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# The linguistic fetish in multilingual advertising: an audio message translated into seven foreign languages

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## ABSTRACT

Language is often used for symbolic purposes in international advertising. Companies make strategic use of foreign language in their advertising campaigns on the basis that the characteristics given by consumers are transferred to the product being advertised. To study this effect, an experimental study was conducted, where 405 respondents were asked to evaluate the advertising message in a foreign language through a series of characteristics, analyzing the type of associations evoked by each language. To achieve this goal, a fictitious advertising message was designed and translated into seven different languages. The results showed that different languages evoked different characteristics.

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## 1. Introduction

The topic of language has garnered significant global attention, leading to extensive investigations into the symbolic associations of foreign languages within the realm of advertising (Alcantara-Pilar et al., 2015; Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Starren 2007; Weijters, Puntoni, and Y Baumgartner 2017). This attention has prompted scholars to delve into the manipulative aspects of translation in this context, exploring how Functional Theories of Translation (Nord 1997) intersect with the creation of symbolic meaning (Adab 2011; Snell-Hornby 2019). Additionally, research has examined how advertising agencies strategically employ multilingual campaigns to evoke symbolic meaning in the minds of receivers, influenced by their prior experiences or knowledge related to the respective countries (Kelly-Holmes 2000, 2005; Piller 2001). Consequently, the practice of broadcasting advertisements in foreign languages has become a commonplace global strategy (Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Starren 2007; Weijters, Puntoni, and Y Baumgartner 2017).

Central to our discussion is the profound impact of foreign languages in advertising, specifically their capacity to evoke sociocultural associations rather than serve as mere conveyors of content (Haarmann 1989; Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Hof 2013; Kelly-Holmes 2005; Piller 2003), a concept explored further by translation studies authors like Adab (2011) and Snell-Hornby (2019). Some scholars argue that in this context, the mere comprehension of language takes on a secondary role, as the

primary benefit lies in the symbolic meaning conveyed by the message (Adab 2011; Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Hof 2013; Kelly-Holmes 2000; Snell-Hornby 2019). Roman Jakobson's (1960) influential theory of language functions, notably the referential and poetic functions, provides insight into how language can serve both as a medium for conveying objective information and as a vehicle for expressing symbolic meaning. Building upon Jakobson's ideas, Kelly-Holmes (2005) introduces the concept of a 'linguistic fetish' in the realm of multilingual advertising, where language assumes a symbolic role that extends beyond its informational function. Conversely, an opposing viewpoint asserts that the literal meaning of language retains significance in influencing the persuasive efficacy of advertising (Cheshire and Y Moser 1994; Gerritsen et al. 2000). The core objectives underlying the use of foreign languages in advertising are the cultivation of sociocultural associations between the advertisement, the brand, and the relevant country (Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Hof 2013).

In summary, this paper extends the lineage of research initiated by Hornikx and y Starren (2006) and Hornikx et al. (2007), which endeavors to discern the unique evocations of each language, transcending the ubiquitous prominence of English. This research contribution lies in its medium of inquiry, as previous studies, such as those by Hornikx and y Starren (2006), Hornikx et al. (2007, 2013), and Hornikx and y Van Meurs (2015, 2015), predominantly relied on written text, whereas our investigation delves into the realm of audio messages. In accordance with the experimental design rooted in Hornikx et al. (2007), we seek to investigate whether significant disparities exist in the characteristics elicited by an identical message presented in audio format across diverse foreign languages.

## 2. The strategic use of foreign language in advertising

In recent years, the proliferation of subcultures within society has had a transformative impact on how companies engage with consumers (Choong et al. 2021). Notably, foreign language utilization in advertising has emerged as a ubiquitous phenomenon within the international communication strategies of companies. This trend is increasingly prevalent, with a growing number of advertisements incorporating foreign languages to enhance their persuasive efficacy (Hornikx and Y Starren 2006; Hornikx and Y Van Meurs 2017; Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Hof 2013; Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Starren 2007; Kelly-Holmes 2000, 2005). This phenomenon transcends geographical boundaries, constituting a global communication practice (Alm 2003; Okazaki, Li, and Hirose 2012; Riefler and Diamantopoulos 2020).

