



*Department: Business and Management*

*Master degree in marketing*

*Chair: Neuromarketing*

## A Study of English Slogans on Advertising Credibility in Italy

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**ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020**

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Literature Review .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1. Foreign-Language Display.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2. Foreign-Language Display and Congruency .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.3. Foreign-Language Display and Comprehension .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.4. Foreign-Language Display and Brand Trust .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.5. Hypotheses.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.5.1. Model 1 .....	15
2.5.2. Model 2 .....	15
<b>3. Model 1: Method and Results .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3.1 Method.....</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1.1 Pre-Test.....	19
3.1.2 Research design .....	20
3.1.3 Main Test .....	20
3.1.4 Instrumentation .....	21
3.1.5 Participants.....	22
<b>3.2 Results.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4. Model 2: Method and Results .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.1 Method.....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1.1 Pre-test .....	24
4.1.2 Research design .....	25
4.1.3 Main Test .....	26

4.1.4	Instrumentation .....	27
4.1.5	Participants.....	28
<b>4.2</b>	<b><i>Results</i></b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Discussion</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>5.1.</b>	<b><i>Discussion of Model 1</i></b> .....	<b>32</b>
5.1.1.	Hypothesis 1.....	32
<b>5.2.</b>	<b><i>Discussion of Model 2</i></b> .....	<b>33</b>
5.2.1.	Hypothesis 2.....	34
5.2.2.	Hypothesis 3.....	35
5.2.3.	Hypothesis 4.....	37
<b>5.3.</b>	<b><i>Managerial implications</i></b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>5.4.</b>	<b><i>Limitation and Future Research</i></b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>References</b> .....	<b>48</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Appendix A – Results</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Appendix B – Questionnaire</b> .....	<b>62</b>
1.	<i>Pre-Test</i> .....	62
2.	<i>Main Test</i> .....	65
<b>10.</b>	<b>Thesis Summary</b> .....	<b>77</b>

## 1. Introduction

In this modern society, characterized by globalization and multinationalism, the inclusion of foreign languages in our communities has become a common practice. Due to the growth in travel, people across the world have the possibility to visit and discover new places, learn about foreign countries and cultures, and new languages. The concomitant technological advancements of online platforms and social media, have also contributed to decrease the physical distance from one side of the globe to the other, granting people the access to information cross-borders, and exposing them to messages in unfamiliar languages. Many multinational companies, that have noticed the gradual disappearing of the linguistic boundaries between countries, have taken advantage of the situation by employing their native language in foreign markets, with the aim of standardizing their messages, increasing their brand reach and attracting new customers. In fact, famous firms that successfully implemented such strategies as for instance, *Nike* and *Mc Donald's* with their internationally recognized slogans "*Just do it*" and "*I'm loving it*", chose to maintain their native tongue, on a worldwide scale.

The adoption of foreign languages in the field of marketing has in fact become increasingly popular, as societies' curiosity and attraction towards foreign lifestyles and habits has grown. From television commercials to magazine texts and print ads, the use of unfamiliar languages has intrigued many academics, for their capacity to impact consumers' attitudes, preferences, recall abilities and purchase intention in marketing-related situations (e.g., Ahn & La Ferle 2008; Gerritsen et al. 2007; Hornikx, Van Meurs & De Boer 2010). Being positioned as the most spoken and understood language in the world, with over 1 billion speakers worldwide (Ethnologue, 2020), English has emerged, among the other tongues, as a common business language, mainly used for practical reasons, but also for symbolic ones. On one hand, multinational firms have been more inclined to adopt English to facilitate their daily tasks and

simplify their coordination across foreign departments, while on the other they have employed it to convey product associations to the customers, evoking modernity, globalism and prestige upon the promoted good (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hornikx, van Meurs & Starren 2007; Kelly-Holmes, 2005; Piller, 2001). Research has demonstrated that the benefits achieved by companies through the standardization of their communications are quite substantial (White, 2000). Yet, even though approximately half of the EU population masters this foreign language, statistics show that the distribution of population's fluency in English is higher in Nordic countries compared to Southern ones, placing Sweden and the Netherlands in the first and second positions of the classification, with 71% and 70% fluent speakers, while Italy and France respectively amount to 56% and 55% (Klazz, 2019). These findings are interesting when it comes to the use of English in non-anglophone countries, as people's understanding, from one place to another might vary and possibly influence to different extents reactions towards commercial stimuli.

Several academics have investigated the use of foreign languages in non-native advertising, focusing on the effect of linguistic choices on advertising performance. In particular, research has delved into the benefits brought by English language in the attraction of consumers' attention and the triggering of product associations, as well as the capacity of other foreign languages to convey territorial connotations when paired to goods of the same provenance (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Congruent product language combinations (e.g., Spanish and Paella) were indeed shown to transmit a sense of authenticity to the consumers as opposed to connotation-free goods (Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2018). Nevertheless, the association between products and languages of the same country of origin has not often been considered for the English language, as it is commonly used for its ulterior advantages. Thus, by introducing English slogans as indicators of product provenance, this study aims to see if English can also evoke connotations of British tradition when combined with a product such

as tea, rather than only transferring a sense of modernity and globalism (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Considering the scarce research questioning English effectiveness when combined to products originating from anglophone countries, this study will firstly try to contribute to the literature by filling this gap.

Comprehension is another important factor to consider in the display of foreign languages. Most of the existing inquiries regarding the use of English in national advertising were carried out in Germanic-speaking countries, which share the same linguistic root as anglophone. Because of linguistic similarities between these two speaking communities, the results evinced in existing literature might not be applicable to any nation, especially if it does not share similar language roots. In fact, few studies in Italy have considered the use of foreign language in national marketing communications and even fewer have tried to compare their effect to that of equivalent Italian communications. Yet, interesting results could emerge from a linguistic confrontation between Italian and English advertisings in the Italian market, as these languages derive from diverse linguistic paths, and as a lower percentage of Italian inhabitants are fluent in English (Klazz, 2019). This suggests a second gap in the literature which aims to be filled in this research.

Finally, though several performance values have been measured in accordance to linguistic choices in advertising, little light has been shed on the consequences of foreign language display on advertising credibility. Nevertheless, trust represents an important issue in the evaluations of marketing communication, as it is the pillar on which brands build relationships with their consumers and eventually establish connection based on loyalty. Considering this third discrepancy in the literature with the two previous ones, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of English language advertising on communication credibility in the Italian market. In particular, this research aims to compare the effects of native and foreign

tongues in the credibility of an advertisement when influenced by comprehension and by congruency in product-language combination.

Altogether, the study will be divided in five sections. The first chapter will delve into a review of the existing literature and theories in the field of linguistics in marketing. The methods employed in the data collection will then be tackled accompanied by an analysis of the obtained results. Moreover, a comprehensive discussion of the research outcome will be presented, followed by limitations and suggestions for future research. Ultimately, a short conclusion will be provided.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. Foreign-Language Display***

Foreign languages in native advertising have been the object of many studies in the field of marketing, due to the intent of several academics to comprehend their impact on consumers across the globe. Whilst some of them discuss the originality and appeal that all these foreign tongues bring to the table, others underline the additional benefits that are carried specifically by the English language. Firstly, English helps to facilitate the coordination of business across foreign departments since it acts as a standardization tool, that allows companies to utilize the same communications in several or all of their foreign markets and simplify their global marketing strategies. Secondly, it serves as a business "lingua franca" that allows companies to reap economies of scale, fully exploit creative ideas in cross-border departments and position their brand image evenly in international markets (White, 2000).

Yet, together with English, other foreign languages have intrigued various researchers, for their ability to serve as "attention-getting devices" in advertising, therefore enhancing the visibility of stimuli in consumers' eyes (Domzal, Hunt & Kernan, 1995). This usage of non-domestic words or expressions within a community's own communications can be denominated: foreign language display (FLD) (Hornikx, van Meurs & Hof, 2013). Indeed, FLD is more and more present in native commercials, as it helps to raise the curiosity of local consumers. Because of their unfamiliarity and their rare encounters with foreign vocabulary, people tend to unconsciously pay more attention to foreign language stimuli. In fact, Gerritsen et al. (2007) who investigated the presence of English in product advertisements from Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain found that the ads that contained Anglo-Saxon words, most often displayed them in their headlines, slogans and product names, which are the three fundamental tools manipulated by advertisers to catch people's attention. These results,



therefore suggested that FLD was in most cases used to increase the distinctiveness and the originality of ads in many European countries.

## ***2.2. Foreign-Language Display and Congruency***

In addition to increasing noticeability, multilingual advertising is also employed for symbolic scope, as it allows consumers to make associations related to the countries in which these languages are spoken. According to Hornikx, van Meurs & Starren (2007), people link some idioms with characteristics that reflect the ethnocultural stereotypes of these communities. For instance, French was established to evoke beauty and elegance, German was related to technique and reliability, while English was often associated with modernity (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hornikx et al., 2007). The associations that are triggered when people come in contact with a commercial also depend on consumers' perceived congruency between the advertised product and all the other pieces of information provided with it. The congruence theory, which evaluates the pairing of a brand with other elements (e.g., endorser, origin cues, or languages), is a vastly applied method in marketing research, that can be implemented to increase consumers' interest for a good. It is composed of two dimensions, the first one being relevancy and the second one expectancy (Heckler and Childers, 1992). Relevancy checks whether the information that accompanies a stimulus, sustains the ideas communicated in the ad, while expectancy indicates the extent to which a cue is fitting with the message that is being communicated (Cheng, 2017). In the use of FLD, relevancy is found when the symbolic meaning of a language is appropriately paired with a brand's essence and expectancy, when the language wording is in line with the advertising style. Therefore, to be perceived as congruent, FLD must comply with both of these notions.

When consumers perceive coherence between a good and the information surrounding it in a commercial, they tend to transfer their associations onto the product, consequently

developing a more positive product attitude, a higher purchase intention as well as, a higher perceived product quality (Hornikx, et al., 2013). The concept of country of origin (COO), which designates the idea that people match certain types of product categories with certain countries based on their legitimate origins, is in fact used in marketing to trigger these consumer associations. For instance, Verlegh, Steenkamp, and Meulenberg (2005) demonstrated that congruence between a product and COO markers, such as Spanish tomatoes, for instance, produced higher purchase intentions and more positive attitudes towards the good compared to incongruent combinations (Dutch tomatoes). This has been proved in other instances, namely by Usunier and Cestre (2007), where goods such as vodka and cosmetics respectively paired with Russian and French COO markers increased consumers' willingness to buy the latter. Besides combining products with specific countries, other researchers focused on the languages related to COOs. In particular, Hornikx, et al., (2013) studied three obvious COO-product combinations in advertisings (French wine, German sausages, and Spanish oranges) commercialized with slogans in their corresponding languages, to measure their effectiveness in comparison to incongruent pairings. Results showed that the the higher the fit between the languages and product's perceived country of origin (e.g., French wine with French slogan), the more effective the ads were (Hornikx, et al. 2013). Yet, while most foreign languages are used as COO markers to evoke associations with ethnocultural stereotypes of their corresponding speaking communities, English is mainly employed to enhance the image of the advertised product without advancing country-specific connotations (Gerritsen et al., 2010). Only few academics have considered the use of English combined with products from anglophone countries.

Among the numerous studies that have observed the general effectiveness of foreign language display in their countries, focusing on various combinations of non-domestic products with several non-domestic languages, few have compared the FLD performance in contrast to

their native-tongue. This is the case in the paper published by Nederstigt et al., (2018) where foreign language ads were confronted against their equivalent commercials in the local tongue (Dutch). The authors chose to contrast the effectiveness congruent ads composed of foreign products and their respective COO language, compared to incongruent ones with Dutch cues (Paella with Spanish slogan vs. Paella with Dutch slogan). Their aim was to find out which technique was better suited to stimulate Dutch-speakers' willingness to buy. Overall, their results showed that foreign languages did not necessarily increase the effectiveness of commercials compared to those in native tongue, as participants equally evaluated the ads regardless of the language conditions (Nederstigt et al., 2018). Further support for this theory was provided in García, Chelminski, and Hernández's (2013) paper, which analysed the effect of congruence in consumers' attitudes and trust towards native and foreign brands when associated with domestic and mixed language cues.

### ***2.3. Foreign-Language Display and Comprehension***

Another factor that has intrigued many researchers, is whether or not consumers' comprehension of slogans influences the effectiveness of foreign language display. Opinions are quite diverse in this field, as some authors argue that languages only play a symbolic role and their literal meaning isn't important, while others claim that comprehension affects the appreciation that consumers have for an ad (Hornikx & Starren, 2006). In an investigation of the use of foreign languages in Japan, Haarmann (1989) concluded that these did have a figurative meaning since the participants in this research were Japanese and were therefore not very likely to understand the European messages to which they were exposed. On the other hand, Horinkx and Starren (2006) hypothesized a link between understanding and appreciation, as they tested the difference in appreciation of easy to understand French slogans (by Dutch speakers) compared to hard to understand ones, and found higher values for the first group.

Hornixk et al., (2010) further investigated this topic using English slogans and comparing their impact on Dutch consumers with respect to identical stimuli in their native language. Their results showed that English slogans were preferred compared to their Dutch equivalents, when these were easy to understand while, no preference was found when these were difficult to understand. Thus, they concluded that foreign language comprehension did indeed act on consumers' appreciation and preference for an ad (Hornixk et al., 2010). This idea was further supported by Hendriks, van Meurs and Poos (2017) in their evaluations of customer's reactions to easy/difficult English slogans, beyond mere text appreciation and preference. Along the latter components, three additional variables were included in this analysis, namely, the attitudes towards ads, towards products, as well as consumer's purchase intention. Eventually, the authors found new support for the necessity of language comprehension in English advertising as easy-English slogans were proved to have a greater impact on those factors (Hendriks, et al., 2017).

#### ***2.4. Foreign-Language Display and Brand Trust***

A very common phenomenon in bilingual communities is code-switching, defined as the "fluid use of several languages in a single speech form" (Muysken, 2002). This language form is often derived from migration, geographic proximity to countries with other mother tongues, or geopolitical history. Taking into consideration the population's knowledge of several languages can be decisive in a company's advertising language choice. The question of whether or not FLD could be successful in multilingual countries was tackled by some academics who contemplated the possible dependence that such technique would have on the product category and the size of the company involved in the advertising. In particular, Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008) evaluated the effectiveness of English versus Hindi communication in the Indian market, for luxury and necessity goods, sold by local or multinational companies, with the aim

of grasping the difference in effects among these product and business categories. From the results, the authors concluded that language choice is a more important matter for multinational companies, as English appeared to be significantly more effective for luxury goods and Hindi for the necessity ones, meanwhile local businesses were not affected by such language distinctions (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008).

In a publication by García et al., (2013) the authors took a new perspective in this fields of research, concentrating on the effect of code-mixing on Mexicans' perceived attitudes and trust towards a brand. In their study, the authors questioned the difference in attitudes that domestic consumers would have towards different commercials, based on the product and on the language(s) used for their promotion. More specifically, they created four ad prints connecting their national Mexican beverage *Jarritos* and the traditionally American brand *Coca-Cola* with both Spanish text markers and mixed text markers (Spanish and English combined), to compare their effects on Mexicans' perceived trust for these brands (García et al., 2013). Based on the theory of Ethnocentrism, which discusses the tendency of consumers to emphasize the positive aspects of domestic products while considering the purchase of imported goods as unpatriotic (Shimp & Sharma, 1987), the scholars hypothesized that Mexican consumers would exhibit more favourable attitudes towards their national goods with a Spanish slogan while being less disposed to trust a foreign good in this same condition. In fact, their results showed that consumers' perceived brand trust was significantly higher for their domestic drink *Jarritos* when it appeared solely with Spanish text, while a greater brand trust was found for *Coca-Cola* in the mixed-text condition (García et al., 2013). This suggested not only that congruency between language and product engendered higher trust, but also that consumers were less willing to trust commercials for native goods when they were accompanied by foreign cues.

