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The Usage of English in Swedish TV Commercials

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Abstract

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The aim of this essay is to study the usage of English in Swedish TV commercials; mainly how much English is used, and whether this depends on factors such as channel, time of day, target audience, and product/service being advertised. In total, 247 commercials were studied. The commercials were taken from three different Swedish TV channels and divided into three different time blocks. The result of the study shows that 28% of all the commercials, not including brand names and lyrics, contained spoken or written English. The result agrees with previous research in that the amount of English very much depends on the category of product/service being advertised, and the audience targeted. The results did not show factors such as time and channel to be relevant to the amount of English used in the commercials.

Keywords: Language choice in advertising, English in Sweden, Global English, Code-switching, Target audience

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.2 Global English.....	1
1.3 Language threat.....	2
1.4 Borrowing and code-switching.....	3
1.5 Advertising.....	4
1.6 English in advertising.....	5
2. Method and Materials.....	7
3. Results and discussion.....	9
3.1 Overview.....	9
3.2 Spoken and written language.....	10
3.3 Time blocks.....	11
3.4 Channels.....	12
3.5 Products/services.....	13
3.6 Target audiences.....	16
4. Conclusion.....	18
5. Suggestions for further research.....	19
6. References.....	19

1. Introduction

The steadily increasing usage of English in Sweden over the past few years has become an important issue for many, and in few areas is this more prevalent than in advertising. Since there are not many first language English speakers in Sweden, it is curious that it has become such an ingrained part of everyday life, and it is becoming more and more apparent that the widespread use of English is not something that will decrease any time soon. Because of this, this essay aims to study the usage of English in Swedish TV commercials, with a focus on how much it is used, and why. However, in order to discuss the results of the study, it is important to be aware of how English is used on a global scale, and the influence it has in advertising.

1.2 Global English

English holds the position of today's lingua franca. In 2003 it was estimated that over a third of the world's population was routinely exposed to English, and these numbers keep increasing even today (Crystal, 2003:108). How then, did English reach its current global position? Despite common belief, a language does not become popular because of how "easy" it is to learn, but because of cultural dominance (Crystal, 1997:7). English started to spread around the globe through British colonization. The native languages of the various colonies were suppressed and English was instated as the language of education, administration, and political and cultural power. By the early 20th century the political and economic dominance had switched from the UK to the United States of America, which, because of previous colonization by the British, also used English as their first language. During the 20th century the world quickly became more global, with many international organizations like the UN being created. Many of the member states had different first languages, and as these international organizations grew the task of finding capable translators for all of these languages became unfeasible, and the only real alternative to facilitate communication was to use a common language. Because of the colonization of previous centuries, many different peoples all over the world already had some proficiency in English, and taking into account the economic dominance of the US, English was the obvious choice. With the birth of internet and the impact of the electronic revolution the world became even more global and English

spread further (Crystal, 1997:115). In summary, the reason English holds its current position, is simply because it was, over and over again, in the right place at the right time.

Today, English does no longer “belong” to any single nation but there are several variations all over the world. The different ways people have acquired and are using English are often visualised by linguist Braj Kachru’s three concentric circles (Crystal, 2003:107). The inner and smallest circle represent English used as a first language (L1), the way it is used in, for example the US and the UK. The outer circle represents English used as a second language (L2) as it is in, for example, India and Singapore, where it is an important part of the national institutions for historical reasons. The expanding circle represents English as a foreign language, and it is mainly this circle which keeps steadily increasing to this day. However, these distinctions and the lines between the three circles are by no means solid, and it can be difficult to determine exactly where to place some nation’s usage of English.

1.3 Language threat

At first glance it would seem that the widespread use of English would be an entirely positive thing, since it enhances intelligibility and communication, but the high status and increased use of English are in many places a political issue. It is important to remember that languages are not only used for the purpose of communication but are also an important means to state one’s identity and are thus a sensitive issue. In many cultures English is treated with suspicion because of its history of colonization, where English replaced the native language as the language of prestige and the native language signals low status. Since language is something which is linked with culture, many cultural concepts and viewpoints are repressed and seen as unimportant when one’s native language is replaced by another (Crystal, 1997:20). For this reason many post-colonized cultures are reluctant to keep using English as a first language. However, colonization is not the only reason people view English with suspicion, as many countries lacking this history, like Sweden, still see the proliferation of it as an issue. There is often a fear that English will grow until it replaces the native language, causing it to die out.