Hornikx and y Starren (2006) have identified strategic motivations compelling companies to incorporate foreign languages into their advertising campaigns, including the cultivation of attention (Alm 2003; Gerritsen et al. 2000; Piller 2001), the piquing of curiosity (Raedts et al. 2015), and the fostering of a positive brand image (Alm 2003; Gerritsen et al. 2000; Piller 2000, 2001, 2003). The acquisition of attention stands as a crucial initial phase in the advertising persuasion process, particularly concerning image transformation when employing diverse foreign languages (Piller 2003). While various factors may contribute to the utilization of foreign languages in advertising, such as geographical or sociocultural proximity, language proficiencies, or the attitudes

of advertising recipients toward foreign languages (Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Starren 2007), it remains possible to elucidate the underlying rationale for this linguistic choice.

Moreover, the study of translation and its role in shaping the persuasive impact of advertising also warrants consideration. Adab (2011) explores the concept of 'Translation as Manipulation: Causes and Consequences' within the broader context of discourse, language, and mind, providing valuable insights into the potential manipulative effects of translation in advertising. Adab's work highlights the intricate relationship between translation and persuasion, shedding light on the significance of linguistic choices in shaping consumer perceptions. In a similar vein, Snell-Hornby (2019) offers an 'Integrated Approach' to Translation Studies, emphasizing the interconnectedness of translation with various facets of communication. Her comprehensive perspective underscores the importance of translation as a multifaceted tool in advertising, one that extends beyond language transfer to encompass cultural nuances and persuasion strategies. Additionally, Snell-Hornby's earlier work (Snell-Hornby 2006) delves into the evolving paradigms of Translation Studies, providing a historical backdrop to the field's development and its relevance to contemporary advertising practices. Functional Theories of Translation, such as those articulated by Nord (1997), play a pivotal role in our understanding of the symbolic associations attributed to foreign languages in advertising. These theories highlight how translation choices, guided by the intended communicative function and target audience, can shape the symbolic meaning conveyed by linguistic elements, ultimately influencing the effectiveness of multilingual advertising campaigns.

These references from the realm of translation studies illuminate the intricate processes through which language choices impact advertising effectiveness and consumer response.

The utilization of foreign languages in advertising serves two primary functions, notably in garnering attention and contributing to the cultivation of a favorable brand or product image (Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Hof 2013; Piller 2003). Kelly-Holmes (2005) introduces a crucial distinction between the referential and symbolic functions of language within multilingual advertising, characterized by the presence of diverse languages or voices in a market discourse context. In the realm of advertising, foreign languages find utility as either a means of addressing speakers of minority languages within a given country, a phenomenon referred to as the referential function (Bishop and Y Peterson 2010, 2011; Carroll, Luna, and Y Peracchio 2007; Luna and Y Peracchio 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Luna, Lerman, and Y Peracchio 2005), or as linguistic symbols generating positive associations in the minds of advertising recipients, termed the symbolic function (Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Hof 2013; Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Starren 2007). It is important to note that both of these language functions serve a dual purpose, combining communicative and symbolic dimensions.

The utilization of foreign languages in advertising, both in its literal and symbolic dimensions, has spurred considerable scholarly discourse. Within this discourse, a dichotomy emerges: some researchers assert that the precise, literal semantics of a foreign language hold little significance (Haarmann 1984, 1989; Kelly-Holmes 2000, 2005; Piller 2001), while an opposing contingent contends that comprehending and valuing the literal meaning can indeed exert influence on the recipient (Cheshire and Y Moser 1994; Gerritsen et al. 2000; Petrof 1990). Kelly-Holmes (2005) advances the argument that, more frequently, foreign language usage in advertising serves

a symbolic function, where the associations evoked by the foreign language advertisement bear greater importance than the precise linguistic content employed. According to Eastman and y Stein (1993), foreign languages in advertising go beyond mere communication of meaning; they also evoke associations related to the speakers of the foreign language, as well as the products advertised in that language. These associations are largely shaped by the individual's perceptions of the country associated with the language in question.