In line with this study, Cheng (2017) investigated product-language fit in Korean celebrity endorsement, to uncover its impact on advertising credibility and purchase intention.

Advertisement credibility, defined as the ability of an ad to fulfil and maintain the promises that it communicates, is built upon three stages of consumers assessments: their evaluation of prior experience with the brand, their assessment of source credibility (brand trust), and their judgement of the message itself (ad trust) (Slater & Rouner, 1996). In his research, Cheng (2017) analysed the influence of product endorsers' nationality on consumers' perceived credibility. Based on the mother-tongue of these brand ambassadors, which was either congruent or not with the promoted products, the brand trustworthiness varied. Results confirmed that the level of credibility for consistent product-endorser combinations was higher than for inconsistent ones (Cheng, 2017).

Aside from the study by García et al. (2013), trust has not often been associated to foreign language display in the literature. As supported by past research, perceived trustworthiness sets the foundations for consumers' future brand loyalty, which represents the ultimate goal that every marketer wishes to reach. To better convey this value through advertising, academics have tried to identify the factors that enhance brand credibility. Hence, they demonstrated that trust derives from the attitudes that consumers hold towards a brand. For instance, in a publication by Jung et al., (2014), the authors demonstrated that customers' positive associations for an advertised brand, favorably influenced its overall perceived trustworthiness, which in turn led the consumers to be more willing to revisit its online community platform.

## **2.5.        *Hypotheses***

Taking into account the previously discussed literature, this study will attempt to uncover the effect of English slogans in the Italian market and evaluate their performance concerning consumers' perceived ad and brand trust. The research will be sectioned in two models; one concentrating on English slogan comprehension, and the second one including a comparison

of credibility between English and Italian text cues, when combined with respective COO products.

#### 2.5.1. *Model 1*

The English language is considered to be an enhancing tool in marketing communications, employed in native advertising firstly to attract consumer's attention and secondly to increase positive associations and attitudes towards an ad or a brand (Gerritsen et al., 2010). Given that consumers' trust for a brand or a communication, derives from the attitudes they hold towards them (Jung et al., 2014), and that English has the ability to influence a publicity's overall efficiency, it is plausible to believe that the use of such language in a foreign market, such as Italy could impact brand and ad credibility. Furthermore, several studies have confirmed that consumers' comprehension of commercials in a foreign tongue was a determinant factor in their attitudes and preference for a particular ad (Hornixk, et al., 2010), as well as for their overall evaluation of marketing campaign efficiency (Hendriks, et al., 2017). In particular, while easy English slogans were proved to enhance consumers' perceived ad performance, difficult English ones were shown to harm it. Given the demonstrated effect of English slogan comprehension on attitudes, as well as the relation between attitudes and credibility (Jung et al., 2014) it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

*H1: An easy to understand English slogan will lead to a higher brand and ad trust, compared to a difficult to understand English slogan.*

#### 2.5.2. *Model 2*

After an examination of the relation between English and perceived credibility in the Italian market, it is interesting to study whether its effects vary when introducing an equivalent in the mother-tongue: Italian. In fact, existing literature has attempted to uncover a discrepancy in

efficiency between native and foreign language advertising techniques, to find out which was better suited in the domestic market. For instance, in the investigation by Nederstigt et al., no clear difference was established when comparing the effectiveness of either linguistic methods, and the authors, therefore, argued that the use of foreign slogans was not necessarily better than the use of equivalent expressions in the local mother tongue. Even though it is uncertain whether English might be preferred when compared to identical stimuli in Italian, numerous arguments aforementioned in the literature tend to predict that English slogans positively influence consumers for their general “foreign appeal”, their associations with modernity, as well as for their ability to stand out and catch consumers’ attention. Since this first hypothesis only takes into consideration the linguistic effects of slogans on brand and ad credibility, without any other type of intervening variable, it is plausible to believe that English alone might act as an enhancer in the commercials (Gerritsen et al., 2010). Considering the link between attitudes and trust, and following the latter line of reasoning, it is possible to develop the next hypothesis:

*H2: The use of English slogans in advertising will have a more positive impact on consumers’ brand and ad trust compared to Italian slogans.*

The introduction of the product origin variable to the latter relationship should result in a different effect for several reasons. Studies regarding COO languages in combination with FLD, have been widely covered in marketing research. In fact, foreign language advertising was shown to operate better on several performance levels when paired with congruent origin markers such as the good’s country of production, or the mother tongue spoken in its nation of provenance (Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2018; Verlegh, et al., 2005). In general, consumers who are faced with harmonious cues in advertising messages, perceive the stimulus as congruent and this accumulation of coherent information, in turn, triggers a succession of positive associations that are transferred onto the good. Yet, English has rarely been paired



with a product evoking ethnocultural links in existing studies. In fact, the use of English slogans as COO indicators would put to test the effectiveness of this language under new circumstances. Hence, combining this language with a typical British good, and comparing it to an Italian product sponsored in the national tongue should lead to high perceived congruence in both cases. Yet, since Italian consumers are generally very passionate and proud of their foods and dishes it is possible to believe that they might respond better to a domestic stimulus in native tongue than a foreign stimulus in foreign tongue. Thus, based on the theory of Ethnocentrism, according to which people tend to emphasize the positive aspects of domestic products while considering imported goods as less performant (Shimp & Sharma, 1987), it is possible to expect a similar reaction from Italian inhabitants onto their national products. In line with these assumptions, the second hypothesis in this model is:

*H3: The relationship between language and consumers' perceived congruency is moderated by the origin of the advertised products, in such way that;*

*H3(a): A traditional Italian product advertised with an Italian slogan will have a higher perceived congruence than a traditional English product advertised with an English slogan*

*H3(b): A traditional Italian product advertised with an English slogan will have a lower perceived congruence than a traditional English product advertised with an Italian slogan.*

Finally, congruency has in many instances been related to better advertising performance, including people's attitudes towards brands (Verlegh et al., 2005). Combining the results of several studies, on one hand, congruency in ads has been proved to cause favourable attitudes, and on the other, favourable attitudes have been shown to engender higher credibility (Jung et al., 2014). Building upon the previous hypothesis, and on the theory of Ethnocentrism, it is possible to suppose that the congruence derived by the combinations of traditional products and their corresponding language markers, will in turn impact consumers' perceived ad and brand trust. Hence, the last hypothesis is the following:

*H4: The relation between a product-language combination and ad/brand trust is mediated by its perceived congruency in such way that;*

*H4(a): A high perceived congruence between a typical Italian product and an Italian slogan will lead to more positive brand trust and ad trust compared to a high perceived congruence between a typical British product and an English slogan.*

Based on the previous hypotheses, this study will take the form of two models to investigate the effects of comprehension and of congruency separately on advertising credibility. For the facilitation of the analysis, the carried-out experiments will be discussed in two separate sections.

### 3. Model 1: Method and Results

The present study was set in the Italian market, and aimed at understanding the effects of English usage in local advertising. Three variables were considered in this model, namely the English slogan comprehension (IV), brand trust (DV1) and ad trust (DV2). Thus, the main object of manipulation was the difficulty of the slogans used in the advertisements shown to each participant. Two phases of data collection were undertaken. Firstly, a pre-test was carried out to identify the stimuli necessary for the manipulations, and then the main study was conducted.

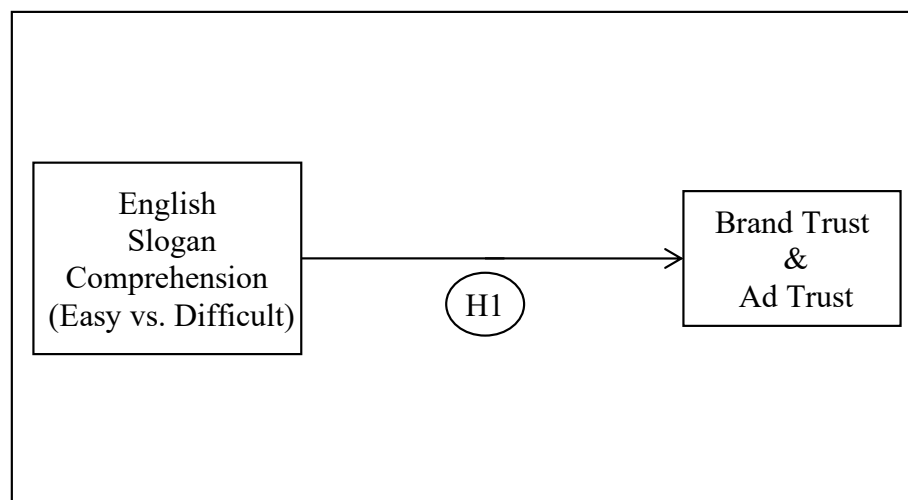


Figure 1. Research Model 1

#### 3.1 Method

##### 3.1.1 Pre-Test

A sample of 37 Italian-speakers took part in a pre-test survey designed on Qualtrics. Since this first model concentrated English comprehension, the scope of the pre-test was to identify appropriate slogan to reflect easy and difficult to understand language cues, which were to be used later for manipulation. Thus, the survey began by a short contextual text to put the respondents into situation. They were told that a company selling autonomous vacuum cleaners was searching for a new slogan to advertise their newest model in the Italian market. They were

then randomly shown 10 English slogans of varying levels of grammatical difficulty and were asked to translate the latter to Italian. This technique was replicated from the study by Hornikx et al., (2010) with the aim of identifying the two worst and best-translated slogans and using the latter as comprehension stimuli in the main research. In fact, according to frequency statistics, the two best-translated slogans, "*Cleaning has never been so easy*" and "*Cleaning without getting your hands dirty*", respectively at 97% and 95% correct translations, were chosen to represent the category of easy-English slogans, while the most incorrect answers, "*You'll stop beating around the bush*" (81% ) and "*From time to time you're allowed to be lazy*" (65%) were selected for the difficult-English slogans.

### 3.1.2 Research design

The experiment followed a 1 (slogan language: English) x 2 (comprehension: easy or difficult) between-subjects design, used to create two scenarios: *Easy-English* vs. *Difficult-English slogans*. Yet, to reinforce participants' answers regarding the two stimuli, each scenario contained two slogans of the same condition (previously selected in the pre-test).

### 3.1.3 Main Test

The main experiment for Model 1 consisted in testing the effect of English slogan comprehension on brand and ad trust. Thus, a questionnaire was designed on Qualtrics to undertake a comparison between participants' perceived credibility towards the stimuli in both language difficulty conditions. A brief introduction told the respondents to imagine that they were considering to purchase a new autonomous vacuum cleaner and that during their online research, they had stumbled upon two commercials. Participants were then randomly exposed to one of the two conditions (*easy English slogan* or *difficult English slogan*) in the form of ad prints for fictitious brands of vacuum cleaners, accompanied by slogans of the same group.

Thus, two ads pertaining to the same condition were displayed to each respondent, who were then asked to evaluate the advertising credibility through measures of brand trust and ad trust. The images used in both conditions were identical, only the difficulty of the slogans varied. Furthermore, vacuums were used in the stimuli as they are universally used products and they pertain to a neutral product category, which does not carry any type of origin connotation.

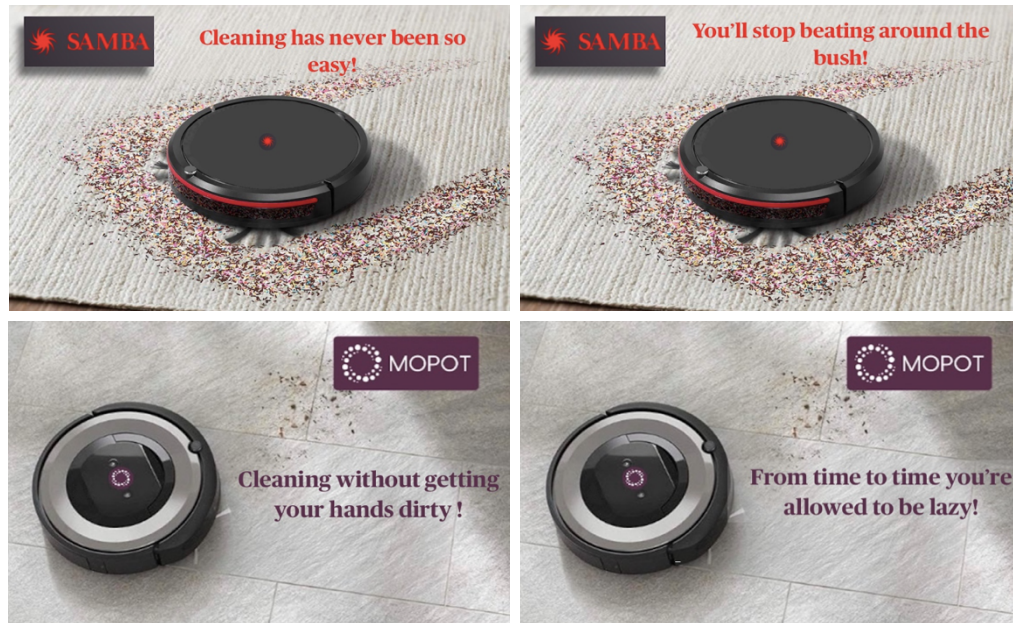


Figure 2. Pairs of ads with easy-English slogans (left) and with difficult English slogans (right)

#### 3.1.4 Instrumentation

Aside from age, gender, sex, education level, and English fluency, the instrumentation in this study included measurement scales for the two dependent variables: brand trust and ad trust. As this study used fictitious brands and products, the third measurement of credibility (*prior brand experience*) was not deemed relevant and therefore only the other two components were taken into consideration to avoid consumer bias and pre-existing beliefs. Hence, two pre-existing tools were used.

Firstly, brand trust was measured with a selection of 5 items from the original 8-item scale by Hess (1995) replicated from the study by García et al., (2013). The statements displayed

were: (1) Brand x is interested in more than just selling me a product x and making profit, (2) Brand x is genuinely committed to my satisfaction, (3) When I see a Brand x advertisement, I believe the information in it is accurate, (4) I think the Brand x ad exaggerates how good it really is, (5) If Brand x makes a claim or a promise about its product, it's probably true. After having recorded the negative item (4) and ran a factor analysis, the fourth element was discarded, leading to scale reliability of  $\alpha = .79$ .

Concerning ad trust, this study relied on a 20 items scale originally designed by Soh et al., (2013). For the purpose of conciseness, only six of them were used in the research, namely: (1) Information conveyed in this advertising is honest, (2) Information conveyed in this advertising is truthful, (3) Information conveyed this advertising is reliable, (4) Information conveyed in this advertising is useful, (5) I am willing to rely on ad-conveyed information when making purchase-related decisions, (6) I am willing to recommend the product or service that I have seen in ads to my friends or family. After running a factor analysis, all the items were kept in both models, with scale reliability at  $\alpha = .93$ .

All scale measurements were carried out using a 7-point Likert scale with 1 representing “*strongly disagree*” and 7 indicating “*strongly agree*”.

### 3.1.5 Participants

Altogether, the survey for the first Model gathered 63 Italian participants ( $N = 63$ ) with various educational backgrounds, the majority having obtained a University degree (64%). There were 54% male respondents and their average age was 31.33 years ( $SD = 12.809$ ). Moreover, to verify that the randomization was successful in the sample, age and gender differences were checked across the groups.

