

## Research Article

# Reasons for Using English or the Local Language in the Genre of Job Advertisements: Insights From Interviews With Dutch Job Ad Designers

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**Abstract—Research problem:** *This study provides insight into practitioners' reasons for choosing a particular language (English versus the local language) in the genre of job ads in countries where English is a foreign language (EFL countries). Scholarly publications and public discourse have suggested reasons for language choice, but these were not based on the perspectives of practitioners. Research questions: (1) What reasons do Dutch job ad writers give for using all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English ads and what genre factors inform these reasons? (2) To what extent do the reasons given by Dutch job ad makers for using all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English ads complement reasons mentioned in publications on job ads? Literature review: Genre theory identifies three factors as important determinants of genre: contextual factors (such as characteristics of the organization and the sector in which the genre is produced), reader-writer factors (characteristics of the genre's target audience and author), and textual factors (the genre's content, structure, and wording). The reasons mentioned for the use of all-English job ads are that English is the organization's corporate language and that the organization is looking for English-speaking candidates. The reasons given for the use of job ads in the local language are that English is less clear than the local language and that English words are strange and exaggerated compared to equivalents in the local language. Among the reasons mentioned for the use of partly English job ads are that English words attract more attention than equivalents in the local language and that English job titles sound more modern and have more status than equivalent job titles in the local language. Methodology: In this qualitative study, we conducted 25 interviews with practitioners who designed job ads in the Netherlands, selected because they had recently placed an all-English, an all-Dutch, or a partly English job ad in a Dutch newspaper. They were asked an open-ended question about their reasons behind the language used in the job ad they placed. Interview data were labelled and categorized; subsequently, patterns were identified across categories. Results and conclusions: The interviews showed that all three types of genre factors—contextual, reader-writer, and textual—underlie practitioners' language choices. Practitioners mentioned the same types of factors that were mentioned in publications on job ads, but gave a greater variety of reasons for language choice. Of the reasons mentioned by the practitioners, the large majority were not given in publications. These findings underline the importance of obtaining text producers' perspectives and can be used to sensitize both novice and experienced professional Human Resources writers to the relevance of genre factors in language choice. A limitation of the present study is that the desired effects of language choice mentioned by the respondents were not verified with the target group of the job ads. Therefore, future research on language choice in workplace writing should test whether particular language choices in job ads actually achieve the recruitment effects Human Resource Manager professionals expect.*

**Index Terms**—English use, genre, job advertising, practitioners, reasons, the Netherlands.

## INTRODUCTION

“Callcenter agents,” “Human Resource Manager,” “Research Consultant,” “Business Improvement Plans,” and “Downstream HR Leadership Team” are just some examples of English words and phrases found in job advertisements in the Netherlands.

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Dutch newspapers and job sites also feature job ads which are completely in English, even though the Netherlands is not an English-speaking country. The present study aimed to establish why English instead of the local language is used in job ads in the Netherlands. To do so, an inventory was made of reasons given for language choice in the literature on English used in recruitment advertising in countries where English is a foreign language (EFL countries). This inventory was then offset against the reasons given by Human Resource Manager (HRM) professionals who design job ads for organizations. The latter information was obtained through interviews with actual job ad writers.

The present study is of relevance to communication professionals in HRM in the many countries

TABLE I  
REASONS FOR (OR AGAINST) THE USE OF ENGLISH IN JOB ADS IN EFL COUNTRIES  
MENTIONED IN SCHOLARLY AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Reasons	Publications	
	Scholarly Discourse	Public Discourse
<b>All-English Job Ads</b>		
English is corporate language	[6]	
Organization is looking for English-speaking candidates	[3], [6], [13], [24], [25], [34]	
<b>All-Dutch Job Ads</b>		
English less clear than local language	[23], [25]	
English words are “odd”, “strange”, “puffed up”, “snobbish” or “exaggerated”	[22], [23]	[35], [36], [37]
English threatens local language		[38]
<b>Partly English Job Ads</b>		
English terms create consistency in multinationals operating in different countries	[5], [25]	
English terms used to enhance organization’s image	[5]	
English job title creates global image for organization	[22]	
English job title makes job more attractive, modern, innovative, or gives it more status	[5], [6], [25]	[35], [36], [39]
English terms are common	[5], [6]	
English term attracts attention	[13], [24], [25]	[39]
English job title is gender neutral	[40], [41]	
English terms signal that applicants should be able to speak English		[39]

Note: The numbers in brackets refer to the sources in the list of references that mention the reasons in the first column.

around the world where English is not the local language. Analyses of language choice in job advertisements in such countries have shown that English words are frequently used in ads in the local language (for example, [1]) and that completely English job ads are published to recruit personnel (for example, [2]–[4]). Although literature on English in job ads has suggested reasons for its use (for example, [5] and [6]), to date, there have been no empirical studies that have asked HRM professionals why they opt for English or the local language in the job ads they produce. Such studies are important to gain insight into the mechanisms underlying language choice in the design of job ads. For example, it is not known what factors professionals consider when they choose to publish a job ad in English, in the local language, or a mix of the two. Insights into these factors are relevant to three groups of professionals—novice and experienced HRM writers and educators of HRM writers. Novice and experienced HRM writers can use such insights to make better informed decisions regarding language choice in job ads, while educators can use them to sensitize novice writers to the factors that shape the job ad genre. The findings of the present study are of value since they provide pooled perspectives and insights from a group of HRM practitioners with wide experience (various industries and sectors) that can supplement the considerations that individual

writers are likely to use intuitively already within the specific context of their own (more limited) experience.

This study was conducted in a European country, namely, the Netherlands, where English is not the local language (which is Dutch), but is increasingly being used alongside the local language (for example, [7] and [8]). Our study addressed the following research question:

- (1) What reasons do Dutch job ad writers give for using all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English ads and what genre factors inform these reasons?

Bhatia [9] and Harwood [10] observe that genre practitioners have unique insights into motivations underlying textual choices, whereas scholars tend not to be privy to such information. Therefore, a second research question was formulated aimed at determining what new insights practitioners can provide about their motivations for using either English or Dutch in job ads to complement the reasons already mentioned in earlier publications on the use of English or the local language in job ads in countries where English is a foreign language (EFL countries). The second research question was:

- (2) To what extent do the reasons given by Dutch job ad makers for using all-English,

TABLE II  
BACKGROUND OF THE INTERVIEWEES AND OF THE ORGANIZATIONS ADVERTISING THE VACANCY

Interviewee	Scope employer	Sector Employer	Capacity job ad writer
<i>All-English job ads</i>			
E1	International	Transport	Recruiter
E2	International	Commercial services (ICT)	Recruiter
E3	International	Transport (Shipping)	Recruiter
E4	International	Education (University)	Personnel Department
E5	International	Finance (Bank)	Recruiter
E6	International	Finance (Financial advice)	Department with vacancy
E7	International	Finance (Financial advice)	Personnel Department
E8	International	Industry (Petrochemical)	Personnel Department
E9	International	Industry (Food)	Personnel Department
E10	International	Industry (Medical)	Recruiter
<i>All-Dutch job ads</i>			
D1	National	Finance	Personnel Department
D2	National	Industry (Textile)	
D3	National	Public Administration (City Council)	Personnel Department
D4	National	Public Administration (City Council)	Personnel Department
D5	National	Commercial Services (Housing association)	Department with vacancy
D6	National	Building (Road building)	Personnel Department
D7	National	Health (Social care)	Personnel Department
D8	National	Health (Health care)	Personnel Department
<i>Partly English job ads</i>			
P1	National	Communication (Call center)	Personnel Department
P2	International	Industry (Petro-chemical)	Recruiter
P3	National	Education (University)	Personnel Department
P4	National	Health (Health care)	Recruiter
P5	International	Agriculture (Plants)	Department with vacancy
P6	National	Health (Healthcare)	Personnel Department
P7	International	Other Services (Recruiting)	Department with vacancy

all-Dutch, or partly English ads complement reasons mentioned in publications on job ads?

