Consumer perception and decoding of language-mixed advertisements in the Swedish consumer market.

Master’s Thesis in International Marketing

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The present study focuses on the phenomenon of using foreign language, or a language mix in advertising messages on the Swedish consumer market. The purpose established for the research was to see if the use of English language or an English-Swedish language mix of advertisement message in the Swedish consumer market has an effect on how consumers perceive, and interpret the advertising messages. Twelve different advertisements were chosen, the featured products were of various kinds, most targeting both females and males; such as training/walking shoes and hair products. Contrary to this some advertisements were chosen specifically for female/male consumers, for example women’s/men’s perfume. Furthermore, most of the advertisements were chosen because they could be viewed as appealing for consumers no matter the consumers’ age.

The employed research methodology was qualitative. The empirical data was obtained through in-depth, face to face interviews with 27 respondents. The collected data was then analyzed based on the established theoretical framework; the objective was to see if similarities or differences could be found between the two consumer groups of native Swedish consumers and immigrant consumers. The analytical methods used for this were pattern matching as well as analytic induction.

The results of the study revealed that age, gender, knowledge of English and cultural background appeared to interact with the consumer’s response towards the advertisement’s language. Younger Swedish respondents and immigrant respondents that have English as their dominant language perceived the use of English language in Swedish advertisements as a positive phenomena and consider it as a more powerful, persuasive and convincing marketing tool, due to their higher level of English knowledge. Older Swedish respondents on the other hand, had more negative perception and emotions towards the English language in Swedish advertisements and preferred to see more Swedish language in marketing messages.

While the sample choices and chosen qualitative methodology limit the generalizability and explanatory power of results, this study should be of use for marketers in Sweden; especially while the construction of communication messages is delivered using language mixing.

Finally, the results of this study may be helpful to researchers continuing in this line of inquiry; in particular, the results should be tested and later replicated to establish their validity and generalizability. The results of the study can be implemented in the marketing industry in Sweden and taken into consideration in terms of the construction of messages in the advertisements in the Swedish market.
Acknowledgements

Throughout the research process, the focus have been to gain insight and a deeper understanding of how English, or English-Swedish mixed advertising messages are perceived by the consumers’ in the Swedish consumer market. Research and information on this subject was fairly scarce when this research process first started. During the research process we have gained a deeper knowledge and understanding on how consumers on the Swedish market perceive this marketing strategy, as well as the underlying reasons to why they perceive it in a certain way.

We would like to express our gratitude and many thanks to all of you who in any way have contributed to our research, resulting in this thesis. We would like to thank all of the consumer respondents that participated in our interviews; without your many valuable points and remarks, this study would not have been able to be carried out. We would also like to thank our supervisor Erik Hunter, for giving thoughtful comments and valuable feedback during the entire research process. Finally we would also like to express our gratitude to our seminar opponents who have also given valuable feedback and insight in this research process.

Thank you!

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1. Introduction

In the first section of the thesis, a background is presented to introduce the reader to the research subject. The background is followed by a problem discussion concerning the subject language mixed advertisements. The problem discussion will lead the reader down to the purpose established for the thesis as well as the formulated research questions. Finally, contributions of the study, delimitations and limitations as well as clarifications are presented.

1.1 Background

According to Vielba and Edelshain (1997), communication is very important; it is also one of the major challenges that businesses are facing. To illustrate the importance of communication, the following example is used.

The Swedish furniture retailer giant IKEA sells many of the same products all over the world without any kind of modifications to the products. The only adaptation made by the company concerns the language in the advertisements the company uses in the various countries all over the world (Wild, Wild & Han, 2008, p 395). Marketing communications tailored to each country enables IKEA to reach out to the many consumers throughout the world and explain what IKEA offers (Marketing & Communication, 2010). The goal is to be able to reach and communicate with each consumer on each local market. To successfully achieve this kind of communication, it is important not only to have a deep knowledge about the company values, but also to have a deep knowledge about each local market and society (Marketing & Communication, 2010). Adaptation of language in the foreign market makes it possible for the company to reach out to consumers, eliminating the barrier of misunderstanding of the advertising message. However, this is a more expensive marketing approach than standardizing the campaigns. Therefore, international companies all over the world use language mixed advertisements; where the product is promoted both in the native language of the country and/or with the use of English language. This technique of advertising is the mid-step between standardized and adapted advertisements, which is popular in several countries of the world.

Problems with communication that can arise are language barriers between a business and its environment or its market (Vielba and Edelshain, 1997). Because of barriers such as this, language differences such as English knowledge, need to be accounted for (ibid). However, according to Doole and Lowe (2008, p. 7-8) there are arguments that the usage of visible signs makes this problem less of a barrier (ibid). According to Wild et al (2008), communication of promotional messages should exclude all factors that in any way might disrupt the audiences’ ability to interpret the advertising message correctly (p 402-404). If this is not avoided, the target audience understanding of the message will be lost, or risks being lost. This highlights the vital importance of how language is used in the advertisement industry, since language is regarded as a common barrier to miscommunication between a company and a potential consumer (ibid).
Due to the fact that language is considered to be a barrier to the interpretation of advertising messages, it is important to keep in mind that the “structure of language has consequences for basic consumer processes such as perception and memory”; e.g. verbal sounds in English are used to “encode the brand name and facilitate memory” (De Mooij, 2003). Linguistic structures of languages affect the perception of the object that is being described (ibid.)

Foreign languages have for more than 600 years had effects on the Swedish language (Lennermo, 2008); of all foreign languages, English has the greatest impact on the Swedish language today. Many advertisements that are featured in the Swedish consumer market mix in English words. According to Larson (1990) advertisers often make use of English words in their work even though it can seem peculiar to come across non-Swedish words within the context of the Swedish language. Larson (1990) continues by explaining that there are common reasons as to why this phenomenon is occurring. One reason put forth is that the use of English words makes the advertisements more internationally oriented (Larson, 1990). As Martin (1998) claims, the convincing and manipulative power and control of the English language has been recognized by advertisers and researchers studying France (Martin, 1998), India (Gupta, 2007), Mexico (Baumgardner, 2008), and Poland (Bulawka, 2006). These researchers found that English in advertising can be interpreted as a symbol of modernization, efficiency and/or reliability (Martin, 1998).

For this study’s point of view, it is worth mentioning that the previous researches by Martin, Gupta, Baumgardner and Bulawka were focusing on the advertising agencies’ perspective, rather than the consumers’ perspective. Moreover, Martin implied that further research is to be done in other cultures as well in order to study the perception of English in advertising within other countries.

To conclude the background section, language has an enormous significance on the perception of the advertisements by the consumers; at the same time language is regarded as the most common barrier to communicate an advertising message, since language mixing can be interpreted differently depending on the culture and consumers’ previous knowledge of the foreign language. English language, as one of the most popular languages in advertising industry is heavily used in Swedish advertisements. However, this topic has been researched mainly from the marketer’s perspective and needs to be studied across cultures.

1.2 Problem Discussion

A Scandinavian-looking man in his sixties was looking through his mail, when he saw a colorful brochure, the text was in very bright and colorful letters, but the language on the advertisement was English. The man was definitely attracted by the picture on the brochure, but could not understand what the text was saying. He tossed the brochure in the garbage bin, without knowing what the advertisement was about.

At this same point in time on the other side of the street, a young Asian-looking girl in her twenties was looking through her mail and held the same colorful brochure in her hands. She read through it and put it aside, in the pile of other discount coupons. The use of English language in the advertisement helped her understand the message of the brochure and get a discount in the neighborhood grocery store.

As illustrated by the above examples, the use of foreign words in advertisement messages has two sides; it can be a tool for some while others perceives it as a barrier to understanding the
marketing messages. However, in spite of language barriers, the usage of foreign words and models in advertising are more common than ever before. According to Neelankavil, Mummalaneni and Sessions (1994), the usage of foreign words in advertisements can be described as a natural consequence to the phenomenon of globalization; with the rise of global brands and hence the need for multinational marketing. This view is shared by Gupta (2007) who claims that because of globalization, advertisements often consist of a mix of languages. The major reason given in order to explain why advertisers engage in this type of marketing is that the marketers reach out to a larger consumer group when marketing products with language mixed advertisement messages (ibid).

However, as seen by the examples above, the marketing strategy of using a foreign language in advertising can also backfire. Even though the underlying and foremost reason for using English or an English mix in advertising might be to reach a larger consumer group; this marketing strategy can backfire if it is being perceived by the local consumers as disrespectful towards local and cultural norms (Neelankavil et al, 1994). The cultural aspects are particularly important in advertising since the effectiveness of advertising messages to a large extent will be determined by the appropriateness of the words used (ibid). This implies that English mixed or English language advertisements should only be used so that the consumers are able to identify the content of the advertisements (ibid). For the Swedish consumers, the usage of language mixed or English language advertisements might become a barrier since not all Swedish consumers might be familiar enough with the foreign language to identify certain advertisement contents. Another negative side of this marketing strategy for Swedish consumers might be that if too many advertisements are featured in English or language mixed, the native Swedish consumers might feel culturally left-out. Culturally left-out is used here to refer to native consumers’ inability to relate advertising messages to their native language; arguably this can be especially sensitive regarding advertisements from/of Swedish brands and products.

If the application of a foreign language becomes too widespread, it can also be a threat to the domestic language (Crystäl, 2002). As people are more and more exposed to a foreign language, they start to use it more frequently in their daily life (ibid). According to Språkrådet (Onödig engelska eller engelska i onödan?, no date), it is important to consider whether or not to use certain English words at all; often time English words can be difficult to adapt to the Swedish language in terms of spelling, pronunciation and inflected form. Because of these difficulties in adapting the languages to each other, the English words can push out Swedish words completely. Because of these factors, the Swedish language can be threatened by the English language. Some people tend to think that English is more cool than Swedish; while others do not appreciate the native language being influenced so much by English. A recent survey investigation carried out by the Swedish network Språkförsvaret (Engelska i reklamen, 2010) points to the fact that Swedes are starting to feel negative towards the extent use of English. If the consumers of Sweden have negative associations to the English language, this can to a large extent also have an effect on the consumers’ susceptibility and appreciation of language mixed advertisements.

Consequences of the extensive use of the English language in Sweden could lead to the extinction of the Swedish language. The possible positive attitude towards the use of English language in advertisements in the Swedish market might induce the large extent of using the English language in the advertisement industry in Sweden, which eventually might take over the Swedish language. According to Crystäl (2002) language death is one of the consequences of the extensive use of a foreign language and positive attitude of the population towards it.
Sweden is already in a situation where the English language is seen on Television, in print advertisements, online, on the radio, in business life as well as in the Swedish education system. If the results of the study show that Swedish consumers have a positive attitude towards the English language in Swedish advertisements, the native language of Sweden is threatened at least in the advertisement sector (Crystal, 2002).

Wild, Wild and Han (2008) claim that when advertisements are being translated or mixed by different languages, consumers’ cultural differences can have an impact on how they interpret an advertising message. The fact that culture can affect how messages are being interpreted in different ways can be applied as a problem on the Swedish consumer market. This is because the Swedish consumer market does not only consist of native Swedish consumers but also of many immigrant consumers. The immigrant consumers represent a significant group in the Swedish consumer market; the inflow of foreigners is growing every year in Sweden. According to the government organization Statistics Sweden (SCB), the population of Sweden increased by nearly 60,000 residents during a nine month period in 2008; immigrants constituted of more than 70 percent of that population increase (Sweden taking in record numbers of immigrants, 2008). The immigrant newcomers are most of the time not familiar with the Swedish language, which means that English becomes their dominant language in the Swedish society (in case of them knowing English before they came to Sweden). This factor can have an effect on the immigrants’ perception of the English language used in Swedish advertisements compared to how native Swedes view English language in advertising since English is regarded as a second language for this consumer segment. Taking into consideration that immigrant consumers constitute a large part of the Swedish consumer market, it was identified as relevant to compare this consumer group to native Swedish consumers. Moreover, the differences in cultural background and the fact that immigrant consumer do not have Swedish as a native language constituted as a major factor for comparing these particular consumer groups in connection the language mixed advertisements. Given the fact that immigrant consumers are not native Swedish speakers, an opportunity to investigate the perception and decoding of language mixed advertisement messages on the Swedish consumer market from two very presumably different aspects was provided. In this particular study, immigrant consumers are recognized as those foreigners having a valid resident permit for staying in Sweden.

How language mixed advertisements is being perceived by the domestic consumer depends according to Puntoni, Langhe and Osselaer (2009) also on emotional perception. Puntoni et al (2009) discovered that when it comes to the emotional perception of marketing communication, consumers tend to be more emotional towards advertisements in their native language. Therefore Koslow, Shamdasani and Touchstone (1994) and Schmitt, Pan and Tavassoli (1994) claim that products should be advertised in consumers’ native language since it would result in a more emotional message. According to Arens, Weigold and Arens (2008, p 141) perception means everything and advertisers must have an understanding of their customers. The advertising agencies, however, create more and more advertisements consisting of language mixed messages, which affects the perception of the message in a more or less emotional way.

Moreover, the process of decoding has a great affect on the way the consumers perceive advertisement messages (Levy, 1999). This process can be described as the way the consumers interpret the symbolism of advertisements; how it is perceived in terms of the correspondence with their self-image or self-perception. One of the main points of the decoding process in this study is to highlight the possibility of existing differences between
the immigrant and native Swedish consumers. The interpretation of symbolism depends to a large extent on the cultural background of the consumers, which is different for the immigrants and native Swedish consumers, due to the differences of the consumers’ self-image and self-perception. The symbols of advertising messages that are interpreted as matching the lifestyle among the native Swedish consumers might be decoded in a different way than by the immigrant consumers, since their self-perception has not been formed in Sweden, but rather in their native country.