The utilization of language for symbolic purposes is acknowledged as a linguistic fetish, rooted in the associations evoked among recipients of multilingual advertisements. Roman Jakobson (1960) is widely recognized for his theory of language functions, encompassing various language functions, notably the referential function for conveying objective information and the poetic function for emphasizing language's stylistic and symbolic aspects. Jakobson's framework lays a robust foundation for understanding language's dual roles, as illustrated in Kelly-Holmes' (2005) concept of the 'linguistic fetish' within the context of multilingual advertising, where language transcends its referential function to serve symbolically. Kelly-Holmes (2005) introduces a critical distinction between language's referential and symbolic functions in multilingual advertising, introducing the notion of a 'linguistic fetish' grounded in the associations triggered among recipients of multilingual advertisements.

For instance, consider the use of French in perfume advertising or German in automotive campaigns. Concerning the resultant brand image shaped by foreign language usage, it gains advantage from the connotations specific languages carry. On this matter, distinctions appear to arise between English and other foreign languages (Kelly-Holmes 2005; Piller 2003). English deployed in advertising typically does not tether itself to a particular country (e.g., the United Kingdom); instead, it aligns with English's global status as a lingua franca. In contrast, other foreign languages are strategically chosen due to their intrinsic associations with the respective countries where they are spoken.

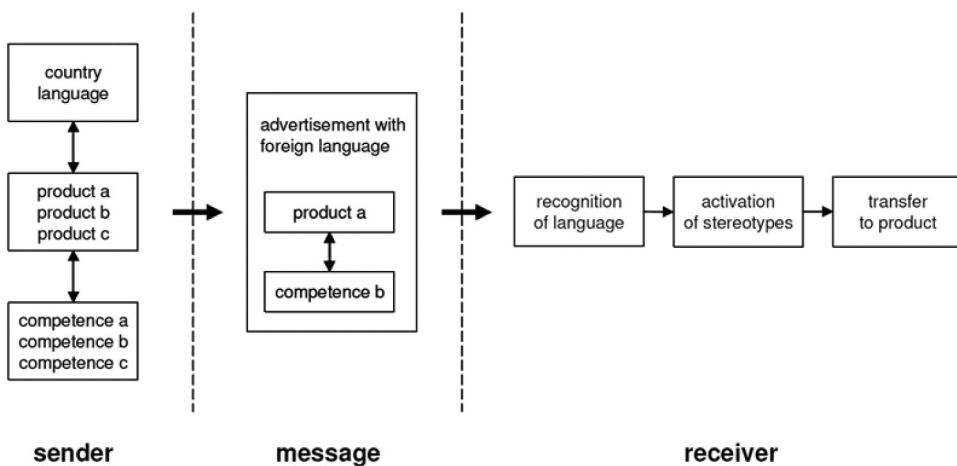
One of the first scholars to address the symbolic meaning of foreign words in advertising was Haarmann (1989), who investigated the use of European languages in advertising in Japan, finding how English, French, German, and Spanish occurred frequently in Japanese advertising. The appearance of these languages was not by chance as it depended on the type of product being advertised. French, for example, was frequently used in advertising products such as watches, automobiles, handbags and perfumes. Since most Japanese cannot read or understand European languages, Haarmann argues that these languages must have symbolic meaning. For example, French seems to be associated with elegance, taste, and attractiveness (Haarmann 1989). Kelly-Holmes (2005) explains how the linguistic fetish is achieved. Foreign languages are not used arbitrarily in advertising. They are generally used when the specific language fits the product and with a quality relevant to the country where this language is spoken. This fit is related to the country-of-origin effect, which holds that it is more effective to relate a product to a country that consumers associate with this product than to another country (Diamantopoulos and Papadopoulos 2010; Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, and Paliawadana 2011). Examples of countries of origin and the products associated with them are France and wine, Germany and beer, and the Netherlands and cheese.

