newspapers/ books	68	27	0	27(40%)
Not classified	85	52	1	53
Total	2,384	1,443	151	1,594

Table 8 shows how many ads there were for each of the product categories that occurred in our corpora, together with how many of these ads were partly in English and how many were exclusively in English (RQ 7). The product category with the highest percentage of ads (overall) with English is shown at the top of the table, i.e. television and radio broadcasting, and the product category with the lowest percentage of ads (overall) with English is shown at the bottom, i.e. magazines/newspapers/books. Some of the categories contain only small numbers of ads, e.g. hotels/travel, digital cameras, interior design, and this will be taken into account in the discussion below. Table 8 clearly shows that English does not occur equally often in all the product categories, and it is possible to classify the occurrence of English as follows:

1. More than 80 per cent of the ads for the following products include English: television and radio broadcasting, mobile phones, hotels/travel, make up/skin treatment and digital cameras.
2. 60–70 per cent of the ads for the following products include English: watches/jewelry, interior design, (sun)glasses, electronic kitchen equipment, perfume/eau de toilette, clothing/shoes/accessories, cars.
3. Less than half of the ads for the following products contain English: food/drink, magazines/newspapers/books.

A chi-squared test showed significant differences between all the product categories in categories 2 and 3. Ads for cars (category 2), for instance, contain English significantly more often than those for food/drink (category 3) ($\chi^2(1) = 6.66, p = .01$). Since most of the cells for category 1 were smaller than 5, chi-squared tests could often not be performed. The difference between watches/jewelry (category 2) and make up/skin treatment is, however, significant ($(\chi^2(1) = 10.96, p = .001)$).

When we looked at the findings for a given product for each of the countries investigated, then the numbers of ads for most product categories were too small to allow us

to conclude anything about the relationship between the product category and the use of English. However, for those products where there were sufficient ads in the corpora, such as clothing/shoes/accessories, make up/skin treatment, perfume/eau de toilette and watches/jewelry, it was consistently possible to divide the data into the three categories given above for each of our countries (RQ 9b).

6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Our primary aim in this study was to investigate the occurrence of English in advertisements aimed at young women. Therefore we focused on the following research questions.

1. What percentage of the ads contain English?
2. What percentage of the ads with English are displayed exclusively in English, and what percentage are partly in English and partly in the local national language?
3. How many English words are used in the ads exclusively displayed in English?
4. How many English words are used in the ads partly displayed in English?
5. How many nativized English words are used in the ads with English?

An answer for RQ 1 is provided in Table 2. It shows that 67 per cent of all the ads in our corpus contain English. This percentage is high, particularly when compared to the results reported in other studies, which state that 30 per cent or less of advertising contains English (Switzerland: Cheshire and Moser, 1994; Spain, Italy, Germany, Netherlands: Gerritsen, 1995; Gerritsen *et al.*, 2000; France: Martin, 2002). Only Piller (2001) claims that between 60 and 70 per cent of the advertisements that appear in Germany contain English. The difference between our results and those of other researchers could be due to several reasons: differences in data analysis, i.e. our definition of English; the fact that we did not only investigate how often ads with English occurred, but what percentage of all the ads in our corpus contained English (the potential of occurrence, cf. "Parts of advertisements" above), differences between print advertising and commercials and differences in the selection of ads. We studied ads in *Elle*, a magazine aimed at young women. As we discussed in the introduction, the younger generation claims to know more English than the older generation; it could be the case that the copy writers of ads published in *Elle* are aware of this, and therefore use English more often in ads aimed at a younger target group. The difference between our results and those of others could also be a result of the increasingly frequent use of English in the course of the last decade (cf. Table 1). All the studies mentioned above present data from the previous century, and the further we go back, the greater the differences are when compared to our findings.

The majority of the ads with English are ads partially displayed in English (Table 3). These ads account for 90 per cent of all the ads with English (RQ 2). The length of the ads displayed exclusively in English (Table 4) varies considerably, from 1 to 110 words, but the mean is relatively small: 15 words (RQ 3). The amount of English used in ads partly displayed in English (RQ 4) is relatively small, at 13 per cent, and the mean number of English words used per ad is only 8 (Table 5). Finally, the use of nativized English words (Table 6) accounts for only a small part of the English used: 7 per cent (RQ 5).