This paper is organized as follows. In the literature review, we present findings on the frequency of occurrence of English in job ads in EFL countries and lay and scholarly perspectives on English in job advertisements. In the methodology section, we detail the method we used in conducting interviews with professionals about their reasons for choosing English or the local language and the method we used to analyze the interview data. Then, we present the results of the interviews: the reasons the HRM professionals gave for their language choice, what our analyses revealed about the factors underlying them, and to what extent the reasons given by professionals reflect reasons for

language choice mentioned in earlier publications. In the last section, we discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from our findings, the limitations of our study, and suggestions for future research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review provides a theoretical background to our study in terms of genre theory, presents findings on the use of English in job ads and discusses reasons for this phenomenon mentioned by lay people and scholars. This section discusses the theoretical orientation, the selection of the literature, the characteristics of job ads in genre terms, the issue of language choice in relation to genre theory, empirical studies on the occurrence of English in job ads in EFL countries,

and publications on reasons for using English or the local language or a mix of the two. It ends by considering factors, taken from Genre Theory, that may underlie reasons for language choice in job ads.

**Theoretical Orientation** The current study takes a Genre Theory approach and is informed by studies in the area of language choice in job advertising. Genre Theory is concerned with the features of text types in terms of content and form, and with the factors that determine the features of a particular text type [9]. It is specifically aimed at determining how a particular genre is shaped by its purpose(s); the needs of the discourse community (that is, the people that utilize the genre); and the sociocultural and contextual constraints governing the professional area in which the discourse community operates [9]. Genre Theory thus offers a framework for analyzing the characteristics of different types of written texts and their production by members of professional communities [9]. This study focuses on one of the levels at which textual characteristics can be analyzed within Genre Theory, namely that of the language that is used. The theoretical orientation of the current investigation also considers studies of language choice in job advertising. These are relevant for the present study because they have investigated the frequency of occurrence of English in job advertising in various countries where English is not the local language, and because they have suggested possible reasons for the use of English versus the local language in this genre.

**Selection of the Literature for Review** Seminal works in the field of Genre Theory were used to contextualize the study. An extensive search was conducted of publications relating to English in job advertisements; using various databases, including Google Scholar; Picarta (a database covering Dutch libraries); and the internet at large. Search terms used included “English,” “job advertisements,” and “job ads/job adverts/recruitment advertising” in various languages. From the same databases, all publications about English use in the Netherlands were selected and consulted to determine if they commented on English in recruitment advertising. The bibliographies of the publications selected were also used to find further relevant publications (snowballing).

### **Genre Approach to Language Choice in Job Ads**

A job advertisement can be defined as a text type or genre used across various media to announce

a vacancy in an organization. Van Meurs et al. [1] characterized job ads in genre terms, following the elements of genre analysis stipulated by, for example, Bhatia [9], Miller [11], and Yates and Orlikowski [12]. The *communicative purpose* of a job advertisement is to persuade suitable candidates to apply for the vacancy (for example, [13] and [14]). The *recurrent situation* to which job ads are a response is the organization's need to hire new employees. The *discourse community* that produces the genre consists of the writers of the job ad. The main *target audience* are job seekers capable of filling the vacancy.

Genre literature specifies that genre analysis should incorporate an investigation of linguistic features (for example, [9] and [12]). One important linguistic feature of the genre of job ads in countries where English is a foreign language, such as the Netherlands, is the use of English or the reader's native language. English is frequently used in professional genres in such countries (for example, in email [15], in annual reports [16], and in product ads [17]). The present study investigated what factors are mentioned by job ad writers as determinants for their code and lexical choices in creating job ads. Genre Theory distinguishes a number of factors that are relevant to the analysis of specific genres, such as the writer and the audience, sociocultural circumstances, and the institutional context (for example, [9, p. 23], [18], and [19]). The current study aimed to establish to what extent these genre factors applied and, in particular, to what extent *contextual* factors play a role in practitioners' choices, since Genre Theory has underscored the relevance of context, both corporate and sociocultural, for genres and genre features (for example, [9], [12], [20]). Yates and Orlikowski [12, p. 320], for instance, remark that “various social, economic, and technological factors [...] occasion the production, reproduction, or modification of different genres in different sociohistorical contexts” and that “[a]nother important factor influencing the development and institutionalization of genres is the national, industrial, organizational, or occupational context.” Van Nus [19] operationalizes situational context in relation to business genres and more specifically the sales letter, and distinguishes three components: business community (sector and the products, services the business offers), organization (organizational features, such as size), and campaign (marketing communication, for example, objectives or target group). Specifically in relation to job ads, Gillaerts [21] mentions political,

economic, social, technological, and corporate contexts that have shaped the genre in Belgium.

**Use of English in Job Ads in Countries Where English is not the Local Language** The use of English in the specific organizational communication genre of job ads in EFL countries has been commented on in scholarly publications relating to, for example, Finland [22], [23]; Germany [13], [24], [25]; Jordan [3]; Sweden [5]; Switzerland [6]; and Turkey [2]. Corpus analyses of the use of English in job ads in non-English-speaking countries have shown that job ads can be completely or partly in English. For instance, an analysis of 419 advertisements from two Turkish daily newspapers by Dogancay-Aktuna [2] revealed that 22% were completely in English. Hamdan and Hatab [3] analyzed a corpus of nearly 3000 job ads from two Jordanian daily Arabic newspapers, published in 1985, 1995, and 2005. They found that the use of completely English job ads in these newspapers increased from 4% (1985) to 23% (1995) and to 29% (2005). Zenner et al. [4] showed that of the 13,000 job ads sampled from a Dutch job ad magazine between 1970 and 2008 and a Belgian job ad magazine between 1989 and 2008, 8.1% were in English and 36.4% contained an English job title. Korzilius et al. [26] found that of the 679 job ads in a Dutch quality newspaper, 2.4% were completely in English, while a more detailed analysis of 119 ads showed that 39% contained at least one English word. The proportion of English used in job ads posted on a Dutch job site was higher: of the 120 ads analyzed, 88.5% contained at least one English word, and 4% were completely in English [1].