To conclude the problem discussion, it can be said that language mixed advertisements have become a commonly used advertising strategy throughout the world. The main intention behind the strategy is to reach a larger target group. However, native consumers might perceive this advertising strategy as negative if it is used too much on the domestic consumer market. Other problems that can occur are misinterpretations and misunderstandings of advertising messages if stated with a foreign language or with mixed languages since foreign words commonly are difficult to adapt to a native language. In this research, the Swedish consumer market is to be studied in terms of consumers’ attitude towards language mixed advertisements. The reactions and responses will be compared between the two consumer groups of native Swedes versus immigrant consumers. Presumably, a study of this kind where the immigrant and native Swedish consumer groups are being compared between each other in terms of the language mixed advertisement perception has not been carried out in Sweden before. Due to the lack of studies of this kind on the European market, this particular study will contribute to the existing research gap in the area.

**Previous Research on the topic**

As mentioned in the background section, Martin - France (1998), Gupta - India (2007), Baumgardner - Mexico (2008) and Bulawka – Poland (2006) have conducted studies on the same topic. These researchers studied the use of English language in domestic and non-English speaking advertisements but from the marketers’ perspective. In addition to this it can be mentioned as a critique that all previous studies within the topic have been carried out on countries that are very different from Sweden in terms of culture and economic development. Moreover, some of the studies (1990, 1998) were carried out a long time ago, which implies that the results of the research can be different from today’s results. The time aspect is also important to consider, as the attitude and perception of the English language in advertisements could have changed with time due to multiple reasons, such as associations with English speaking countries as well as the attitude to these countries. For example, if political actions and the reputation of the USA are to be taken into consideration; the attitudes of consumers towards the use of the English language in advertisements may vary with time. For instance, with the beginning of the war in Iraq, as some studies have showed - the reputation of the USA rapidly turned negative; this made North America less popular throughout the world (Fullerton, 2005). At the end of 2009 beginning of 2010 the reputation of the USA started to regain its strength with Barack Obama becoming the first African-American president in the history of the USA, and later on winning the Nobel Peace Prize Award (BBC News, 2009 and 2008). Arguably, depending on the time when the previous studies were done, attitudes towards English language could be different due to the behavior of certain countries that are directly associated with the English language.

If the above speculations are correct it is important that research of this nature is carried out periodically, especially when geopolitical dynamics change. Trends come and trends go and
that might also be the case regarding how the consumers’ attitude to English speaking countries can affect the way English or English mixed advertisements are perceived.

One study that was more focused on consumers is by Hsu (2008). Hsu studied how Taiwanese consumers perceived English mixed advertisements. The results revealed that consumers viewed the advertisements to stand out more, to be internationalized, of higher quality as well as more trendy than advertisements concluding only the native language. Hsu also found negative effects of using English in advertising; this was explained by the majority of the peoples illiteracy in English and the effects of this was that people paid less attention to the advertisement content if it included English mixing. Furthermore, some of the participants from the study considered the trend of using English in the domestic advertising should be forbidden (ibid). This study clearly points out different opinions regarding how language mixing is perceived within one country and culture. Apart from illiteracy, it could also be attributed to the peoples’ different perceptions of the foreign language or their individual language ability.

Moreover, perception of the message depends not only on the language, but also on the symbolism of the advertisement, which is perceived by the consumer as appropriate/matching to the way the consumer perceives him or herself (Levy, 1999).

**Concluded research gap**

From the literature that was reviewed for this study, it became apparent that a study on the Swedish consumer market, comparing the same consumer groups’ reactions of language-mixed advertising strategy, has not been done before. In addition to this, results from previous studies are from countries very different from Sweden in terms of culture and economic development. The lack of studies on European countries, apart from France, is also something that has been concluded as a research gap regarding the use of foreign language mixed advertisements. Concerning symbolism in advertisement, the immigrant versus native Swedish consumer groups have not been studied before, as well as their perception of the symbolism versus their self-image.

**1.3. Purpose**

Based on the above discussion, the purpose established for this thesis is as follows:

**The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the perception and decoding of language mixed advertising messages between consumer groups in Sweden (native Swedish consumers and immigrants.)**

The analysis of the consumers' perception of the language mixed advertisements as well as the decoding process of the advertising messages between the two groups was to be studied in correspondence with the following research questions.

**RQ1: How can consumer groups' attitude towards the use of language mixed advertisements be described?**

Regarding this research question, the consumers’ attitudes were measured in terms of how the emotional perception of English language in Swedish advertising differs between consumer groups.
RQ2: What associations do the consumer groups have regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisements?

In connection to this research question special attention was paid to the consumers associations to the English language in general; the associations to the English language was also looked at in the advertising context, if it becomes different or if it is still similar to the general association. In addition to this attention was paid to if the consumers association to the English language had anything to do with their ability to decode the advertising messages.

RQ3: How can the consumer groups decoding process of the language mixed advertising be described in terms of how the advertising message is being interpreted?

The decoding process and the consumers’ interpretations of the advertising messages were measured in terms of whether the symbolisms in mixed advertisements are in line with the consumers’ self-image. Furthermore, attention was paid to whether different cultural groups in Sweden respond to advertising messages differently.

RQ4: How can the consumer groups' perception of symbolism in language mixed advertisements be described?

The aim of research question four was to ascertain if symbols featured in advertisements were perceived as suggested by theory; or if there were other reasons explaining how symbolism was perceived. In addition to this, a comparison between the two consumer groups was made to see if either relationships or deviations amongst the groups could be found.

Contributions of the study.

This study’s main contribution was to gain a deeper knowledge of how native Swedish consumers and immigrant consumers that do not have English as a native language perceive and decode advertising messages in English, or an English-Swedish mix. The results of this study contribute to marketing theory in terms of deeper knowledge of how two different consumer groups in the Swedish consumer market perceive and interpret the marketing strategy of language mixed advertisement messages. Since a research of this kind, measuring the Swedish consumer market has not been carried out before; the results of this study can contribute and help marketing managers. The results can increase the marketing managers understanding of how to use English, or a Swedish-English language mix in advertisements in Sweden; so that the domestic consumers take in the advertising message in the most desirable way. In short, the results of this study can help marketing managers understand how to communicate to target customers in a more desirable way.

The contributions of this study were mainly recognized as practical rather then theoretical. Carrying out the study from a consumer’s perspective contributed to empirical information that can be of practical use rather than theoretical.

A more in depth discussion regarding the contributions of this study take place in chapter six.

Delimitations and Limitations

The research process for this thesis was carried out with the following delimitations in mind:

The study was only focused on print advertisements in the Swedish consumer market. Furthermore the study concentrated only on the use of one foreign language (English) and
how/if the advertising strategy of using English language in advertisements has an impact on how the native consumers vs. immigrant consumers perceive different advertising messages.

Second, the fact that the study was conducted only from the consumers’ perspective can also be regarded to as delimitation.

Another delimitation identified was that the study was carried out only in the city of Halmstad in the South of Sweden, and in Örnsköldsvik in the North of Sweden.

Recognized limitations of this particular study were the fact that one of the researchers is not fluent in the Swedish language; therefore, the interpretation of the interviews with Swedish consumers who were not fluent in English could not be conducted by both of the researchers.

Furthermore, another limitation of the study was the choice of immigrant consumers as a group for the study. The important point to keep in mind is that immigrants are difficult to characterize and organize in one group according to several characteristics. The immigrants that were chosen for this particular study came from different countries; they vary in age and in their knowledge of Swedish language. The factors recognized that put the respondents in one group were that they had a valid residence permit in Sweden, they learn and study the Swedish language and they speak English. If the study would have been carried out on immigrants who do not speak any English – the results could have been affected and completely different.

Another limitation is that the immigrant respondents were contacted through the School of Swedish language for the Foreigners. If the immigrant respondents were contacted through some other means, the results of the study could have been different.

Clarifications

During the literature review for this thesis it was discovered that there were different expressions for terms concerning the research subject. Throughout this thesis, the term “language mixing” has been used, however some authors refer to this as “code mixing” or “bilingual”. Since these two terms were considered to be synonymous, the term ”language mixing” was chosen in order to reduce misunderstandings.

Clarifications should also be made regarding kinds of advertisements used for the study. This study focuses on print advertisements only; for this study print advertisements are defined as: magazine ads, billboards and posters.

Moreover, in this study, immigrant consumers are those with a permanent resident permit in Sweden; hence tourists or exchange students are not perceived as immigrants.
2. Literature Review

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that was used for the study. It consists of theories on the communication process, construction of messages in advertisements, language death, language and emotions, and symbolism. Furthermore, the literature review chapter is divided into different sections according to the research questions presented in the previous chapter. Each section of the theory provides the description of the theory, as well as the argument why the theory was chosen in this particular study.

The theories that were chosen for this study were used in order to help answer the Research Questions of the study, to fulfill the purpose of the study as well as to provide a deeper understanding in the areas of advertising, communication of advertising message, language in advertisement, etc. The literature review provided a necessary theoretical background for the understanding of the phenomenon in general. Moreover, theories were used in order to provide a better understanding of the data acquired during the research and explain the data gathered during the research in the analysis chapter.

2.1 How can consumer groups' attitude towards the use of language mixed advertisements be described?

Language and Emotions Theory

Several researchers state that bilingual speakers report experiencing greater emotional intensity when using their first (or dominant) language compared to their second language (Dewaele, 2004, as cited in Harris, Cleason & Aycicegi, 2005). First, or dominant, language is the language that the speaker feels more comfortable and fluent in (ibid). In this study, therefore, the English language was regarded as a dominant language for the immigrant consumer group, and as a second language for the native Swedish consumer group. English speaking immigrants perceived English language as their dominant language in Sweden, as their level of the Swedish language was lower. Swedish consumers, on the other hand, perceive Swedish as their first, or dominant, language, and English as their second.

Harris et al (2005) studied the emotional affect of the native, or dominant, language on a person on a psycho-physiological level. According to the results of the study, the second language is perceived less emotionally by bilinguals (ibid). However, the study has shown that not any kind of words or sentences is perceived more or less emotionally by the bilinguals. In general bilingual and multilingual participants of the study stated that swear- or taboo words in the native language were rated as “the most forceful”; also the aversive words like “death” or “disease”, reprimands like “Don’t do that” were rated as more emotionally powerful to them, than in the second language (Harris et al, 2005). However, this particular study did not focus on advertisements containing swear or taboo words due to the lack of advertisements of this content in most magazines.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the age of the acquisition of the second language. The earlier the person learned the second language, the less are the difference between the emotional perception of the ‘strong words’ in native and second languages (Birdsong & Molis, 2001, as cited in Harris, Cleason & Aycicegi, 2005). The way of learning also affects the emotional response to the language, i.e. if the person learns the second language in a naturalistic context, rather than in school – the more natural and close the second language will be perceived by the person, and, consequently, with less emotional difference from the
native language. Moreover, the better the person speaks the second language – the less the difference between the emotional perception of the native vs. second language (Dewaele, 2004, as cited in Harris, Cleason & Aycicegi, 2005).

Therefore, taking into consideration the two consumer groups that are being compared in this study, native Swedish versus immigrants, the emotional perception of the language in the advertisement is most likely to be different according to the study by Harris et al (2005). Swedish citizens learn English in schools starting at around 10 years of age (Education System in Sweden, 2007). However, their naturalistic context of learning is favorable to them at an earlier stage, as a number of TV channels and programs are broadcasted in English. Children get a chance to learn the second language on a more informal level, while watching TV program or cartoon. Therefore, the learning of a second language at an early stage of life; a naturalistic context of learning as well as fluency in speaking English leads to the conclusion that native Swedish consumers do not experience significant emotional difference between messages in English or Swedish languages.

Immigrants, on the other hand, come to Sweden without knowing much Swedish, and, if spoken, English is considered their dominant, or first, language in the context of Sweden, when Swedish is the second language (as English is the most commonly used and known foreign language in the country) (Knowledge of foreign language in Sweden, 2005). Therefore, the emotional perception of Swedish in the advertisement will be of a less significance than it is for the Swedes. English language, if being dominant in the Swedish context, is most likely to be perceived on a more emotional level. This is due to the high likelihood that Swedish is being learned on a later stage in life for the immigrants (unlike the Swedes learning English); Swedish is not spoken as fluently by the immigrants, as English is spoken by the Swedes.

The two consumer groups were analyzed in terms of their attitudes towards the use of English language in Swedish ads, and emotional decoding and interpretation of symbolism was compared between the native Swedish consumers and immigrants. The factor of English or Swedish being the dominant language for either of the groups might have an effect on the English language perception by the two groups.

**Language Death Theory**

It is not possible, as Crystal states, to come up with a one sentence response to why some languages die. However, one of the most common ones is “the current preoccupation with global English as “the cause” of language death” (Crystal, 2002).

One of the reasons that make it difficult to give a specific cause of the language death is that the situation that is present in a modern world is “without precedent: the world has never had so many people in it, globalization processes have never been so marked; communication and transport technologies have never been so omnipresent, there has never been so much language contact; and no language has ever exercised so much international influence as English” (Crystal, 2002, p. 70).

However, several languages die due to the fact that the culture itself dies. This is due to the environmental factors, wars, cataclysms like earthquakes, floods or epidemics in the areas where the culture is isolated from the rest of the world. For instance, several Pacific and Indian Ocean island communities were “caught up in the invasions and battles of the Second World War, with language endangerment one of the outcomes” (Crystal, 2002, p. 75).
According to Crystal (2002, p 77), another reason for the death of language is Cultural Assimilation: “one culture is influenced by a more dominant culture, and begins to lose its character as a result of its members adopting new behavior and mores”. Therefore, when one culture assimilates to another, the factors influencing language seem to be the same everywhere (ibid). The author mentions three broad stages, the first of which is “the immense pressure on the people to speak the dominant language – pressure that can come from political, social, or economic sources” (Crystal, 2002, p. 78). This pressure can come from top down – in the form of incentives, recommendations, or laws introduced by a government; or it might come from “bottom up”, in the “form of fashionable trends or peer group pressures from within the society of which they form a part” (ibid).