We can conclude that English appears to occur frequently in ads in *Elle*, as two out of every three ads contain English. However, the proportion of English words within the total amount of words in the ads is actually quite small. Only 9 per cent of the ads are displayed exclusively in English, and only 13 percent of the words in those ads that are partly in

English are English words. These findings are surprising, because they are not in line with other data which show that English may already be part way through the process of becoming a second rather than a foreign language in some of the countries we investigated – at least if we assume that membership of the Dual Circle is also reflected in the frequency with which English is used (Berns, 1995). This is especially remarkable if one considers that the target audience for these ads, i.e. young and educated women, constitutes one of the sectors within society where any shift towards English as a second language is likely to be most advanced.

The second aim of our study was to gain insight into the role played by English in advertisements, as indicated in the following research questions.

- 6a. Are there differences in use of English between the different parts of the ads?
- 6b. If so, do those differences support the idea that English is most especially used to attract the reader's attention, i.e. that it occurs more often in prominent parts of the text such as the slogan and headline?
- 6c. If so, are these differences in line with Bhatia's hierarchy: product name > headline > slogan > body?
7. Is English used more frequently in advertisements for products that can be associated with modernity, progress and globalization than it is in advertisements for products that cannot?

It appears from Table 7 that there are indeed differences between the different parts of the advertisements in the use of English (RQ 6a). The hierarchy is as shown in (5):

(5) Standing information > picture > body copy > product name > headline = slogan

This hierarchy is neither completely in agreement with Piller (2001) (RQ 6b) nor with Bhatia (2001) (RQ 6c), as we will discuss below.

Piller (2001) found that English occurred less frequently in standing information than in the headline and slogan. The results of our quantitative analysis are precisely the other way around: English occurs significantly less in headlines and slogans than in standing information. The difference regarding standing information could be a result of our definition of English (cf. "What is English?" above). In addition, in keeping with the classification we use throughout the project, websites ending in .com were considered as English because .com did not occur in the most recent authoritative dictionaries for French, German, Dutch and Spanish. The standing information often contained reference to .com websites. It is possible that Piller (2001) did not consider them as English in her analysis, or that the ads that she studied – published in 1999 – did not yet contain as many .com websites.

The differences between Piller's results and ours regarding headlines and slogans are less easy to explain. It is possible that the frequent occurrence of English in the headlines and slogans in her ads is due to the fact that she collected ads in newspapers, flyers, posters, product containers and packages, whereas we only collected ads published in *Elle*. A second reason for the difference could be that a change took place between the time that she collected her 400 ads (1999) and the time that we collected ours (2004). A final explanation, however, could be that the differences are a consequence of differences in the methodology used. Piller's (2001: 157) data come from incidental observations in her corpus, whereas we performed a quantitative analysis of our ads. Moreover, not only did we investigate how many headlines, for instance, contained English, we also looked at what percentage of all the headlines in our corpus contained English. Finally, we used a definition of English in the classification of our data, which may have been more restrictive in what was considered English than was the case in Piller's study.

Piller (2001) contends that the primary aim of the use of English in ads is to attract a reader's attention. If this is the case, then we would expect that the headline, slogan and product name are those parts of an advertisement that are most likely to achieve this, and that as a result it would be in these parts in particular that English would occur most often. Although the hierarchy under (5) above shows that in the headline, slogan and product name fewer English words occurred than in the body copy, picture and standing information, more than one-third of the ads do in fact include English in these parts: headlines 37 per cent, slogans 41 per cent, and product names 47 per cent. It is therefore plausible that, as Piller suggests, advertisers do indeed use English to attract the reader's attention. In our corpus, however, the same cannot be said for the English used in the standing information, picture and body copy. The frequent use of English in the standing information in our analysis can be accounted for by the categorization of .com websites as English, and the frequent use of English in pictures is because a product often contains information in several different languages. In both cases English occurs, but it does not serve to attract the reader's attention. Similarly, in the body copy, we believe that English is used essentially for practical reasons rather than to attract the reader's attention, since English is often used for words or expressions that would most probably be difficult or clumsy to translate into the local language, e.g. *invisible kiss proof*, *deep-hydra-complex*, *uv-reponse*, *super balanced make up*, *bio extender*, or equally, for words that perhaps sound more modern or up to date in English than they would in the local language, e.g. *sparkling*, *intelligent cooking system*, *health*, *energy*, *eyewear*, *aqua planning*. Our findings therefore, especially for the body copy in our ads, would suggest that English is also being used for reasons other than just as a means of attracting the reader's attention.