This process leading to a language disappearing is called *language death* and is divided in three stages of cultural assimilation. The first stage begins when there is a pressure to use the new language on an everyday basis and it becomes ingrained in society. The second stage takes place when people are expected and required to be fluently proficient in both languages, and the third stage signals the start of language death, which is when the young become more fluent in the new language than in that of their parents (Hrakhouskaya &

Königsson, 2010:59). However, these fears of Swedish being overtaken by English are those of a small vocal minority, as can be seen in the study about perception of language-mixed ads by Hrachouskaya and Königsson, which shows that the respondents did in fact not see English in general as a threat to Swedish (Hrachouskaya & Königsson, 2010:71). They did however show more concern over it taking over in certain areas, such as business and advertising. In another study, Mickwitz (2007) calls this phenomenon domain loss and expresses concern that Swedish will be less and less used in situations connected with business and academia, being reduced to a language only used in informal situations, while English would become a language for the educated. This would have the consequence of widening rifts between social groups.

English has not yet reached the status of a second language in Sweden, as it has no official status and the majority of Swedes are not nearly as proficient in English as they are in their native language. But English cannot be counted as just another foreign language either, since it is often used in advertising, business, education and the informal speech of young people. Much like the English used in the advertising of many other countries such as Germany, it is not seen as foreign to the same extent as, for example, Italian or Russian, but a quite familiar language which seems natural to use in some contexts (Piller, 2001:155).

1.4 Borrowing and code-switching

In order to define when English is used in another language one has to differentiate between *loanwords* borrowed from another language, and *code-switching*. A loanword is defined as a word that is borrowed from one language and inserted into another. Sometimes the term *adoption* is used by linguists since *borrowing* implies that the word will eventually be returned (Lepp, 2013:3). Most borrowed words are simple words such as nouns, and describe simple concrete concepts, while function words that express little lexical meaning, like pronouns and articles, are rarely borrowed. The distinction between a loanword and a foreign word can be difficult to determine since loanwords can be integrated into the recipient language to different degrees, some changing spelling and pronunciation, and even sometimes meaning. A loanword is generally understood by the majority of speakers in the recipient language, but before this happens there is usually a long period of time when the word gains ground. Borrowing can occur for several reasons, for example because the target language has no equivalent item, because the new word is more neutral and lacks negative connotations, or simply because of the prestige of the donor language (Tatsioka, 2008:134). The distinction

between loanword and foreign word is important because it determines whether someone is code-switching between languages or not.

Code-switching describes the act of switching between different styles or languages when one is speaking (Urge, 2010:5). It differs from borrowing in that a loanword is more integrated in the recipient language and so understood by the majority. Code-switching does not affect the lexicon in the same way and only occurs in individual utterances. There are several reasons people code-switch, the most common ones being lack of proficiency in one language, and as a signal of group identity (Tatsioka, 2008:131). The former reason often causes many people to view code-switching with disdain and as something that is “corrupting” one’s own language, since it seems to signal abandonment of one’s native language in favour of another. This attitude can be seen in Urge’s study “We need to ta det lugnt” where many of the respondents saw code-switching as a sign of laziness, and were often unaware of how often they themselves did it (Urge, 2010:6).

1.5 Advertising

Advertising is the act of communicating the value of a product, service or organization, in order to persuade the audience to act in a certain way. In commercial marketing the audience is encouraged to purchase the product or service, while non-commercial marketing encourages its audience to, for example, donate to charity (Hermerén, 1999:15). Commercial advertisements can further be divided into two categories; consumer advertisements with a mass target audience, and corporate advertisements which do not advertise any specific product or service, but rather aim to affect the audience’s view of the company in question. In addition to these categories, advertisements can also be divided according to the geographical area they cover, as they can be local, national, international, and global.