The aforementioned studies have shown that a small percentage of job ads in a number of EFL countries is fully in English, that the majority are in the country's native language, and that a substantial number of those ads in the country's native language also include English words and phrases. This suggests that writers of job ads have, at their disposal, a number of choices when formulating the genre. For instance, within the Dutch context, the choice between English or Dutch, that is, completely English or Dutch job ads can be regarded as a matter of code choice (See, for example, [27, pp. 45–46]). The use of English words and phrases instead of the native language in largely native-language job ads can be seen as a matter of lexis or vocabulary (c.f. [9, p. 26], [12]). Following Tardy [28], Zhang [29] notes that code and lexical choices constitute aspects of genre knowledge. Knowledge of why to employ a particular

code or lexical item from a particular language is important in order to be able to write texts in this (or any) particular genre that are appropriate within the professional discourse community and achieve their communicative purpose. In other words, the question is what reasons or criteria professional writers apply to choose a particular language code or a specific lexical item in a particular language. Gaining insight into the reasons that underlie practitioners' language choices is important not only for trainers of HRM professionals, but also for novice and experienced HRM professionals themselves. Being able to consider possible reasons given by other professional writers will enable HRM professionals to make language choices in a well-informed manner.

Existing publications that discuss the use of English in job ads in various non-English-speaking countries offer at least some indication of reasons for the use of English versus the local language. Following Spitzmüller [30], these publications can be characterized as either scholarly literature, that is, publications aimed at a scholarly readership, or public discourse, that is, publications in media aimed at the general public, such as articles in newspapers and popular magazines. These publications indicate reasons for the use of job ads which are completely in English, partly in English, or completely in the local language. For example, a reason mentioned for the use of an *all-English* job ad is that such an ad indicates the importance of English language skills for successful applicants. As Watts [6, p. 117] says about all-English job ads in Swiss newspapers, even if the advertisement includes no explicit references to language requirements, “the applicants [...] are expected to infer, and obviously will infer, that the major language with which they will be expected to communicate is English”. A reason for the use of *English words and phrases* in job ads (that is, partly English job ads) in non-English-speaking countries is that English enhances the image of the job advertised in some way. For instance, Larson [5, p. 368] states that one reason for the use of “an English-sounding job title” instead of a Swedish one in a Swedish job ad is that it can make a job sound “more appealing and challenging.” Finally, a reason suggested in the literature for the use of the *local language* instead of English words or phrases is that English is more difficult to understand [23]. Table I provides an overview of reasons found in the literature that was consulted for the use of all-English, all-Dutch, and partly English ads in EFL countries, including the Netherlands. It should

be noted that the reasons *in favor of* all-Dutch ads are derived from reasons *against* the use of all-English ads or *against* the use of English words and phrases mentioned in the literature (for example, English threatens the local language). The overview in Table I shows that scholarly discourse sources mention more reasons than the public discourse sources. Of the 13 reasons found, eight reasons are given only in scholarly discourse sources, two reasons are provided only in public discourse sources, while three reasons are given in both types of sources.

The publications in Table I provide useful insights into possible reasons for making code and lexical choices in the context of job ad writing. However, they are all based on the authors' interpretative analyses of job ads and not on the views of professional job ad writers. Bhatia [9, p. 12] points out that in addition to scholars, "specialist informants also have an important role to play in the description, analysis and clarification of genres." He stresses that it is important to check scholars' findings against the views of such specialist informants, that is, the members of the professional community that produce the genre texts [9, p. 34], since they "have greater knowledge of the conventional purpose(s), construction and use of specific genres than those who are non-specialists" [9, p. 15] and, as Harwood [10] observes, only writers can really shed light on the motivations for using particular text features. The present study aimed to determine Dutch job ad writers' reasons for using either all-English or all-Dutch ads or partly English ads, that is, Dutch ads with English words and phrases. In doing so, we follow Cheshire and Moser [31] and Martin [32], who distinguished these three gradations of the use of English in the related promotional genre of products ads [13, p. 218], [33, p. 62].

Bhatia and Bremner [42] noted a gap between academia and the workplace in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching, and suggest that

"researchers and practitioners need to collaborate with members of professional communities in order to understand how and why they communicate the way they do [42, p. 436].

By complementing the reasons mentioned by scholars and other writers for the use of English with reasons given by practitioners, that is, practitioners' perspectives, the present study aimed to address this concern.

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to explain the methodology used in this study to answer the research questions. This allows readers to evaluate the approach taken and allows other researchers to replicate the methodology. As noted before, the present study investigated the following two research questions: (1) What reasons do Dutch job ad writers give for using all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English ads and what genre factors inform these reasons? and (2) To what extent do the reasons given by Dutch job ad makers for using all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English ads complement reasons mentioned in publications on job ads? This section includes a description of the study's choice of research methodology, participants, instrument, data analysis, as well as the trustworthiness and credibility of the data.

**Choice of Research Methodology** A qualitative approach was taken to gauge practitioners' reasons for placing completely English, all-Dutch, or partly English job ads. Conducting interviews was thought to be the most appropriate data-collection method because it allows the researcher to uncover and explore people's views, perceptions, and experiences [43, p. 10], [44, p. 278]. This study is an instance of research on workplace writing. (See [45].)

**How Data Were Collected** In order to collect the data, we conducted open-ended interviews with job ad makers. The interviews were carried out face to face at interviewees' places of work. The interviews were conducted in Dutch; the quotations in the Results section are literal translations by the researchers. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

**Participants:** For this study, we sought to interview job ad makers who had placed all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English job ads in Dutch-language newspapers. To recruit participants, we first selected a sample of job ads from three national and three local/regional newspapers, all of them with a large circulation. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the ads, in the sense that the cases were chosen because they had characteristics that were theoretically relevant [46], that is to say, they were examples of all-English, all-Dutch, and partly English job ads. In total, 23 all-English ads, 26 all-Dutch, and 25 partly English ads were selected. Next, the contact persons mentioned in each of the ads were approached by letter or email: in total, 25 contact persons responded, ten of whom had placed an all-English job ad, eight an all-Dutch

job ad, and seven a partly English job ad. All were responsible for creating the ad, and all agreed to take part in an interview with the researchers. The interviews were conducted within an average of three months of the ads' publication.

*Instrument:* Each participant in the interviews was presented with the job ad he or she had placed and was asked one open-ended question asking for their reasons for placing an all-English job ad, an all-Dutch job ad, or for using English in an otherwise Dutch job ad.

**How Data Were Analyzed** The total number of words analyzed from all 25 interviews was 5761. The analysis of the interview data followed the stages common in qualitative research. (See, for example, [43].) The remarks made by the interviewees were labelled (stage 1) and categorized (stage 2). Finally, patterns were identified in the categories (stage 3). *Labelling* entailed identifying and coding the reasons given by the job ad makers (for example, as “corporate language” or “international target group”) for each ad type (all-English, all-Dutch, partly English). The labels were based on the reasons mentioned in the literature. (See Table I.) Reasons that were not mentioned in the literature were given new labels. This first stage of qualitative coding is also referred to as “open coding” (for example, [46, p. 96]), where the researcher writes codes in the margin of the transcripts, in this case, to identify fragments that contained reasons for a particular ad type. The fragments (with their labels) were placed in a data matrix, per interview.