The second stage, no matter whether the pressure comes from “top to bottom” or from “bottom up”, is a period of emerging bilingualism, as people become increasingly efficient in their new language while still retaining competence in their old, which in time leads to the old language giving way to the new language. Therefore, the third stage comes in, where the younger generation becomes increasingly proficient in a new language, “identifying more with the second language and finding their first language less relevant to their new needs” (Crystal, 2002 p. 79). As an outcome, parents start to use the new language more to their children and outside home – children talk the new language to each other. Consequently, “within a generation – sometimes even within a decade – a healthy bilingualism within a family can slip into a self-conscious semilingualism, and thence into a monolingualism which places that language one step nearer to extinction” (ibid).

Crystal (2002, p. 80) states that a new language is attractive because it “facilitates outward movement from the indigenous community; there are new horizons which members of the community wish to reach towards, new standards of living to be achieved and new quality of life to be pursued”.

Taking into consideration the quantity of advertisements displaying the English language in Sweden, the requirements from schools to study the English language and the percentage of the English-speaking population in Sweden, the country is already on the second stage of the language death according to Crystal (2002). During the study, native Swedish consumer and immigrant consumer groups’ opinion whether English is a threat to the Swedish language was taken into consideration. Moreover, the older generation’s English language perception was compared to the younger generation’s one in the analysis part, as it was speculated that older and younger generation might perceive the use of English language in advertisements on a different scale.

2.2 What associations do the consumer groups have regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisements?

The Communication Process
Vielba and Edelshain (1997) state that communication is one of the largest challenges that today’s businesses are facing; therefore it is of the utmost importance that the business communication is well functioning. Regarding promotional messages, the communication should be as clear as possible; factors that can make it harder for the target audience to interpret the advertising message correctly should be avoided (Wild, Wild & Han, 2008, p 402-404). If this is not considered, there is a risk that the target audience does not understand the promotional message. Language is explained as one of the most common barriers to
miscommunication between companies and their potential consumers (ibid). Figure 1 below displays the process of communication from start to end.

![Communication Process Diagram]

Figure 1: The Communication Process

According to Lancaster and Reynolds (2005, p 181) encoding is the process where thoughts of a message are being processes into a symbolic form, this step is controlled by the sender of the message. At the other end, decoding can be found. Decoding is the process when the message symbols are being transformed back into thoughts; it is the opposite of encoding and this step is controlled by the receiver. Both factors are mental processes; the message itself is the result of the encoding process and is the tool used to share a thought with the receiver. The channel is described as the pathway which the message moves from one end to the other. Feedback allows the sender of the message to get information on how accurate the message is interpreted by the receiver (ibid). According to Lancaster and Reynolds (2005, p 181), it is recognized that advertising messages may not be interpreted by consumers as originally intended by the sender; market feedback allows the sender to re-examine and in some cases, reconstruct the message.

In this study only the aspect of decoding was investigated. This was due to the fact that the study was carried out from a consumer’s perspective as well as because there was not enough time to contact all the companies behind the chosen advertisements used in this study. Therefore, the decoding process by the two consumer groups was analyzed according to the symbols and interpretation of the message by the respondents. The interpretation of the advertising messages by immigrant and native Swedish consumer groups was compared. The effect that the English language has on the decoding process in terms of the clarity and perception of the message in the advertisements was studied as well. The process of the study is more thoroughly described in the Methodology chapter.

Language in Advertising
As already mentioned, advertisements tend to reflect like a mirror the local personalities, language, customs and values (Martin, 1998; Neelankavil, Mummalanen & Sissions, 1995). Nevertheless, the use of foreign spokespersons or models, or use of foreign language in
domestic advertisements is becoming more and more common throughout the world. Neelankavil et al (1995) suggest a theoretical model of the use of foreign words and models in advertisements. The authors offer five factors which can explain the usage of foreign language in advertisements, i.e. country of product origin, product type, target audience, customer country and the use of foreign language (Neelankavil et al, 1995). A description of each of the factors of Figure 2 is provided after the model.

Figure 2: Language in advertising.

Country of Origin of a Product refers to the standardization of the advertising campaigns of global companies, which leads to the appearance of foreign words in a number of domestic advertisements (Neelankavil et al, 1995).

Product Type refers to that the usage of foreign words and models in domestic advertisements is dependent on product type, “presumably for the purposes of product/model and product/message congruency (ibid).

Target Audience refers to the separate groups of customers, or segments that “exert a measure of influence on the choice of words and models in advertisements”; for instance, social class affects the advertisement message perception (ibid).

Customer Country implies that the social and cultural climate of the country “could have an impact on the content of advertising, as for example, the presence of African-Americans in advertisements or British modifications for the goods that are exported to less developed economies (ibid).
The Use of Foreign Language is a variable that is dependent on the four listed above factors, which lead to the extended use of foreign words in advertising, as well as the use of foreign models in advertisements (ibid).

As the use of a foreign language depends on the country of origin of the product, product type, target audience and customer country, all of these variables were taken into consideration during the research, in order to see how the use of foreign language affects the customers’ perception of the brand product categories. Each of the variables has an effect on how the consumers perceive the product that they are willing or not willing to purchase. In this particular research, these variables are taken into consideration because they go together with the “use of foreign language” in the advertising, and these variables can affect the foreign language perception of the consumers. For instance, if the product’s country of origin is Great Britain and the advertising is in English, the consumers might have a different perspective towards the English in this particular advertisement than to a French or German product with English language in the advertising. This is a speculation; however, it will be analyzed in the research.

2.3 How can the consumer groups decoding process of the language mixed advertising be described in terms of how the advertising message is being interpreted?

Construction and Formulation of an advertising message

Schmitz (2009, p73) claim that an advertising message should captivate its intended target audience, the message should be defined and refined, as well as the message should be concentrated.

An advertising message needs to be understandable, “matter of fact”, correct and also effective. Furthermore the message should stand out as important for the target audience; the message should not be based on facts only, but also contain emotional arguments (ibid).

To reach this, the most important factor to consider is the language used in the advertising message (Schmitz, 2009, p 183). The intelligibility of a text is the far most important factor to consider in order for the advertisement to get recognition. According to the author, the most basic advice to be given regarding the construction of advertising messages is to use a sense of writing that “fits the situation” as well as using a language that suits the target audience.

When talking about the language that is used in advertising, it is quite often mentioned by the marketers that language is one of the essential tools of communication of messages in advertising industry. Language is used in order to persuade the consumer that the product that is being advertised is of a need for the consumer. Therefore, various techniques are implemented in order to persuade the customer to buy the good or service. For instance, advertising technique of claim of superiority like ‘better’, ‘more’ and ‘best’, is one of the language techniques that persuades the consumer to purchase the product (Schrank, 1976).

According to Pieters and Wedel (2001), it is essential for the advertisers to search for the perfect wording in the advertisements, as a simple change in a single word can have a major “impact on the effectiveness of a message” (ibid). Moreover, words have meanings beyond their literal meanings, which are called “connotative meanings and are suggested meanings in addition to the explicit or literal meaning of the word” (Moriarty, 1991). Consequently, it is
vital to pay attention to the language use in advertising industry, more specifically – foreign language use in advertising.

In addition to this theory, aspects of the communication process model have also been included for RQ3. Since the model is presented in 2.2, it will not be presented here again.

2.4 How can the consumer groups’ perception of symbolism in language mixed advertisements be described?

Symbolism
When talking about symbolism, a number of scholars mention it as a very important aspect of advertising in Asian cultures (De Mooij, 2010). However, symbolism is common in other cultures as well, and it is often used in advertising as a technique to persuade the consumer to purchase the product.

Levy (1999) describes the language of symbols in advertising. The author states that the things that are bought are seen to have “personal and social meanings in addition to their functions” (p. 205). The specialists in the study of communications, language formation, and semantics make a distinction between levels of meaning of symbols, and it is common to speak of “signs, signals, symbols, gestures, and other more technical terms” (Levy, 1999, p. 206). Therefore, Levy (1999, p. 208) says that all commercial objects have a symbolic character, and the consumption of the advertised product involves an “assessment of this symbolism”.

A symbol in the advertisement that is associated with a product is regarded as appropriate (and the product will be used and enjoyed) when “it joins with, meshes with, adds to, or reinforces the way the consumer thinks about himself” (Levy, 1999, p. 208). This theory corresponds with the theories by Aaker (1997), Dolich (1969), Helgeson & Supphellen (2004) and Sirgy, Grewal, Mangleburg, Park, Chon, Claiborne, Johar and Berkman (1997), about self-concept and self-congruity. Self-congruity is often described as a theory that proposes that part of consumer behavior is determined by an individual’s comparison of the image of themselves and the image of a brand, as reflected in a stereotype of a typical user of the brand (Sirgy, 1997). Self-congruity (SC) consists of four major types – actual SC, ideal SC, social SC and ideal social SC. However, most attention has been paid to actual and ideal SC, as research has shown that they have the strongest effect on brand attitudes and choice (Sirgy, 1982). Actual SC is the present actual perception of oneself. Ideal SC is an envisioned preferred self (Aaker, 1997).

This means that an advertising of a favored brand with appealing brand image is most likely to be chosen by the consumer, as it reinforces his/her self concept (Dolich, 1969). Whereas, self concept is generally defined as an individual's perception of how he actually is, the ideal self is that perception of how he would like to be (Dolich, 1969). The theory of self concept in turn was used to explain the consumers’ preference for and choice of products that have higher versus lower levels of congruity (Helgeson, 2004). In other words, the theories of self congruity and self concept are used to explain and predict brand attitude, product use or ownership, and purchase intention (Sirgy 1997). Therefore, if the symbol of the advertisement fits the self-perception or self-image of the consumer he/she will consider the advertising message as favorable.
The literature review chapter was constructed according to the theories that help fulfillment of the purpose of the study in the most adequate manner. The theories were helpful in terms of creation of the interview guide as well as the interpretation of the empirical data, which is thoroughly described in the Analysis chapter of the thesis. Research Question 1 was supported by the Language Death and Language and Emotions theory; Research Question 2 was supported by Language in Advertising theory; Research Question 3 was supported by the Communication process model and Construction and Formulation of Advertising Message theories; Research Question 4 was supported by Symbolism theory. The following chapter of Methodology describes the research methods that were used in this study and the Empirical Data chapter describes the findings acquired during the research. The analysis chapter compares the theories of the literature review and the empirical data in order to analyze the data of the study.
3. Methodology

This section regards the methodology used for this research process; the chapter is divided into three main parts, design, implementation and analysis. In the first section, the appointed research strategy is being discussed. In implementation, a discussion on how the empirical data was gathered is presented. The final section regards how the analysis of the empirical data was carried out.

3.1 Research Design

In this section there is a discussion about the choices made by the researchers regarding the study’s design; as well as justifications for the chosen design.

Methodology Approach

Within the research field, there are two recognized methodology approaches to distinguish between; quantitative and qualitative (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p 4). A quantitative approach can be described as the collection of numerical data. In addition to this the quantitative approach commonly explains certain preoccupations, usually measurements, causality, generalization and replication (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p 154). This particular study does not seek to generalize the findings; furthermore the aim of the established research questions is not gathering numerical data. Because of this, a quantitative approach was not suitable for this particular research.

Contrary to the above approach, the qualitative approach is focused on words rather than quantification of the collected data and it has a tendency to be more open ended as a strategy. Commonly, a qualitative approach involves collecting and analyzing the empirical data; theory is viewed as something that emerges from this collection and analysis. However, a theoretical framework can also be established before the collection of empirical data in order to test the theories empirically (Bryman & Bell 2007, p 402-408). Critique that has been appointed to this research process is that it is too subjective, the research processes it difficult to replicate and that the researcher will have difficulties in generalizing the findings (Bryman & Bell 2007, p 423).

The research problem and the purpose of the research influence to a large extent what kind of knowledge the researcher aims to collect. The established purpose was: to investigate and analyze the perception and decoding of language mixed advertising messages between consumer groups in Sweden; native Swedish consumers and immigrants. In order to answer an established research problem and the purpose of the research, it is vital to employ the adequate research method so that the correct information is obtained (Bryman & Bell 2007, p 4-6).

Based on the above discussion, the appointed research method for this research was a qualitative method approach. This decision was based on the fact that the researchers aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic, rather than having the objective to generalize the findings of the study. Engaging a qualitative research approach enables the researcher to obtain developed descriptions of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002 p. 10). Finally, qualitative research bring up the perspective of those that are being studied; the point of orientation is guided by what the participants of the study regard as important and significant (Bryman & Bell 2007, p 425). In order to reach the established purpose of this study, which is to investigate and analyze the perception and decoding of language mixed...
advertising messages between consumer groups in Sweden; (Native Swedish consumers and immigrants), the participants’ perspective, thoughts and comments need to be considered. Clearly a qualitative approach is most suitable for this study considering the purpose.

Another standpoint to make regards the relationship between theory and research. Bryman and Bell (2007, p 402) argue that qualitative research features an inductive standpoint regarding the relationship between theory and research. This study has its starting point in theory with the aim of trying to detect potential relationships between the established theoretical framework and the study’s empirical data. However, the study can also include inductive elements considering that the implications and findings of the study might lead to theoretical contributions.

Character of the study

There are different types of studies to carry out within the research field; they usually are exploratory, descriptive or experimental in their character (Patel & Davidsson, 2003, p 12). Since the established research questions for this study aim at obtaining information that enables the researchers to describe the research topic; the character of this study is defined and recognized as descriptive.