### 3.2 Results

Before starting to analyse the results for the main effect, the average English level of the sample respondents was checked. Thus, based on descriptive statistics, the mean English level across the sample was of  $M = 4.98$  ( $SD = 1.571$ ), hence slightly above average. An independent-sample t-test was then conducted to compare brand and ad trust in easy English slogans and difficult English slogans conditions. Considering the results for brand trust, there was a significant difference in the scores for easy English slogans ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 1.272$ ) and difficult English slogans ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 1.197$ ) conditions;  $t(61) = 2.799$ ,  $p = 0.007$ . For ad trust, similar values were found as there was also a significant difference in group means for easy English slogans ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.312$ ) and difficult English slogans ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 1.100$ ) conditions [ $t(61) = 2.059$ ,  $p = .044$ ]. These results advance that the comprehension of English in slogans does have an effect on a brand and an ad's credibility in a foreign market like Italy. Specifically, they suggest that when people are faced with easy to understand English slogans, they perceive both higher brand and ad trusts.

#### 4. Model 2: Method and Results

The second experiment in this study took place in the Italian market too, and had for mission to explore the impact of English and native language usage in local advertising. Five variables were considered in this model, namely the English slogan comprehension (IV), brand trust (DV1), ad trust (DV2), as well as product origin (moderator) and perceived ad congruence (mediator). Thus, the manipulations here depended on the combinations of the two slogan languages (English and Italian) and the two products originating from these speaking communities (tea and pasta) in the form of advertisement stimuli. The data collection was undertaken in two steps. First, a pre-test was carried out to check the relation between the selected products and their perceived origins, then the main study was conducted.

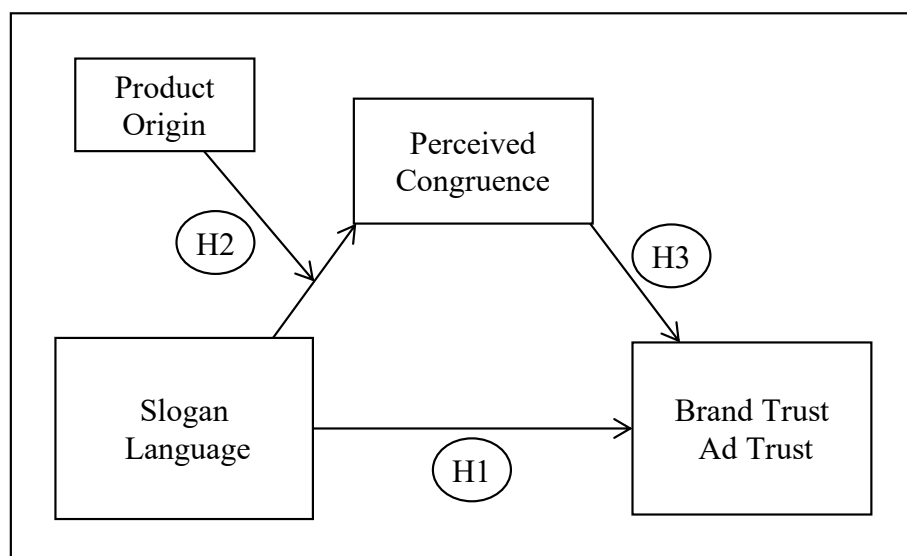


Figure 3. Research Model 2

#### 4.1 Method

##### 4.1.1 Pre-test

The pre-test questionnaire was designed on Qualtrics and contained a sample of 37 Italian-respondents. Its goal was to check the assumed fit between the two products selected for this study (tea and pasta) and their perceived countries of origin (England and Italy). These two



products were initially chosen based on the high COO associations they evoke to consumers. Thus, the survey presented two fictitious print ads to the respondents, one containing an image of a tea box and the other one of a package of pasta, and were then asked to match both goods to the country they associated them the most with, among a list of options. They were then presented with a list of products including the latter along with other traditional food products such as pizza and fish & chips, and they had to rate the extent of perceived concordance they found with the countries Italy and England on a 7-points Likert scale (1 = not at all; 7 = very much). Based on frequency measures, and among the other proposed countries Italy was paired with pasta 92% of the time, and tea with England 89% of the time. The analysis of the second output regarding product linkage, measured on the Likert scale, further confirmed that the product the most associated with Italy was pasta ( $M = 6.75$ ) and with England was tea ( $M = 6.95$ ). Hence, the result confirmed the fit between the languages and their respective product.

#### 4.1.2 Research design

For this second Model, a 2 (slogan language: English or Italian) x 2 (product origin: tea or pasta) between-subjects design was employed, composing a total of 4 scenarios: *Tea with English slogan*, *Tea with Italian slogan*, *Pasta with English slogan* and *Pasta with Italian slogan*. These stimuli were created accordingly to other studies of foreign language display in local advertising (García et al., 2013; Hornikx et al., 2013). The main survey for this model was also created on Qualtrics and was distributed to Italian respondents, through several social media platforms. Participants were randomly assigned one of the conditions aforementioned in and were asked to respond to a set of questions.

#### 4.1.3 Main Test

The second survey included the four stimuli aforementioned, combining both English and Italian slogans with products generally perceived as originating from these two speaking communities, to investigate the impact of their combined effect on advertising congruency, and in turn on brand trust and ad trust. These two commodity products were purposely chosen for their widespread use, their low cost, as well as for the high interest that Italians generally hold for food. Moreover, fictitious brands were again created to avoid any influence from pre-existing brand attitudes in respondents' answers. To further underline the COO markers in the communication, the brands were named with British and Italian names (Humphrey's and Mirotto). Hence, participants in the survey were asked to imagine themselves in a supermarket, doing their groceries and encountering an advertisement poster in the shopping alley. Then, one of the four product-language pairings was shown to them in a randomized fashion. At that point, respondents were requested to assess the extent of ad congruency that they perceived in the advertising, and give an evaluation of the trustworthiness of the brand and the ad as a whole. Once again, identical images were used for the two product conditions, and only the language of the slogans varied. At the end of both surveys, some demographic questions were asked.



Figure 2. Ads with congruent product-COO markers; Italian-pasta (Left) and English-tea (Right)

#### 4.1.4 Instrumentation

The instrumentation in this study was once again used for an evaluation of the two dependent variables (brand trust and ad trust), as well as of the mediator (perceived ad congruency). Pre-existing scales were employed for their measurement. Additionally, respondents' age, gender, sex, education level, and English fluency were taken into consideration. Once again, as this study used fictitious brands and products, the third measurement of credibility (*prior brand experience*) was not deemed relevant and therefore only the other two components were taken into consideration.

Due to identical dependent variables in the first and second models, the scales employed in both experiments were exactly the same. For brand trust the 5 items scale by Hess (1995) was replicated (see items in Model 1). The fourth element, after being re-coded to obtain positive values, produced a low score of scale reliability. Thus, it was eliminated, which led to an increase in Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .90$ ). For ad trust, the same scale by Soh et al., (2013) was used, replicating the items selected in Model 1. After running a factor analysis, all the items were kept in both models, with scale reliabilities at  $\alpha = .94$ .

Finally, perceived ad congruence based on product and language combinations was measured with Chang and Yen's (2013) three-item scale. The statements depicted were the following: (1) The ad is appropriate for this product, (2) The ad highlights product features, (3) The ad is a good match with the product depicted. After removing the third item from this scale, its reliability was also found at:  $\alpha = .84$  on average.

All scale measurements were carried out using a 7-point Likert scale with 1 representing "*strongly disagree*" and 7 indicating "*strongly agree*".

#### 4.1.5 Participants

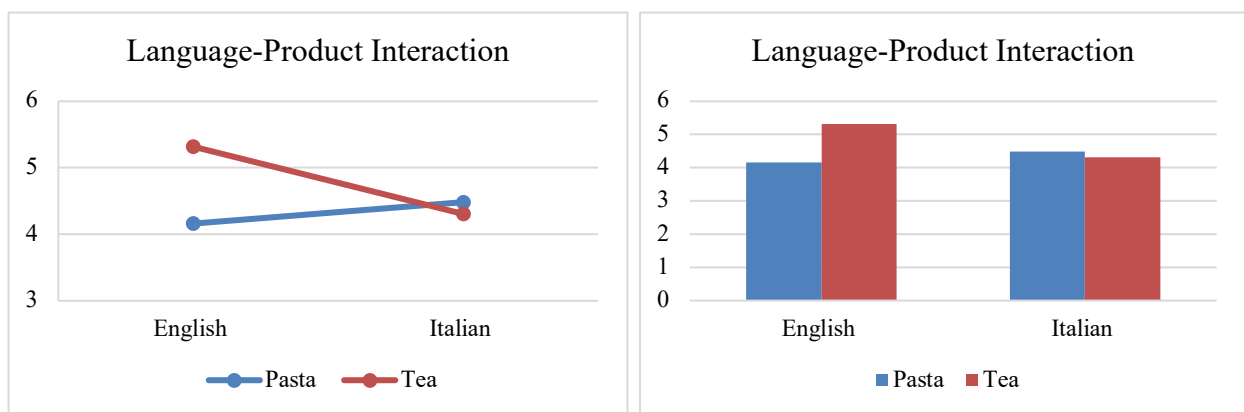
Model 2 had a larger sample ( $N = 129$ ) as it included 4 conditions. Here, 62.3% of the respondents were University graduates, the majority of them were female (59%) and their average age was of 32,21 years ( $SD = 12.706$ ). Overall, participant's self-assessment of their English level, measured on a scale from 1 to 7 (1= very bad; 7= excellent), was above average as the sample mean amounted to  $M = 4.95$  ( $SD = 1.459$ ).

### 4.2 Results

The second model was a moderated mediation, which was tested using several statistical tools. To assess the second hypothesis of this study, an independent t-test was carried-out, with the aim of comparing brand and ad trust in English and Italian slogans conditions. For both DVs, results were insignificant. In fact, brand trust scores for English slogans and for Italian slogans were almost equal [ $t(127) = -.109, p = .913$ ] and so were the results for ad trust [ $t(127) = 1.521, p = .131$ ] for which English slogans and Italian slogans had very close means.

The third hypothesis assumed that product and language, separate and joint effects, would influence people's perceived ad congruency. To test this assumption the PROCESS (model 1) plugin in SPSS was used. Even though the overall model results were insignificant ( $F(3, 125) = 2.4278, p = .0686$ ), the interest here was to find the main effect of the language groups and the interaction effect (language x product origin) on congruence. In the "model summary" section, the predictors showed a significant moderation effect produced by the interaction of language and product origin ( $\beta = -1.122, t(125) = -2.074, p < .05$ ). This confirms the moderating role of product origin in the relationship between language choice and perceived congruence. Furthermore, slogan language resulted as a significant predictor of perceived congruency ( $\beta = .800, t(125) = 2.0834, p < .05$ ) meanwhile, the individual effect of product origin did not show statistical significance ( $p = .650$ ). In fact, looking at the two product

categories (0 = tea ; 1 = pasta) in the “conditional effects” section, when the advertised product was tea, there was a significant positive relationship between language and congruency,  $\beta = .800$ ,  $SE = .384$ , 95%  $CI [.040, 1.56]$ . When the product was pasta, relationship between language and congruency was nonsignificant and negative  $\beta = -.3221$ ,  $SE = .381$ , 95%  $CI [-1.0763, .43]$ . Thus, looking at the positive and negative inclinations of the slopes, the stimuli matched the expected perceptions for tea and for pasta, but their steepness was not as high as expected for pasta. In fact, as shown in the line graph, mean variations were the largest for tea between the two language categories, since the Italian group with tea was perceived to have a lower advertising fit than the English group with tea. Yet, for pasta it was the other way around even though the discrepancy between the two languages groups was not as evident. Additionally, the bar graph displays a smaller variation in product means for the Italian group than the English group.



Figures 3. Line Graph and Bar Graph of Mean Congruency for the Four Conditions in Model 2

When considering the mean differences between the four language-product combinations, it appears that, as opposed to what was hypothesized, it was the English-tea condition ( $M = 5.11$ ) that was perceived to be more congruent than the Italian-pasta scenario ( $M = 4.49$ ). Even though the differences in means were minimal for the other two (unfitting) combinations, Italian-tea was slightly more congruent than English-pasta.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis assumed a moderated mediation effect on brand and ad trust. To test this for both dependent variables, the SPSS plugin PROCESS (model 7) was used. The first part of the output was the same as in the preceding section, as it calculated the moderation effect between language and product on perceived congruency, while the second part focused on the mediation effect of perceived ad congruency on the relation between language and the DVs.

Starting with brand trust, the results showed overall model significance, [ $F(3, 126) = 52.871, p < .000$ ]. Analysing the impact of each variable (language and congruence) separately on brand trust, perceived ad congruence emerged as a positive significant predictor ( $\beta = .595, t(126) = 10.282, p < .05$ ) while, language did not have any significant effect. This means that as the level of perceived advertising congruence increased, consumers' trust for the brand grew. Furthermore, the results obtained in the index of moderated mediation showed a significant indirect effect,  $I.E = -.668, SE = .326, 95\% CI [-1.333, -.053]$ . The fact that the zero was not included in the confidence interval confirmed the presence of the mediation effect. Thus, advertising congruency is a mediator in the relationship between slogan language and brand trust.

Turning to the second dependent variable, ad trust, results were quite similar. The model was also significant overall [ $F(3, 126) = 63.911, p < .000$ ]. Significant statistical evidence showed that advertising congruence predicted ad trust ( $\beta = .6168, t(126) = 11.103, p < .05$ ). Yet, the output for slogan language was not significant. Here too, the mediation effect was confirmed  $I.E = -.6918, SE = .343, 95\% CI [-1.400, -.051]$ . Thus, advertising congruency is a mediator in the relationship between slogan language and ad trust.

Based on the results obtained in the first part of the mediation (hypothesis 3), and on the ones obtained in this last part, it is possible to extend the interpretation of the moderation effect onto both brand trust and ad trust. Therefore, considering the two language categories

separately, Italian slogans, which did not generate a clear difference in means for tea and pasta on perceived congruence, had no significant impact on ad and brand trust. English on the other hand had substantial differences in means between both product categories leading to a significantly higher impact for English-tea ( $M = 5.11$ ) than English-pasta on brand and ad credibility. Looking once again at the mean difference for all four language-product combinations, English-tea ( $M = 5.11$ ), which was perceived as the most congruent scenario, had a significantly greater impact on brand and ad trust than Italian-pasta ( $M = 4.49$ ).

## **5. Discussion**

### ***5.1. Discussion of Model 1***

The first experiment in this research aimed to understand the impact of English language slogans in commercials dedicated to the Italian market. Thus, it compared the effect of easy easy-English slogans to those of difficult-English ones in relation to brand and ad credibility.

#### **5.1.1. Hypothesis 1**

Results for the first Model show support for H1, stating that the use of English slogans in Italian advertising would lead to better trust towards the marketed brand, as well as towards the ad in general when the slogan was formulated in an easy to understand format, compared to when it was difficult to understand. These findings deepen previous knowledge regarding advertising performance and language comprehension, in that, they incorporate two additional variables to the list of those that are influenced by linguistic difficulty, namely ad and brand credibility. Indeed, both of these items appear to vary depending on the type of slogans that were shown to the Italian respondents, suggesting a stronger positive impact for understandable slogans rather than complicated ones.