Piller (2000) asserts that the utilization of a foreign language in advertising is contingent upon its capacity to evoke a specific country of origin. Typically, the language of

a country renowned for a specific product's quality is chosen (Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Hof 2013). This selection aligns with the Country-of-Origin (COO) effect, which posits that associating a product with a country resonating with consumers enhances its effectiveness (Hornikx and Y Van Meurs 2017; Leclerc, Schmitt, and Y Dubé 1994). When there is a disconnect between the language, the country of origin, the product, and the associated competition, the COO effect diminishes, potentially diminishing the persuasive impact of the foreign language in the advertisement (Kelly-Holmes 2005).

Hence, when a company opts to incorporate a foreign language into its advertising strategy, it hinges on what Kelly-Holmes (2000) terms a 'hierarchy of cultural competence'. This hierarchy predetermines specific products in relation to the countries with which they are associated. Notably, it emphasizes the autonomous symbolic value of the foreign language. This value is not solely a consequence of its communicative utility but is rooted in its symbolic significance within the realm of intercultural advertising communication. This symbolic value evolves from complex intercultural, social, political, economic, historical, and linguistic interactions among different countries (Kelly-Holmes 2000).

In Figure 1, the left and central columns are grounded in the concept of a hierarchy of cultural competencies that delineates the categories of products associated with specific countries. Consequently, the products and competencies attributed to these countries are rooted in our deeply entrenched perceptions and conceptions of them. This approach advocates employing a foreign language in advertising that aligns with the product and imparts positive attributes to it. Such an application enhances the persuasive impact of the message. Kelly-Holmes (2000) contends that an advertising message in a foreign language comprises a product reference coupled with the utilization of the foreign language to convey competencies. Kelly-Holmes (2005) underscores that the products and expertise linked to particular countries are contingent upon individuals' perceptions of those countries. These perceptions may stem from direct encounters (e.g., sojourns or vacations in foreign lands) or indirect exposure, notably through the media, which shapes our understanding of countries, their inhabitants, and their characteristics.



**Figure 1.** Symbolic associations of foreign languages in advertising from sender to receiver. Source: Hornikx and y Starren (2006) (Based in Kelly-Holmes 2000, Kelly-Holmes 2005, Piller 2001).

On the right of [Figure 1](#), the thought processes of the receiver of the advertisement are represented. Once the language is recognized, then the receiver will activate stereotypes of the country and its inhabitants; finally, these stereotypical associations are transferred to the product. If the receiver of the ad considers the language to be charming and elegant, the product will also be seen as charming and elegant. In this situation, the foreign language is used as a symbol that produces such associations, regardless of the diminished understanding of the message it entails ([Hornikx and Y Starren 2006](#); [Kelly-Holmes 2005](#)). This makes the advertisement more persuasive ([Piller 2001](#)).

The importance of examining more directly the stereotypical associations evoked by the use of foreign language in advertising was stressed by [Luna and y Peracchio \(2002\)](#). To date, very few researchers have delved into the study of which stereotypical associations or characteristics can be associated with the product or brand by the use of foreign language from a previous list. The work carried out by [Alm \(2003\)](#) and [Hornikx et al. \(2007\)](#) should be highlighted. [Alm \(2003\)](#) conducted a study in Ecuador in which he presented 21 concepts related to the English language to the participants. [Hornikx et al. \(2007\)](#) attempt to study which associations are evoked by Dutch reader participants in print advertising, the number of associations and their valence (positive, negative or neutral), when they read a foreign language in advertising. They were presented with two print advertisements of an identical product in three foreign languages: French, Spanish and German. The results showed that the different languages evoked different associations and that the valence of the associations rather than their number affected participants' ad preference. Participants preferred the ad with the highest number of positive associations and the lowest number of negative associations. These comparisons are an approximation, as associations depend on the products advertised in the multilingual advertisement in which they appear ([Haarmann 1984, 1989](#); [Hornikx, Van Meurs, and Y Starren 2007](#); [Kelly-Holmes 2005](#)).