Even though advertising does to some degree reflect the society it came from, it is important to remember that they are created with one specific purpose in mind, and everything in them are carefully planned to serve this purpose. They are not made to illustrate reality, but rather a version of it that fits the target audience’s ideal. The carefully planned out aspect of advertising is even more prevalent in TV commercials, which are very expensive. A 30 seconds long Swedish commercial can easily require a budget up to 250 000 SEK (Nygards, 2013), and so everything in it is carefully planned to suit the advertiser’s purpose. Despite the high cost, TV commercials are popular since TV is generally considered the advertising medium with the greatest impact, partly because television is a medium which can

take advantage of many elements, such as text, dialogue, music, and visuals, but also because television allows the advertiser to reach a large number of people. In addition to this, the advertiser has a large variety of TV channels with different target audiences to choose from, which makes it easier to reach a specific demographic group (allbusiness, 2014). A typical Swedish TV commercial is about 30 seconds long and even though the advertisers are free to use the time whichever way they like, the advertisements often follow the same formula of experts recommending the product or actors playing out a scenario related to what is being advertised, such as a problem which in the end gets resolved with the relevant product/service. At the end of the commercial, the brand name is usually spoken and/or written, with a slogan underneath it. In all, one half minute commercial integrates many elements such as dialogue, narration, written text, and music, which makes it a very powerful advertising medium.

1.6 English in advertising

There are several reasons for using English in advertisements directed at an audience that do not speak English as a L1 language. The most obvious reason is that if the commercial is part of an international or global campaign it is simply cheaper to keep it in English, since it can then reach and be understood by a wider audience. The other reasons are connected with the audience's attitude towards the language in questions, and what they associate with it. Advertisements often rely on stereotypes because it is an easy way to control what the audience will associate the product or service with. The simplest way to say that your wine is of high quality is often to associate it in some way with Italy or France because many people will share the so-called common sense assumption that Italians and French people are good at wine (Kelly-Holmes, 2005:4), even though this is only true of some wine and far from all. In a way, stereotypes like this show a constructed image of reality used to control how the audience sees your product. The product image is constructed and conveyed via connotation and not denotation, and works on a more emotional and subconscious level. However, even though language choice in advertising often depends on common sense assumptions, the way English is used often differs from the way other foreign languages are used. Foreign languages are often used in advertising to benefit from common sense assumptions about a particular culture and people, while English is generally not associated with any specific cultural stereotype, but is rather seen as a high prestige language associated with certain social stereotypes, such as modernity, professionalism and globalization (Gerritsen et al. 2007:296).

The first step in advertising is to target an ideal addressee (Hermerén, 1999:32). Since advertisements are not something people intentionally seek out but rather are exposed to unintentionally it is crucial that they are tailored to grab the attention of the target audience. The message of the advertisement has to be in line with the targets' value system and their ideal self-image so that they can identify with what is advertised. It also has to create a sense of community and familiarisation to break through the natural scepticism most people have towards advertising (Hermerén, 1999:40). The use of English therefore very much depends on the target audience and the way they use English, since advertisers create commercials in order to connect with a specific group. By accommodating one's language to the language of the audience, one can create a sense of belonging to a specific group, and advertisers do so not only by using slang and loanwords, but also by making references and allusions to something the target audience will most likely be familiar with. Careful accommodation shows that advertisements do not show an accurate image of reality, but one that is distorted to fit the audience's expectations. Even though many advertisements directed at young people make heavy use of references to American pop culture, the advertisers always take care not to include unfamiliar cultural references and allusions since this would alienate the audience (Martin, 1998:165-166). To reiterate, the language used in advertising does not reflect society as it is. English is not used in Swedish ads to reach many people but rather to create a modern image. Haarmann's study of advertisements in Japan show that the way English is used there has much in common with the way it is used in Sweden as it is in both places used as a high prestige language to symbolize high quality in certain areas, such as fashion, and to create an image of a successful international company (Haarmann, 1989:3-4). If the language used in advertising were to reflect society, Arabic and Bosnian would be more used in Swedish ads than English.

The impact of the target audience can clearly be seen in the study by Hrakhouskaya and Königsson (2010:36) which shows that, in addition to using many English words and phrases and being familiar with American pop culture, young Swedish speakers also have a more positive attitude towards mixed language advertisements than older people as young people are generally more proficient in English, and feel familiar with it. However, this positive attitude towards English use in advertising also depends on what is being advertised as many saw it out of place to use if the product was obviously Swedish, like IKEA, or needed to communicate much information in technical vocabulary such as medicine and technology (Hrakhouskaya & Königsson, 2010:61). Advertisers are aware of these attitudes, since code-switching in advertising often occurs in specific domains and is not something that

is used arbitrarily or indiscriminately (Martin, 1998:161). Another reason English is generally avoided in some advertisements, apart from the need to communicate detailed information or to advertise a local or national product, is connected to the link between language and emotion. Emotional connection works best with one's mother tongue which means that it is easier to use someone's first language to build trust, something that can be seen in areas such as medicine, insurance and non-commercial ads. Studies have shown that people's L1 language has a more emotional effect than other languages, even those in which the speaker in question is fluent (Puntoni et.al, 2009:1012). The reason for this is that we connect words with experiences and words we often encountered while young evoke more emotions associated with them (Puntoni et. al, 2009:1014). We are, in other words, more emotionally distant to languages other than our mother-tongue. This connection between language and emotion is important in advertising, especially in certain categories of products and services.