Furthermore, taking a closer look at the average responses for both groups in the measurement of brand trust, the scores are quite discrepant, differing by almost 1 point. While easy English slogans are above 4, the midpoint of the scale (1 to 7), difficult ones lie a bit below, implying that their effect was more negative than positive on the participants' perceived brand trust. It is therefore possible to conclude that a high level of linguistic difficulty in a slogan leads to a negative impact on brand trust, while a low level of difficulty leads to a positive impact on brand trust. The fact that two slogans of the same condition were shown to the respondents, further strengthens this outcome, the allowing therefore a better generalization of the results (Hornikx et al., 2010).



These results are in line with the past theories regarding comprehension of FLD. Though many have found the symbolic meaning of languages to be more relevant than their literal meaning in advertising (Haarmann, 1989), other academics have insisted on the importance of comprehension is consumers' preference for ads and attitudes towards them (Hornikx et al., 2010). In fact, based on what emerged from this study, the use of easy vocabulary and grammatical formulations in English slogans was beneficial in the perception of trustworthiness that consumers derived from the advertising stimuli. A reason for this outcome might be the higher amount of work that people need to put into the comprehension of a complex slogan. In fact, according to Sperber and Wilson (1995) the linguistic difficulty in a message results in higher cognitive effort for the consumers, which leads them to feel frustrated and eventually negatively affects their appreciation of that stimuli. Domzal et al. (1995) also argued that additional cognitive effort was necessary to process of a message in foreign tongue. Accordingly, participants in the present study might have rated more negatively their trust for the commercials containing complex English slogans because of their lack of patience in trying to grasp their meaning. Thus, this first model contributed to exiting literature in demonstrating the dependence of credibility on the facility to grasp the meaning behind promotional messages.

## ***5.2. Discussion of Model 2***

Model 2 first compared English and Italian slogans relative to ad and brand credibility. Then, it measured the effects of both languages when combined with two products perceived as fitting or unfitting to their origins, to measure their overall ad congruency. Finally, four groups were created based on language and product combinations and their influence on brand and ad credibility were analyzed. Hence, the discussion of this model will take a step by step

approach, starting with the second hypothesis of this study and gradually introducing a moderating and a mediation variable in the relation.

#### 5.2.1. Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis in this study consisted in comparing the impact of Italian language slogans, with those of English, on the dependent variables. The main effect hypothesized in H2 is nonsignificant, suggesting that there is no direct relation between language choice on the two dependent variables. Hence, H2 is not supported, meaning that, regardless of the language condition, consumers have similar levels of trust for both English and Italian slogans.

These results conform with past literature in the field of FLD as they do not find differences in performance for foreign against native language choice. This was reflected in the study by Nederstigt et al., (2018) where neither language type, between domestic and foreign, was found to perform better than the other in advertising, when paired with foreign products. Thus, on the sole basis of the slogan language, there was no evidence that foreign tongue increased advertising effectiveness more than native, and consequently, there is no evidence in this paper of one method suiting better than the other to evoke higher trustworthiness.

Such outcome could be explained by the fact that the respondents, who were of Italian nationality, might have found similar levels of trust in both ads because when no specific product was paired to the languages, the use of Italian was perceived as normal, while the use of English might have raised curiosity and positive attitudes (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Thus, on one hand the trust evoked by the normality of the local language, and on the other the curiosity implied by the foreign language might have provoked similar extents of credibility, since no particular product was taken into consideration at this point of the study. Therefore, respondent's neutral reactions did not favor one language over to the other.

### 5.2.2. Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis introduced a moderation effect (product origin) on the relationship between languages and consumers' perceived advertising congruency. The results for the individual influence of each predictor show indeed a significant outcome on respondents' perceived congruency, both for language alone, and for the interaction between language and product origin. Firstly, the statistical evidence for interaction effect confirms the moderation in the model. Secondly, the interpretation of the influence of language alone is that, participants perceived a higher coherence in the publicities when they were in English writing (for both products) compared to when they were in Italian. Thus, the assumption that Italian consumers would perceive their own language to be more congruent in an ad, regardless of the products that it accompanied, is not reflected in these results. It is rather the contrary according to the findings.

Furthermore, looking at the products, the output suggested a higher discrepancy in means for perceived congruency in ads containing tea (for both language conditions), compared to pasta, for which the difference in means between the two language groups was insignificant.

Regarding the four combinations of products and languages, when these were fittingly put together (English-tea and Italian-pasta), it was the English-tea condition that was perceived as the most congruent. Nevertheless, when non-fitting combinations were presented to the participants (English-pasta and Italian-tea), only a minimal difference in means was found between both groups, placing English-pasta slightly worse off, than Italian-tea with a lower perceived congruency. These results were not significant though.

Although, the moderation effect was determined through the significant interaction effect, the direction of the relationship obtained between language and congruency was opposed to the one expected in the hypothesis. Thereby, H3a and H3b were not confirmed.

Considering this outcome with respect to previous studies, some comments can be made on the effects and the directions of the relations in this hypothesis. Firstly, H3 introduced the English slogan as an indicator of origin to provoke associations related to the provenance of the product to which it was paired (tea). Only few papers have considered English to evoke origin cues (García et al., 2013), whereas a vast majority employed this foreign language as a tool to convey associations of modernity and globalization for connotation-free products (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hornikx et al., 2007). Consequently, this study helped reinforce the value of English language as a COO marker, used to transmit a sense of authenticity and coherence in advertisements for products that originally belong to anglophone communities (in this case the UK). This is demonstrated in the perception of the English-tea condition, which results in significantly higher perceived congruency against the other scenarios. Therefore, besides being used for its modern and international value, English should also be employed as a companion of goods from British, American, Canadian, and many other traditions, leading people to grasp a stronger sense of fit in the advertisement.

In addition to confirming the use of English as a COO indicator, the results obtained also showed a higher recognized congruency in the English-tea scenario rather than the Italian-pasta scenario. Although H3a suggested that Italian respondents would have felt a higher sense of fit for the national product and language combination, due to the theory of Ethnocentrism (García et al., 2013), the outcome turned out to be reversed. From what it seems, the national pride and the strength of the tradition that should have been awakened by the Italian-pasta condition was not perceived as expected, leading people to see its counterpart condition as more congruent. Several reasons could explain such outcome.

To start with, it is possible to argue that the Italian language did simply not reflect the incongruent and congruent conditions as planned. Pairing this native tongue the two products should have led to one highly congruent combination (pasta) and one highly incongruent

combination (tea). However, their effect was not perceived as such. This probably due to the fact that, in a sample of Italian respondents, the salience between the two goods did not appear since consumers are used to see Italian text aside any type of product. Thus, this habitual contact with ads in the mother-tongue could have hindered the perception of Italian as a COO marker for pasta rather than for tea. The same applies to pasta, which is a very common food in the Italian diet and is used almost as much as bread. Due to its high consumption, and peoples' familiarity with this good, pasta might not have expressed its value as a product originating from Italy but rather as a connotation-free good. Therefore the COO pairing in this condition was less successful than the English-tea.

Secondly, it is possible to argue that congruency and incongruency were better grasped for both products in the English conditions, because of its generally higher saliency and raise peoples' attention (Gerritsen et al., 2007 ; Domzal et al., 1995). Since the purpose of COO language-product combinations is to convey fitting associations to consumers, people need to see a logical reason for a language to be displayed with a particular product. Considering that the noticeability of English language in the Italian market was higher compared to the mother tongue, the paring of English with both goods was also more salient. Consequently, English manifested more clearly its value as a COO marker for tea, and exhibited more evidently its discordance with pasta.

Therefore, the effect the congruent English scenario (English-tea) was better sensed than the congruent Italian scenario (Italian-pasta). Concerning the two other categories, no significant difference was perceived.

#### 5.2.3. Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis aimed to demonstrate a mediation effect of advertising congruency on the relation between product-language combinations and credibility. From the results, the

model emerges as significant on the whole both for ad trust than for brand trust. Considering the individual effects of the predictor variables, no direct impact is found between the language and either of the credibility variables, which is in line with the findings in H2. On the other hand, a direct effect is found between the mediator and both brand and ad trust. Therefore, the mediation effect is confirmed for both credibility measurements.

The output also displayed the results from the moderation effect obtained in H3, which are significant. Given that language was proved to predict people's perceived ad congruency (in the moderation), and that congruency in turn was shown to influence credibility, it is possible to extend the outcomes obtained in the first part of the mediation onto the DVs: brand and ad trust. In other words, the advertisement with English language and tea has a higher perceived fit, which in turn causes a more positive impact on the latter's brand trust and ad trust, compared to its complementary scenario: Italian-pasta. This implies that, when English writing is combined with a congruent COO product in a marketing stimulus, customers grasp a higher sense of advertising coherence, which in turn, leads them to regard the brand and the ad as more trustworthy, than a congruent stimulus in Italian. Even though the evidence for the moderated mediation is found, the direction of effect appears to be opposed to the predictions. Accordingly, H4a is rejected. Considering the results within separate language categories, English encounters substantially higher reactions for tea (due to congruency) than for pasta, while the Italian slogan provokes no difference in credibility between the two product groups. In fact, both ads (pasta and tea) are considered to be equally congruent when paired with Italian slogans. Taking into account the performance of each product separately, tea produced a significant gap between the two used language groups, as it was perceived to be extremely trustworthy with English, yet much more incongruent and untrustworthy with Italian. Pasta on the other hand did not produce such a large variation, and was perceived almost as congruent with Italian than with English.

This outcome, combined with the previously obtained results follow a similar line of reasoning to the one discussed in the former section. Hence, several comments can be made. Firstly, most of the existing literature considers English language as an advertising enhancer due to its ability to evoke positive attitudes within a non-English-speaking community (Gerritsen et al., 2010). Yet, based on the output English is not only considered to enhance the advertising, but it also acts as a clear COO marker for products that fit with anglophone countries. In fact, H4 reinforces the value of English as an indicator of product provenance, since it demonstrates that congruent goods paired with English have the ability to channel higher credibility in advertising. This is a valuable piece of information, since trust represents a fundamental building block in the creation of a long term relationship and loyalty.

Additionally, although the theory of Ethnocentrism (García et al., 2013) implied that Italian respondents would have felt more trustworthiness for their national product and language combination, the outcome turned out to be reversed. As people's national pride should have stimulated a higher perception of trust for the Italian-pasta condition, it was instead the counterpart condition that triggered more credibility. Several reasons could explain such outcome.

To start with, it is possible to argue once again that the Italian language stimuli did not reflect congruent and incongruent conditions as much as English. As explained earlier, this derives from the higher saliency of the foreign compared to the native language, within national advertising. The Italian public on which the experiment was done might have been more numb to local language and local goods. Hence, it is the foreign appeal transferred by English, that led it to be more noticeable than Italian (Domzal et al., 1995).

Moreover, past literature showed that harmony in a marketing stimulus between a product and a language (written or spoken) led to higher credibility, both when celebrity endorsers are involved (Cheng, 2017), than when famous brands are implicated (García et al., 2013). Yet, in

this paper credibility was tested through the use of two fictitious brands and their respective suitability with native and foreign languages. This difference in implementation might have put the Italian product (pasta) at disadvantage not only because of participants' high expertise and consumption of this product, but also because of their lack of knowledge regarding the brand used in the stimulus (since it was fictitious). Indeed, food goods were used in this study as they are the most common product category employed in product-language combinations research (e.g. Verlegh et al., 2005 ; Usunier et al., 2007). Still, as pasta represents a common ingredient in the Italian diet, consumers often rely on brands that they recognize and trust, and tend to remain loyal to them. Hence, it is possible that the use of a fictitious brand in this study might have disfavored pasta, since the respondents did not know the used trademark and thus, had better knowledge of the competitors in the pasta rather than the tea industry, which made it easier for them to make comparisons with brands that they usually consume. Furthermore, in this same line of reasoning, the lack of an explicit indication origin in the advertising could also have contributed to this effect. As many Italians take high pride in local food production their trust also depends upon the origins of the products they buy. The lack of such indicator might have affected more the pasta than the tea because the origin for a local good is more important than for a good that is usually imported. Consequently, the Italian slogan might not have been enough to evoke a sense of authenticity with pasta, while the accompaniment of tea with English seemed more truthful and harmonious. Because participants knew less about the tea industry and were more used to its import, such an issue did probably not appear for this product. Thus, when paired with English, more people sensed more authenticity and in turn more trustworthiness.

Finally, considering the literature regarding FLD and comprehension some conclusions can be drawn in the present results. Specifically, easy slogans (*"Enjoy your pasta"* and *"Enjoy your tea"*) were used in this second experiment to avoid any type of bias deriving from slogan



difficulty. Hence in line with past academic findings and with the output obtained in the first experiment, the English language slogans, due to their easy essence might have impacted the trustworthiness of the ads and brands displayed, to a further extent (Hendriks et al., 2017 ; Hornikx et al., 2006 ; Hornikx et al., 2010). The comparison between the latter and Italian equivalents could have led to different outcomes if the complexity of the message used would have been more elevated. Nevertheless, since their meaning was easy to grasp, the English slogans paired with both fitting (tea) and unfitting (pasta) goods created a higher match and mismatch, consequently causing a stronger effect on credibility.

All in all, this study contributed to existing literature in three ways. Firstly, the comprehension of foreign slogans was shown to impact brand and ad credibility in the Italian market. Additionally, the research confirmed the use of English language as a COO marker for products related to anglophone nations, since the pairing of English and tea helped convey a higher perceived advertising congruency. Finally, this research proved that the use of English language for congruent foreign products increases peoples' perception of ad and brand trustworthiness more, than the use of native slogans for domestic products.

### ***5.3. Managerial implications***

The emerging evidence in this study is relevant in the field of marketing as it supports the use of the English language in Italian advertising campaigns. Based on the results obtained in in both models, the question regarding standardization and adaptation of marketing communications comes to mind. Indeed, the Italian market should be included among the countries in which multinational companies could use standardization strategies. In fact, by employing the English language in their communications for foreign markets, international companies would reap many benefits from an economic standpoint, as well as from a practical one, as the coordination of their advertising campaigns would be facilitated cross-borders,

while their brand image and positioning would simultaneously become consolidated and homogenous across the markets (White, 2000). In addition to deriving overall organizational improvements, the systematization of their global communications could also enhance their perceived product trustworthiness. The results in both models, show support for business standardization and bring insightful suggestions for a successful achievement of such a plan of action.

To begin with, based on the study by Hornikx et al. (2010), and the new found evidence in Model 1, it is advisable for managers to take into consideration the comprehension of their foreign language slogans, when deciding to adopt a standardization strategy. Specifically, the results obtained suggest that consumers' trust is favorably influenced by English cues, especially if these are formulated in easy wordings. Thus, marketers should acknowledge the difficulty of their slogans to achieve higher credibility. Keeping in mind that brand loyalty is built upon the trust that consumers derive from a product or a brand, the implementation of marketing communications should take into consideration these results, to convey a better credibility and built a loyal relationship with their audience on the long run. Moreover, the first experiment used a connotation-free product (vacuum cleaner), to better grasp the effect of English alone as an enhancing tool for advertising (Gerritsen et al., 2010). Even though the understanding of the underlying meaning in the slogan was proved to be relevant, it does not disregard the symbolic value of FLD (Hornikx et al., 2010). Thus, marketers should try to combine both the symbolic and the literal meaning of their communications to perform better and convey higher reliability and believability.