Patel and Davidsson (2003, p 13) claim that a descriptive study is characterized by the fact that there already is some knowledge about the area/topic. The descriptions can be about relationships from both the past and present time. Furthermore, descriptive studies are commonly limited to investigating a few aspects of the appointed research phenomena (ibid). The aspects that the research aims to describe are usually detailed and thorough; the aspects can be described either separately or with the objective of finding connections between them. In addition to this, Patel and Davidsson (2003, p 13) explain that there is commonly one kind of technique employed to gather information in a descriptive study. Another reason for choosing a descriptive character for this study was due to the fact that there was one technique employed regarding the empirical data collection. In the section below, the appointed technique to gather the empirical data for this study will be discussed.

When there are gaps in the knowledge, the study is characterized as exploratory (Patel & Davidsson, 2003, p 12). The main purpose with exploratory studies is to collect as much information as possible within the chosen problem area; the researcher tries to highlight the problem in a versatile manner. In addition to this, exploratory researcher often uses more than one technique in order to collect the empirical information (ibid).

Based on the above section regarding the character of the study, this study was regarded as being of both descriptive and exploratory character. This is because the character of the appointed research questions varies. The research questions are of a descriptive nature; however, the manners in which the questions are being measured are more of an exploratory character.

Research Strategy

In addition to choosing a research method, the researcher also needs to settle on what strategy to use in order to extract the empirical information. The most common strategies within the research field are: surveys, case studies, experiments and interviews. Interviews are according to Bryman and Bell (2007, p 472) the most commonly employed method to use for data collection within qualitative research; mainly because of its flexibility. Qualitative interviewing is characterized as having quite free structure: and the emphasis in the
interviewee’s point of view is greater than in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007 p 474). Since the structure of the interview process is not clearly outlined, there is a greater chance for the interviewer to get a deeper insight into what the respondent sees as relevant and important. Finally, the researcher can ask “new” questions in order to follow up on respondents’ replies if desired, the order of the questions do not need to be set, rather it can vary (ibid).

The two major types of interviews for a qualitative approach are unstructured- and semi-structured interviewing. The unstructured interview inclines to be similar to a normal conversation. The respondent answers to questions in a free manner and the interviewer only remark to the points worth following up (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p 474). A semi-structured interview implies that the researcher has a list with the questions regarding specific topics to be asked during the interview occasion, an interview guide. However, the respondent still has a lot of freedom regarding how to answer to each question (ibid). It is worth pointing out that even though the interviewer has an interview guide, the questions can still be asked in a random manner and additional questions can also occur during the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p 474).

Based on the above discussion regarding the types of strategies within qualitative research, and especially the types of interviews, the appointed research strategy for this research process was semi-structured interviews. This study seeks to investigate how some specific advertising messages are being decoded by two different consumer groups; since this is based on emotions and experiences to a large extent, it is suitable to appoint interviews as a research strategy (Denscombe 2000, p 132). Using a semi-structured interview approach was the most suitable way to carry out the data collection since it allows the researcher to have a list of questions that covers the research topic as a guideline during the interview occasion. Furthermore, it is possible for the respondents to answer each question freely which is necessary when it comes to this research in terms of reaching the established purpose.

Sample
According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p 497) one problem with sampling within qualitative research is the lack of transparency. This belief is further developed by the fact that it can many times be difficult to separate the researcher’s methods on how the interviewees were selected and how many of them were selected. In this study, the sample was selected for convenience as well as purposive reasons.

According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p 197), a convenience sample is a sample available to the researcher by the virtue of its accessibility. Data from a convenience sample does not consent definite findings to be generalized; however, a convenience sample can constitute as a springboard for further research or allow links to be forged with existing findings in an area (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p 198). The authors recognize that convenience sampling probably plays a more prominent role than is sometimes supposed (ibid).

On the other hand, purposive sampling is a sample that is chosen in accordance with the purpose of the study (Palys, 2008). To say one will engage in purposive sampling signifies that one sees sampling as a “series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how one does one’s research” (Palys, 2008, p. 697-698). The participants of the study are not only chosen in accordance with the purpose of the study, but the respondents that do not fit the requirements of the study are neglected on purpose (ibid).
The respondents were chosen in order to fulfill the purpose of the study. Therefore, the immigrant respondents that do not speak English were neglected for this study, as the purpose is to analyze the English language perception in advertisements.

The intensions were to keep interviewing until no new information appeared and the sample size of this research ended up being twenty-seven participants. In addition to this, the intentions were to include participants of all ages; age variety was preferred in order to be able to gain knowledge from different consumer segments viewpoints. Selecting the sample for purposive reasons was also suitable considering the time limitation for this research process as well as for financial reasons. The sample population constituted of consumers based in the Halmstad city region; as well as the city of Örnsköldsvik. Interviews with the consumers classified as immigrants took place at Klarabergsgymnasiet Komvux department; since this is the place immigrants come to study Swedish for beginners. The immigrant consumer group consisted of both new immigrants as well as those who have been in Sweden for a few years. The time spent in Sweden varied from six months up to two years. Given the difference of time spent in Sweden, the immigrant consumers’ level of Swedish varied; prior to collecting the empirical data the researchers were aware of this. However, the consequences of the Swedish language variation among the immigrant consumers was not seen as a threat regarding how it would affect the results of the study; no attempt to generalize the findings were made. The diversity of the consumers, even within the two consumer groups were rather viewed as positive since it enable the researchers to get many different viewpoints regarding the research subject.

The immigrant group of the consumers was contacted through the Swedish Language for Foreigners institute in Halmstad, Sweden. The respondents were chosen according to their country of origin and their age, also here a variety regarding age, nationality, gender as well as time spent in Sweden was viewed as positive for the study. This was because the researchers found it necessary to keep the group of the respondents as diverse as possible, so that the results of the study are as all-round as possible. The participants of the study come from China, Russia, The Netherlands, Romania, Iran and Lebanon.

The age variety of the sample population was between 19 and 67 years of age. The age variety was desirable because we were able to get reflections regarding the research subject from not only one consumer segment but various. In addition to this, the study aimed to gain a deeper understanding on consumers’ attitude towards language mixed advertisements, the researchers welcomed all ages in order to get as many viewpoints as possible on the topic.

Validity and Reliability in qualitative research
According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p 410) validity refers to “whether you are observing, identifying or measuring what you say you are”; furthermore it can be measured both internally and externally. Internal validity refers to whether or not there is a mutual understanding between the researchers in terms of the observations and the developed theoretical ideas (ibid). Bryman and Bell claim that the internal validity is commonly strong within qualitative research since the researchers participate in the social life to a large extent when collecting the empirical data. The internal validity of this particular study was increased since the researchers conducted face to face interviews when collecting the empirical data; hence participating in the social life with the respondents of this study. Furthermore, the researchers did share the same beliefs and conclusions regarding the theoretical ideas as well as for the observations made during the empirical data collection. This enables the researchers to reach a high level of congruency between theory and social life (Bryman & Bell, 2007 p
The validity of a study will also be enhanced if different points of views are taken into account and if these views can be confirmed (Denscombe, 2000). This particular study includes empirical data from many different participants, from both of the identified consumer groups. This resulted in a great variety of viewpoints and identified factors regarding the topic. However, the different viewpoints and factors identified could be found among more then one of the respondents. In other words, the respondents many times shared the same viewpoints. As Denscombe (2000) argues, the confirmation of views increase the validity of the study; this was true regarding this particular study.

Contrary to internal validity, external validity is harder to reach within qualitative research since this is concerned with the ability to generalize a study’s findings across social settings (Bryman & Bell, 2007 p 410). However, it is recognized that the external validity is difficult to ensure in qualitative research (ibid). The goal of this study was not to be able to generalize the findings of the study, but rather to identify relationships from the data obtained; because of this aim an exploratory approach was taken. By also employing a descriptive character of the study the goal was to deepen the knowledge about the research topic and to thoroughly describe the research phenomenon.

The criteria for external validity were difficult to meet because generalizing the findings of this study among social settings is a complicated matter to reach. Since the applied data collection method was face to face interviews and each interview was carried out with the respondents individually, in different places, during different occasions as well as with different advertisements as the main topic during the interviews (since it was up to the individual respondent to chose the advertisements who matched their viewpoints best); it is recognized that the external validity and the ability to generalize the findings of this study as difficult. However, as mentioned, generalization of the results is not the main criteria of this research process.

The aim of identifying relationships in the obtained data and to describe the data in-depth to gain deeper knowledge about the research area was carried out in accordance to the methods of pattern matching and analytic induction.

Reliability on the other hand, can be described as the dependability, consistency, and/or repeatability of a project’s data collection, interpretation, and/or analysis (Miller, 2008, p 753-754). According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p 410) external reliability concerns to what extent the research can be replicated. Securing the external reliability of this research is recognized as a difficult criterion to meet by the researchers of this particular study. This is due to the fact the interviews and the setting and circumstances of these interviews happen at a single point in time; this fact makes it difficult to replicate the study. Internal reliability can be referred to as, when there is more than one observer, whether or not the researchers are on the same page regarding what is seen and heard during the empirical data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p 410). This study’s internal reliability was enhanced since during the empirical collection the researchers took notes of the respondents’ answers as well as the interviews were recorded. Furthermore, all the acquired data was transcribed, by recording and transcribing the empirical data, the risk of misunderstandings among the researchers was eliminated. In addition to this, the reliability of the data collected during this particular research was increased by the fact that the data was composed from two different consumer groups. This implied that the risk of subjectivity was reduced and the reliability of the collected data enhanced by the diversity of the sample population.
3.2 Implementation of empirical data

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the perception and decoding of language mixed advertising messages between consumer groups in Sweden, native Swedish consumers and immigrants.

What first needed to be thought of was what kind of advertisements that could be used for the empirical data gathering. Twelve different advertisements were chosen from the two magazines, King Magazine and Cosmopolitan. The chosen advertisements are of products that can apply to both males and females as well as there is a great variety between the advertisements in terms of their language structure and layout. Some have the advertisement message mainly in Swedish while other has the majority of the text in English. Furthermore the chosen advertisements can be appealing for both consumer groups as well as for consumers of various ages.

In order to reach the established purpose, a focus group discussion was arranged prior to conducting the interviews with respondents from the two consumer groups. A focus group discussion is a method of interviewing that involves more than one and most commonly at least four interviewees at the same time (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p 510). This was done as a pilot study in order for the researchers to be well prepared for the interview occasions later on. Furthermore, the focus group discussion provided an opportunity to come up with suitable questions as well as an opportunity to see what kind of responses the focus group participants could provide in terms of the selected advertisements containing mixed language. The focus group discussion took place three days before the face to face interviews were carried out. A room at Halmstad University was booked by the researchers in order to carry out the discussion without any disturbance from the surrounding environment.

From the focus group discussion and the viewpoints brought up there regarding the chosen advertisements, an interview guide was formulated. The questions of the interview were designed in a manner that corresponds with the theoretical framework in order to analyze and compare theory and empirical findings.

To answer RQ1 questions derived from the language and emotions theory and language death was formulated.

RQ1: How can consumer groups’ attitude towards the use of foreign language mixed advertisements be described?

The consumer’s attitude were measured in terms of how their emotional perception of English language; furthermore, whether different cultural groups in Sweden respond to them differently.

According to the theory on language death, English is the far most language that is being practiced internationally. If a culture to a large extent is being influenced by a more dominant culture, it can begin to lose its character and start to adopt new behaviors, this influences how languages are being used. A new language can be viewed as attractive because it represents
something new, a change. Since English is a large part of everyday life in Sweden; we wanted to look into how people in the Swedish consumer market viewed this phenomenon. Questions that were asked in order to answer that the consumers’ attitudes towards language mixed advertisements was if they viewed the extensive use of English as a threat to the Swedish language. In addition to this, the respondents were asked if they thought it is appropriate to use English language in advertisements targeting consumers in Sweden.

Moreover, discussions about the respondents attitudes towards this advertising strategy was also held in terms of whether it is positive, negative, exciting and if so, why? The respondents were also asked about what emotions they got (positive, negative, resentment) when seeing an advertisement containing English language in any form. The main intentions were to measure the consumer groups’ attitude to the research topic in terms of positive or negative with their developed answers of why they had a certain attitude; and then compare these attitudes among the two consumer groups.

In theory, a person’s dominant language has a greater emotional appeal than other languages. However, the way the second language is learnt and when it is learnt makes a great difference regarding emotional response towards the second language. Moreover, the level of the second language is important to consider; the differences in emotional perception between the dominant and the second language decrease the higher level a person have of the language. All of these factors have an impact on peoples’ attitude to the use of a second language in advertisements. Questions that were asked during all the interview occasions were which language is dominant? How did the respondent learn the second language and when? Did the respondents perceive one language more emotionally appealing than the other language?

To answer RQ 2 a number of questions was formulated from the theories about the communication process and from language in advertising theory.

RQ2: What associations do the consumer groups have regarding English language mix in the Swedish advertisements?

The consumer groups’ associations were measured as the consumers’ associations to the English language in general as well as the associations to the language when out into the advertising context in advertisements in the Swedish consumer market. In addition this, attention was also paid to if the consumers associations to the English language had anything to do with their ability to decode the advertising message.

Theory about language in advertisements suggests that there are different factors that can explain the use of a foreign language in advertisements. These factors were country of product origin, product type, target audience and customer country. These variables was taken into consideration and interview questions was formulated to find answers to if these variables affected the respondents’ perception of the use of a foreign language regarding different products advertisements. The aim was to first ask what associations the respondents had to the English language in general and then see if the associations were similar when put into the advertising context. Furthermore, questions were developed from the communication process model with the aim of finding out if the consumers had problems in decoding any of the advertising messages, if so why and how it affected their associations and perceptions of
advertisements. Questions asked were for example if a product/brands country of origin affected the respondents perception of the language used in the advertisement? Are there certain products that should only be advertised in ONE of the languages, and if so why?