At the second stage of the coding process, also referred to as “axial coding,” which entails making connections between labels identified at the open coding stage (for example, [46, p. 108]), the fragment labels were assigned a *category* label on the basis of the entities they referred to. These entities reflected a number of commonly distinguished factors in genre analysis (for example, [9] and [19]): “society,” “sector,” “organization,” “job” (contextual genre factors), “target group” and “writer” (reader-writer relationship genre factors), “text” and “word” (textual genre factors). The data were grouped in a cross-interview matrix, to determine in how many of the interviews a particular fragment label had been assigned. We also noted whether individual job ad makers referred to more than one entity, to see whether particular combinations of reasons occurred in the data.

At the third stage of the coding process, “selective coding,” which focused on finding connections between categories (cf. [46, p. 114]), *patterns* were identified on the basis of the fragment labels that indicated the reasons. When a concept occurred *across entities*, this was seen as a pattern. For instance, the concept “internationality” occurred in a number of fragment labels for reasons given for all-English ads: because the “organization” (Contextual entity) and the ‘target group’ (Reader-writer entity) were international. This pattern was assigned the label “international.” Stage 3 of the coding process thus yielded more overarching categories than the earlier stages.

All of the codes used in the three stages, that is, for the individual reasons, the entities they related to, and the patterns, are used in the tables presenting the findings in the Results section (Tables III–V). Finally, the fragment labels reflecting the interviewees' reasons were compared to the reasons mentioned in publications. (See Table I.)

**Ensuring Credibility and Trustworthiness** At the beginning of each interview, the participant was told that all results would be presented anonymously so their observations would not be attributable to any specific organization or person. This was done in order to ensure that the participants felt they could speak freely about the topic. As for the external validity in terms of the selection of participants, they were all professionally involved in designing recruitment advertising in Dutch organizations at the time of the study.

In order to ensure that the interpretation of the data was reliable, the following procedure was followed. The four authors independently categorized the interview fragments in the data matrix in terms of the entities they referred to. Subsequently, their categorizations were compared and any discrepancies were discussed until a consensus was reached. These categorizations were compared with those of a fifth coder, who independently coded 63 (76%) of the quotations. The percentage of agreement with the fifth coder was 83%; Cohen's kappa was .76, indicating substantial interrater reliability [47]. The fifth coder and the first author then discussed categorizations they disagreed on until they reached a consensus.

Approval from an internal review board and explicit written consent from the participants was not sought for this study, since this was not required nor common practice for this type of research in the Netherlands at the time the study was conducted.

## RESULTS

The purpose of this section is to present the findings of the study in terms of professional job ad makers' reasons for using English or the local language, Dutch, in job advertisements. It starts with a description of the participants, and then presents first, the reasons given for using all-English ads, second, the reasons for placing all-Dutch ads, and, finally, the reasons for placing partly English job ads. In each of the subsections outlining the reasons Dutch job ad makers give for language choice in each of the job ad types, these reasons are linked to the entities that they relate to (Research question 1). In addition, in each subsection, patterns are identified in the reasons by showing how they apply across different entities, and combinations of entities in the reasons mentioned by individual interviewees are noted. Finally, each subsection also describes how the reasons given relate to those in the literature, by showing how they agree and how they differ (Research question 2).

**Who Participated in the Study** The interviews in which the data were collected were conducted with professional designers of job ads. Ten had designed all-English job ads, eight all-Dutch ads, and seven partly English ads. They were all Dutch non-native speakers of English. Table II shows the scope of the organization advertising the vacancy, the sector in which organization operates, and the capacity in which each interviewee worked.

Table II shows that seven job ads were placed by recruitment agencies on behalf of organizations. The organizations for which the vacancies in the 25 job ads were advertised belonged to various sectors, such as agriculture, transport, financial institutions, healthcare, and the petro-chemical industry. They were either international or national in operational scope. Although these factors were not part of the present study's design, their potential relevance for language choice in job ads will be considered in the Discussion section.

To preserve the interviewees' anonymity, quotation sources are identified with a letter and number code (E stands for an all-English ad, P for partly English ad, and D for an all-Dutch ad, and the number refers to a particular interviewee).

**Reasons for Placing All-English Job Ads** In relation to research question 1, Table III shows that the reasons mentioned for placing all-English ads related to the Contextual entities "organization,"

"job," and "sector," the Reader-writer entities "target group" and "writer," and the Textual entity "word."

With respect to the Contextual entity "organization," a commonly mentioned reason was that "English is the corporate language." One interviewee put this as follows:

[...] we're looking for people for vacancies in a large number of locations in the Netherlands for [organization X]. And in these locations you get to work, in a large number of these locations the working language is English and not Dutch. That's the other thing it (= the use of an all-English ad) signals. And that that is the international working language of [organization X] and not Dutch and not Chinese either. (E8).

Another commonly mentioned reason related to the organization was that an all-English ad was placed because the organization is international. For instance, an interviewee stated that "It's an organization that has an international character and it is that that they want to communicate. That's why the text is in English." (E1). Another interviewee remarked: "We are an international organization so we communicate in English in external communication." (E9).

In relation to the Contextual entity "job," the single reason given was that the job involves international communication: "[Organization Y] didn't require that they speak Dutch, because this position really involves negotiating international contracts worldwide." (E2).

With regard to the Contextual entity "sector," two reasons were given, namely that the sector is English-speaking and is international. The first reason is shown in the following: "Yes, it concerns an English-speaking environment. [...] shipping is English-speaking." (E3). The second reason can be illustrated by the following quote: "And thirdly, the scientific world is also just international. And so English is just logical. When scientists write a dissertation it's also just English, so yes." (E9).

With respect to entities at the level of reader-writer, two reasons were given relating to the entity "target group" and three reasons relating to "writer." One target-group-related reason was that the organization wants to reach an international target group:

So when do we use it, English, we use it when we say like, it is possible that we won't just get Dutch candidates, because given the

composition of the team it is desirable that foreign candidates apply too. [E5]

Another target-group-related reason was to reach an English-speaking target group (“people who work here and come to work here have to also absolutely be able to speak English otherwise they can't function here.” [E7]). The writer-related reasons reflected circumstances the writer temporarily found himself in: he only received English source texts at the time (“and then I only received English texts.” [E10]), and was too busy with other tasks to translate these from English into Dutch (“I was very busy doing other things at the time.” [E10]). Also, he wanted to accommodate the person he had to report to, who could not read Dutch but was able to read English:

I had it ready, in English. And then I just hung the other things underneath, also to please [pleasen] the German director, to use a nice Dutch expression, because his Dutch is very bad. [E10]

One reason given related to the Textual entity “word,” namely, that some English terms are difficult to translate into Dutch: “Because a number of things are very easy to translate into Dutch but a number of things are a bit trickier to translate.” (E10).

Finally, it is noteworthy that the interviewees did not mention any reasons related to the entities “society” or “text.” Therefore, these two entities did not explicitly inform language choice with respect to all-English ads.