Furthermore, the outcomes in Model 2 urge the reinforcement of brand credibility through congruent product associations for foreign language display. In other words, the results encourage companies that sell goods originating from English speaking nations such as the UK, the United States, or Canada for instance, to increment their brand believability abroad by

maintaining their communication strategies in their native language. In fact, as English was shown to be a valid indicator of provenance (COO maker), companies selling traditional goods that relate to this tongue should also envisage the conformation of a sole communication language in their advertising. By doing so, they should convey more authenticity and achieve higher perceived congruence than by adapting their slogans to the domestic language of each country. Hence, a tea brand should use an English slogan rather than a translation in Italian when selling it in the Italian market.

On the other hand, companies producing goods which are known to originate from foreign countries might be better-off pursuing an adaptation strategy to increment the product and advertising credibility. In fact, even though no significant difference was found between the Italian-pasta and the English-pasta conditions, English-pasta had a lower perceived congruence which negatively impacted brand trust, (due to the negative direction of its slope). Therefore, the use of English slogans for incongruent products might decrease the credibility rather than enhance it.

Concerning Italian companies wanting to sell locally, the use of English rather than Italian could likewise be beneficial to them when selling products that do not carry cultural associations. Yet, when considering products with cultural connotation no linguistic strategy is deemed better than the other. In contrast to the results by García et al., the local product (pasta) is not subject to more boundaries than the foreign good (tea).

Over all, favoring congruence in their advertising should, therefore be a convenient strategy on the whole. In conclusion, the use of English to increase prestige, brand appeal and credibility is a reasonable and effective strategy in targeting local populations for congruent goods.

#### ***5.4. Limitation and Future Research***

Even though the results conveyed in this study were insightful, some limitations should be considered. Hence the shortcomings will be presented accompanied of additional recommendation and suggestions for future research.

Firstly, even though the outcome in Model 1 appears to favor English usage with easily understandable vocabulary to enhance credibility, the extend of this research cannot confirm with certainty that the same might hold true for other foreign languages, which might rely more on their symbolic value. Thus, future research could investigate the importance of comprehension in slogans from other foreign languages, further alimentering the literature in this field of research (Hendriks et al., 2017 ; Hornikx et al., 2006 ; Hornixk et al., 2010).

Furthermore, in Model 2 the desired perception for the products in Italian language were not conveyed as planned, in part because of consumers' habit of being exposed to native language commercials for any type of good, and also because of the general foreign appeal that English conveyed. Consequently, the expected congruency and misfit for the pasta and tea combinations in the Italian conditions were less felt and consumers did not experience as much alteration in their trust for these products, as for those advertised in English. Such outcome could vary if more products from a same category are used to reinforce the COO value of Italian language, as implemented in the paper by Nederstigt et al. (2018). In fact, the products selected for the stimuli pertained to the food sector, which is a commonly used product category in the study of congruent foreign language display (e.g. Verlegh et al., 2005 ; Usunier et al., 2007). Therefore, future research should consider exposing the respondents to multiple food products from both nations to better grasp their overall effects on trustworthiness when paired with congruent languages. Additionally, as other industries aside from the food category are big contributors of the Italian economy, it could be interesting to further investigate the impact of FLD within other product sectors, such as the fashion and luxury industries (Krishna et al.,

2008), as well as in services such as tourism, which contributes up to 13% on the total annual GDP in Italy (WTTC, 2020). Indeed, an evaluation of different products and service associated to languages might bring new insights on the building of trust, for more businesses that might be interested in standardizing their communications cross-borders.

Additionally, this study focused on an analysis of FLD in slogans only, since it was inspired from existing research (e.g. García et al., 2013 ; Hornikx et al., 2010). Nevertheless, it is not certain that the results obtained in this instance are equivalently applicable to more extensive language manipulations such as in advertising headlines and body copies (Hornikx et al., 2010). Therefore, upcoming inquiries should consider the use of English in other parts of advertising.

Finally, this study only considered English for its foreign language cue. Since it is uncertain whether the results that emerged would hold true for other foreign languages, future research could include additional foreign tongues such as German or French to observe peoples' reactions in the Italian market, and evaluate whether their effect would be similar to those of English.

## 6. Conclusion

The study conducted in this paper took the perspective of foreign language usage in domestic advertising, as a standardization tool of marketing communications. It had for aim to understand whether the perception of an advertising's credibility would be influenced by the language employed in its slogan, the difficulty of the slogan, as well as the perceived congruency between the language and the product used in a marketing stimulus. Based on the obtained results, comprehension was a key determinant of credibility. The easier the English slogan, the better the brand and ad trusts were. Furthermore, the pairing of goods with fitting languages was shown to impact advertising congruency, as well as brand and ad trust. Among the congruent communications (English-tea and Italian-pasta) the foreign combination resulted in higher brand and ad trusts compared to the native combination. Based on the literature regarding FLD, it was possible to deduce that the foreign match-up produced a higher impact on credibility due to its overall foreign appeal, and its higher sense of exclusiveness compared to its counterpart. In fact, the domestic advertising stimuli for both congruent and incongruent products did not produce any difference in trustworthiness because people did not find one product to be better fitting with Italian language than the other.

These pieces of evidence are relevant in the field of marketing, as managers should consider standardizing their communications in the Italian markets. In doing so, marketers should pay attention to the linguistic complexity in the messages conveyed, while using English for products that evoke belongingness with English-speaking communities (García et al., 2013). Such strategy would bring several benefits to companies from performance, and logistic standpoints. In fact, English language would appear as more salient and call for attention compared to native language (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Additionally, it would allow firms to reap

economies of scale in the printing or diffusion of their ads, achieve better coordination cross-boundaries and exploit the creative ideas coming from geographically spread departments.

## 7. References

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## 8. Appendix A – Results

### 1. Pre-test Results

Model 1: Correct and Incorrect Slogans Translation

		S4_code			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Incorrect	1	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Correct	36	97.3	97.3	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

		S1_code			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Incorrect	30	81.1	81.1	81.1
	Correct	6	16.2	16.2	97.3
	Partially Correct	1	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

		S9_code			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Incorrect	2	5.4	5.4	5.4
	Correct	35	94.6	94.6	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

		S7_code			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Incorrect	24	64.9	64.9	64.9
	Correct	7	18.9	18.9	83.8
	Partially Correct	6	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Model 2: Tea and Pasta

Selezionate il paese al quale associate il prodotto esposto in questa pubblicità (Tè)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Francia	2	5.4	5.4	5.4
	Inghilterra	33	89.2	89.2	94.6
	Spagna	1	2.7	2.7	97.3
	Italia	1	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Selezionate il paese al quale associate il prodotto esposto in questa pubblicità (Pasta)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Inghilterra	1	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Spagna	2	5.4	5.4	8.1
	Italia	34	91.9	91.9	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

## 2. Model 1: Results H1

### T-Test

**Group Statistics**

	Dum_Eng	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total_BT	Easy-English	32	4.35	1.272	.225
	Difficult-English	31	3.48	1.197	.215
Total_AT	Easy-English	32	4.08	1.312	.232
	Difficult-English	31	3.45	1.100	.198

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Total_BT	Equal variances assumed	.013	.911	2.799	61	.007	.872	.311		.249	1.495
	Equal variances not assumed			2.802	60.951	.007	.872	.311		.250	1.494
Total_AT	Equal variances assumed	.974	.328	2.059	61	.044	.629	.306		.018	1.240
	Equal variances not assumed			2.065	59.785	.043	.629	.305		.020	1.239

## 3. Model 2: Results H2

**Group Statistics**

	Dum_Lang	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total_BT	English	67	3.83	1.330	.163
	Italian	62	3.85	1.425	.181

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Total_BT	Equal variances assumed	.256	.614	-.109	127	.913	-.026	.243		-.506	.453
	Equal variances not assumed			-.109	124.331	.913	-.026	.243		-.508	.455

## T-Test

### Group Statistics

	Dum_Lang	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total_AT	English	67	3.91	1.356	.166
	Italian	62	3.55	1.384	.176

### Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Total_AT	Equal variances assumed	.006	.941	1.521	127	.131	.367	.241	-.110	.845
	Equal variances not assumed			1.520	125.771	.131	.367	.242	-.111	.845

#### 4. Model 2: Results Moderation (H3)

Run MATRIX procedure:

\*\*\*\*\* PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 3.5 \*\*\*\*\*

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. [www.afhayes.com](http://www.afhayes.com)  
Documentation available in Hayes (2018). [www.guilford.com/p/hayes3](http://www.guilford.com/p/hayes3)

\*\*\*\*\*

Model : 1  
Y : Tot\_Cong  
X : Dum\_Lang  
W : Dum\_Prod

Sample  
Size: 129

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:  
Tot\_Cong

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	
P	.2346	.0551	2.3546	2.4278	3.0000	125.0000	.06

86

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4.3065	.2756	15.6259	.0000	3.7610	4.8519
Dum_Lang	.7996	.3838	2.0834	.0393	.0400	1.5592
Dum_Prod	.1774	.3898	.4552	.6497	-.5940	.9488
Int_1	-1.1217	.5408	-2.0740	.0401	-2.1921	-.0513

Product terms key:

Int\_1 : Dum\_Lang x Dum\_Prod

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0325	4.3016	1.0000	125.0000	.0401

-----

Focal predict: Dum\_Lang (X)  
Mod var: Dum\_Prod (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

Dum_Prod	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	UL
----------	--------	----	---	---	------	----

```

CI
      .0000      .7996      .3838      2.0834      .0393      .0400      1.55
92
      1.0000     -.3221      .3811     -.8453      .3996     -1.0763      .43
21

```

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor  
 Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

```

DATA LIST FREE/
      Dum_Lang  Dum_Prod  Tot_Cong  .
BEGIN DATA.
      .0000      .0000      4.3065
      1.0000      .0000      5.1061
      .0000      1.0000      4.4839
      1.0000      1.0000      4.1618
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
      Dum_Lang WITH      Tot_Cong BY      Dum_Prod .

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
      95.0000

----- END MATRIX -----

```

```

DATA LIST FREE/
      Dum_Lang  Dum_Prod  Tot_Cong.
BEGIN DATA.
      .0000      .0000      4.3065
      1.0000      .0000      5.1061
      .0000      1.0000      4.4839
      1.0000      1.0000      4.1618
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
      Dum_Lang WITH      Tot_Cong BY      Dum_Prod.

```



### 5. Model 2: Results Moderated Mediation (H4 - Brand Trust)

Run MATRIX procedure:

\*\*\*\*\* PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 3.5 \*\*\*\*\*

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. [www.afhayes.com](http://www.afhayes.com)  
Documentation available in Hayes (2018). [www.guilford.com/p/hayes3](http://www.guilford.com/p/hayes3)

\*\*\*\*\*

Model : 7  
Y : Total\_BT  
X : Dum\_Lang  
M : Tot\_Cong  
W : Dum\_Prod

Sample  
Size: 129

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:  
Tot\_Cong

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	
P	.2346	.0551	2.3546	2.4278	3.0000	125.0000	.0686

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4.3065	.2756	15.6259	.0000	3.7610	4.8519
Dum_Lang	.7996	.3838	2.0834	.0393	.0400	1.5592
Dum_Prod	.1774	.3898	.4552	.6497	-.5940	.9488
Int_1	-1.1217	.5408	-2.0740	.0401	-2.1921	-.0513

Product terms key:

Int\_1 : Dum\_Lang x Dum\_Prod

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0325	4.3016	1.0000	125.0000	.0401

-----

Focal predict: Dum\_Lang (X)  
Mod var: Dum\_Prod (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

Dum_Prod	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	UL
CI						

# A STUDY OF ENGLISH SLOGANS ON ADVERTISING CREDIBILITY IN ITALY

```

          .0000      .7996      .3838      2.0834      .0393      .0400      1.55
92
          1.0000     -.3221      .3811      -.8453      .3996     -1.0763      .43
21

```

```

*****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
  Total_BT

```

```

Model Summary
      R      R-sq      MSE      F      df1      df2
p
      .6755      .4563      1.0383      52.8708      2.0000      126.0000      .00
00

```

```

Model
      coeff      se      t      p      LLCI      ULCI
constant      1.2384      .2855      4.3378      .0000      .6734      1.8033
Dum_Lang      -.1644      .1801     -.9131      .3629     -.5208      .1919
Tot_Cong      .5953      .0579     10.2820      .0000      .4807      .7099

```

```

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

```

```

Direct effect of X on Y
      Effect      se      t      p      LLCI      ULCI
      -.1644      .1801     -.9131      .3629     -.5208      .1919

```

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

```

INDIRECT EFFECT:
Dum_Lang  ->  Tot_Cong  ->  Total_BT

```

```

      Dum_Prod      Effect      BootSE      BootLLCI      BootULCI
      .0000      .4760      .1999      .1072      .8817
      1.0000     -.1918      .2521     -.6864      .3171

```

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):

```

      Index      BootSE      BootLLCI      BootULCI
Dum_Prod     -.6678      .3263     -1.3331     -.0532
---
```

```

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

```

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:  
95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:  
5000

----- END MATRIX -----

### 6. Model 2: Results Moderated Mediation (H4 - Ad Trust)

Run MATRIX procedure:

\*\*\*\*\* PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 3.5 \*\*\*\*\*

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. [www.afhayes.com](http://www.afhayes.com)  
Documentation available in Hayes (2018). [www.guilford.com/p/hayes3](http://www.guilford.com/p/hayes3)

\*\*\*\*\*

Model : 7  
Y : Total\_AT  
X : Dum\_Lang  
M : Tot\_Cong  
W : Dum\_Prod

Sample  
Size: 129

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:  
Tot\_Cong

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	
P	.2346	.0551	2.3546	2.4278	3.0000	125.0000	.0686

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4.3065	.2756	15.6259	.0000	3.7610	4.8519
Dum_Lang	.7996	.3838	2.0834	.0393	.0400	1.5592
Dum_Prod	.1774	.3898	.4552	.6497	-.5940	.9488
Int_1	-1.1217	.5408	-2.0740	.0401	-2.1921	-.0513

Product terms key:

Int\_1 : Dum\_Lang x Dum\_Prod

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0325	4.3016	1.0000	125.0000	.0401

-----

Focal predict: Dum\_Lang (X)  
Mod var: Dum\_Prod (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

Dum_Prod	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	UL
CT						

# A STUDY OF ENGLISH SLOGANS ON ADVERTISING CREDIBILITY IN ITALY

```

.0000      .7996      .3838      2.0834      .0393      .0400      1.55
92
1.0000     -.3221      .3811     -.8453      .3996     -1.0763      .43
21

```

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

Total\_AT

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	
P	.7096	.5036	.9558	63.9110	2.0000	126.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.8349	.2739	3.0482	.0028	.2929	1.3770
Dum_Lang	.2243	.1728	1.2985	.1965	-.1176	.5662
Tot_Cong	.6168	.0555	11.1031	.0000	.5068	.7267

\*\*\*\*\* DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y \*\*\*\*\*

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.2243	.1728	1.2985	.1965	-.1176	.5662

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:

Dum\_Lang -> Tot\_Cong -> Total\_AT

Dum_Prod	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
.0000	.4932	.2093	.1033	.9230
1.0000	-.1987	.2629	-.7209	.3103

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):

	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Dum_Prod	-.6918	.3431	-1.3996	-.0506