2. Method and Materials

The method used in this study is based on the one used in Lepp's "A Study of the Use of English and Other Languages in TV-commercials in Sweden" (Lepp, 2013), where the commercials were studied in three different time blocks during the weekdays, and the distinctions between loanwords and code-switching was also made depending on whether the word existed in the Swedish Academy's dictionary (SAOL). However, unlike Lepp's work, this essay does not include lyrics, or any language other than English and Swedish even if it did occur in the commercials. Three different channels are studied instead of two, in order to get a wider overview of a broader target audience, and the discussion of the results focuses more on why English is used in certain cases, and why certain factors have an effect on this.

This study involves three different TV channels, namely TV4, TV5, and TV6. These channels were chosen because they belong to the three largest commercial media companies in Sweden, which are *Bonniers TV4 Gruppen* (TV4, 2013), *ProSieben Sat. 1* (TV5, 2010), and *MTG* (TV6). Furthermore they are also intended for slightly different target audiences, which means that the advertisements broadcasted on the different channels can be easily compared with target audience as a factor. The intended target audience is stated on all the channels' webpages, with TV6 intended for young male viewers, TV4 for 12 – 59 year-olds, and TV5 for 15 – 44 year-olds. All three are also intended for a Swedish audience, unlike themed international channels such as MTV or Eurosport. The study focuses on commercials

broadcast at three specific time blocks during the day: 8 – 9, 15 – 16, and 21 – 22 o'clock. The purpose of this is to investigate if the frequency of English is different depending on which time the commercial is broadcast, and these particular slots were chosen for the purpose of comparing the results with those in Lepp's study. The study does not involve weekends since they would have to be studied over a longer period of time. The commercials broadcasted were recorded so that they could be viewed several times. Sponsor commercials, that is, the support of a television programme by a business to advertise certain products/services, are not included in the study because they are much briefer than regular TV commercials and do not follow the same formula.

Before recording, a spread sheet was prepared which included six different factors: company name, spoken text, written text, product/service being advertised, time block and channel. Song lyrics were at first counted as a factor but are only mentioned in the discussion, and not included in the actual results, which means that the lyrics used in the commercials do not influence the numbers in the tables. The reason for this is that a very high percentage of music broadcast in Sweden is in English, and even though the music choice for the commercials was a conscious decision on behalf of the advertiser, the inclusion of lyrics as a factor in the tables would have heavily influenced the numbers in favour of English. After the spread sheet was prepared, the commercials were recorded and the data inserted. The tables presented in this essay show the percentage of languages used in the commercials depending on channel, time block, and category of product/service. Target audience as a factor is discussed in its own section, but is not presented in any table since it is difficult to label precisely and a single commercial can have a very broad target audience. The commercials were recorded on weekdays between September 30th and October 7th 2013. In total, the commercials from the three channels, each from three different one-hour time blocks added up to a total of 247 commercials. Company and product names were not labelled as "English" or "Swedish", and so do not affect the result. This decision was made because these names were not chosen solely for the advertisement and are "fixed" brands that symbolise the company. It also does not require any proficiency in English for the viewer to be able to recognize them. Slogans are however counted as either English or Swedish, since they make a statement about the company or product/service, and were kept/changed to English for a reason. The two languages studied in the commercials are English and Swedish, and are abbreviated as E (English), S (Swedish), and S/E (Code-Switching between Swedish and English). Other abbreviations used are B (block), SL (spoken language), and WL (written

language). As an example, *TV4 block 1 spoken language Swedish and English* would be written as *TV4B1 SL S/E*.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Overview