Therefore, knowledge of the attributes related to each foreign language improves companies' communication strategies. According to [Hornikx and y Starren \(2006\)](#) and [Hornikx et al. \(2007\)](#), one of the key elements is to know which characteristic activates each language. This is why it is assumed that the language in which a message is delivered awakens symbolic associations or different characteristics, which we can transmit to our products. Based on the previous literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The same advertising message evokes different characteristics depending on the foreign language used.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Experimental design

In this study, a between-subjects experimental design was employed to address our research hypothesis. We created a promotional advertising message, presented solely in audio format, for a fictitious company, which was then translated and broadcasted in various languages for analysis. Advertising message used in this study was as follows:

'Years of experience and loyalty of the most demanding customers endorse us. Don't hesitate. Look no further. Nostromo is your brand. You won't regret it'.



The independent variable in this study was the language used in the commercial advertising message, comprising seven variants: Italian (L1), Turkish (L2), Russian (L3), English (L4), French (L5), Chinese (L6), and Portuguese (L7). Each participant was exposed to the advertising message in only one language. Subsequently, a questionnaire was administered as the primary research tool for collecting quantitative data. The questionnaire remained consistent across all participants, except for the advertising message.

Initially, sociodemographic variables such as gender, age, and employment status were recorded. Participants then listened to the commercial message in one of the seven selected languages and were asked to identify the language. If they were able to identify it, they were also requested to indicate their proficiency level (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, or C2) in that language. Participants who failed to recognize the language were excluded from the sample, as illustrated in [Figure 1](#).

Subsequently, participants heard the advertising message and, following the framework established by Hornikx et al. (2007), were required to rate 16 language characteristics on a multi-item Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7. These characteristics included: 'serious', 'beautiful', 'boring', 'simple', 'elegant', 'trustworthy', 'simple', 'modern', 'technical', 'emotional', 'passionate', 'fun', 'pleasant', 'quality', 'expensive' (luxury), and 'melodic'.

### 3.2. Sample

The initial sample consisted of 437 Spanish individuals. After excluding those who could not identify the language, the final sample comprised 405 participants. The distribution among the seven languages was as follows: Italian (14.07%), Turkish (13.09%), Russian (16.05%), English (14.57%), French (11.36%), Chinese (16.79%), and Portuguese (14.07%). The gender distribution was 31.85% male and 68.15% female. The age range of participants spanned from 18 to 59 years old, with an average age of 22.78 years.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Characteristics associated with language in the advertising message

To reduce the dimensionality of the analyzed characteristics, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Factors were extracted using a principal component analysis with standardized varimax rotation. Factors were composed of characteristics with factor loadings exceeding 0.6 in absolute terms, as shown in [Table 1](#).

The following factors were derived, organized by their factor loadings from highest to lowest:

**Factor 1:** This factor encompassed hedonic and emotional components and was correlated with the following six characteristics: 'with passion', 'emotional', 'melodic', 'fun', 'pleasant', and 'melodic'.

**Factor 2:** This factor pertained to utilitarian attributes and was correlated with four characteristics: 'quality', 'simple', 'modern', and 'technical'.



**Table 1.** Matrix of factor loadings of the Exploratory factor analysis for the characteristics associated with the foreign language (normalized varimax rotation).

<i>Characteristics</i>	Factors			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1. Serious	−0,294666	0,203594	−0,143771	<b>−0,645730</b>
2. Pretty	<b>0,611036</b>	0,257269	0,019309	0,154043
3. Boring	−0,116075	−0,170375	0,129456	<b>−0,797542</b>
4. Simple	0,144224	0,069798	<b>0,856365</b>	−0,065704
5. Elegant	0,499147	0,510442	0,060003	−0,059416
6. Confident	0,219124	<b>0,619935</b>	0,319003	−0,015611
7. Simple	−0,030322	0,026997	<b>0,887538</b>	0,068279
8. Modern	0,193739	<b>0,676904</b>	0,158823	0,347762
9. Technical	−0,175564	<b>0,681912</b>	−0,109592	−0,065861
10. Emotional	<b>0,792330</b>	0,075372	0,001619	0,116495
11. Passionate	<b>0,803803</b>	0,114305	0,032141	0,102173
12. Fun	<b>0,687057</b>	0,169653	0,083507	0,206721
13. Pleasant	<b>0,677643</b>	0,307785	0,212048	0,239757
14. Quality	0,320605	<b>0,732744</b>	0,016497	0,100646
15. Expensive	0,399326	0,524727	−0,067923	−0,164543
16. Melodic	<b>0,688509</b>	−0,009478	0,036778	0,023689
<b>Explained Variance</b>	3,802334	2,664941	1,760696	1,376792
<b>Total Ratio</b>	<b>0,237646</b>	<b>0,166559</b>	<b>0,110043</b>	<b>0,086050</b>