---

\*\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS \*\*\*\*\*

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

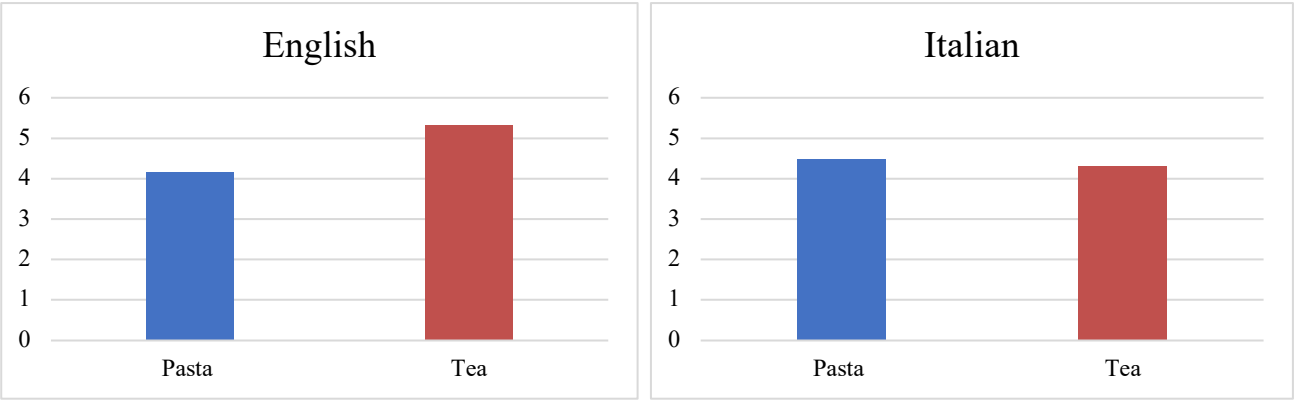
95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

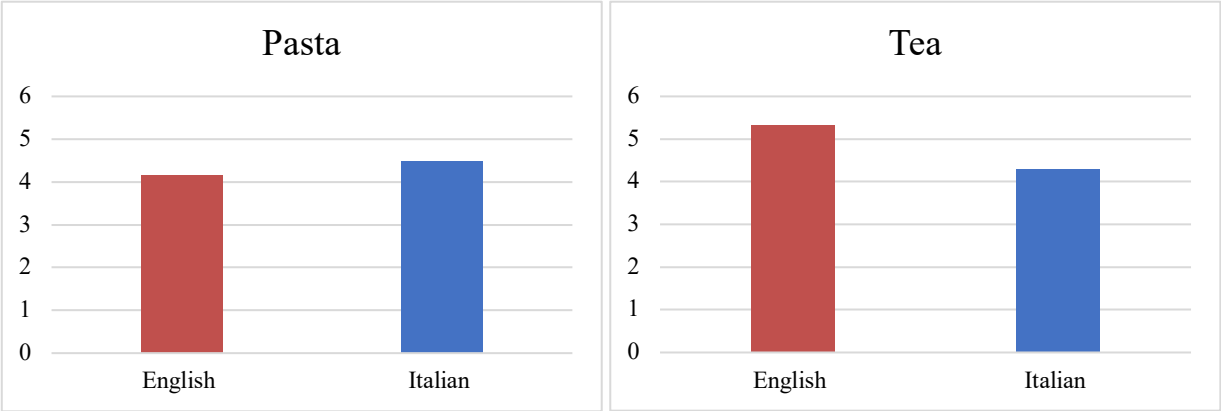
5000

----- END MATRIX -----

7. Model 2: Bar Graphs for the Language Groups



8. Model 2: Bar Graphs for the Product Groups



## 9. Appendix B – Questionnaire

### 1. Pre-Test

#### MODEL 1

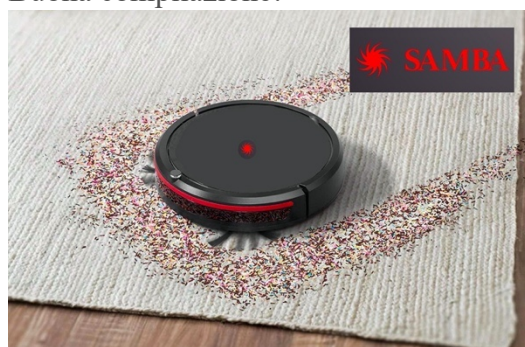
##### INTRODUCTION

Ciao!

Sono una studentessa di Marketing dell'Università LUISS Guido Carli e sto conducendo una ricerca per la mia tesi Magistrale.

Questo piccolo sondaggio si dividerà in due parti e durerà circa 10 min. Tutto ciò che scriverete o risponderete rimarrà completamente anonimo. Vi ringrazio in anticipo per la vostra partecipazione.

Buona compilazione!



#### 1. Il produttore di aspirapolvere Samba è alla ricerca di uno slogan convincente per il suo gran debutto sul mercato nell'2021.

In questo questionario vi verranno presentati i 10 slogan preselezionati dall'azienda in lingua inglese. Affinché la pubblicità sia interpretata correttamente nel mercato italiano, **vi chiedo gentilmente di tradurre gli slogan in seguito dall'inglese all'italiano nella casella di testo prevista**. Se non siete sicuri, provate ad intuire il senso delle frasi al meglio, senza ricorrere a strumenti di traduzione o dizionari. Non ci sono risposte sbagliate!

Samba, Try it and you'll see.

Samba, You'll stop beating around the bush.

Samba, No more excuses.

Samba, Cleaning has never been so easy.

Samba, Leave no more dirt behind.

Samba, Now is the time to start enjoying cleaning.

Samba, From time to time you're allowed to be lazy.

Samba, Find your happiness in simple things.

Samba, Cleaning without getting your hands dirty.

Samba, Let the dirt fear you.

#### 2. Indicate la vostra età in cifre.

#### 3. Valutate il la vostra conoscenza della lingua inglese su questa scala (1= pessimo ; 7= eccellente).

Considero che il mio livello di inglese è:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

## MODEL 1

### INTRODUCTION

Ciao!

Sono una studentessa di Marketing dell'Università LUISS Guido Carli e sto conducendo una ricerca per la mia tesi Magistrale.

Questo piccolo sondaggio si dividerà in due parti e durerà circa 10 min. Tutto ciò che scriverete o risponderete rimarrà completamente anonimo. Vi ringrazio in anticipo per la vostra partecipazione.

Buona compilazione!

In questo questionario vi verranno mostrate 2 pubblicità. Per ognuna, indicate il paese che più associate al prodotto esposto. Basatevi sulle informazioni presenti in ogni immagine.



**1. Selezionate il paese al quale associate il prodotto esposto in questa pubblicità.**

- Francia
- Inghilterra
- Belgio
- Spagna
- Italia



**2. Selezionate il paese al quale associate il prodotto esposto in questa pubblicità.**

- Francia
- Inghilterra
- Belgio
- Spagna
- Italia

**3. Indicate in che misura associate i seguenti cibi con l'Inghilterra su una scala dal 1 al 7 (1=per niente ; 7=moltissimo).**

Per niente	2	3	4	5	6	Moltissimo
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

1. Fagioli in salsa
2. Pasta
3. Tè
4. Filetti di pesce fritto
5. Pizza

**4. Indicate in che misura associate i seguenti cibi con l'Italia su una scala dal 1 al 7 (1=per niente ; 7=moltissimo).**

Per niente	2	3	4	5	6	Moltissimo
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

1. Tè
2. Filetti di pesce fritto
3. Pizza
4. Pasta
5. Fagioli in salsa

**5. Indicate la vostra età in cifre.**

**6. Valutate il la vostra conoscenza della lingua inglese su questa scala (1= pessimo ; 7= eccellente).**

Considero che il mio livello di inglese è:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---



## 2. Main Test

### MODEL 1

#### Introduction

Ciao!

Sono una studentessa di Marketing dell'Università LUISS Guido Carli e ho bisogno del tuo aiuto per condurre la mia ricerca per la tesi Magistrale.

Questo sondaggio si dividerà in due parti e durerà circa 2 minuti.

Tutto ciò che scriverai o risponderai rimarrà totalmente anonimo.

Ti ringrazio in anticipo per il tuo aiuto!

Immagina di voler comprare un nuovo aspirapolvere robot per le pulizie in casa. Essendoci molti modelli sul mercato, ti lanci in una assidua ricerca e capiti su vari annunci pubblicitari.

#### Easy-English



Basandoti su questa pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo,**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

**7= totalmente d'accordo).**

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto

2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.

3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.

4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.

5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.
2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.
3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.
4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.
5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisione di acquisto.
6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.



Basandoti su questa pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo,**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

**7= totalmente d'accordo).**

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto
2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.
3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.
4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.
5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.

2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.
3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.
4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.
5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisione di acquisto.
6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.

## Difficult-English



Basandoti su questa pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo,**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

**7= totalmente d'accordo).**

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto
2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.
3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.
4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.
5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.

2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.
3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.
4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.
5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisione di acquisto.
6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.



Basandoti su questa pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo,**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

**7= totalmente d'accordo).**

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto
2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.
3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.
4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.
5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.

2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.
3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.
4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.
5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisione di acquisto.
6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.

## **CONTROL and DEMO**

**1. Indica la tua età in cifre.**

**2. Indica il tuo sesso.**

- Maschio
- Femmina

**3. Qual'è il livello d'istruzione più alto che hai ottenuto?**

- Scuole Medie
- Liceo
- Istituto Tecnico
- Istituto Professionale
- Università

**4. Valuta la tua conoscenza della lingua inglese su questa scala (1= pessimo ; 7= eccellente).**

Considero che il mio livello di inglese è...

Pessimo      2      3      4      5      6      Eccellente

## Model 2

### INTRODUCTION

Immagina che stai facendo la spesa nel tuo solito supermercato. Mentre ti avventuri attraverso i scaffali, un poster pubblicitario cattura la tua attenzione.

### Tea-English



Tenendo a mente la pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente indisaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto
2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.
3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.
4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.
5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.
2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.
3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.

4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.

5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisione di acquisto.

6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.

**3. Indica quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni su una scala da 1 a 7, basandoti sull'immagine che hai appena visto. (1= totalmente in disaccordo e 7= totalmente d'accordo)**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. La pubblicità è appropriata per questo prodotto.

2. La pubblicità mette in evidenza le caratteristiche del prodotto.

3. La pubblicità corrisponde al prodotto raffigurato.

## Tea-Italian



Tenendo a mente la pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto

2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.
3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.
4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.
5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

- |                             |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------|
| Totalmente in<br>disaccordo | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Totalmente<br>d'accordo |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------|
1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.
  2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.
  3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.
  4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.
  5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisioni di acquisto.
  6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.

**3. Indica quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni su una scala da 1 a 7, basandoti sull'immagine che hai appena visto. (1= totalmente in disaccordo e 7= totalmente d'accordo)**

- |                             |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------|
| Totalmente in<br>disaccordo | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Totalmente<br>d'accordo |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------|
1. La pubblicità è appropriata per questo prodotto.
  2. La pubblicità mette in evidenza le caratteristiche del prodotto.
  3. La pubblicità corrisponde al prodotto raffigurato.



## Pasta-English



Tenendo a mente la pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente indisaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto

2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.

3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.

4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.

5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.

2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.

3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.

4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.

5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisioni di acquisto.

6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.

**3. Indica quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni su una scala da 1 a 7, basandoti sull'immagine che hai appena visto. (1= totalmente in disaccordo e 7= totalmente d'accordo)**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. La pubblicità è appropriata per questo prodotto.

2. La pubblicità mette in evidenza le caratteristiche del prodotto.

3. La pubblicità corrisponde al prodotto raffigurato.

## Pasta-Italian



Tenendo a mente la pubblicità, rispondi alle seguenti domande.

**1. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente indisaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. La marca è interessata a qualcosa di più che vendermi semplicemente un prodotto e realizzare un profitto
2. La marca vuole impegnarsi sinceramente per ottenere la mia soddisfazione.
3. Quando vedo l'annuncio pubblicitario di questa marca, penso che le informazioni fornite siano accurate.
4. Penso che la pubblicità della marca amplifichi la qualità del suo prodotto.
5. Quando la marca fa un'affermazione o una promessa riguardo il suo prodotto, è probabilmente vera.

**2. Indica in che misura sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni (1= totalmente in disaccordo, 7= totalmente d'accordo).**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono oneste.
2. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono veritiere.
3. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono affidabili.
4. Le informazioni trasmesse in questa pubblicità sono utili.
5. Sono disposto/a a fare affidamento sulle informazioni di questa pubblicità quando prendo una decisioni di acquisto.
6. Sono disposto/a a consigliare il prodotto che ho visto nella pubblicità ad amici e parenti.

**3. Indica quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni su una scala da 1 a 7, basandoti sull'immagine che hai appena visto. (1= totalmente in disaccordo e 7= totalmente d'accordo)**

Totalmente in disaccordo	2	3	4	5	6	Totalmente d'accordo
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

1. La pubblicità è appropriata per questo prodotto.
2. La pubblicità mette in evidenza le caratteristiche del prodotto.
3. La pubblicità corrisponde al prodotto raffigurato.

## Control & Demo

**1. Indica la tua età in cifre.**

**2. Indica il tuo sesso.**

- Maschio
- Femmina

**3. Qual'è il livello d'istruzione più alto che hai ottenuto?**

- Scuole Medie

Pessimo      2      3      4      5      6      Eccellente

- Liceo
- Istituto Tecnico
- Istituto Professionale
- Università

**4. Valuta la tua conoscenza della lingua inglese su questa scala (1= pessimo ; 7= eccellente).**

Considero che il mio livello di inglese è...

## 10. Thesis Summary

### Introduction

In this modern society, characterized by globalization and multinationalism, the inclusion of foreign languages in our communities has become a common practice. Due to the growth in travel, people across the world have the possibility to visit and discover new places, learn about foreign countries and cultures, and uncover new languages. The concomitant technological advancements of online platforms and social media, have also contributed to the decrease of the physical distance from one side of the globe to the other, granting people the access to information cross-borders, and exposing them to messages in unfamiliar languages. Many multinational companies that have noticed the gradual disappearing of the linguistic boundaries between countries have taken advantage of the situation by employing their native language in foreign markets, with the aim of standardizing their messages, increasing their brand reach and attracting new customers. In fact, famous firms that successfully implemented such strategies as for instance, *Nike* and *Mc Donald's* with their internationally recognized slogans “*Just do it*” and “*I'm loving it*”, chose to maintain in their native tongue, on a worldwide scale.

The adoption of foreign languages in the field of marketing has in fact become increasingly popular, as societies' curiosity and attraction towards foreign lifestyles and habits has grown. From television commercials to magazine texts and print ads, the use of unfamiliar languages has intrigued many academics, for their capacity to impact consumers' attitudes, preferences, recall abilities and purchase intention in marketing-related situations (e.g., Ahn & La Ferle 2008; Gerritsen et al. 2007; Hornikx, Van Meurs & De Boer 2010). Among these, English has emerged as a common business language, mainly used for practical, but also for symbolic reasons. On one hand, multinational firms have been more inclined to adopt English to facilitate their daily tasks and simplify their coordination across foreign departments, while on the other they have employed it to convey product associations to the customers, evoking modernity, globalism and prestige upon the promoted good (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hornikx, van Meurs & Starren 2007; Kelly-Holmes, 2005; Piller, 2001). Research has demonstrated that the benefits achieved by companies through the standardization of their communications are quite substantial (White, 2000). In particular, it has delved into the benefits brought by this language in the attraction of consumers' attention and the triggering of product associations, as well as in the general capacity of other foreign languages to convey territorial connotations when paired to goods of the same provenance (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Congruent products language combinations (e.g., Spanish and Paella) were indeed shown to transmit a sense of authenticity

to the consumers as opposed to connotation-free goods (Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen, 2018). Nevertheless, the association between products and languages of the same country of origin has not often been considered for the English language, as it is commonly used for its ulterior advantages. Thus, considering the scarce research questioning English effectiveness when combined to products originating from anglophone countries, this study will firstly try to contribute to the literature by filling such gap.