Table 1. *Percentage of languages used in the commercials*

	E	S	S/E
All (247)	2%	72%	26%
TV4B1 (32)	0%	72%	28%
TV4B2 (29)	0%	69%	31%
TV4B3 (29)	3%	76%	21%
TV5B1 (22)	0%	73%	27%
TV5B2 (27)	7%	78%	15%
TV5B3 (36)	3%	75%	22%
TV6B1 (14)	0%	64%	36%
TV6B2 (30)	0%	73%	27%
TV6B3 (28)	0%	68%	32%

In total 247 commercials were recorded for this study. The results show that Swedish is the most commonly used language for all channels and time blocks. Code-switching between Swedish and English was less than half as common, and only English was used in as little as 2% of all the commercials studied. As mentioned in the method/material section, no brand names and lyrics are accounted for and so do not influence the numbers. Lyrics used in the commercials were noted during the views of the recordings, but since 40 out of all 44 counted lyrics were in English they would have heavily influenced the results of this study, causing, for example, the percentage of commercials using only Swedish to drop from 72% to 61%. In sum, 28% of all commercials had English in them. The results are similar to Lepp's study, in which Swedish was also the most commonly used language in the commercials, followed by code-switching. 3.6% of the 420 commercials recorded in Lepp's study used only English and no Swedish, which is similar to the 2% in this study (Lepp, 2013:13).

3.2 Spoken and written language

Table 2. *Percentage of spoken languages used in the commercials. Note that the percentage shown here is not calculated from the total of commercials studied (247) but all the commercials which included spoken language (223).*

	SLE	SLS	SLS/E
All (223)	5%	79%	16%
TV4B1(31)	6%	72%	22%
TV4B2(28)	7%	72%	21%
TV4B3(25)	4%	84%	12%
TV5B1(22)	0%	86%	14%
TV5B2(22)	0%	91%	9%
TV5B3(30)	3%	87%	10%
TV6B1(11)	0%	55%	45%
TV6B2(29)	3%	80%	17%
TV6B3(25)	4%	76%	20%

Table 3. *Percentage of written languages used in the commercials*

	WLE	WLS	WLS/E
All (247)	2%	75%	23%
TV4B1(32)	0%	75%	25%
TV4B2(29)	0%	76%	24%
TV4B3(29)	3%	86%	12%
TV5B1(22)	0%	73%	27%
TV5B2(27)	7%	78%	15%
TV5B3(36)	3%	75%	22%
TV6B1(14)	0%	71%	29%
TV6B2(30)	0%	80%	20%
TV6B3(28)	7%	72%	21%

There were no great differences between the amount of spoken and written English used in the commercials, however, code-switching between Swedish and English was slightly more common in written text (23%) than in spoken language (16%). It was also slightly more common for only English to be used as a spoken language (5%) than as a written one (2%). The reason for the higher amount of commercials using only English as a spoken language

can be explained by the fact that spoken and written language was used differently in the commercials. Written text was more often used for detailed information, such as prices, product names, and time limits for sales, while spoken language was often used for slogans, monologues or dialogues between actors, or simple statements about the product. In that regard, spoken language in the commercials did not so much function to communicate a lot of information, but rather to give the product a specific image, and since spoken language was not often used to communicate detailed information the viewer is not required to be fluent in English in order to understand the main point of the spoken message. The fact that code-switching was slightly more common in written text than in spoken is most likely because many of the commercials used English for written slogans at the end of the commercial. This was the most common use of English, and in many cases the only English that occurred.

3.3 Time blocks

Table 4. *Percentage of languages used in the commercials of block 1, 2, and 3*

	E	S	S/E
Block 1 (68)	0%	71%	29%
Block 2 (86)	2%	73%	24%
Block 3 (93)	2%	73%	25%

Swedish was the most commonly used language in all of the blocks, followed by code-switching between English and Swedish. Like the results in Lepp's study, there were no great differences between the amounts of English used in the three different blocks (Lepp, 2013: 14), except that in this study there was no commercial using only English during any of the morning blocks. However, since this study only involves 249 commercials and only 2% (5) of these were completely in English, a study of larger quantity would have to be made to verify whether this is a trend or just coincidence. The lack of difference between time blocks is surprising since one would think that different audiences would be watching at different times of the day. However, this lack of difference could be explained by difficulty of reaching a very specific audience at any specific time of day, especially today when many people do not follow the schedule of the traditional nine to five workday. One could also assume that there is a great competition between advertisers for different slots and not everyone can get the time

of day they would prefer, although, as with the lack of all English commercials during the morning blocks, these results do not necessarily indicate a trend.