With respect to combinations of reasons mentioned by the interviewees who placed all-English ads, it can be noted that they all gave more than one reason. Reasons that were combined were organizational (English is the organization's corporate language) and target-group-related (the target group is international and should be English-speaking, see Table III).

Table III shows two patterns in the reasons given for placing all-English ads. The first, “Internationality,” subsumes some of the reasons relating to the Contextual entities “organization,” “job,” “sector,” and the Reader-writer entity “target group.” These are that the organization is international, the organization offers opportunities to work internationally, the job involves international communication, the sector is international, and the organization wants to reach an international target group. A second pattern, “Use of English

as communication code,” underlies a number of reasons relating to the Contextual entities “organization,” “sector,” and the Reader-writer entities “target group” and “writer.” These reasons include that English is the organization's corporate language, the sector is English-speaking, the target group needs to be English-speaking, and the writer was too busy to translate English source material (into Dutch).

With respect to research question 2, Table III (column 2) shows that interviewees mentioned 14 reasons for placing all-English ads, while earlier publications only gave two of these. These two reasons were that English is the corporate language (Contextual entity “organization”), and that the organization is looking for candidates who speak English (Reader-writer entity “target group”). Reasons for the use of all-English ads were not mentioned in public discourse publications.

In total, 12 reasons were given for placing all-English ads that were not mentioned in earlier publications (these reasons are italicized in Table III). These related to the Contextual entities “organization,” “job,” and “sector,” the Reader-writer entities “target group” and “writer,” and the Textual entity “word.” All might be taken to reflect insider's knowledge. The practitioners base their language choice on what they know about characteristics of the organization, the job offered, the sector in which the organization operates, the target group, the writer's circumstances and individual goals, and what writing a job ad involves.

**Reasons for Placing All-Dutch Job Ads** In relation to research question 1, Table IV shows that the reasons for placing all-Dutch ads related to the Contextual entities “organization” and “sector,” the Reader-writer entities “target group” and “writer,” and the Textual entity “word.”

In relation to the Contextual entity “organization,” for example, a reason given was that the organization is Dutch: “The city council is of course a Dutch organization par excellence.” (D3) and “we are a Dutch company that targets the Dutch market and also all documentation in our shops and all the brochures, that's all in Dutch.” (D2). Another reason was that the organization's policy is to communicate in Dutch:

Really to continue the company's strategy in this. To use Dutch in all things, also in the ads that shows, and [Company Z] is just more a Dutch company. That is a conscious choice. (D2)

TABLE III  
FINDINGS FOR THE ALL-ENGLISH ADS: OVERVIEW OF REASONS, MENTIONED BY THE INTERVIEWEES  
(INDICATED WITH X) AND IN THE LITERATURE, AND PATTERNS ACROSS ENTITIES

Interviewees		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	
Entity	Reasons <sup>a</sup>											Patterns
Contextual												
Organization	English is corporate language	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	Code <sup>b</sup>
	<i>Organization is international</i>	x						x		x		Int <sup>c</sup>
	<i>Organization's standard procedure is to publish job ads in English</i>				x							-
	<i>It is easy for the organization to distribute an all-English ad</i>			x								-
	<i>Organization offers opportunities to work internationally</i>								x			Int
Job	<i>Job involves international communication</i>	x										Int
Sector	<i>Sector is English-speaking</i>		x									Code
	<i>Sector is international</i>									x		Int
Society	-											-
Reader-Writer												
Target group	<i>Organization wants to reach international target group</i>	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			Int
	Organization is looking for candidates who speak English		x				x	x	x	x		Code
Writer	<i>Job ad writer is too busy to translate from English</i>										x	-
	<i>Job ad writer received source text in English only</i>										x	-
	<i>Job ad writer wants to please person with final responsibility who cannot read Dutch but can read English</i>										x	Code
Textual												
Text	-											-
Word	<i>English terms are difficult to translate into Dutch</i>										x	-

Note: <sup>a</sup>Reasons in italics are new reasons not mentioned in the literature; reasons in Roman type were mentioned in the interviews and in scholarly publications. <sup>b</sup>Code = English as communication code. <sup>c</sup>Int = Internationality.

TABLE IV  
FINDINGS FOR THE ALL-DUTCH ADS: OVERVIEW OF REASONS MENTIONED BY THE INTERVIEWEES  
(INDICATED WITH X) AND IN THE LITERATURE, AND PATTERNS ACROSS ENTITIES

Interviewees		D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	
Entity	Reasons <sup>a</sup>									Patterns
<b>Contextual</b>										
Organization	<i>Organization is Dutch</i>		x	x	x		x			-
	<i>Organization's policy is to communicate in Dutch</i>		x	x				x		Code <sup>b</sup>
	<i>Dutch terms are common in organization's department</i>				x					CU <sup>c</sup>
	<i>Organization's intention is to be clear</i>					x		x		-
Job	-									-
Sector	<i>Dutch terms are common in sector</i>			x			x		x	CU
Society	-									-
<b>Reader-Writer</b>										
Target group	<i>Organization is looking for Dutch-speaking candidates</i>	x	x		x		x			Code
	<i>Organization wants to address regional target group in Dutch for lower level jobs</i>								x	-
	<i>Organization wants to reach 'down-to-earth' candidates</i>					x				-
Writer	<i>Job ad writer is language purist (wants to keep Dutch beautiful)</i>			x						-
<b>Textual</b>										
Text	-									-
Word	<i>Dutch terms suffice, no need to use English</i>								x	-
	<i>English words are considered "odd", "strange", "puffed up", "snobbish" or "exaggerated"</i>									

Note: <sup>a</sup>Reasons in italics are new reasons not mentioned in the literature; reasons in Roman type were found in scholarly and public discourse publications, or only in scholarly discourse publications. <sup>b</sup>Code = Dutch as communication code. <sup>c</sup>CU = Common usage.

As another interviewee put it:

All social-pedagogical services in the Netherlands changed their name into [Organization X]. At the time we talked about culture and language use and expressed the intention then to use as many Dutch terms as possible. (D7)

A third organizational reason was that Dutch terms are common in the organization, more specifically in one department:

This is originally an environmental department, this is my own interpretation but, originally environment was instigated by environmental people. In the 1970s, there were all sorts of environmental movements. This is a kind of pioneering department which has grown a

lot. It started with a certain type of people who really wouldn't use English terms. And in environment there's also a certain kind of people for whom it isn't really so common. (D4)

With respect to the Contextual entity "sector," the only reason mentioned was that Dutch terms are common in the sector: "Well, in the care sector people speak in Dutch terms a lot." (D8), and "I've been thinking about this but I think we have very few English language terms in our sector." (D6)

With respect to the Reader-writer entities "target group" and "writer," interviewees mentioned four reasons related to "target group" and one to "writer" for placing an ad in the local language. For example, one target group-related reason was that the organization is looking for Dutch-speaking candidates:

Yes, we deliberately choose Dutch-speaking people, of course there are insurance companies all over the world and outside the Netherlands where you can outsource but we notice that there is a large demand within the Netherlands which is why we only look for Dutch-language, Dutch-speaking people. (D1)

You take into consideration your customers, this position is a commercial man. If he were English speaking, so someone who has English as a mother tongue originally, then that is a lot trickier to send this guy to the customers. You are expected to speak fluent Dutch. (D6).