Comprehension is another important factor to consider in the display of foreign languages. In fact, only few studies in Italy have considered the use of foreign language in national marketing communications and even fewer have tried to compare their effect to that of equivalent Italian communications. Yet, interesting results could emerge from a linguistic confrontation between the latter and English in the Italian market, as these languages derive from diverse roots and as a lower percentage of Italian inhabitants fluently speak English compared to other countries where existing studies on comprehension were undertaken (Klazz, 2019). This suggests a second gap in the literature which aims to be filled in this research.

Finally, though several performance values have been measured in accordance to linguistic choices in advertising, little light has been shed on the consequences of foreign language display on advertising credibility. Nevertheless, trust represents an important issue in the evaluations of marketing communication, as it is the pillar on which brands build relationships with their consumers and eventually establish a connection based on loyalty.

Considering this third discrepancy in the literature with the two previous ones, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of English language advertising on communication credibility in the Italian market. In particular, this research aims to compare the effects of native and foreign tongues in the credibility of an advertisement when influenced by comprehension and by congruency in product-language combination

## **Literature Review**

### ***Foreign-Language Display***

Foreign languages in native advertising have been the object of many studies, as academics have extensively discussed the originality and appeal that all these foreign tongues bring to the table, while underlining the additional benefits that are carried specifically by the English language. Firstly, it helps to facilitate the coordination of business across foreign departments since it acts as a standardization tool, that allows companies to utilize the same communications in several or all of their foreign markets. Secondly, it serves as a business "lingua Franca" that allows companies to reap economies of scale, fully exploit creative ideas

in cross-border departments and position their brand image evenly in international markets (White, 2000).

This usage of non-domestic words or expressions within a community's own communications can be denominated: foreign language display (FLD) (Hornikx, van Meurs & Hof, 2013). FLD is more and more present in native commercials, as it unconsciously attracts people attention due to their unfamiliarity or their rare encounters with such foreign vocabulary. Academics refer to it as "attention-getting devices" in advertising enhancing the visibility of stimuli in consumers' eyes (Domzal, Hunt & Kernan, 1995). In fact, Gerritsen et al. (2007) who investigated the presence of English in product advertisements from several European countries, found that the ads that contained Anglo-Saxon words, most often displayed them in their headlines, slogans and product names, which are the three fundamental tools manipulated by advertisers to catch people's attention.

### ***Foreign-Language Display and Congruency***

In addition to increasing noticeability, multilingual advertising is also employed for symbolic scope, as it allows consumers to make associations related to the countries in which these languages are spoken. According to Hornikx, van Meurs & Starren (2007), people link some idioms with characteristics that reflect the ethnocultural stereotypes of these communities. For instance, French evokes beauty and elegance, German, technicity and reliability, while English is associated with modernity, globalism and prestige (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hornikx et al., 2007). The associations that are triggered when people come in contact with a commercial also depend on consumers' perceived congruency between the advertised product and all the other pieces of information provided with it. In fact, the congruence theory, which evaluates the pairing of a brand with other elements (e.g., endorser, origin cues, or languages), is a vastly applied method in marketing research, that can be implemented to increase consumers' interest for a good (Heckler and Childers, 1992).

When consumers perceive coherence between a good and the information surrounding it in a commercial, they tend to transfer their associations onto the product, consequently developing a more positive product attitude, a higher purchase intention as well as, a higher perceived product quality (Hornikx, et al., 2013). The concept of country of origin (COO), which designates the idea that people match certain types of product categories with certain countries based on their legitimate origins, is in fact used in marketing to trigger these consumer associations. For instance, Verlegh, Steenkamp, and Meulenberg (2005) demonstrated that congruence between a product and COO markers, such as Spanish tomatoes, for instance,

produced higher purchase intentions and more positive attitudes towards the good compared to incongruent combinations (Dutch tomatoes). Besides combining products with specific countries, other researchers focused on the languages related to COOs. In particular, Hornikx, et al., (2013) studied three obvious COO-product combinations in advertisements commercialized with slogans in their corresponding languages, to measure their effectiveness in comparison to incongruent pairings. The higher the fit between the languages and product's perceived country of origin the more effective the ads were. Yet, English has rarely been employed to advance country-specific connotations (Gerritsen et al., 2010).

Among the numerous studies that have observed FLD and product combinations, few have compared their performance in contrast to their native-tongue. Namely a study by Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen (2018), did not find any evidence on the fact that, when paired to corresponding foreign products, foreign languages were more effective in advertising than the native language in that country.

### ***Foreign-Language Display and Comprehension***

Some authors argue that languages only play a symbolic role and their literal meaning isn't important, while others claim that comprehension affects the appreciation that consumers have for an ad (Hornikx & Starren, 2006). In an investigation of the use of foreign languages in Japan, Haarmann (1989) concluded that these did have a figurative meaning. In other studies the link between understanding and appreciation was tested both for French and English compared to the native language, and scholars found higher enjoyment, preference, advertising performance and purchase intention for foreign language slogans when they were easy to understand than difficult to understand (Hornikx & Starren, 2006 ; Hornikx et al., 2010 ; Hendriks, van Meurs and Poos, 2017).

### ***Foreign-Language Display and Brand Trust***

In García, Chelminski and Hernández's (2013) publication, the authors concentrated on the effect of code-mixing on Mexicans' perceived attitudes and trust towards a brand. In their study, they questioned the difference in attitudes and trust that domestic consumers would have towards different commercials, based on the product and on the language(s) used for their promotion. More specifically, they created four ad prints connecting their national Mexican beverage *Jarritos* and the traditionally American brand *Coca-Cola* with both Spanish text markers and mixed text markers (Spanish and English combined), to compare their effects on Mexicans' perceived trust for these brands (García et al., 2013). Based on the theory of



Ethnocentrism, which discusses the tendency of consumers to emphasize the positive aspects of domestic products while considering the purchase of imported goods as unpatriotic (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) the scholars showed that consumers' perceived brand trust was significantly higher for their domestic drink when it appeared solely with Spanish text, while a greater brand trust was found for American brand in the mixed-text condition (García et al., 2013). Thus, congruency between language and product engendered higher trust.

In another research by Cheng (2017) the influence of product ambassadors' nationality on consumers' perceived credibility was analysed. Based on the mother-tongue of these brand endorsers, which was either congruent or not with the promoted products, the brand trustworthiness varied. Results confirmed that the level of credibility for consistent product-endorser combinations was higher than for inconsistent ones (Cheng, 2017).

Finally, academics have tried to identify the factors that enhance brand credibility. They demonstrated that trust derives from the attitudes that consumers hold towards a brand. For instance, in a publication by Jung et al., (2014), the authors demonstrated that customers' positive associations for an advertised brand, favorably influenced its overall perceived trustworthiness.

### ***Hypotheses***

The research will be sectioned in two models; one concentrating on English slogan comprehension, and the second one focusing on the comparison of credibility between English and Italian slogans when paired with corresponding COO products.

#### ***Model 1***

Given that consumers' trust for a brand or a communication, derives from the attitudes they hold towards them (Jung et al., 2014), and that English has the ability to influence a publicity's overall efficiency, it is plausible to believe that the use of such language in a foreign market, such as Italy could impact brand and ad credibility. Moreover the overall evaluation of marketing campaign efficiency was shown to derive from slogan comprehension (Hendriks, et al., 2017). Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

*H1: An easy to understand English slogan will lead to a higher brand and ad trust, compared to a difficult to understand English slogan.*

*Model 2*

After an examination of the relation between English and perceived credibility in the Italian market, it is interesting to study whether its effects vary when introducing an equivalent in the mother-tongue: Italian. In the investigation by Nederstigt et al., (2018) no clear difference was established when comparing the effectiveness of linguistic methods, and the authors, therefore, argued that the use of foreign slogans was not necessarily better than the use of equivalent expressions in the local mother tongue. Since this first hypothesis only takes into consideration the linguistic effects of slogans on brand and ad credibility, without any other type of intervening variable, it is plausible to believe that English alone might act as an enhancer in the commercials (Gerritsen et al., 2010). Considering the link between attitudes and trust, it is possible to develop the next hypothesis:

*H2: The use of English slogans in advertising will have a more positive impact on consumers' brand and ad trust compared to Italian slogans.*

Foreign language advertising was shown to operate better on several performance levels when paired with congruent origin markers such as the good's country of production, or the mother tongue spoken in its nation of provenance (Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2018; Verlegh, Steenkamp and Meulenberg, 2005). Thus, combining English with a typical British good, and comparing it to an Italian product sponsored in the national tongue should in both cases lead to high perceived congruence. Yet, based on the theory of Ethnocentrism, according to which people tend to emphasize the positive aspects of domestic products while considering imported goods as less performant (Shimp and Sharma, 1987), it is possible to deem a similar reaction in the relation between Italian inhabitants and their products, leading to following hypothesis:

*H3: The relationship between language and consumers' perceived congruency is moderated by the origin of the advertised products, in such way that;*

*H3(a): A traditional Italian product advertised with an Italian slogan will have a higher perceived congruence than a traditional English product advertised with an English slogan*

*H3(b): A traditional Italian product advertised with an English slogan will have a lower perceived congruence than a traditional English product advertised with an Italian slogan.*

Finally, congruency has in many instances been related to better advertising performance, including people's attitudes towards brands (Verlegh et al., 2005). Since on one hand, congruency in ads has been proved to cause favourable attitudes, and on the other,

favourable attitudes have been shown to engender higher credibility (Jung et al., 2014), the following hypothesis is:

*H4: The relation between a product-language combination and ad/brand trust is mediated by its perceived congruency in such way that;*

*H4(a): A high perceived congruence between a typical Italian product and an Italian slogan will lead to more positive brand trust and ad trust compared to a high perceived congruence between a typical British product and an English slogan.*

For the facilitation of the analysis, the study will be divided in two models and two separate experiments will be carried-out.

### Model 1: Method and Results

Three variables were considered in this model, namely the English slogan comprehension (IV), brand trust (DV1) and ad trust (DV2). Thus, the main object of manipulation was the difficulty of the slogans used in the advertisements shown to each participant.

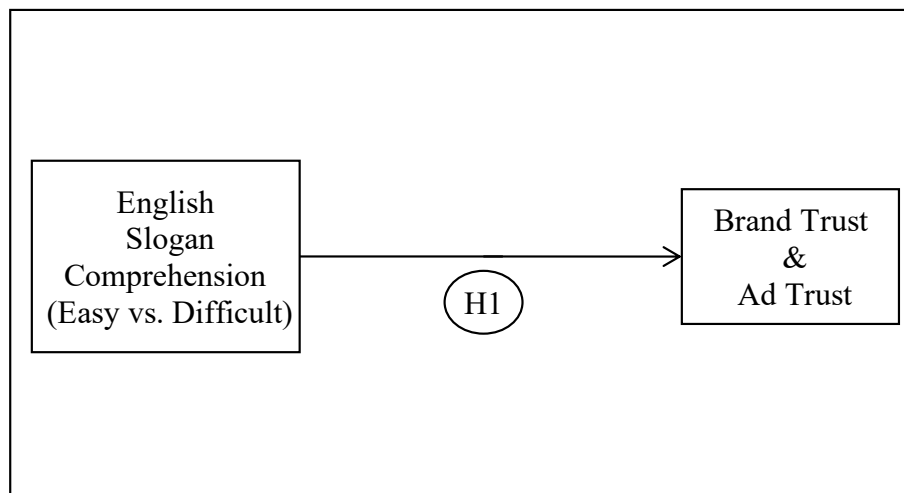


Figure 4. Research Model 1

### Method

A pre-test was carried out to identify appropriate slogans to reflect easy and difficult to understand language cues, which were to be used later for manipulation. Participants were randomly shown 10 English slogans of varying levels of grammatical difficulty and were asked to translate the latter to Italian. This technique was replicated from the study by Hornikx et al.,

(2010) with the aim of identifying the two worst and best-translated slogans and using the latter as comprehension stimuli in the main research.

The experiment followed a 1 (slogan language: English) x 2 (comprehension: easy or difficult) between-subjects design, used to create two scenarios: *Easy-English* vs. *Difficult-English slogans*. Yet, to reinforce participants' answers regarding the two stimuli, each scenario contained two slogans of the same condition (previously selected in the pre-test).

For the main experiment, a questionnaire was designed on Qualtrics to undertake a comparison between participants' perceived credibility towards the stimuli in both language difficulty conditions. Thus, respondents were randomly exposed to one of the two conditions (*easy English slogan* or *difficult English slogan*) in the form of two ad prints for fictitious brands of vacuum cleaners, accompanied by two slogans of the same group. They were then asked to answer question related to brand trust and ad trust.

The instrumentation in this study included a 4-item scale by Hess (1995) for brand trust that was reliable at  $\alpha = .79$  and 6-items scale originally designed by Soh et al., (2013) with a reliability at  $\alpha = .93$ . All items were measured on a 7-points Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree).

### **Results**

The first Model gathered 63 Italian participants ( $N = 63$ ) with a majority of university graduates (64%). There were 54% male respondents and their average age was 31.33 years ( $SD = 12.809$ ). An independent-sample t-test was then conducted to compare brand and ad trust in easy English slogans and difficult English slogans conditions. The results for brand trust showed a significant difference in the scores for easy English slogans ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 1.272$ ) and difficult English slogans ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 1.197$ ) conditions;  $t(61) = 2.799$ ,  $p = 0.007$ . For ad trust, a significant difference was also found in group means for easy English slogans ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.312$ ) and difficult English slogans ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 1.100$ ) conditions [ $t(61) = 2.059$ ,  $p = .044$ ].

## Model 2: Method and Results

Five variables were considered in this model, namely the English slogan comprehension (IV), brand trust (DV1), ad trust (DV2), as well as product origin (moderator) and perceived ad congruence (mediator). Thus, the manipulations were done through the combinations of slogan languages (English and Italian) and the two products originating from these speaking communities (tea and pasta) in the form of advertisement stimuli.

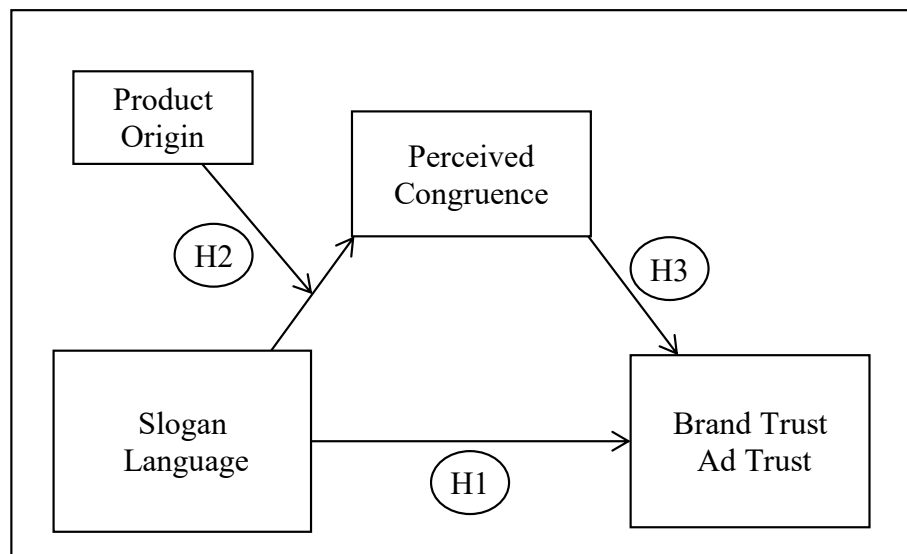


Figure 2. Research Model 2

## Method

The pre-test questionnaire had for goal to check the assumed fit between the two products selected for this study (tea and pasta) and their perceived countries of origin (England and Italy). Thus, the survey presented two fictitious print ads to the respondents, one containing an image of a tea box and the other one of a package of pasta, and were then asked to match both goods to the country they associated them the most with, among a list of options. Based on frequency measures, and among the other proposed countries Italy was paired with pasta 92% of the time, and tea with England 89% of the time, which result confirmed the fit between the languages and their respective product.