In contrast to Piller's work, Bhatia's theory about the differences in occurrence of English in different parts of ads is not based on the idea that English is used to attract the reader's attention (Bhatia, 2001). As we have outlined above, he refers instead to a model that postulates that the penetration of English in ads is conditioned by linguistic factors according to a particular hierarchy, so that, if English is used, it will penetrate more easily in some elements, e.g. product names, than in others, e.g. body copy. Bhatia suggests the following order ranging from the most likely penetration to the least likely penetration: product name, headline, slogan, body copy. The hierarchy suggested by our findings is similar to this: name, headline and slogan all occur in the same position as in Bhatia's work, but the position of the body copy is different in our findings, since our ads show that this is the place where the most English occurs rather than the least. Again, this may be explained by the reasons we have discussed above, i.e. that English is being used for a number of different practical purposes in the body copy and not primarily to attract the reader's attention.

Where it is used to attract a reader's attention, English may also be used to activate certain associations. According to Piller (2003) and Kelly-Holmes (2005: 104), for instance, English differs in this respect from other foreign languages. Foreign languages other than English are used in advertising to form an association with an ethno-cultural stereotype, whereas English is used to form an association with a specific social stereotype, i.e. modernity. Our data show that English was indeed rarely used to form an association with speakers of English such as the British or the Americans. The only advertisements that sometimes do this, for instance by also including tartan scarves and umbrellas, are the ads for Burberry. These, however, account for only 0.9 per cent (16 out of 1,604) of the ads that contain English. Our corpus indicated that English was used to activate an association with the product

and the social stereotype of modernity, but the use of English in the ads was not equally divided among all the products that are advertised (see Table 7). English is used most frequently in ads for television and radio broadcasting, mobile phones, hotels/travel, make up/skin treatment and digital cameras (category 1); it is used slightly less often in ads for watches/jewelry, interior design, (sun)glasses, electronic kitchen equipment, perfume/eau de toilette, clothing/shoes/accessories, and cars (category 2), and much less often in ads for food/drink and magazines/newspapers/books (category 3). If we compare the products advertised in categories 1 and 2 with those in category 3, then those in categories 1 and 2 can be associated more with modernity, e.g. internationalism, future orientation, success and elitism, sophistication, fun, youth (Piller, 2001:173). This confirms RQ 7, and also corroborates the findings of Martin (2002; 2006: 173–6), Alm (2003), Piller (2003:175), Kelly-Holmes (2005:104), Ustinova and Bhatia (2005) and Lee (2006).

Now that we have established how much English is used in ads in *Elle*, and the role that it plays, we will turn our attention to whether or not there were variations between the countries that we investigated. On the basis of data put forward by Berns (1995) and Graddol (1999) on the status of English in Europe, we assumed that English would be used more often in countries that belong to the Dual Circle than in countries that do not belong to the Dual Circle, and that, following on from that, English would also play a different role in Dual Circle countries than in other countries. The relevant research questions were as follows:

8. Is the use of English in product ads higher in the Netherlands and Germany than in Belgium, France and Spain?
9. Is English used in the Netherlands and Germany, in a different way than in Belgium, France and Spain in:
 - 9a. the parts of the text in which English is used?
 - 9b. the products with which it is associated?

Tables 1–5 above show the occurrence of English in ads in the countries we investigated, and the hierarchies (6–9) below the significant differences between the countries we found.

- (6) Occurrence of ads with English (Table 2)
Spain = Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium > France = Germany = Netherlands
- (7) Proportion of ads displayed exclusively in English compared to ads partially displayed in English (Table 3)
Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium = Netherlands = Spain > Germany
- (8) Amount of English used in ads partially displayed in English (Table 5)
Spain > Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium = Germany = Netherlands > France
- (9) Amount of nativized English used in ads displayed exclusively and partly in English (Table 6)
Germany > Dutch-speaking Belgium > French-speaking Belgium = France = Netherlands > Spain

There were no significant differences between the countries in the amount of English used in the ads displayed exclusively in English (Table 4).

RQ 8 was inspired by Berns's observation (1995) that English in the Netherlands and in Germany is situated between the Expanding and the Outer Circle, in an overlapping area, the Dual Circle, whereas English in Belgium, France and Spain is in the Expanding Circle. The hierarchy that this would lead to is shown in (10):

- (10) Germany = Netherlands > Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium = France = Spain

According to Graddol (1999), in the countries we investigated, only in the Netherlands would English have the characteristics of a second language. This would lead to the hierarchy shown in (11):

(11) Netherlands > Dutch-speaking Belgium = French-speaking Belgium = France = Germany = Spain

However, if we compare the hierarchies in (10) and (11) with our findings (as shown in hierarchies 6–9), then there are hardly any similarities. Only the difference between Germany, the Netherlands and France as shown in (8), and the difference between Germany, Belgium, France and Spain as shown in (9) is in line with our assumption (10) on the basis of Berns (1995).