The one writer-related reason was that the writer is a language purist: "And I am quite a language purist myself. So then, if you want to keep Dutch beautiful, it is also nice to do so in advertisements." (D3)

In relation to the Textual entity "word," the one reason mentioned was that Dutch terms suffice and, therefore, English is not necessary ('you see here and there some English terms coming in and then always comments like "Oh dear, can't you just do it in Dutch?") (D8).

As was the case for the all-English job ad category, the interviewees did not mention any reasons for placing all-Dutch ads related to the entities "society" or "text." In addition, they did not mention reasons relating to the entity "job."

With respect to combinations of reasons mentioned by the interviewees who placed all-Dutch ads, all but one of the interviewees gave more than one reason. Combinations involved organizational reasons (the organization is Dutch and the use of Dutch is organizational policy), a sector-related reason (Dutch is common in the sector), and a target-group-related reason (candidates need to be Dutch-speaking, see Table IV).

Table IV shows two patterns in the reasons given for placing all-Dutch job ads: "Use of Dutch as communication code" and "Common usage." The first links the Contextual entity "organization" and the Reader-writer entity "target group." Reasons relating to this pattern are that the organization's policy is to communicate in Dutch and that the organization is looking for Dutch-speaking candidates. "Common usage" is the pattern that links the Contextual entities "organization" and "sector": Dutch terms are common in the organizational department with the vacancy, and Dutch terminology is commonly used in the sector.

With respect to research question 2, Table IV (column 2) shows that the interviewees mentioned 10 reasons, two of which were also mentioned in publications: the local language is clearer than English (Contextual entity "organization"), and English is seen as a threat to the local language (Reader-writer entity "writer"). Table IV also shows that earlier publications mention one reason for not using English (Textual entity "word") that the interviewees did not: English words are "strange" and "exaggerated" compared to words in the local language. This reason relates to the *effect* of linguistic choice.

In all, the interviewees gave eight reasons for placing all-Dutch ads that were not mentioned in earlier publications (these reasons are italicized in Table IV). These related to the Contextual entities "organization" and "sector," the Reader-writer entity "target group," and the Textual entity "word." Like the reasons that were unique to practitioners in the case of the all-English ads, all might be said to reflect insider's knowledge. The practitioners base their language choice on what they know about the organization, the job offered, the sector in which the organization operates, the target group, the writer's circumstances and individual goals, and what writing a job ad involves.

**Reasons for Placing Partly English Job Ads** In relation to research question 1, Table V shows the reasons mentioned for placing partly English ads related to the Contextual entities "organization" and "sector," and the Textual entity "word."

With regard to the Contextual entity "organization," one reason is that English is the corporate language: "Yes, because it's the working language at [Company X]." (P2). Another reason is that the organization's headquarters is in England and, therefore, names of divisions mentioned in the ad are in English:

The headquarters is in England [...] that is the Holding Company, with branches and divisions under it: Pest Control, Hygiene, those are all English names that are directed from England. So all divisions are also in English. (P5).

A third reason is that the organization is international and adapts terminology to international usage ("We are an international firm with customers worldwide and then you just start converging to each other." [P7]). A fourth reason is that English terms are common in the organization ("That's the jargon within the group." [P4]).

TABLE V  
FINDINGS FOR THE PARTLY ENGLISH ADS: OVERVIEW OF REASONS MENTIONED BY THE INTERVIEWEES  
(INDICATED WITH X) AND IN THE LITERATURE, AND PATTERNS ACROSS ENTITIES

Interviewees		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	
Entity	Reasons <sup>a</sup>								Patterns
<b>Contextual</b>									
Organization	<i>English is the corporate language</i>		x						
	<i>Organization HQ is in England and therefore names of divisions are in English</i>					x			
	<i>Organization is international and conforms to international usage</i>							x	
	<i>English term is common in organization</i>				x				CU <sup>b</sup>
	English terms create consistency in a multinational organization operating in different countries								
	English terms are used to enhance the organization's image								
	English job title creates global image for the organization								
Job	English job title makes job more attractive, modern, innovative, or gives it more status								
Sector	English terms are common in sector		x	x	x		x	x	CU
Society									
<b>Reader-Writer</b>									
Target group	English job title is used because it is gender-neutral (signals that both men and women can apply)								
	English terms are used to signal that applicants should be able to speak English								
Writer	-								
<b>Textual</b>									
Text	-								
Word	<i>No equivalent for English term in Dutch</i>	x	x		x				
	<i>English term is known/common</i>	x						x	
	English term is clear	x						x	
	<i>English term is more powerful</i>		x						
	English term attracts attention								

Note: <sup>a</sup>Reasons in italics are new reasons not mentioned in the literature; reasons in Roman type were found in scholarly and public discourse publications, or only in scholarly discourse publications. <sup>b</sup>CU = Common usage.

With respect to the Contextual entity “sector,” the reason mentioned for using English terms was that these terms were common in the sector: “That is now also the accepted term within the sector, I think.” (P4).

In relation to the Textual entity “word,” four reasons were mentioned, namely that there was no Dutch equivalent for the English term (“The Dutch [term] just doesn't cover it.” [P1]), the English term is known or common (“The most important reason is, I think, that it is fossilized terminology.” [P1]). the English term is clear (“Everyone knows what it means, familiarity with the terminology is

important for me.” [P1]), and the English term is more powerful than the Dutch equivalent (“Well, sometimes it lends itself to- reads pretty well, formulates it sometimes a bit more powerful.” [P1]).

As was the case with all-Dutch and all-English ads, the interviewees did not mention any reasons for placing partly English ads that related to the entities “society” and “text.” Furthermore, they did not mention any reasons relating to the entities “target group” or “writer.”

With respect to combinations of reasons mentioned by the interviewees who placed partly English ads,

all but two of the interviewees gave more than one reason. Combinations involved a sector-related reason (English terms are common in the sector) and a text-related reason (the absence of Dutch equivalents for the English terms used, see Table V).

Table V shows that there was one pattern in the reasons given for partly English job ads. "Common usage" links the Contextual entities "organization" and "sector" and the Textual entity "word"; that is, English terms are common in the organization and in the sector, and English terms are said to be in common use.

With respect to research question 2, Table V (column 2) shows that interviewees mentioned nine reasons for using English terms, two of which were also mentioned in earlier publications: English terms are common in the sector, and English terms are known.

Table V also shows that earlier publications mentioned seven reasons not mentioned by the job ad makers. Three relate to the Contextual entity "organization": English terms create uniformity in organizational units across countries, enhance the organization's image in general, and create a global image for the organization. Another reason mentioned only in publications relates to the Contextual entity "job": English job titles provide the job with certain positive characteristics. Two reasons given in earlier publications relate to the Reader-writer entity "target group": an English job title prevents gender bias and English terms signal that applicants should be able to speak English. The final reason given only in earlier publications was that English terms attract attention (Textual entity "word"). As was the case for the one reason that was unique to the publications relating to all-Dutch job ads, all of these reasons relate to the *effect* of linguistic choice.