For this second Model, a 2 (slogan language: English or Italian) x 2 (product origin: tea or pasta) between-subjects design was employed, composing a total of 4 scenarios: *English Tea*, *Italian Tea*, *English Pasta* and *Italian Pasta*.

For the main experiment, a questionnaire was designed on Qualtrics to undertake a comparison between participants' perceived credibility towards the four conditions of

language-product pairs. Only one of these combinations was shown to them in a randomized fashion, later asking them assess the extent of ad congruency that they perceived in the advertising, and give an evaluation of the trustworthiness of the brand and the ad as a whole.

The same measurement scales were used as in Model 1, as they were confirmed to be reliable at  $\alpha = .90$  for brand trust and  $\alpha = .94$  for ad trust. A congruency with Chang and Yen's (2013) two-item scale with a reliability at:  $\alpha = .84$ . All items were measured on a 7-points Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree).

### **Results**

Model 2 had a larger sample of Italian participants ( $N = 129$ ) with 62.3% university graduates, and a majority of females (59%) aging around 32,21 years ( $SD = 12.706$ ). To assess the second hypothesis of this study, an independent t-test was carried out, with the aim of comparing brand and ad trust in English and Italian slogans conditions. Results were nonsignificant for brand trust [ $t(127) = -.109, p = .913$ ] and for ad trust [ $t(127) = 1.521, p = .131$ ]. The third hypothesis was tested with the PROCESS (model 1) plugin in SPSS. The predictors showed a significant moderation effect produced by the interaction of language and product origin ( $\beta = -1.122, t(125) = -2.074, p < .05$ ). This confirms the moderating role of product origin in the relationship between language choice and perceived congruence. Furthermore, slogan language resulted as a significant predictor of perceived congruency ( $\beta = .800, t(125) = 2.0834, p < .05$ ). Under the moderation effect, when the advertised product was tea, there was a significant positive relationship between language and congruency,  $\beta = .800, SE = .384, 95\% CI [.040, 1.56]$ . When considering the mean differences between the four language-product combinations, it appears that, as opposed to what was hypothesized, it was the English-tea condition ( $M = 5.11$ ) that was perceived to be more congruent than the Italian-pasta scenario ( $M = 4.49$ ). Finally, the fourth hypothesis assumed a moderated mediation effect on brand and ad trust and used PROCESS (model 7). For brand trust, the results showed overall model significance, [ $F(3, 126) = 52.871, p < .000$ ] and perceived ad congruence emerged as a positive significant predictor ( $\beta = .595, t(126) = 10.282, p < .05$ ) of brand trust. Moreover, the results obtained in the index of moderated mediation showed a significant indirect effect,  $I.E = -.668, SE = .326, 95\% CI [-1.333, -.053]$  confirming the presence of the mediation effect. For ad trust, the model was also significant overall [ $F(3, 126) = 63.911, p < .000$ ] and statistical evidence showed that advertising congruence predicted ad trust ( $\beta = .6168, t(126) = 11.103, p < .05$ ). Here too, the mediation effect was confirmed  $I.E = -.6918, SE = .343, 95\% CI [-1.400, -.051]$ . Transferring the results obtained in the first part of the mediation, English had

substantial differences in means between both tea and pasta categories, leading to a significantly higher impact for English-tea ( $M = 5.11$ ) than English-pasta on brand and ad credibility. Looking at the mean difference for all four language-product combinations, English-tea ( $M = 5.11$ ), which was perceived as the most congruent scenario, had a significantly greater impact on brand and ad trust than Italian-pasta ( $M = 4.49$ ).

## Discussion

### *Discussion of Model 1*

Results for the first Model show support for H1, stating that the use of English slogans in Italian advertising would lead to better trust towards the marketed brand, as well as towards the ad in general when the slogan was formulated in an easy to understand format, compared to when it was difficult to understand. These findings deepen previous knowledge regarding advertising performance and language comprehension, in that, they incorporate two additional variables to the list of those that are influenced by linguistic difficulty, namely ad and brand credibility. Indeed, both of these items appear to vary depending on the type of slogans that was shown to the Italian respondents, suggesting a stronger positive impact for understandable slogans rather than complicated ones. While easy English slogans are above 4, the midpoint of the scale (1 to 7), difficult ones lie a bit below, implying that their effect was more negative than positive on the participants' perceived brand trust. It is therefore possible to conclude that a high level of linguistic difficulty in a slogan leads to a negative impact on brand trust, while a low level of difficulty leads to a positive impact on brand trust, further strengthening past studies regarding comprehension and FLD (Horinkx & Starren, 2006 ; Hornixk et al., 2010 ; Hendriks et al., 2017). In fact, linguistic difficulty in a message results in higher cognitive effort for the consumers, which leads them to feel frustrated and eventually negatively affects their appreciation of that stimuli (Domzal et al., 1995 ; Sperber & Wilson, 1995). All in all, this first model contributed to exiting literature in demonstrating the dependence of credibility on the facility to grasp the meaning behind a promotional messages.

### *Discussion of Model 2*

Model 2 first compared English and Italian slogans relative to ad and brand credibility. Then, it measured the effects of both languages when combined with two products perceived as un/fitting to their origins, to measure their overall ad congruency. Finally, four groups were created based on language and product combinations and their influence on brand and ad credibility were analyzed.

*Hypothesis 2*

The main effect hypothesized in H2 is nonsignificant, suggesting that there is no direct relation between language choice on the two dependent variables. Hence, H2 is not supported, meaning that, regardless of the language condition, consumers have similar levels of trust for both English and Italian slogans. Similar results were reflected in the study by Nederstigt et al., (2018), where neither language type between domestic and foreign, was found to perform better than the other in advertising, when paired with foreign products. In this case, the fact that the participants were Italian might have caused them to automatically trust the brand in their native language slogan, while simultaneously perceiving trust for the English slogan because of its capacity to stand out (Gerritsen et al., 2007), therefore, resulting in similar credulity levels. Hence, the evidence in this paper does not support one method over the other to evoke higher trustworthiness.

*Hypothesis 3*

The third hypothesis introduced a moderation effect (product origin) on the relationship between languages and consumers' perceived advertising congruency. Firstly, the statistical evidence for interaction effect confirms the moderation in the model. Secondly, the interpretation of the influence of language alone is that, participants perceived a higher coherence in the publicities when they were in English writing (for both products) compared to when they were in Italian. Regarding the four combinations of products and languages, when these were fittingly put together (English-tea and Italian-pasta), it was the English-tea condition that was perceived as the most congruent. Although, the moderation effect was determined through the significant interaction effect, the direction of the relationship obtained between language and congruency was opposed to the one expected in the hypothesis. Thereby H3a and H3b were not confirmed. Nevertheless, this outcome includes some meaningful insights. Firstly, only few papers have considered English to evoke origin cues (García et al., 2013), whereas a vast majority employed this foreign language as a tool to convey associations of modernity and globalization for connotation-free products (e.g., Gerritsen et al., 2007; Hornikx et al., 2007). Hence, based on the high effect of the English-tea condition, this study helped reinforce the value of English language as a COO marker, used to transmit a sense of authenticity and coherence in advertisements for products that originally belong to anglophone communities. Secondly, the higher perceived congruency for the English-tea scenario rather than Italian-pasta can be explained both by the fact that Italian language did not manage to



reflect the incongruent and congruent conditions as planned, and that English generally has higher saliency in markets that are not used to being exposed to it, and therefore raise peoples' attention more than the native tongue (Gerritsen et al., 2007 ; Domzal et al., 1995). Since the purpose of COO language-product combinations is to convey fitting associations to consumers, and the Italian language did not function as an origin indicator as much as planned, people saw higher fit for English-tea and higher misfit for English-pasta.

#### *Hypothesis 4*

The fourth hypothesis aimed to demonstrate a mediation effect of advertising congruency on the relation between product-language combinations and credibility. A direct effect exists between the mediator and both brand and ad trust. Therefore, the mediation effect is confirmed for both credibility measurements. Given that language was proved to predict people's perceived ad congruency (in the moderation), and that congruency in turn was shown to influence credibility, it is possible to extended the outcomes obtained in the first part of the mediation onto the DVs: brand and ad trust. In other words, the advertisement with English language and tea has a higher perceived fit, which in turn causes a more positive impact on the latter's brand trust and ad trust, compared to its complementary scenario: Italian-pasta. Hence, even though the evidence for the moderated mediation is found, the direction of effect appears to be opposed to the predictions. Accordingly, H4a is rejected. Again several comments can be made concerning this outcome. Firstly, based on the output English acts as a clear COO marker for products that fit with anglophone countries, and is considered to enhance advertising credibility when it is in a fitting product pairing. This is a valuable piece of information, since trust represents a fundamental building block in the creation of a long term relationship and loyalty. Concerning the reversed effect obtained in the output, it is arguable that the foreign appeal transferred by English, that led its scenarios to be more noticeable than the Italian ones (Domzal et al., 1995). Furthermore, the use of fictitious brand in this study might have disfavored the perception of congruency between pasta and Italian as it represents a common ingredient in the local diet, and most consumers rely on brands that they recognize and trust in their consumption. Similarly, the lack of an explicit indication origin in the advertising could also have also contributed to this outcome, as many Italians take high pride in local food production and their trust depends upon the origins of the products they buy. They might therefore have trusted less the pasta without and explicit "*Made in Italy*" marker compared to tea which they generally know less about. In fact, such issues were less apparent for tea since its consumption in the Italian market is lower. Finally, considering the literature regarding FLD

and comprehension, as well as the generally easy slogans (*“Enjoy your pasta”* and *“Enjoy your tea”*) that were used in this experiment, English language slogans might have impacted the trustworthiness of the ads and brands displayed, to a further extent (Hendriks et al., 2017 ; Hornikx et al., 2006 ; Hornikx et al., 2010). In other words, since their meaning was easy to grasp, the English slogans paired with both fitting (tea) and unfitting (pasta) goods created a higher match and mismatch consequently causing a stronger effect on credibility.

All in all, this study contributed to existing literature in three ways. Firstly, the comprehension of foreign slogans was shown to impact brand and ad credibility in the Italian market. Additionally, the research confirmed the use of English language as a COO marker for products related to anglophone communities, since the pairing of English and tea helped convey a higher perceived advertising congruency. Finally, this research proved that the use of English language for congruent foreign products increases peoples’ perception of ad and brand trustworthiness more than the use of higher trust than the use of native slogans for domestic products.

### Managerial Implications

The emerging evidence in this study is relevant in the field of marketing as it supports the use of the English language in Italian advertising campaigns. Based on the results obtained in in both models, the question regarding standardization and adaptation of marketing communications comes to mind. By employing the English language in their communications for foreign markets, international companies would reap many benefits from an economic standpoint, as well as from practical one, as the coordination of their advertising campaigns would be facilitated cross-borders, while their brand image and positioning would simultaneously become consolidated and homogenous across the markets (White, 2000). In addition to deriving overall organizational improvements, the systematization of their global communications could also enhance their perceived product trustworthiness.

Based on the study by Hornikx et al. (2010), and the new found evidence in Model 1, it is advisable for managers to take into consideration the comprehension of their foreign language slogans, when deciding to adopt a standardization strategy. Specifically, the results obtained suggest that consumers’ trust is favorably influenced by English cues, especially if these are formulated in easy wordings. Thus, marketers should acknowledge the difficulty of their slogans to achieve higher credibility. Furthermore, even though the understanding the underlying meaning in the slogan was proved to be relevant, it does not disregard the symbolic value of FLD (Hornikx et al., 2010). Thus, marketers should try to combine both the symbolic

and the literal meaning of their communications to perform better and convey higher reliability and believability.

The outcomes in Model 2 urge the reinforcement of brand credibility through congruent product associations for foreign language display. In other words, the results encourage companies that sell goods originating from English speaking communities such as the UK, the United States, or Canada for instance, to increment their brand believability abroad by maintaining their communication strategies in their native language. In fact, as English was shown to be a valid indicator of provenance (COO maker), companies selling traditional goods that relate to this tongue should also envisage the conformation of a sole communication language in their advertising. Hence, a tea brand should use an English slogan rather than a translation in Italian when selling it in the Italian market.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Even though the outcome in Model 1 appears to favor English usage with easily understandable vocabulary to enhance credibility, the extend of this research cannot confirm with certainty that the same might hold true for other foreign languages, which might rely more on their symbolic value. Thus, future research could investigate the importance of comprehension in slogans from other foreign languages, further alimending the literature in this field of research (Hendriks et al., 2017 ; Hornikx et al., 2006 ; Hornixk et al., 2010). Additionally, as the expected fit and misfit for the pasta and tea combinations in the Italian conditions were less felt, upcoming research should consider exposing the respondents to multiple food products from both nations to better grasp their overall effects on trustworthiness when paired with congruent languages. Also, as other industries aside from the food category are big contributors of the Italian economy, it could be interesting to further investigate the impact of FLD within other product sectors, such as the fashion or luxury industries (Krishna et al., 2008), as well as in services such as tourism. An evaluation of different products and services associated to languages might therefore bring new insights on the building of trust, for more businesses that might be interested in standardizing their communications cross-borders. Finally, having focused on an analysis of FLD in slogans only, it would be relevant to investigate whether results these are applicable to more extensive language manipulations such as in advertising headlines and body copies (Hornikx et al., 2010).

## **Conclusion**

The study conducted in this paper took the perspective of foreign language usage in domestic advertising, as a standardization tool of marketing communications. It had for aim to understand whether the perception of an advertising's credibility would be influenced by the language employed in its slogan, the difficulty of the slogan, as well as the perceived congruency between the language and the product used in a marketing stimuli. Based on the obtained results, comprehension was a key determinant of credibility. The easier the English slogan, the better the brand and ad trusts were. Furthermore, the pairing of goods with fitting languages was shown to impact advertising congruency, as well as brand and ad trust. Among the congruent communications (English-tea and Italian-pasta) the foreign combination resulted in higher brand and ad trusts compared to the native combination. Based on the literature regarding FLD, it was possible to deduce that the foreign match-up produced a higher impact on credibility due to its overall foreign appeal, and its higher sense of exclusiveness compared to its counterpart. In fact, the Italian advertising stimuli for both congruent and incongruent products did not produce any difference in trustworthiness because people did not find one product to be better fitting with the domestic language than the other.

These pieces of evidence are relevant in the field of marketing, as managers should consider standardizing their communications in the Italian markets. In doing so, marketers should pay attention to the linguistic complexity in the messages conveyed, while using English for products that evoke belongingness with English-speaking communities (García et al., 2013). Such strategy would bring several benefits to companies from performance, and logistic standpoints. In fact, English language would appear as more salient and call for attention compared to native language (Gerritsen et al., 2007). Additionally, it would allow firms to reap economies of scale in the printing or diffusion of their ads, achieve better coordination cross-boundaries and exploit the creative ideas coming from geographically spread departments.