The interview questions established to answer RQ 3 were formulated from the **communication process model**, as well as the theory on **construction and formulation of advertising messages**.

**RQ3: How can the consumer groups’ decoding process of the language mixed advertising be described in terms of how the advertising message is being interpreted?**

The consumer’s decoding and interpretations of the advertising messages was measured as whether symbolism in the language-mixed advertisements is in line with the consumers’ self-image. In addition to this, attention was also paid to whether different cultural groups in Sweden responded differently to the advertising messages.

According to theory, advertising messages should be short, concise and clear. Language is often pointed out as a common barrier to communication. To answer RQ3 the respondents were asked if the language-mixed advertisement messages as clear and understandable. The respondents was also how they interpreted messages from the chosen advertisements as well as if the language was perceived as a barrier to the advertising communication or if the language was regarded as a tool to understand messages. Questions were also asked to the respondents concerning if they thought messages was in line with the overall advertisement, was the language used appropriately – persuasive, serious or convincing. These questions were formulated from the theory on construction/formulation of advertising messages.

In the communication process model it is said that encoding is the development where thought of a message are turned into a symbolic form. The respondents were asked if they found any of the advertisement symbols to stand out more than other, and why? The decoding of the symbols are controlled by the individual receiver, the process will differ among individuals. All respondents were asked about what/which symbols they thought stood out more than others and why. The purpose with asking this was to answer RQ 3 as well as to see for what reasons the symbols caught the respondent’s eye. According to the theory on symbolism an advertising message is good when the symbol of the advertisement fits the self-perception of the consumer.

The interview questions belonging to RQ4 are developed from the theory on **symbolism**.

**RQ4: How can consumer groups’ perception of symbolism in language mixed advertisements be described?**

The consumer groups’ perception was perceived as how the consumers viewed symbols featured in the advertisements, as suggested by theory or other viewpoints? In order to detect either relationships or deviations among the two consumer groups a comparison of the answers was made.
According to the reviewed theory on symbolism, its foremost purpose is to persuade consumers to purchase a product. This is in theory achieved when symbols in the advertisement matches a consumer’s self-concept and self-congruency. If a consumer’s perception of an advertising symbol fits the way the consumer think of him/her self, the consumer is more likely to view the advertising message as positive and appropriate for the product. The questions asked to the respondents were if there were any of the chosen advertisements that matched their personality; as well as if they viewed any of the products advertisements as being close to their personality, character, habits and lifestyle. The aim was to see if the symbols featured in the chosen advertisements was perceived by the respondents as the theory suggested, or if there was other underlying reasons as to how symbolism was perceived. Furthermore, the desire was to compare the results between the two consumer groups in order to detect either relationships or deviations.

In order to answer research questions 1 through 4, twenty-seven interviews were conducted with native Swedish consumers as well as immigrant consumers. The interviews were carried out face to face with all of the respondents. All of the respondents participated in the study voluntarily and were free to withdraw from the process of the study at any point of time. The full names and personal numbers of the respondents were not recorded due to privacy issues, moreover, this was not considered as necessary for the study. However, information about age and the country of origin of the respondent was included in the information since this information was regarded as important and possibly affects the results of the study. The researchers briefly explained the topic of the research at the start of all interviews; however the details were not mentioned in order not to make the respondent lean towards a certain kind of answer.

An interview guide was used by the interviewer in order to start the discussion and to keep the respondents on the subject so that accurate answers could be gained. The interview guide was not sent out in advance to the respondents in order to keep the answers spontaneous and not biased in any way. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 1. The interview guide was constructed from the theoretical framework presented in the literature review section. Some of the theories required more questions for the interviews than the others, for instance, the theory of language and emotions required information about the age of second language acquisition, the way of language acquisition, the emotional perspective of the respondent towards the second language, etc. However, these questions were based on the literature and were both relevant to the theory and research questions.

All interview occasions have been summarized in Table 1 below. Each interview occasion varied in time between 25 to 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded so that no information would be lost and individual notes were taken as well. Before each interview the respondents were asked if they would mind being recorded but fortunately none of the respondents had any problems regarding this.

Table 1: Information on all Interview Occasions.

The table below includes information on number of participants, gender, age and nationality of participant, when and where the interview was help as well as how long the interview lasted.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
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<th>AGE</th>
<th>NATIONALITY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
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Between April 7\textsuperscript{th} and April 12\textsuperscript{th}, fifteen individual interviews were held with native Swedish consumers. The interviews took place at either the interviewer’s home or the interviewee’s home in the two towns of Halmstad and Örnsköldsvik. Conducting the interviews on a home basis meant a relaxing and undisturbed environment which was helpful and good in order to get high quality discussions regarding the research subject. The interviews with the Swedish consumers were held in Swedish due to the fact that not all of the consumers were familiar enough with the English language to conduct the interview in English. This meant that only one of the researchers was able to hold the interviews with the native Swedish consumers since the second researcher does not know the language at all. However, the non-Swedish speaking researcher participated during the interviews that took place in Halmstad; observing body language and reactions of the respondents during the interview. However, it needs to be recognized that the results from these interviews might be affected due to the fact that only one of the researchers was able to understand and control the interviews held in Swedish to a full extent. Still, this can also be a problem even if both researchers are fluent in Swedish since people interpret things differently depending on personality, previous experiences and knowledge.

The interviews with the twelve immigrant consumers took place at Klarabersgymnasiet during April 13\textsuperscript{th} and April 14\textsuperscript{th}. The interviews took place in closed rooms at the school so that the respondents would not be distracted by noise or people passing by during the process. The interviews were held with one respondent at a time and all interviews were held in English, both researchers were present during all interviews. The immigrant consumers’ duration of stay in Sweden were taken into consideration as this was important for the analysis of the study in terms of comparing the immigrant consumer group to the native Swedish consumers. In addition to this, all twenty-seven interviews were recorded with a tape recorder; so that the transcription process would be more convenient as well as no information was risked being lost.
3.3 Analysis

The data analysis was based on the established theoretical framework as well as on the empirical data that was obtained through the carried out face to face interviews. After having conducted all twenty-seven interviews; all the acquired data was transcribed. All responses were compared amongst the two consumer groups and according to the research questions as well as theory. The data analysis is presented more in depth in the data analysis section of the thesis; comparisons are made between empirical and theoretical data.

Due to the fact that the study was completed through the qualitative research, i.e. in-depth interviews, the analysis of the data acquired during the study was in accordance with the guidelines of the qualitative analysis. It is hard to say that only one type of qualitative analysis fits one study, therefore pattern matching and analytic induction were the two types of qualitative analysis used in this study.

Pattern matching can be explained as: “involves predicting a pattern of outcomes based on theoretical propositions to explain what you expect to find” (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2007, p. 489). This approach is used when a theoretical framework is developed before the research is done, and the data acquired is tested in adequacy with the theoretical framework, which explains the findings (ibid). In this particular study the literature was reviewed prior to the study and the questions for the interview were based on the theories in the literature review chapter. Afterwards, the data acquired during the interviews was analyzed in accordance with the theories in order to explain the findings of the research.

Analytic induction was another type of qualitative analysis in this study, as it is “an inductive version of the explanation-building procedure, it is defined as the intensive examination of a strategically selected number of cases so as to empirically establish the causes of a specific phenomenon” (Saunders et al, 2007, p 489). The data that was acquired during the interviews was intensively examined. Moreover, the cases of the study can be called specific, since there were two main consumer groups that were compared to each other – immigrant vs. native Swedish consumer groups.

To summarize the methodology chapter; this particular research was of a qualitative approach with the character of the study being both descriptive and exploratory. The empirical data was gathered through face to face interviews of a semi-structure nature. This implied open ended questions and the ability for the respondent to talk freely; whilst the researchers could use an interview guide as a helping tool during the interviews. 15 native Swedish consumers as well as 12 immigrant consumers was the sample population for this research; the interviews with these consumers took place during one week, between April 7th and April 14th, 2010. The empirical data was analyzed according to the approaches of pattern matching as well as analytic induction. In the following chapter, all the empirical data that was acquired will be presented.
4. Empirical Data

In this section of the thesis the empirical data collected from the face to face interviews with the respondents is presented. The structure of this section will be in line with the structure of the literature review section.

4.1 Swedish and Immigrant Consumer Responses

The following is a presentation of the empirical data obtained from interviews with 27 different consumers from the Swedish consumer market.

RQ1: How can consumer groups’ attitude towards the use of English language in advertisements be described?

Due to the fact that Research Questions 1 is focusing on the two consumer groups’ attitude towards English language in advertisements, the questions that were asked were focusing on the consumers’ attitude towards English language; whether the consumers thought that it is appropriate to have English language in Swedish advertisements. For instance, ‘Do you think that it is appropriate to have English language in the Swedish advertisements?’, ‘When you look at the advertisement [the advertisement was given during the interview], what do you think about the use of English words in it? Do you find it attractive, effective, appropriate, problematic? The consumers’ attitude was measured in terms of the emotional perception of the English language used in Swedish advertisements.

Language and Emotions theory
The consumers were asked what emotions they have towards English in Swedish advertisements, whether they perceive English or Swedish more emotionally than the other language, and what language they perceive as their dominant. When the consumers were asked about their emotions towards the perception of English language, they were to specify whether they see the language as favorable, appealing, convincing and/or persuasive. The consumers were also asked to specify whether they find the English language as more emotionally appealing to them in the advertisement. For instance, in order to analyze the data according to the theory of Language and Emotions, the questions about the age and way of language acquisition were asked. Moreover, the respondents were asked whether they perceive English language in a more or less emotional way than Swedish language. The respondents were also asked about their age when they started their English and second language acquisition. For instance, the immigrants were asked when they started to learn English and Swedish, which is important for this particular study; and Swedish respondents were asked when they started to learn English. This factor was important in order to see the emotional perception of the foreign language of the respondents. The level of English knowledge was essential to know in order to analyze the emotional perception of the advertising messages in English.

Swedish

All 15 of the Swedish respondents had Swedish as their dominant language and English as their second language. However, the level of English knowledge varied a lot amongst the native consumers from Sweden. The younger respondents claimed that their level of English knowledge is quiet high and they feel comfortable using it and seeing it on TV and in advertisements. However, older respondents, 40-60 years old, stated to be not as fluent in
English as the younger generation, due to the fact that they learned it later in school, or did not learn it in school at all.

For example female 25 years old stated:

“I am fluent in English; I started to learn the language at the age of 8 to 9 years old in school. But I got it more through a natural acquisition when I was abroad in the States for a year. Before going abroad my English had also improved from watching TV and movies as well as some travels”.

While a female 42 years old: “My English is limited. I started to learn the language in fourth grade at school and from that I got the basic knowledge of the language. I am better at understanding the language but I am really bad at speaking it, also some help through travels and also TV and movies.”

Male 66 years old: “My English is very limited. When I was young we did not learn English in school; the English I know I have learned from work related experiences and to a small extent travel have also helped me acquire knowledge.

**Immigrants**

The immigrant respondents that were interviewed for the study are originally from China, Russia, The Netherlands, Romania, Iran and Lebanon. Some of them stated their home country’s national language as their dominant one, meaning that they felt more comfortable expressing emotions in their mother tongue. However, when taking the context of Sweden as their new place of living, all of the respondents said that English is being their dominant language of communication, whereas Swedish is the language that they study more out of a necessity.

All of the respondents started to learn English during their primary school years, at the age from 4 to 10. Only one of the respondents started to learn English when she was 13. However, even though all of the respondents learned English through school, about 50 percent of the respondents claimed that watching TV programs in English or travelling abroad was a more useful and effective way for them to learn the language.

Female 24 years old, China: “I learned English in school, started to learn it when I was 13 years old. I didn’t watch many TV shows or anything like that in English. School was the primary source of language acquisition for me. But when here in Sweden, both English and Chinese are the languages in which I feel comfortable expressing myself, I see these two languages as more emotional and close to myself.”

Male 43 years old, Iran: “I started to learn English when I was 8 years old, but until I started to travel the world and live abroad I couldn’t speak fluently in English. Now English is my dominant language, I feel much more comfortable speaking it and expressing myself in it, rather than in my native language.”

**Swedish**

Some advertisements targeting the Swedish consumer market are completely in English, or the advertisements contain a mix of Swedish and English. The Swedish consumers’ responses regarding attitude and emotional perception towards these marketing strategies vary among
the respondents, and mostly in terms of the age differences and level of language knowledge. The younger Swedish respondents see English used in Swedish advertisements, whether it is completely in English or mixed-language, as a positive factor. In the majority of the cases, due to the different level of English knowledge, the respondents prefer to have the mix of language in the advertisements: the lower the respondents claim to have their English level, the more they prefer to see Swedish language in the advertisements.

The responses are presented below:

Male 20 year sold claims to be positive and happy about this: “I like that there is a variety to the advertisement supply here in Sweden. Since I do understand most of the English language I do not regard it as a problem seeing it in Swedish advertisements. However, I think that if the brand or the product being promoted is really “Swedish”; then I rather see the main language used as being Swedish!”

In addition to this, male 24 years old states: “If I were to say either or, I would say my emotions are more negative than positive, simply because English is not my first language, at the most I can relate to mixed advertisements but I do not feel positive towards having advertisements only in English”.

Female 45 years old states that: “If I compare seeing an advertisement in English or a mix with English, to seeing an advertisement only in Swedish; I would say that it feels a lot bigger and impressive to see one in English. This is because it is more exotic in a way since I cannot say that I am fluent in the English language. It feels more international than seeing only Swedish in an advertisement”.