In summary, we can state that our data neither corroborate RQ 8 (cf. 10) nor the refinement of RQ 8 (cf. 11). That might be an indication that the use of English in ads is unrelated to the status of English in a given country – in other words, that it is not the case that the more English that is used in a country, and the more that this leans towards a second language, the more frequently English will be used in ads. However, this unexpected finding could be the consequence of the method we used in order to determine what we classified as English in the ads. We based our classification of English on the most authoritative dictionaries for each country; however, these do not all deal with English – and the assimilation of English – in the same way. For example, the word *weekend* occurs in the Dutch *Van Dale* dictionary and the German Duden dictionary, but not in the Spanish Real Academia Española dictionary, despite the fact that it is used in Spanish. As a consequence the word *weekend* is considered to be Dutch in the Netherlands and German in Germany, but as English in Spain. This difference between the languages in the officially standardized assimilation of English becomes clear if the number of words that are labelled “from English” in the electronic versions of dictionaries for the different languages are compared: Dutch has 9,145 occurrences, German 6,033, French 815 and Spanish 672.⁹ This difference could, of course, account for the relatively high occurrence of English in Spain, as a result of the dictionary-based classification system we used in identifying the English words.

Our findings showed even less support for our expectation that English would be used in a less specific way in ads in those countries where English is shifting towards the Outer Circle (RQ 9). Table 7 shows that there were not many differences between the countries in the place within the ad in which English was used: the hierarchy was as in (5) for all the countries we investigated. There were also no differences between the countries and the types of product advertised using English; in all the countries investigated, English was used to advertise products that could be associated with modernity.

Our quantitative investigation of the use of and role played by English in product advertising in *Elle* has shown that many ads contain English, but that the amount of English used is small. English is used partly to attract the reader’s attention, and partly to avoid the use of long or complicated constructions that would otherwise have to be used in the local language. The products advertised using English were mostly those that could be associated with modernity, and it is probable that English is used deliberately by advertisers in order to associate a product with modernity in a consumer’s mind. There were no differences in the countries investigated concerning the role played by English in ads, but there were some differences in the frequency with which it was used. These differences in frequency were not what we had expected on the basis of previous commentators’ suggestions that English

in both the Netherlands and Germany is in the process of shifting from the Expanding to the Outer Circle, whereas it is not in Belgium, France and Spain.

Our findings for the use of English and the role it plays are not entirely in accordance with those of previous researchers. For instance, we found a higher percentage of advertisements with English. This could have been caused by the fact that we only selected ads in *Elle*, a magazine targeted at young, highly educated women, i.e. a group within society who claim that they are able to speak English at a very high level (cf. 'Introduction'). It is possible that ads targeted at other groups would contain less English. Alternatively, the more frequent use of English that we found could also be a consequence of the increasing use of English across society as a whole in Europe. Finally, the difference we found could have been a result of differences in methodology between our investigation and that of other studies: in our investigation we defined English strictly, and took the potential of occurrence into account. The difference between our research findings and that of Piller (2001), in particular in terms of the attention-getting function associated with English, could be a consequence of this difference in research method.

Now that we know that English is used frequently in advertisements, the next question is, of course, what the effect of using English actually is on the target group: do they understand it, what is their attitude towards it, and what effect does its use have on the image of the product or service being advertised (cf. Van Meurs *et al.*, 2004)? Answers to questions such as these can give us more insight into the status of English within Europe. And indeed, there are indications that the knowledge of English within Europe is less than has often been thought (Lanting, 2005). The desire to use English in advertising may also in fact be sometimes greater than the knowledge of English held by advertisers themselves, if the following example is anything to judge by. The text of the perfume advertisement on the back of the December 2004 issue of the magazine circulated by the most exclusive department store in the Netherlands, the Bijenkorf magazine, read: *armani. black code. the new fragment for men*. It would seem to be an appropriate moment to investigate empirically what the knowledge of English in Europe actually is.