3.4 Channels

Table 5. *Percentage of languages used in the commercials of TV4, TV5, and TV6*

	E	S	S/E
TV4 (90)	1%	72%	27%
TV5 (85)	3%	75%	21%
TV6 (72)	0%	69%	30%

As with the time blocks, no great difference could be found between the three channels regarding how much English was used, except that TV6 did not broadcast any commercial using only English. This is surprising since the three channels are directed at different target audiences, with TV4 targeting 12 – 59 year olds, TV5 15 - 44 year olds, and TV6 young male viewers. Since TV6 mainly targets young people one would have assumed that they would use English to a higher degree than the other channels. Despite this, none of the commercials using only English was broadcasted on TV6, and the channel only broadcast a slightly higher amount of commercials with any English element at 30% compared to TV4’s 28% and TV5’s 25%. This differs from the result of Lepp’s study where 13 out of the 15 commercials containing only English were broadcasted on TV3, and only the remaining two were broadcasted on TV4 (Lepp, 2013:13). However, as with the lack of English during the morning blocks, this would have to be verified by a study of a larger quantity, since it is difficult to draw definite conclusions when the amount of all English commercials studied is so low.

3.5 Products/services

Table 6. *Percentage of languages used for different categories of products and services in the commercials. Note that these categories only account for 168 commercials. The other 79 commercials are not included since they either arguably belonged to several categories at the same time, or the categories were not relevant in this study.*

Category	E	S	S/E
Local advertisements (8)	0%	100%	0%
Banking/insurance (11)	0%	100%	0%
Medicine (9)	0%	100%	0%
Appliances (12)	0%	100%	0%
Food/beverages (34)	0%	91%	9%
Home Improvement (16)	0%	81%	19%
Non-commercial advertisements (3)	0%	67%	33%
Electricity (9)	0%	45%	55%
Cars and car products (16)	0%	44%	56%
Telephone services (14)	0%	43%	57%
Clothes (23)	9%	43%	48%
Travel (6)	0%	33%	67%
Alcohol (1)	100%	0%	0%
Makeup (4)	25%	0%	75%
Videogames (2)	0%	0%	100%

These results coincide with earlier studies in that foreign and native languages, in this case English and Swedish, are used differently for different categories of products/services. In the recorded commercials, Swedish was mostly used in local advertisements, and in the advertisements for banking/insurance, medicine, and appliances, of which all of the advertisements were completely in Swedish. The highest amount of English was used in the categories videogames, makeup, alcohol, travel, clothes, telephone services, cars and car products, and electricity. In every one of these categories, less than 50% of the commercials

used only Swedish. In summary, English was used more in the advertisements for luxury products and services, while Swedish was mainly used for three different purposes; to communicate detailed information, to advertise a product which is perceived as being very “Swedish”, and to build trust between the company and the consumer.

It is obvious that Swedish is used when the advertisement needs to give the viewer a lot of detailed information because of many viewers’ lack of proficiency in English, especially in areas with a specialized and advanced vocabulary, such as in the advertisements for technology, medicine, and banking/insurance. These commercials need to communicate much more information than, for example, an advertisement for clothing or alcohol. Furthermore, the information communicated often consists of a high amount of technical language and the advertisers cannot count on the fact that the majority of the audience would understand this in English. The same result was reached in Piller’s study about English usage in German advertising, where the advertisers showed a clear preference for communicating factual information in the viewers’ L1 language (Piller, 2001:163).

When the product was clearly from Sweden, such as in the local advertisements, Swedish was always the only language used in the commercials. This fits with the results from Königsson’s study where many of the respondents stated that they felt that the language of the advertisements should match the origin of the product being advertised, and that it would feel “wrong” to use English in an advertisement for a very “Swedish” brand such as IKEA. It is clear from the results that most advertisers must be aware of these attitudes, as none of the local commercials contained any English.