Male 35 years old and female 42 years old discusses: “It does not matter too much if there is a mix of the languages or completely in English. Some advertising messages are just formulated so out of the blue and do simply not match the overall layout of an advertisement so the main problem is often not the use of language in terms of English or Swedish, but a question of formulation of messages in relation to the overall picture”.

Female 21 years old claims that: “Many times an advertising message sounds better in English that in Swedish. I would say that a mix is the best way because some advertisements that are completely in English can be hard to understand, so I am more positive to the mix perspective”.

Male 66 years old and female 67 years old discusses: “Since we have so poor knowledge of English we feel more negative towards this, not so much resentment but just negative since we are missing out on the information in the advertisement if it is in English. However, we find that most advertisements that are targeting older people to be mainly in Swedish already”.

**Immigrants**

The immigrant respondents that are between the age groups from 21 to 30 years old are the ones that have been in Sweden for a time period from 5 to 24 months. However, the older respondents are the ones that have spent from 3 to 15 years in Sweden. The respondents that have been in Sweden longer than the others are more fluent in Swedish. Nevertheless, all of the respondents state that English remains their dominant language of communication.
Due to the fact that immigrant respondents claim English as their dominant language of communication in Sweden, their reaction to the English language in Swedish advertising was rather homogeneous. None of the respondents had any negative attitude towards the use of English in Swedish advertisements. In fact, the majority of the respondents stated that they felt rather included in the Swedish market as consumers, when they saw the advertisement in English.

Male 24 years old, The Netherlands: “I am not that fluent in Swedish. I can read and I can speak, but I am not as fluent as I am in English. And when I see the advertisement in English, I feel that I am being included or counted in as a consumer here.”

Female 22 years old, Russia: “I like seeing English in advertisements, and I like seeing Swedish language as well. English language tells me that the product that is being advertised is internationally known and I am a part of this international consumer group that it is aimed at. But Swedish attracts me as I want to see how much of the language I understand, plus I think it gives the advertisement some ‘domestic’ touch. I prefer seeing the mix of the both languages.”

Male 37 years old, Lebanon: “English is the language of communication in the world today. I can’t imagine seeing advertising industry without any English language in it. Sweden is a big country, with lots of foreigners, who speak English. This is the language that reaches them most. I think it’s a necessity and smart to use English. I personally find it appealing.”

When discussing whether one language was perceived more emotionally than the other and if this made the consumers regard advertisements as more emotionally appealing than other; the Swedish consumers tended to be divided in half regarding which language that was more emotionally appealing. In general, the respondents that felt more comfortable with the English language most of the time perceive it more emotionally in advertisements. However, the respondents that specifically mention that Swedish is their first and dominant language – prefer to see Swedish in advertisements more. For instance:

Male 25 years old and female 25 years old both felt that “I can relate more to emotions in English. To me it is much easier to express emotions in English then in Swedish even though that is my native language”.

Male 20 years old agrees to this by stating “Even though Swedish is my first language I think English is more emotionally then Swedish. The language itself is cooler and not as stiff and boring as Swedish is!”

Female 46 years old is on the same page, claiming “I think that many expressions sounds better in English then in Swedish, so for advertisements, using English many times sound better and more powerful. The language can create more colorful expressions then the Swedish language can”.

Contrary to the above consumers, some responded that their native language was more emotionally appealing then English, which is also suggested in the theory.
Male 24 years old states “Because it is my native language, Swedish becomes more emotionally perceived to me. I think emotions are easier to relate to if they are communicated in Swedish and it is the same regarding advertising messages”.

Female 45 years old claims “Swedish is more closely related to emotions for me because I know that language fully. Relating this to seeing the two languages in advertising, the one that I perceive as more emotional than the other it becomes the same, Swedish”.

Female 23 years old states “Both languages have strong emotional connections for me, but I would ultimately say that Swedish is more emotionally perceived by me. This is because many times I think that in English, emotions can be expressed too much and in that way they kind of lose their seriousness”.

**Immigrants**

When it comes to the emotional perception of the English and Swedish languages, the vast majority of the respondents said that they find English language in advertisements much more emotionally appealing to them, than any other language – whether it is Swedish or their native country’s language. The respondents mentioned that English language seems to be much more convincing in advertisements than Swedish language, the slogans are more powerful and catchy, the text is more attractive and the message seem to match the picture of the advertisement well. When looking at the advertisements offered by the researchers, most of the respondents found the advertisements with English (either mixed language, or completely in English) much more modern, appealing, international and convincing than the advertisements in Swedish language only.

Female 21 years old, Romania: “When I see the advertisements in English I get the message very quickly, whereas Swedish takes longer to comprehend. Moreover, I’m young, I speak fluent English, and I’ve been travelling the world – English appeals to me right away”.

Male 30 years old, The Netherlands: “English makes me think. There’s always some kind of a double meaning behind it, it is very catchy, it attracts me. I feel young and as a part of the world when I see that some advertisement is really appealing to me because of the English language. The same message could have been written in Swedish, or even Dutch and I still think that English is much more trendy and cool. In my native language, or in Swedish, the same advertisement would look lame to me.”

Female 22 years old, Russia: “English gives the idea of international and famous brand. It shows that the product is of high quality. If I see the advertisement of a brand of shoes, but one advertisement is in English or mixed and the other one is in Swedish only, I will pick the shoes from the English or mixed advertisement. The presence of English makes me think that this product is of higher quality, internationally recognized and the slogans on the advertisement will look much more convincing to me.”

However, some of the immigrant respondents mentioned that seeing Swedish in the advertisement attracts them as they want to see how much of the language they understand. For instance, the younger respondents, who have been in Sweden for a shorter period of time, see the advertisements in Swedish as a challenge and try to read through the text and slogans and see how much of the message they understand. They like to understand the message, but this is due to their feeling of self-achievement, rather than the attitude towards the English or Swedish languages in the advertisements.
Female 21 years old, Romania: “I love reading text in Swedish. I pay attention to these advertisements, of course. But it is more for an exercise, just to check how much of the Swedish I comprehend.”

Female 24 years old, China: “I can speak Swedish fluently already, I understand everything that I read and I like to exercise. I read through the advertisements in magazines, just to make sure that I understand everything. English language is the one that communicates to me the best. It is more persuasive, I think.”

To conclude, the Swedish consumers’ attitude towards the use of English language in advertising can mainly be described as positive. The younger generation does not regard this as weird or strange in any way since they are born in the time of globalization. The middle-aged respondents of 35-45 years old had mixed feelings about the English language use in the advertisements. The respondents in their 60’s claimed to have more negative feelings to the English language in advertisements.

For example, female 19 years old claims that “I do not feel that this is a problem; since I am so young I am used to having it this way and to be surrounded by the English language. But still, I would not want English to take over within the advertising field; the best way according to me is to use a mix of the both languages in adverts”.

Male 35 years old makes clear that “I do not have any problems with this because I am comfortable enough with the language to understand most of it. But sometimes I can think that advertisements are featured in English “just because”. In many cases using Swedish would have worked just as well in terms of communicating a certain slogan or a message”.

Male 66 years old claims “If advertisements are only in English, then it is not beneficial for me and I tend to view this as negative since I do not understand much English. If there is a mix of the languages it can work, but I would prefer having the advertisements in only Swedish”.

Immigrant consumers were more or less homogeneous in their positive attitude towards the use of English language in Swedish advertisements. The respondents perceive English as their dominant language in the Swedish environment and therefore perceive it more emotionally than Swedish language in advertisements. The use of English is seen as appropriate and the difference between the answers according to the generation variance of the respondents did not occur.

**Language Death Theory**

The consumers were asked whether they see English language as a threat to the Swedish language and whether it is appropriate to have it in Swedish advertisements.

**Swedish**

Whether or not advertisements in English are appropriate to have and use in Sweden resulted in a lot of different answers from the consumers. Some respondents stated that the use of English language is appropriate, due to the fact that a great percentage of Swedish people understand and speak English. Some of the respondents however, (the majority are middle to older age generation) said that English is not that appropriate in Swedish advertisements.
Male 20 years old states: “I would say, why not! Sweden is a highly international country with a population that has a great English knowledge overall; I think it is appropriate to have advertisements in English. However, I still think that the only languages to choose from are Swedish and English; for example German would not work”.

Female 46 years old: “I prefer seeing advertising messages in Swedish but still think that in some situations English fits better in terms of expressing a message as well as the impact of an advertising message”.

Male 66 years old and female 67 years old are both stating: “Since I do not have a good understanding of the English language I do not think this strategy is appropriate to use in Sweden”.

**Immigrants**

Immigrant consumers perceived English language as appropriate in the Swedish advertisements. They referred to the fact that majority of population in Sweden speaks English, and the use of English in the advertisements is mostly perceived as a sign of internationalization or globalization, which is a positive factor.

Male 37 years old, Lebanon: “Of course, English is appropriate. I understand it, my Swedish friends understand it, and the language sounds more powerful and convincing. The majority of people in Sweden speaks and understands English; it is as appropriate as it can be!”

**Swedish**

None of the Swedish respondents regarded English to be a threat to the Swedish language in general. However several respondents mentioned that the extent use of English might already have become a threat to the Swedish language within the advertising and business sector. Female 46 years old expressed her concerns as “It seems to be a trend that is going strong, to use English in advertising messages, maybe in that sense it can be a threat to the Swedish language”.

Female 23 years old concerns went even deeper, claiming: “I do not think the English language is a threat against the Swedish language itself, but it can be more of a threat to our culture. I can sometimes be annoyed that so much in our society and everyday living are so Americanized; movies, music, the clothes we are wearing, all restaurants”.

The Swedish consumers agree on that, to a large extent they are used to seeing English in advertising as well as in other aspects of society; the Swedish population is used to having contact with the English language. Because of this, Swedish consumers tent not to reflect too much about the English being used in advertisements; several respondents recognized this fact in itself as a threat to the use of Swedish within the advertising industry and business sector.

For example, male 25 years old states “I think English is more powerful in advertising. Maybe in advertising it is a threat for Swedish language”.

Male 24 years old reflects on this issue, claiming “But I can definitely say that it is noticeable how much we are influenced by the English language, slang words and directly translated words and so on, can be found to a large extend in every-day Swedish conversations.”
Female 19 years old, “I think English sounds better and cooler than Swedish, if too many starts to think this way it is a treat to our native language, but of course I do not think that English will cause the Swedish language to die out”.

The immigrant respondents’ opinions on English being or not being a threat to Swedish language differed. Two of the respondents perceive English as a threat to the Swedish language, and the majority of the respondents thought that English will push out Swedish, at least from the advertising industry.

Female 24 years old, China: “English is so popular in advertisements, I think it could completely overtake the whole industry and Swedish will not be here anymore.”

Female 22 years old, Russia: “Sweden is a country with very rich heritage of culture and traditions. The language here is very strong. I do not think that English will ever be able to threaten Swedish language. Even advertising is going to keep both English and Swedish.”

Male 43 years old, Iran: “English could be a threat to Swedish language. More and more young people use English when they talk to each other. They might start to forget their native language because of this constant English exposure.”

Male 37 years old, Lebanon: “English is a threat, for sure. I, as an immigrant whose dominant language is English, am constantly exposed to the English language in advertisements, TV shows, radio and internet. I do not have any incentives to study Swedish or to speak Swedish and make sure it is perfect, because everybody understands what I’m saying when I speak English.”

RQ2: What associations do the consumer groups have regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisement?

In connection to this research question attention was paid to the consumers associations to the English language in general; the associations to the English language were also looked at in the advertising context, if it becomes different or if it is still similar to the general association. In addition to this attention was paid to if the consumers association to the English language had anything to do with their ability to decode the advertising messages. Since decoding is a mental process, this can affect consumers associations differently when the language is put into the advertising context. The type of language used in advertisements, country of origin of the featured product and/or brand and product category might also affect the consumers’ association to the language used. In addition to this, the intended target audience has an effect on the consumers’ associations to the English language mixed advertisements.

Communication Process Model

The respondents were asked to describe their associations with the language in general and also to describe whether some products should be advertised in one language or the other.

Swedish

The majority of the Swedish consumers associations with and of the English language in general can be generalized as associating it with USA. 12 respondents claimed that the main associations was to USA, in addition to USA the respondents also associated the language to a large extent to TV, movies and the Internet. For example, female 42 years old state “Because of all the English influences from TV and movies, which I watch a lot, it is easy to associate the language with USA.”
Male 20 years old: “I associate the language as being very international, I also associate it with USA”.

Female 45 years old was one of the few respondents that did not mainly associate the English language with USA. “When I see or hear it my associations are always: I wish I could be better, or even fluent in English!”

Associations to the English language in general are for male 66 years old is explained as: “I definitely associate the language with internationalization. It makes one realized how much smaller the world has become during just my lifetime! So much has developed in terms of IT, transport and the way businesses are run today compared to when I was young.”

Female 67 years old: “When I think about the language or when I hear English, my associations are that nowadays everyday life in Sweden is so influenced by English; society has become more modern compared to before”.

**Immigrants**

Only one out of all the immigrant respondents said that she has some sort of associations with the English language in general. The rest of the respondents claimed that the English language does not trigger any images in their mind, when they are asked to give associations with it. The respondent that had associations with the English language said, that it represents internationalization, globalization and modernity (Female 24, China).

Female 24 years old, China: “English language is a symbol of internationalization for me. Whenever I see it or hear it, I perceive it as something global, modern. It is the language of twenty first century I think.”

**Swedish**

Most of the respondents answered that they got the same kind of associations when seeing or reading English that is used in advertising. Sweden and the Swedish way of living are to a large extent influenced by America, not only in terms of TV and movies, but also product, clothing trends and so on. This was the main explanation as to why many respondents got the same associations when thinking about the language in general as when putting it into the advertising context. Respondents that answered differently follow below.