Source: own elaboration.

**Factor 3:** This factor focused on attributes like ‘simple’ and ‘easy’ and represented linguistic proximity or reduced linguistic distance from the user. Additionally, this factor had a positive connotation.

**Factor 4:** This factor was associated with two characteristics: ‘serious’ and ‘boring’, with ‘boring’ being the most salient. Consequently, this factor encompassed negatively loaded characteristics related to unfavourable language perceptions.

#### 4.2. Analysis of the psychometric properties of the factors

To assess the reliability and measurement validity of the scales, we conducted a psychometric analysis. Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for the component variables of each of the four extracted factors. Factor 1 demonstrated excellent reliability ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ), Factor 2 showed acceptable reliability ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ), and Factor 3 exhibited good reliability ( $\alpha = 0.74$ ). However, Factor 4 had low reliability ( $\alpha = 0.41$ ) and was subsequently excluded from further analysis. (See Table 2 for details.)

#### 4.3. Effect of the foreign language on the underlying factors extracted related to the characteristics associated with the advertising message

The hypothesis under examination posits that the assessment of the message, based on the composite factors, will be contingent upon the language of delivery. To investigate this, an ANOVA was conducted to assess the presence of significant differences, with language serving as the independent variable and each factor as a dependent variable. Concurrently, the Bonferroni test was employed to scrutinize distinctions among the various languages.

**Table 2.** Analysis of the psychometric properties of the factors.

	Related characteristics	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach 's Alpha (a)
<b>Factor 1:</b>	Nice	2,92	1,67	<b>15,45</b>	<b>7,26</b>	<b>0,85</b>
Hedonic	Emotional	2,31	1,56			
	Passionate	2,20	1,66			
	Fun	2,14	1,44			
	Pleasant	3,31	1,67			
	Melodic	2,57	1,61			
<b>Factor2:</b>	Confident	3,88	1,74	<b>15,74</b>	<b>5,14</b>	<b>0,70</b>
Utilitarian	Modern	3,65	1,79			
	Technical	4,19	1,81			
	Quality	4,02	1,73			
<b>Factor 3:</b>	Simple	3,78	2,08	<b>6,89</b>	<b>3,74</b>	<b>0,74</b>
Positive	Simple	3,51	2,10			
<b>Factor 4:</b>	Serious	5,43	1,67	<b>8,91</b>	<b>2,79</b>	0,41
Negative	Boring	3,48	1,85			

**Table 3.** Differences between foreign languages on factor 1: hedonic.

Factors	Language	Mean	Typical dev.	F-value	p-value	Bonferroni test						
						(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<b>Factor 1</b>	(1) Italian	19,32	1,16	11,14	0,00		0,01	0,00	0,00	1,00	0,00	0,67
	(2) Turkish	14,89	0,80			0,01		0,09	1,00	0,02	1,00	1,00
	(3) Russian	11,28	0,60			0,00	0,09		0,32	0,00	0,60	0,00
	(4) English	14,25	0,67			0,00	1,00	0,32		0,00	1,00	1,00
	(5) French	19,52	1,08			1,00	0,01	0,00	0,00		0,00	0,60
	(6) Chinese	13,87	0,90			0,00	1,00	0,60	1,00	0,00		0,55
	(7) Portuguese	16,58	0,98			0,67	1,00	0,00	1,00	0,60	0,55	

Source: own elaboration.