As for the advertisements for banking/insurance and medicine, the success of the product often depends on the level of trust the company has managed to build with the customer. As seen in the study by Puntoni et al. (2009) about language and emotions, an emotional message is more effective in the audience’s L1 language, since people have more and stronger emotional associations for the vocabulary in their first language, and are thus more emotionally connected to it. Furthermore, if the message is in a language the audience is not fluent in, it can also create the feeling that the company is trying to hide or downplay certain information. For all of these reasons, Swedish advertisements for banking, financial, and health services generally always use very little English as they are trying to build a relationship of trust with the consumer, which is best done through the consumer’s first language. One example of this is the commercial for the insurance company *Länsförsäkringar*, in which all written text and spoken dialogue is in Swedish. The commercial opens with a text which translates to “A day in Sweden” and follows people of different ages and genders

talking in a fast pace in fragments about their day being interrupted by various accidents. The music playing builds up and becomes increasingly tenser until a voice states, in Swedish: “But it got sorted out. They already got here in the afternoon.” The music calms down and a text appears which translates to “We are where the accident is” below the company name “Länsförsäkringar”. This commercial is trying to gain customers through emotional persuasion, rather than logical persuasion, as there is not much information about what different services the company can offer the customer, but rather that they can trust them to sort everything out if an accident should occur. Since the focus is on building trust, this advertisement would not work nearly as well in English, as it would fail to connect on an emotional level in the same way.

Advertisements for clothing and telephone services also showed in this study to contain a high amount of English. Clothing was one of the three categories of products which used only English in some of the advertisements, the others being alcohol and makeup, and six out of eight telephone service advertisements code-switched between Swedish and English. However, unlike the advertisements for alcohol and makeup, which also contained a high amount of English, the amount of the English used in the advertisements for clothing and telephone services heavily depended on the target audience, with the advertisements with the youngest target audience, *G-star*, *Stadium*, and telephone company 3 were either completely in English or used code-switching both in spoken and written text. The connection between language usage in advertising and target audience is something that will be elaborated upon in the next section.

Car and car product commercials deserve a mention, as the English in these commercials generally followed the same formula. While English was used in the majority of the ads, it was used sparsely, almost only ever occurring as a short written English phrase or slogan close to the brand name, such as the text “official partner” under the logo for *Hankook* deck, or the spoken and written “find new roads” in the ad for *Chevrolet*. While cars could be counted as a luxury product and so would be expected to use a high degree of English, these commercials often relied on emotional persuasion to advertise their products, which could explain the sparse use of English.

Another category of products which deserves to be mentioned is electricity. Much like the advertisements for cars and car products, the advertisements for electrical companies used code-switching, but in a very sparse manner, with most of the English used in them consisting of short single words, such as *smart plug*, or *mint condition*. However, unlike the car commercials, most of these did not rely on emotional persuasion to the same extent.

The English usage can instead be explained by the fact that technology is one of the areas most affected by English, and most likely to accept new English loanwords. Many of these words are known and used by the majority of the Swedish population, but as stated in the section concerning borrowing and code-switching, there is usually a long period of time before a new word is accepted as a loanword and entered in the dictionaries of the recipient language. Most of the English words used in the commercials for electrical companies could therefore arguably be on their way on becoming loanwords, and are only counted in this study because they did not occur in the Swedish Academy's dictionary (SAOL).

3.6 Target audiences

Since target audience is harder to precisely determine than product/service, there is no table showing the exact percentage of language usage related to this factor. This study did however show target audience to be a very important factor in how much English is used in TV advertising, but only for the advertisements themselves, and not for the channels or the time they were broadcasted. There were for instance no TV6 commercials using only English despite the fact that this channel has the youngest target audience and so would be expected to use a higher amount of English than the other channels. The importance of target audience can be seen especially clearly in the advertisements for clothes and telephone services, since these categories, unlike for example makeup and videogames, often targets very different audiences. Out of these two categories, 57% of the commercials contained written or spoken English, and as many as 9% of all the clothing advertisements used only English. As an example of the impact of target audience in clothing advertising, one can look at the advertisement for the brand *G-Star*, one of the few commercials which used only English (GStarRawTV). This commercial advertises clothing with a focus on raw denim and targets young adults. The commercial is very fast-paced, showing rapidly shifting images with loud music that speeds up and slows down with the movement on the screen. It opens with a skeletal dog dressed in one of the company's jackets, running and in a jump dissolving and reshaping as a woman wearing a different outfit, who continues the movement while being transformed into a man in yet another outfit. At the end of the commercial, he too is reshaped into the first image of the dog running, with "RAW" scribbled in large letters on the background, followed by the text "available at authorised retailers G-Star". The movement in this commercial is continuous and even though the product names are written next to the three different outfits, not much attention is drawn towards them, especially since the viewer's