Female 19 years old: “When seeing the language in advertisements, the associations go more towards internationalization because it makes me realize that many products are not from Sweden”.

Male 20 years old states: “When seeing English in advertising the associations I get depends a lot on products and the overall layout of the advertisement and the advertisement message of the actual advertisement”.

Female 45 years old claims that: “When I realize that the language can be found in so many places around me, such as in advertisement, I realize that the world has become very much more internationalized then before”.

Female 46 years old also explains that her associations become different when putting the English language in the advertising context. “Seeing English in relation to different brands and products make me realize and be more aware of how big the world actually is! That the
language it so widely spread over the globe, so in some terms you could say that I also think about how globalized the world has become just compared to how it was when I was younger.”

Female 25 years old states: “The associations I get when seeing English used in advertising depends to a large extent on my previous knowledge about the product being advertised and the overall layout of the advertisement in question”.

**Immigrants**

Even though immigrant respondents did not report to have any associations with the English language in general, during the interviews the respondents had very strong opinions about the usage of English in Swedish advertisements. When the immigrants were given the samples of the print advertisements they paid careful attention to the language and described precisely what associations they had regarding English language in the advertisements. Most of the respondents said, that they perceive the brands that are advertised with a language mix or only English, as the brands that are worldwide recognized, international, modern and oriented towards younger generation. Therefore, even though the respondents did not have any specific association with the English language in general, they still were able to associate brands with English advertisements with internationalization, modernity, worldwide recognition, etc.

Female 22 years old, China: “When I see that the product is advertised in English, I think that this is the product of high quality. If it is in English, it is aimed at different countries, it is international. And a brand, that is international – cannot be of bad quality. English gives me a feeling of international high standard.”

Male 24 years old, The Netherlands: “English language in advertisements represents something very modern, something oriented towards the younger generation, something that unites this younger generation throughout the world. I do not think that English language by itself has some specific characteristic. However, in the advertising industry it is very persuasive and it gives me a feeling that the product is recognized in the whole world, with high quality and modern features.”

Male 37 years old, Lebanon: “I communicate with the English language; it is the language that I am most comfortable using in any situation of my life. I do not have any associations with it, because it seems to be too natural to me. But I know that I prefer English in advertisement because it just enhances the positive features of the brand. If Diesel advertised their ‘Be Stupid’ campaign in just Swedish – it would not make any sense to me, even though I am already fluent in Swedish. However, English language makes the whole ‘Be Stupid’ idea look very modern, daring, young and international. It is oriented not only to the Swedish customers, but to all of those youngsters around the world, who speak English and value internationalization.”

**Language in Advertising Theory**

The respondents were also asked whether the country of origin of the product affected their associations of the language used in the advertisements.
Swedish

When asked if the country of origin affects one's perception of the language used in advertising; male 24 years old stated “No, this is not something I dwell on at all when seeing advertisements”.

Apart from this response, most consumers tended to regard the country of origin as something affecting the association and perception about an advertisement. The respondents said that the products that were made in English-speaking countries are preferred to be advertised in English. The products of core Swedish companies are preferred to be advertised in Swedish, or preferably Swedish in language mixed advertisements. However, the English language of the advertisements of products that are produced in the countries with a reputation of low-quality production was perceived as a cover of low-quality. The extent to which the language is being used is to be categorized according to the country of origin of the product varied among the consumers, as seen in the examples below:

Male 20 years old: “If I know a product is Swedish or I know it is from an English speaking country, then I think it fits better to have the native language in the advertisement even when targeting Swedish consumers, it becomes more exotic. However if a product’s country of origin is something else than from an English speaking country, naturally I want the advertisement to be adapted into Swedish in order to understand the message”.

Female 46 years old: “If a product is from Sweden I see no reason in marketing it in other languages than Swedish, even mixing the languages seems pointless to me”.

Male 35 years old: “I think about it but for example “Made in Taiwan” is not as bad as it used to be according to me, now price are more of a guideline when buying rather than the country of origin”.

Contrary to the above response, female 25 years old explains: “I have prejudices regarding products from certain countries; like made in China or Taiwan. I associate this with cheap and low quality products. If I see that one of these products is being advertised in English I perceive it as a cover up for a lower quality”.

Male 66 years old: “The country of origin affect me in the way that I think it is more arguably correct to use English if the product comes from England or USA that using English when advertising products that are from Sweden”.

In line with male 66 years old response to the question was also male 33, female 21 and female 67.

Female 23 years old develops and explains in depth that: “I think that foreign brands and products can be more exclusive than Swedish ones. Depending on the country of origin, I definitely think that the use of English/Swedish in the advertising changes my perception; it fits, or looks more acceptable many times with English when advertising a foreign brand instead of adapting it into Swedish. Products or brands that are really Swedish, like IKEA, they for sure should stick to Swedish, and anything else would make me sad! Things that are so deeply rooted and connected to Swedish way of living and that all Swedes know are Swedish; those brands/products should definitely keep their advertising, within Sweden, in
Swedish. It is “our” thing, if using English it would feel like Sweden lost the product/brand. But say if IKEA for example, would have a line of furniture that is inspired by English furniture that they would call the “London collection”, or what ever. Then using English just for that line would be fine with me. Or like H&M that cooperate with so many international designers in their clothing collections, then it feel more suiting to also advertise in English so that the consumer gets the whole international and more exclusive feeling for the product”.

**Immigrants**

The immigrant respondents were also asked whether they had a certain preference of the language used in advertisement depending on the products country of origin.

Some of the respondents mentioned that when it comes to very Swedish brands like IKEA, for example, they prefer to see the advertisement in both English and Swedish, or just Swedish language. The ‘Swedishness’ of the brand is enhanced through the language that is used in the advertisement, and respondents would not want to see this ‘Swedishness’ to disappear because of the English language.

Female 22 years old, Russian: “IKEA is a very Swedish company. I like seeing the mix of English and Swedish in the advertisements. It preserves the Swedish heritage of the brand. Having the advertisements just in English would ruin my perception about the brand.”

Male 37 years old, Lebanon: “English language is great for international and well-known brands, but when it comes to genuinely Swedish products, like IKEA or H&M, the companies that stress the fact that they are Swedish, too much of English language in the advertisement could harm the image of the brand.”

The previous quotations can also be related to the respondents’ attitudes towards the country of origin of the product and the language of its advertisement. Some of the respondents said that depending on the country of origin of the product, they would like to see it in the advertising. Meaning, that if L’Oreal, for instance, is advertising its mascara in Sweden, the advertisement should not only contain English language, but also include some French touch in it.

Female 24 years old, Chinese: “I think that if the brand is internationally known, it’s great to see the advertisement in English, but it is also nice to see the country of origin of the product. I mean, if the perfume is French, why not make sure that I as a customer know that it is French, since France is famous for its high quality perfume?”

Male 30 years old, The Netherlands: “I do not think that I would like to see Chinese hieroglyphs in the advertisements, since I have no idea what they mean. But if the product is of high quality, I understand what it is; it would also be cool to see where it comes from.”

However, the aspect of the country of origin of products was not considered as significant by the respondents. Therefore, as it is not considered as important by the respondents, it might not be relevant to the research question regarding the immigrant consumer group.
Swedish

When asked whether there are certain product categories that should be advertised only in English, only in Swedish, or in a mix of both languages; the responses from the Swedish consumers were quite clear and generalizable. Products such as medicine, technology, insurance, and banking related services should definitely be advertised in only Swedish according to the Swedish consumer respondents.

Male 35 years old: “Medicals should never be advertised in other languages that the native country; however there can be a complementary message that can be in English”.

Female 42 years old: “Products that require some thinking before buying and that implies major spending should be in Swedish instead; such as furniture, bank loans and cars and so on”.

Male 20 years old: “Products that I do not have much knowledge about I would like to see as being promoted in Swedish instead, just to be sure that I understand everything”.

Female 67 years old: “I think that products that have the older generation of the Swedish population as their target group should be advertised only in Swedish. Advertisements using a mix of the languages could work as well for me, but then the majority of the text would still have to be in Swedish”.

However, certain product categories, like cosmetics, hair products, computer games, product oriented towards teenagers and children should be advertised only/preferably in English, according to some respondents:

Female 23 years old: “Certain products, such as cosmetics and hair products should be advertised only in English because the short and catchy phrases and slogans used in the advertisements just sound and looks better in English then in Swedish according to me. Using English in the advertisements for this category of products make sense to me, it sounds more exclusive and it adds more weight to the message”.

Female 45 years old: “Having my children in mind, I think that products that reach out to the younger generation can look better and more appealing to them if the advertisement is in English only; for example computer games”.

Immigrants

When asked if there are certain types of products that should be advertised in only Swedish or only English the opinions about the product categorization and the language of advertising had irrelevant variation among the respondents. The majority of the respondents said that they understand why products like medicine are advertised in only Swedish, because “the native consumers have to understand every detail of the product description” (from interviews).

Female 22 years old, China: “This is one of the reasons why I learn Swedish. English is very popular here, but still Swedish is necessary. I cannot blame the advertising agencies for not putting English everywhere on every product. It would be too much to demand. I am in Sweden, Swedish is the national language.”

Male 43 years old, Iran: “If I was at home, I would prefer to see the advertisement for important and expensive products in my native language as well. I’ve been living in Sweden
for a while now, I am fluent in Swedish, and even if I was not – I would not expect the details for medicine to be written in English for the foreigners. It is Sweden, not England or USA.”

**RQ 3: How can the consumer groups decoding process of the language mixed advertising be described in terms of how the advertising message is being interpreted?**

For this research question, the respondents were shown advertisements that were chosen for this particular study. All of the advertisements were presented before the respondents, and they were free to choose any of the advertisements and discuss on the questions that were asked during the interview.

**The Communication Process – Decoding**

The consumers were asked questions whether they find the advertising clear; understand the message of the advertising, and how they interpret the message of the advertisement. In addition to this the respondents were also asked of the languages used in the advertisements are a tool or a barrier for them in terms of decoding the message of the advertisement.

**Swedish perspective, Orrefors advertisement:** Swedish consumers interpreted the message of the advertisement as being for beer instead of for glasses. It was only after looking at the advertisement more thoroughly, when they realized that the advertisement is for the Orrefors glasses. Given the fact that all of the Swedish consumers speak and read Swedish this is the way they interpreted the message.

Female 42 years old, Sweden: “When I saw the Orrefors advertisement I immediately though about beer and that I wanted to have some beer. But then reading the entire advertisement text one understands that the advertisement is for the glasses itself and Orrefors; suddenly the ad is not as persuasive anymore and the only thing I can think of is: why use that headline?”

**Immigrant perspective: Orrefors advertisement** Immigrant consumers were confused regarding this advertisement; the message is mostly stated in Swedish. Despite the fact that some of the respondents are fluent in Swedish and some of them are not, all of the respondents misinterpreted the advertisement as being for beer, rather than Orrefors glasses.

Male 37 years old, Lebanon: “I thought it was the advertisement of beer that is one of the reasons why I thought it was attractive. It took me a while, even though I speak Swedish fluently, to understand that it’s about glasses.”
Swedish perspective: INTERSPORT - Asics Swedish consumers had no problems in interpreting the message of the advertisements. All of the consumers, when looking at the text, regarded it as an advertisement for running shoes and this is what the expert would recommend. However, when looking at the picture of the advertisement, some of the consumers did not think that their interpretation of the message was in line with the image of the advertisement. For instance, one of the consumers said that she would prefer to see the professional athlete in the picture, rather than “ordinary people” (Female 46 years old, Sweden, personal interview).

Immigrant perspective: INTERSPORT – Asics: Immigrant consumers did not have problems interpreting the message of the advertisement. All of the respondents liked the fact that the advertisement was in English; this enhanced their perception of the brand as international and well known. The respondents found that the picture matches the text well, and that the message is clearly delivered.
Swedish perspective: Diesel Apparel Swedish respondents interpreted the message differently according to the age group. For instance, younger generation interpreted the message as related to their generation, a bit laid-back style. Either the picture or the slogan of the advertisement was regarded as related to the respondent. The older generation, however, perceived the message as “fuzzy” and could not understand what exactly the advertisement was trying to communicate.

Diesel clothes – Male 25 years old, Sweden: “I like it. I like the image and the slogan. Matches me. Relaxed and laid back”.

Immigrant perspective: Both Diesel advertisements Immigrant consumers interpreted the message of the advertisement as the one aimed for the younger generation, rebellious and spontaneous in the way younger generation behaves, acts and dresses. There was no difference between the interpretation of the message between older and younger generation. The respondents also interpreted the message as more about a lifestyle, rather than apparel.

Male 24 years old, The Netherlands: Together with the picture, it says something like you have to act smart, or follow your heart and be stupid. I don’t think that the ad refers to jeans, but it refers more to the atmosphere that they want to communicate, the lifestyle. Obviously Diesel is rating itself and relating itself to the spontaneous lifestyle.
Swedish perspective: Vitamin Well
Swedish consumers in general interpreted the message of the advertisement at related to the long and dark winters in Sweden. The respondents thought that the aim of the advertisement is to communicate to the consumer that the water can lighten up their dark days of long Swedish winters.

Female 23 years old, Sweden: “I really like the Vitamin Well advertisement. The message: add some light is something I can relate to during the fall and winter time because I always get somewhat of a depression from all the darkness”.

Immigrant perspective: Vitamin Well
Immigrant consumers perceived the message as something related to a healthy lifestyle, very clear and concise message related to sports.