The interviewees gave six reasons for placing partly English ads not mentioned in publications, relating to the Contextual entity "organization" and the Textual entity "word" (these reasons are italicized in Table V). As was the case with the reasons unique to practitioners in the case of all-English and all-Dutch ads, all reflect insider's knowledge. The practitioners base their language choice on what they know about the organization and what writing a job ad involves.

**Answers to the Research Questions** With regard to research question 1, as to the reasons Dutch job ad writers give for using all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English ads and the genre factors that

inform these reasons, it can be concluded that job ad writers consider most genre factors, that is, contextual, reader-writer, and textual factors, to guide their language choices when writing job ads. Therefore, the findings confirm that genre factors, including contextual factors, play an important role in job ad writing. Contextual factors were found to relate to organization, job, and sector, but not to society. The reader-writer factors concerned target group and the job ad maker's specific circumstances at the time of writing the ad and the job ad writer's more general language attitudes. With respect to textual factors, considerations were limited to word level and did not relate to the job ad as a whole.

With regard to research question 2, as to the extent to which the reasons for language choices given by Dutch job ad makers complement reasons in the literature, the following conclusion can be drawn. The reasons given by job ad makers to a large extent were not featured in the literature on language choice in job ads. At the same time, the literature mentioned reasons not given by the practitioners in the interviews. In other words, the new reasons provided by the job ad makers complement those given in the literature.

## CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this section is to discuss the findings of our study by relating them to the literature, and considering their implications for both theory and practice. The section starts with the conclusions, which include implications for research and theory as well as implications for practice, continues with limitations, and ends with suggestions for future research.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study has shown the value of investigating practitioners' viewpoints to complement literature on text features, in this case, language choice in job advertising. Its findings confirm the relevance of suggestions in the literature regarding reasons for the use of English or the local language in job ads. They also have produced novel insights, uncovering a considerable number of reasons not mentioned in previous literature. Furthermore, the findings underline the importance of reader-writer, textual, and contextual factors in shaping a genre, by showing that practitioners indeed consider such factors

when making language choices. The relevance of contextual factors is stressed in Genre Theory, but they have now been shown to be relevant to actual job ad makers (that is, practitioners) too. The contextual factor “society” was not mentioned by the practitioners, while the contextual factors “sector,” “organization,” and “job” were, which suggests that, in this genre, broader contextual considerations relating to sociocultural dimensions (such as political and economic factors) were not top of mind for these practitioners. Some research found that such broader contextual factors are relevant to genres other than job ads, however. With regard to the annual report genre, for example, de Groot [16] found that text producers consider contextual factors, such as “legal requirements” and “cultural heritage” in their choice for the local language Dutch (rather than English). These contextual factors were not mentioned by the job ad makers in the present study. This is theoretically important because it reveals the potential nuances in how genre factors can shape different genres differently.

This section explores the implications of this study. It first indicates the implications for research and theory, and then the implications for practice.

*Implications for Research and Theory* :The present investigation aimed to gain further insight into practitioners' language choice when writing job advertisements in an EFL country, the Netherlands. The first objective was to determine what reasons Dutch job ad writers give for using all-English, all-Dutch, or partly English ads and what genre factors inform these reasons (research question 1). The findings reveal a wide range of reasons for language choice, 33 different reasons in total, relating to various entities, namely “organization,” “job” and “sector” (Contextual), “target group” and “writer” (Reader-writer), and “word” (Textual). Thus, the reasons mentioned cover three genre factors: context, reader-writer relationship, and text (cf. [9], [19]).

With respect to language choice for the three types of ads investigated (all-English, all-Dutch, partly English), the majority of interviewees mentioned a combination of reasons (that is, more than one reason) relating to various entities. This indicates that, on the whole, job ad writers consider a number of genre factors when making language choices.

A number of patterns were found to underlie reasons relating to different entities. For the all-English ads, these were “Internationality” and “Use of English as a communication

code,” for the all-Dutch ads “Use of Dutch as a communication code” and “Common usage of Dutch terms,” and for the partly English ads “Common usage of English terms.” A number of reasons underlie language choice (Dutch or English) across all three ad types, namely, (1) Language used is that of the organization (covers “English is the corporate language/Organization's policy is to communicate in Dutch”), (2) (Inter)national orientation of the organization (covers “Organization is international/Organization is Dutch”), (3) Language use in sector (covers “Sector is English-speaking/Dutch terms are common in sector/English terms are common in sector”), and (4) Availability of translation equivalents for terms (covers “English terms are difficult to translate into Dutch/Dutch terms suffice/No equivalent for English term in Dutch”). In these cases, the underlying reason is the same but the eventual code or lexical choice is different depending on the specific organization (1) and (2), sector (3), or word (4) under consideration.

The majority (18) of the 33 reasons given by practitioners relate to the Contextual entities “organization,” “sector,” “job.” This confirms the relevance of contextual factors in determining how genres are shaped, as has been proposed by genre theorists (for example, [9], [12], [18], [20]), although the contextual factor “society” does not seem to play a role explicitly in language choice among practitioners. It can be concluded that practitioners indeed consider contextual factors to guide their language choices when writing job ads. These contextual factors seem to be work related (that is, “organization,” “sector,” or “job”). The contextual factor not mentioned by the job ad makers, “society,” could be said to be more “general,” that is, less directly work-related. Therefore, an added value of the findings of the present study is that they show the relevance of contextual factors to a genre feature, in this case, language choice, from a practitioner perspective. Thus, such factors would not only appear to be relevant to *scholars* but to explicitly inform *practitioners'* decisions regarding the shape of the genre, at least with regard to code or lexical choice.

The relevance of context to language choice is perhaps further underlined by the fact that the scope of the organizations for which the ads were placed was different for the all-English, all-Dutch, and partly English ads. While the influence of employer and interviewee characteristics was not a focus of the study and such characteristics were not used to select our participants, it is striking that all

of the all-English ads were placed for internationally operating employers, while all all-Dutch ads were placed for nationally operating organizations. (See Table II.) With respect to the partly English ads, these were placed for both nationally and internationally operating organizations. Thus, the international versus national orientation of the organization placing the ad appears to be an important contextual factor influencing language choice, which is also reflected in the fact that this was a contextual feature mentioned for all three types of job ads. If we look at the distribution of the sector where the organization placing the ad operates, we do not see such clear differences for the three types of ads. In fact, there is some overlap in the sectors placing different types of ads. For instance, organizations from the industry sector placed all-English, all-Dutch, and partly English ads, organizations from the finance and commercial services sectors placed all-English and all-Dutch ads, and organizations from the education sector placed all-English and partly English ads, and organizations from the health sector placed all-Dutch and partly English ads. Finally, capacity of the job ad maker was different across the three types of ads. Half of the writers of all-English ads were working for recruiters, while none of the writers of all-Dutch job ads were. Only some of the writers of partly English ads worked for a recruiter. This may suggest that the scope of the employer (international versus national) perhaps influences who is asked to write the job ad (that is, recruiter versus personnel department versus someone working in the department that has the vacancy).