focus is on the movement on the screen. This advertisement and its message can be very difficult to decode if one is not familiar with this type of advertising, or with the company and what it is selling. The small focus on the products can be explained by the fact that this is a mixture of a consumer advertisement selling a product, and a corporate advertisement made to create and maintain an image of the company as modern, urban, and young. The difference between clothing advertisements created for different target audiences becomes even clearer when one compares this advertisement to one for *Kappahl*'s clothes, which targets an older audience. The *Kappahl* advertisement recorded in this study contained only written text as did the one for *G-Star*, but the language used was Swedish instead of English, and the products were clearly marked with names and prices. A similar advertisement to the one from *G-Star* is mentioned in Hrachouskaya and Königsson's study (Hrachouskaya & Königsson, 2010:60). This advertisement from *Diesel Apparel* also targeted a young audience and the focus was on creating an image for the company. When confronting viewers with it the response varied heavily depending on age group, as older viewers were often not able to decode the message to understand what was being advertised, while younger viewers could generally do so without a problem.

As with the category of clothes, the amount of English used in the advertisements for telephone services depended much on the target audience. Six of the eight advertisements used code-switching, and all of these six advertised products/services from the telephone company 3, which mainly targets teens and young adults. Two different commercials from 3 were recorded, and both of these followed the same basic formula, which consisted of actors playing out a dramatic scenario where the protagonist, who works for the company, is chased by various villains whom s/he evades or defeats. The written text is mainly in Swedish and clarifies what is being advertised, but the dialogue is, in both of the commercials, in English. Much like the advertisement for *G-Star* mentioned above, the usage of English in the commercials from 3 does not communicate much information about the product or service but rather serves to give the brand a specific image. The fact that young people are often familiar with and reasonably proficient in English is used by the advertiser to connect and get a positive response from them as the target audience.

4. Conclusion

There is no doubt English has an enormous influence over many languages, and Swedish is no exception. Even though the majority of the recorded commercials used only Swedish, almost a third of them used code-switching between English and Swedish. As mentioned previously, English usage in advertising differs from the use of other foreign languages in that it does not so much represent any specific cultural stereotypes, but rather social stereotypes, such as professionalism, modernity, and internationality. English also seems, unlike other foreign languages, more natural to use in some contexts, such as when advertising videogames or travel, or targeting young people. That English is not associated with cultural stereotypes is a good indication of how wide-spread it has become, since it is no longer associated with any single nation.

Even though the influence of English has caused many people to worry about the future of the Swedish language, this study and previous research show that these worries are often exaggerated. English is still by far a minority language in Sweden, and unlike, for example Arabic or Finnish, it is not used much as a second language, but rather as a prestige language in a few specific domains, such as advertising. The development of English usage in these domains is a much more relevant question than the increasing usage in general, and deserves attention. However, even in advertising, English is not used indiscriminately but depends on factors such as what is being advertised, and to whom. As for the products and services being advertised, the results were well predicted by previous theories and research, in that English was practically never used for some categories of products and services, such as medicine, insurance, and local advertisements, while being very common in other categories, such as clothes, makeup and travel. The results from this study also fit the trend shown in previous research, in that commercials aimed at teenagers and young adults are more likely to contain spoken or written English, than commercials with any other target audience. In addition to these factors, the English used in ads rarely requires the viewer to be proficient in it, and is more often used to create a specific image for the product or company, than to provide the viewer with factual information.

5. Suggestions for further research

Since this study was made during a very limited timeframe, not a large quantity of commercials could be studied. To firmly confirm certain trends of English use in Swedish advertising, such as the lack of great differences between time blocks and channels, a larger study would have to be made. In addition to increasing the quantity of the commercials, one could also focus on how aware the advertisers themselves are on the topic, why they make the language choices they make, and how much competition there is between different slots. Doing so could help explain the lack of difference between time blocks and channels.

Another area that could not be covered in depth in this study is the social stereotypes associated with English. As English becomes more and more widespread, it would be interesting to see if the general impression of it as something modern associated with youth culture changes, to become an even more naturalized part of certain domains, to the degree that it loses even those current social stereotypes as modern, professional, and global. This would of course affect the way it is currently used in advertising, as it could not be used in the same way to control the audiences' views of what is being advertised.

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