**Table 3** illustrates the impact of language on Factor 1, which pertains to hedonic components. The results indicate statistically significant differences ( $p \leq 0.00$ ). Among the languages examined, French (19.52) and Italian (19.32) achieved the highest ratings for this factor, closely followed by Portuguese (16.58). When comparing these two languages to the others, both French and Italian exhibited statistically significant variations ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) except in the case of Portuguese. Russian received the lowest rating, registering at 11.28.

**Table 4** displays the impact of language on factor 2, the utilitarian components, revealing notable differences ( $p \leq 0.00$ ). When analyzing this impact across each language, we observe that French (17.09) and English (17.03) garnered the highest scores. In contrast, Russian received the lowest rating for this factor, with a score of 11.28. It is

**Table 4.** Differences between foreign languages in factor 2: utilitarian.

Factors	Language	Mean	Typical dev.	F-value	p-value	Bonferroni test						
						(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<b>Factor 2</b>	(1) Italian	15,91	0,79	5,12	0,00		1,00	0,10	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
	(2) Turkish	16,32	0,84			1,00		0,02	1,00	1,00	0,79	1,00
	(3) Russian	13,33	0,69			0,10	0,02		0,00	0,00	1,00	0,00
	(4) English	17,03	0,77			1,00	1,00	0,00		1,00	0,07	1,00
	(5) French	17,09	0,84			1,00	1,00	0,00	1,00		0,11	1,00
	(6) Chinese	14,41	0,73			1,00	0,79	1,00	0,07	0,11		0,14
	(7) Portuguese	16,86	0,84			1,00	1,00	0,00	1,00	1,00	0,14	

Source: own elaboration.

**Table 5.** Differences between foreign languages in factor 3: positive.

Factors	Language	Mean	Typical dev.	F-value	p-value	Bonferroni test						
						(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<b>Factor 3</b>	(1) Italian	9,52	0,39	10,74	0,00		0,00	0,00	0,03	0,04	0,00	0,11
	(2) Turkish	5,21	0,49			0,00		1,00	0,02	0,05	1,00	0,00
	(3) Russian	5,97	0,41			0,00	1,00		0,49	0,89	1,00	0,17
	(4) English	7,41	0,49			0,03	0,02	0,49		1,00	1,00	1,00
	(5) French	7,35	0,41			0,04	0,05	0,89	1,00		0,10	1,00
	(6) Chinese	5,46	0,46			0,00	1,00	1,00	0,04	0,10		0,01
	(7) Portuguese	7,67	0,53			0,11	0,00	0,17	1,00	1,00	0,01	

Source: own elaboration.

noteworthy that Italian, in this instance, does not feature among the top-rated languages as it did in factor 1.

**Table 5** outlines the impact of language on factor 3, specifically focusing on positive components, revealing significant differences among them. Italian achieved the highest score for factor 3, registering at 9.52. According to the Bonferroni test, Italian's score is notably higher compared to all other languages, except for Portuguese. Conversely, Turkish, Chinese, and Russian received the lowest ratings.

## 5. Conclusions

With regard to the results obtained, we can conclude that there are significant differences in the three factors analyzed. Therefore, it can be affirmed that certain languages are perceived by the message recipients as more hedonic, some as more utilitarian, and others as having positive components.

In relation to the hedonic factor, it's noteworthy that all three languages belong to the Romance language family, which is similar to the main language spoken by the participants. Hence, while these Romance languages received higher ratings in the hedonic component compared to other languages, it's essential to explore whether this is because the respondents share the same language family or if the Romance family inherently conveys hedonic messages.

When considering the utilitarian factor, English and French emerge as the most distinct, followed by Turkish and Portuguese. In this case, the notion of language families may not apply, as Italian and Portuguese, both belonging to the Romance language family, do not significantly differ from any other language. Nevertheless, if a language were to be recommended for communicating or supporting a confident, modern, technical, and quality message, English or French would be the preferred choices. It's important to note that Chinese, with its average rating in this factor, ranks only slightly above Russian, mirroring the pattern observed in the hedonic factor.