The second objective of the present study was to determine to what extent reasons given by Dutch job ad makers complement reasons for language choice in publications on job ads (research question 2). The analysis showed that the practitioners gave 33 reasons, of which 27 were not mentioned in earlier publications. This underlines the importance of getting text producers' perspectives on aspects of constructing a genre (cf. [9], [10]). Thus, the findings based on practitioners' views add new insights to published knowledge. (See Table I.) The findings also confirm the relevance to practitioners of reasons (six in total) mentioned in earlier publications.

Earlier publications mentioned eight further reasons for language choice not mentioned in the interviews. This shows the value of consulting publications on a particular genre to gain additional—or initial—insights into the mechanisms underlying language choice, in line

with Bhatia's [9] recommendation that a literature review should be part of genre analysis. In the present study, the reasons that are exclusive to earlier publications involve *effects* of the use of English (for example, English words are considered “strange,” used to enhance the company's image, or attract attention).

The findings show that the reasons given by practitioners and in publications, per type of job ad, partly related to different entities. While *practitioners* mentioned more entities for all-English and all-Dutch job ads, earlier *publications* mentioned more entities in relation to partly English job ads. However, for all three types of job ads combined, both the practitioners and earlier publications referred to the same entities (“organization,” “job,” “sector,” “target group,” “writer,” and “word”).

The reasons given by the practitioners and in earlier publications would not appear to differ in kind, as both refer to *practical* reasons (for example, English is the corporate language as a reason for the use of all-English ads), and to the *effects* of language choice (for example, practitioners say that an organization uses Dutch terms to be clear, and publications say that English words are used to enhance the organization's image). However, the reasons that were unique to the practitioners all reflect an insider's knowledge about the organization and what making a job ad involves. For two of the three job ad categories, namely, all-English and all-Dutch, they reflect insider's knowledge about the sector, the target group, and the writer's situation and individual goals. With respect to the latter, the findings confirm that “linguistic resources” can be “exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s)” [9, p. 15].

From the similarities and differences found between the reasons given by the practitioners and in publications, we can conclude that combining views from the literature and practitioners (cf. [42]) can contribute to a fuller perspective on reasons for language choice in job ads and on how the genre is shaped in this respect.

*Implications for Practice* : As far as we can determine, this is the first study to consider practitioners' reasons for language choice in recruitment advertising in an EFL country. In comparison with earlier publications, the findings have yielded insights into practitioners' motivations for using English or the local language (in this case,

Dutch). These findings have implications for three groups of practitioners: novice and experienced professional HRM writers, and educators training practitioners of the future. In general, for all three groups, the findings underline the importance of genre knowledge relating to language choice and reveal aspects of genre that need to be considered when writing job ads in an EFL country: *contextual* factors (that is, the organization the writer works for, the job being advertised, or the sector), *reader-writer* factors (that is, the target group and writer's private goals), and *textual* factors (that is, considerations relating to the words in the ad). Novice practitioners should be made aware of these aspects so that they can make language choices that are appropriate in the recurrent situations they will find themselves in once they enter the world of work. For instance, in relation to contextual factors, they should investigate what is common practice in the sector with regard to language choice, and they should be sensitized to the role of company's language policies in determining the language that may be used for recruitment advertising (cf. [18]). Experienced HRM writers could benefit from the study's findings by checking them against their own practices in order to determine whether they have considered all of the relevant factors that shape the genre. Finally, educators and trainers in the HRM field can use the findings to sensitize students to the genre factors that are important when writing job ads, by, for instance, presenting them with cases in which they have to analyze what the relevant factors are and what this entails for language choice. This is of value because teachers of professional writing strive to educate students to acquire "knowledgeably skilled identities" [48, p. 55] within their future professional community of practice, since in these professional roles, they will be assessed on the basis of how well they are able to apply different aspects of genre knowledge. For all three groups of professionals, the findings of the current study can be turned into checklists, itemizing genre factors that should be considered when writing job ads.

To some extent, practitioners already consider some of the factors that emerged from the interviews. This is evident because of the very fact that practitioners mentioned them. The added value of the insights presented in the current study is that they are based on the pooled experiences of a group of HRM practitioners on the one hand, and that they have been linked to more generalized, abstract genre factors on the other hand. This means that the genre considerations presented in the present

study go beyond individual writer's experience and can be applied more widely, to different recruitment situations. Thus, the added value of the current study is that it has made genre factors governing language choice in job ads explicit and formulated them in abstract terms. As a result, practitioners can consciously consider them and weigh the alternatives.

**Limitations** A limitation of this study is that the sample of interviewees may have been biased because they responded positively to the request to take part in the interview and may have done so because they were inherently more interested in the phenomenon of language choice and had stronger views on it than those who did not respond (cf. [49]).

A second limitation is that the interviews may not fully reflect job ad makers' motivations when actually drawing up ads, because they gave reasons for language choices some time after they had constructed the ads. This could have led to post-hoc rationalization, which may not reflect the actual reasons that guided their decisions. However, the reasons given in the interviews do indicate what considerations are important to job ad makers. As Odell, Goswami, and Herrington [50, p. 228] observed in this respect, interviews about writing decisions cannot "obtain information about mental processes" but can "identify the kinds of world knowledge and expectations that informants bring to writing tasks." Thus, the current study is of value because it is the first to provide insights into what job ad makers regard as important when making language choices in job ad writing.

A third limitation is that we focused on reasons for the language choice in print-medium job ads. These days, many professionals also consult job ads on job sites (for example, see [51]). Corpus analyses revealed that English was used much more frequently in such online job ads than in print-medium job ads [1], [26]. It is conceivable that the reasons for the use of English in job ads published on online platforms are different from those for print-medium job ads, such as those published in newspapers that form the basis for the current study. For example, the fact that online job ads are accessible to a wider international audience may mean that more all-English ads are used in online recruitment media than in traditional print media with a more limited international readership.

A fourth limitation is that this paper explored reasons for language choice and did not investigate the possible effects of such a choice, that is, how

language choice impacts the *actual* effectiveness of recruitment ads. The interviews did, however, indicate what effects the language choice was intended to have. For instance, all-English ads were used because the organization wants to reach an international target group, and partly English ads were used because an English term was considered to be clear and more powerful. HRM professionals may benefit from considering these possible effects when drawing up job ads.

**Suggestions for Future Research** If we consider the second limitation outlined before, future research should involve an examination of the actual text production process. This may take the form of think-aloud protocols (see, for example, [52]) or an observation of job ad makers at work using video recordings, participant observation, and keystroke logs. (See, for example, [53]–[55].)

With regard to the fourth limitation, experimental studies could be conducted to investigate whether language choices indeed have the effects that job ad

makers intend them to have. Earlier experimental studies have focused on the prestige-enhancing effects of the use of English because these were the reasons most often mentioned in the scholarly and public discourse [5], [6], [25], [35], [36], [39]. These experiments showed that the use of English did not actually have such prestige-enhancing effects on readers [56]–[58]. The reasons mentioned in the interviews in the current study revealed different possible effects, such as the organization's desire to indicate that it has an international scope by placing all-English job ads. Future experiments should test whether these effects are indeed experienced by readers of job ads.

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