NOTES

1. A *local bus* is a bus or electronic pathway that allows access to the Central Processing Unit (CPU) at a speed synchronized with the CPU. A *bluetooth* is an industrial specification for wireless personal area networks.
2. We have referred to only a part of Bhatia's hierarchy here, as not all the parts of an ad that he included occurred in our corpus.
3. <http://www/quotemedia.nl/index.php?action = showpage&id = 241&language =>, retrieved 4 April 2006.
4. Chi-squared tests showed no significant differences in the occurrence of ads with English between Dutch- and French-speaking Belgium on the one hand and between France, Germany and the Netherlands on the other. Ads with English occurred significantly more often in Spain than in France ($\chi^2(1) = 21.12$, $p = .001$), Germany ($\chi^2(1) = 42.50$, $p = .001$) and the Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 16.70$, $p = .001$). Ads with English occurred more frequently in Dutch- and French-speaking Belgium than in France, Germany and the Netherlands (Dutch-speaking Belgium–France ($\chi^2(1) = 8.27$, $p = .001$), French-speaking Belgium–France ($\chi^2(1) = 6.71$, $p = .01$), Dutch-speaking Belgium–Germany ($\chi^2(1) = 21.38$, $p = .01$), French-speaking Belgium–Germany ($\chi^2(1) = 18.72$, $p = .01$), Dutch-speaking Belgium–Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 6.31$, $p = .01$), French-speaking Belgium–Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 5.14$, $p = .02$)).
5. Chi-squared tests showed that there were no significant differences in the proportion of ads displayed exclusively and partly in English between Dutch- and French-speaking Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain. Significantly fewer ads displayed exclusively in English occurred in Germany than in Dutch-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 34.64$, $p = .001$), French-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 22.21$, $p = .001$), the Netherlands and Spain ($\chi^2(1) = 39.25$, $p = .001$). Unfortunately, we could not calculate whether France and the other countries differed significantly in the occurrence of ads partly and exclusively in English, because the frequency of ads exclusively in English was zero, and was therefore too low to perform chi-squared tests.

6. Chi-squared tests showed no significant differences in the amount of English used between Dutch-speaking Belgium, French-speaking Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. In Spain, significantly more English occurred than in Dutch-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 4.55, p = .01$), French-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 6.58, p = .01$), France ($\chi^2(1) = 562.17, p = .001$) and the Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 11.86, p = .001$), and in France significantly less English occurred than in Dutch-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 374.24, p = .001$), French-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 371.46, p = .001$), Germany ($\chi^2(1) = 457.07, p = .001$) and the Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 361.02, p = .001$).
7. Chi-squared tests showed the following significant differences between the countries. In Germany, significantly more nativized English occurred than in all the other countries: Dutch-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 16.55, p = .001$), French-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 58.90, p = .001$), France ($\chi^2(1) = 37.45, p = .001$), Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 59.32, p = .001$) and Spain ($\chi^2(1) = 14.95, p = .001$). In Dutch-speaking Belgium, significantly more nativized English occurred than in French-speaking Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 14.51, p = .001$), France ($\chi^2(1) = 8.23, p = .004$), Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 11.24, p = .001$) and Spain ($\chi^2(1) = 38.76, p = .001$), and in Spain significantly less nativized English occurred than in the Netherlands ($\chi^2(1) = 8.36, p = .001$).
8. Chi-squared tests indicated no significant differences in the occurrence of English between headlines and slogans. English occurred less frequently in headlines than in the body copy ($\chi^2(1) = 109.45, p = .001$), standing information ($\chi^2(1) = 310.49, p = .001$), picture ($\chi^2(1) = 156.17, p = .001$) and product name ($\chi^2(1) = 25.97, p = .001$), and less frequently in slogans than in the body copy ($\chi^2(1) = 54.20, p = .001$), standing information ($\chi^2(1) = 184.24, p = .001$), picture ($\chi^2(1) = 88.31, p = .001$) and product name ($\chi^2(1) = 6.06, p = .014$). In standing information, English occurred more frequently than in the body copy ($\chi^2(1) = 43.38, p = .001$), picture ($\chi^2(1) = 11.60, p = .001$) and product name ($\chi^2(1) = 181.99, p = .001$). The body copy contained English more often than the product name ($\chi^2(1) = 37.07, p = .001$) and less English than the picture ($\chi^2(1) = 7.02, p = .001$). The picture contained more English than the product name. ($\chi^2(1) = 71.91, p = .001$).
9. Data for Dutch from Van Dale (2000–2002), electronic version 1.2; data for German from Verein Deutsche Sprache, *Der Anglizismen-Index*; data for French from Académie Française (2006); data for Spanish from Real Academia Española (2003).

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