Finally, the positive factor, which includes simplicity and straightforwardness, consistently shows the highest values among the three Romance languages, with English having the highest score, followed by Italian. We could categorize this factor as a critical element according to Herzberg's theory (Herzberg 1966). If it does not enhance the appeal of the language, but rather, if it is absent – meaning, if the language is not easy to understand or its sound is not straightforward – the receiver will be reluctant to accept it.

Therefore, it can be affirmed that, from a sociolinguistic perspective, languages moderate the message, as well as the characteristics it conveys. Values associated with a language, a product, or its message can be transmitted. This is done with reference to the Model of Symbolic Associations of Foreign Languages in advertising from the sender to the receiver proposed by Hornikx and y Starren (2006).

### **5.1. Implications**

Based on the results obtained from this research, we can assert that companies must carefully select the language they use in their communication campaigns to effectively convey their intended messages. Furthermore, they can employ languages that the target audience may not necessarily understand but can still recognize. This recognition is pivotal for achieving the Country of Origin (COO) effect through advertisements, for instance.

As demonstrated in the study conducted by Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2019), the language used in the message is associated with varying industry sectors. For instance, in our present study, Chinese language is strongly linked to utilitarian attributes, whereas in the research by Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2019), it is associated with the technology sector. Consequently, companies need to consider not only which elements are conveyed by different languages but also in which sectors consumers perceive them as congruent or incongruent.

### **5.2. Limitations and future lines of research**

One main limitation to note is that the sample for this experiment consisted entirely of Spanish university students. Consequently, some of the results, as discussed during the analysis of factors, may be influenced by the fact that Spanish, as a language, shares linguistic similarities with languages such as Italian, French, or Portuguese. Therefore, as a result of this initial limitation, a future research direction could involve incorporating a cross-cultural component to the study. This would help confirm whether the grouping of characteristics into the same factors holds true and whether, for example, Chinese individuals also perceive Italian, French, or Portuguese as the most hedonic among the languages they have listened to. Additionally, it would be worthwhile to expand the age range of the sample to investigate whether different generations perceive languages in the same manner. It is widely acknowledged that, in Spain and around the world, English has become the lingua franca in recent generations. Therefore, studying a second language different from the one predominantly studied today could potentially yield different results.

As potential future research directions, in addition to the cross-cultural approach and broadening the age range, drawing inspiration from studies by Hornikx and y Starren (2006), Hornikx and y Van Meurs (2015, 2017), and Hornikx et al. (2007, 2013), one could consider advancing the Foreign Language Display Model, but through an audio-visual medium. In this context, it would be beneficial to further explore the Country of Origin (COO) concept and the Hierarchy of Cultural Competencies (Kelly-Holmes 2000, 2005). To achieve this, we could leverage stereotypical visual cues (Vries 2015), incorporate typical landscapes or iconic landmarks (Aichner 2014), or incorporate flags and symbols

representing a particular country or region (Vries 2015). Additionally, it is important to analyze the moderating effect of the language employed and assess the congruence between the language and the message (Puzakova, Kwak, and Y Bell 2015; Usunier and Y Cestre 2007), as well as examine the positive associations conveyed by the product based on the language used (Aichner 2014; Veale and Y Quester 2009).

Another potential avenue for future research could involve the application of neuroscience to linguistics. Both the studies by Volk et al. (2014) and Hadjichristidis et al. (2017) demonstrate the feasibility of measuring the effects of using a native language versus a foreign language through neuroscience. Additionally, sociolinguistics emphasizes the communication of cultural values through language, which necessitates distinguishing cognitive processes influenced by culture. In this regard, the works of Isabella et al. (2015), Han and y Northoff (2008), and Gutches et al. (2006) have identified variations in neural activity based on culture. The latter study has revealed differences in brain activation patterns between Americans and Japanese. Culture may also exert an influence on spatial cognition (Majid et al. 2004) and the conceptual encoding of space (Haun et al. 2011; Levinson et al. 2002; Pederson et al. 1998).

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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