Female 21 years old, Romania: “I am really attracted by this advertisement, since it looks like it represents something clean and healthy. It is very clear; I understand right away the message is addressed towards the people who are in sports or those who care about their health”

Swedish perspective: ECCO
Swedish respondents interpreted the message of the advertisement in two different ways. Some of the respondents interpreted the advertisement message as communicating the lifestyle of a higher class, shoes that are of higher quality and more expensive than just “the random pair of shoes”

Female 46 years old, Sweden: “The ECCO text and advertisement fits well together; I interpret the message as ECCO shoes is a lifestyle, it is not the random pair of shoes you buy”

However, the other part of Swedish consumers interpreted the message as not ‘inline’ with the image of the advertisement. They perceived “My life. My style” message as more related to the laid back and comfortable foot wear, rather than expensive business style of Chicago.

Female 45 years old, Sweden: “I associate ECCO a lot with comfortable and functional shoes, and this is not showing at all from this picture and style of the ad according to me”.

Female 23 years old, Romania: “I am really attracted by this advertisement, since it looks like it represents something clean and healthy. It is very clear; I understand right away the message is addressed towards the people who are in sports or those who care about their health”
Immigrant perspective: ECCO advertisement Immigrant consumers did not split into two different opinions about the message of the advertisement like the Swedish consumers did. All of the respondents found the text and picture to be inline and perceive the message of the advertisement as higher quality, expensive business class brand. They said that this is the advertisement for people from higher social class and the picture is very much corresponding to the text.

Female 22 years old, Russia: “It is a good advertisement in terms of the clarity – I can see that it is rather expensive brand, high quality, business style in Chicago. The text matches the picture, the message is clear.”

Swedish

Most Swedish consumers tend to think that, whether the English language becomes a barrier or a tool to understand an advertising message varies depending on the overall layout of the advertisement and the actual product being advertised. In most cases the respondents answered that the foreign language was not a barrier to understand an advertising message.

Female 23 years old explains “I definitely not consider the language as being a barrier just because it is in English. For me it can be more of a barrier if the message does not fit the overall picture of the product being promoted, then language can be a barrier even if it is in Swedish. For example the Orrefors ad is really confusing even though it is mainly in Swedish”.

The respondents who did perceive the language mix or English language as a barrier were the respondents of older age. Male 66 years old and female 67 years old both agree that when it comes to the use of English language in advertisements it becomes a barrier to understanding the messages because of poor language skills.

Immigrants

The immigrant consumers regarded all use of English in the advertisements as helpful to understanding the message; this was the same no matter the consumers’ age. Contrary to this, most of the immigrant consumers stated that Swedish became more of a barrier for them when it comes to decoding an advertising message.

Construction and formulation of an Advertising Message.

Swedish

From the advertisements chosen for this study; the consumers were asked if they thought the messages were appropriately formulated in regards to the product being advertised as well as to the overall layout of the advertisements. The consumers were asked if they found the messages persuasive, convincing, appealing and serious.

Male 20 years old claims “The INTERSPORT - Asics is serious and convincing both because of the text and the symbols/pictures in the advertisement, I would say it is convincing. Most times I think the text used in advertisements fit the product being featured. In addition to this, the Diesel perfume
advertising is very serious, which is in line with the text according to me”.

Female 46 years old agrees with the above two respondents, stating “The ECCO text and advertisement fits well together. The message in the Diesel perfume advertisement definitely works for me, the man looks tough and brave and the bottle has a cool design; it is persuasive and serious”.

Female 23 years old expresses her opinion, “The Diesel Clothes advertisement, I understand the text itself, no problems here, but it is difficult to connect the text to the picture. The models in the picture take a lot of space so you start to wonder what they do. The text does not fit the product in this case according to me. I can somewhat see that clothes are in focus here, but still the connection is hard to make because the text is so diffuse. I can think that this ad would have looked better if the text was not there! Just the diesel logo together with the picture would have been better according to me. The ECCO advertisement, the picture fits the message according to me, there is a nice flow”.

Female 42 years old, “When I saw the Orrefors advertisement I immediately thought about beer and that I wanted to have some beer. But then reading the entire advertisement text one understands that the advertisement is for the glasses itself and Orrefors; suddenly the ad is not as persuasive anymore and the only thing I can think of is: why use that headline?”

All of the Swedish consumers agreed with female 42 years old regarding the Orrefors advertisements. All the consumers regarded this advertisement as being for beer, only after having had second looks at the advert the consumers realized that it was for the brand Orrefors.

Male 66 years old and female 67 years old both felt that regarding if the advertising messages fit the featured products was difficult to answer since both have limited English knowledge.
Immigrants

The immigrant consumers were asked if they found the chosen messages persuasive, convincing, appealing and serious. The respondents were asked whether they found the message of the advertisement clear, whether they understood what the advertisement was trying to communicate to them about the product, and how they interpret the message of the advertisement.

Male 37 years old, Lebanon: Orrefors. I like this ad most of all. It is classy, I like the colors – they are strict and elegant. It gives me a desire to drink, even though it is advertising the glasses not the beer. So I think it’s smart to advertise that way, you want to know more about the product. When it comes to language – I think it’s nice to see the mix of English and Swedish. I am curious and try to read in Swedish. But if I was in a hurry – I would not take my time to read in Swedish, I would prefer English instead. I think that the advertising is trying to communicate the taste of the beer that is being enhanced by the glass. Sounds sophisticated, but I think that this is exactly what they are trying to communicate. It is not that clear. This advertisement made me think, but I like it because of it.

Female 24 years old, China: ECCO – it gives me a clear impression of what exactly ECCO is. I like this impression, simple words, English is used very well here. The advertisement seems to communicate high class level of life. the picture and the text match each other very well. It is easy to understand what exactly is communicated through it.

Female 22 years old, Russia: Be Delicious – it is simple, describes the product very well in just a couple of words, and looks very natural. Language is English here, and I think that in perfume commercials (like in most of the international products) it should be English.
RQ 4: How can the consumer groups’ perception of symbolism in language mixed advertisements be described?

For the Research Question Four, the respondents were also exposed to all of the advertisements chosen for the particular study. They were free to choose any of the advertisement and discuss freely regarding the interview questions.
Symbolism Theory
The assumptions about symbolism in advertisements are that it is used as a technique to persuade consumers to purchase the product. However, for this to be effective, the consumer needs to find the featured product to be related to their lifestyle, habits or self-image/self-perception.

Swedish

The Swedish consumers’ perception of symbolism in the chosen advertisements and the consumers’ considerations regarding what advertisements that was most close to them personally, whether it matched their lifestyle and personality. These questions resulted in a variety of answers.

Male 20 years old recognized the Diesel perfume advertisements as something close to his personality because: “I love perfume; the same criteria go for the advertisements of the car. I can also relate the ESET advertisement as matching my personality because I like computers and movies; and the ESET advertisement looks a lot like a movie poster to me”.

Regarding the ESET advertisement, several of the Swedish consumers seemed to agree on the fact that this advertisement look like a movie poster. Because of this fact, the consumers also answered that they perceived the advertising as being close to their personality and lifestyle.

However, Male 35 years old explains: “For me the ESET security advertisement was the one that stood out most. This was because the advertisement was so much more appealing graphically than the other advertisements. Since this is something I work with, I might look at the graphics more than others; I also liked it because it is made to look like a movie poster; I do not think that the text, which was mostly in Swedish, affected my perception about it, it was the picture”.

Female 46 years old, states that: “The ad for DKNY Perfume is really appealing to me since I love perfume and to smell nice. The girl in the advertisement and the colors used along with the message in the advertisement just gives a nice and fresh impression about the product according to me”.
Female 19 years old is thinking in the same way as: “I consider the Perfume ad of DKNY to be close to my habits and personality because perfume is something I wear every day and buy on a regular basis”.

Male 24 years old explains that even though he does not use Diesel clothes or in any other way relate the brand with his personality; it was the most appealing advertisement. “The message has a more deep touch which I can relate to, but I do not wear their clothes so I can not say it matches my lifestyle in that sense, but the text of the advertisement definitely matches my personality. Furthermore I liked the ESET advertisement because it looks like a movie poster and I like to watch movies”.

Male 25 years old agrees with male 24 in terms of the Diesel clothes advertisement. “I do not wear their clothes but I like the image and the slogan, which matches me; relaxed and laidback. In addition to this I can relate the advertisement for Inter Sport - Asics a lot to my personality, habits and lifestyle since I am currently training to participate in Värruset”.

Female 23 years states: “I really like the Vitamin Well advertisement. The message: add some light is something I can relate to during the fall and winter time because I always get somewhat of a depression from all the darkness”.

Female 25 years old regarded this advertisement in the same way: “I can relate to the message, add some light because during the long fall and winter when it gets really dark here in Sweden, light is needed!”

Female 42 years old years defined the Björn Axén advertisement as being most close to her personality, habits and lifestyle. However this was not because of the products being advertised in the campaign but rather because of the layout and the featured picture of the advertisement.

“I like this advertisement because of the bold and bright colors of the models clothes as well as the colors in the background. I love clothes and I also work with clothes so this is why this advertisement felt most personal to me”.

Female 67 years old claims that: “The only advertisement I can think of from the appointed ones that matches my habits, lifestyle and personality would in that case be the Loréal advertisement. This is because I wear makeup everyday”.

Male 66 years old: “The advertisement that first came to my mind is Orrefors, but then this advertisement is for the glasses itself and not for the beer. If the advertisement was for beer I could have related it to my lifestyle and habits because I drink beer a few times a week, mostly alcohol free though but it would have been the advertisement I could most easily relate to”.

Female 21 years old explains: “The Intersport - Asics advertisement matches my personality for the obvious reason that I work out. I can also relate to the Vitamin Well advertisement because I like to eat as well as drink healthy”.

Male 33 years old explains: “I liked the car advertisement; I noticed that advertisement because I am currently looking to buy a new car so that is why I think it stood out more for me. I thought the message was pretty funny “är det dax för en ny caddy?” since I am both into golf and cars this was appealing to me”.


Immigrants

The immigrant consumers’ perception of symbolism in the chosen advertisements and the consumers’ considerations regarding what advertisements that was most close to them personally, whether it matched their lifestyle and personality, is presented below.

The respondents were asked to evaluate the advertisements in terms of the way it matches their personality or lifestyle, whether the advertisement or the product itself is close to their perception of themselves, and to explain their opinion.

Male 24 years old, The Netherlands: Diesel. I like Diesel’s slogan: “Be Stupid” mainly because of the phrase. It says smart listens to the head, stupid listens to the heart. It doesn’t really make any sense, but it’s appealing. Together with the picture, it says something like you have to act smart, or follow your heart and be stupid. It’s a very nice picture. I don’t think that the ad refers to jeans, but it refers more to the atmosphere that they want to communicate, the lifestyle. Obviously Diesel is rating itself and relating itself to the spontaneous lifestyle. It’s not only about the message, but it’s also about the colors, the picture, the whole atmosphere and lifestyle that is being communicated. I don’t wear Diesel, but I will remember this advertisement for sure. I wear jeans, in general of course, but I don’t have any Diesel jeans, they’re not really my style.

Female 22 years old, Russia: The Urban advertisement. I like the design, the colors, the posture of the models, the whole image. It’s very appealing to me. It is bright and attractive. I like the way people look. I like brand name, it’s for young people. The design of product is depicted carefully here, and I would like to buy this product. I think that the picture in general fits very well. Even though there is not much hair in the picture, but the whole idea of the advertisement: the colors, the postures, young people, motion – they fit the idea of the product very well. The product fits me. Because of the ad I want to buy it. It seems like even the package will remind me of the picture on the advertisement and I will want to use it.

Female 22 years old, China: The Urban advertisement – I feel passion, color and motion. I think it’s good for young people, even though it’s a Swedish brand, it gives an image of international expensive product.

Be Delicious – gives me impression of pureness, modernity. The picture is very nice. I like English here, because it’s more international. 90 percent of Swedish people understand English, so why not keep it on international level for a famous brand? Moreover, I feel included in the market as a customer, when I see an advertisement in English.

Female 21 years old, Romania: Vitamin Well – I find it very expressive and simple at the same time. The advertisement goes straight to the man idea; you know that water is the product being advertised. The lights are good, the colors are appealing. The advertisement is very clear to me. The language is mixed in this ad, but I would prefer everything to be in English. I would understand everything much faster – if it was just in English. But for a Swedish consumer I think it is trying to send a message of international product.

This chapter contains the majority of the most valuable answers from both Swedish and immigrant respondents. All of the responses were grouped according the Research Questions of the study, the theories that were used in the Literature Review chapter and the interview questions. In the coming section, data analysis, the empirical data are narrowed down to make to overall view of the responses easier to comprehend.
5. Analysis

In this section, an analysis of the collected empirical data and the established theoretical framework is presented. The analysis was carried out according to the methods of pattern matching and analytic induction. This section is structured according to the established research questions in order for the discussion to be as clear as possible. At the end of this chapter, a table is presented which summarize and compare the two consumer groups’ responses.

Since all of the data acquired during the interviews was tape recorded and then transcribed, all of the responses were carefully analyzed. In terms of analytic induction, the responses were grouped into similar categories, and then into subcategories to group the data into more specific subcategories. Moreover, the data that was collected was carefully looked through and the patterns that appeared throughout the text were matched accordingly.

5.1 How can consumer groups' attitude towards the use of English language in advertisements be described?

Regarding this research question, the consumers’ attitudes were measured in terms of how the emotional perception of the English language in Swedish advertisements differs between consumer groups.

Language and Emotions

As stated previously in the literature review, the emotional effect of a second language may differ due to the time when exactly it was learned and how well it is known by the person. According to Harris, Cleason and Aycicegi (2005), the dominant language of a person is the one which he/she feels more comfortable and fluent in. In the context of this particular research, the Swedish language is dominant for the Swedish respondents while the English language is dominant for the immigrant respondents (since it is on a much more fluent level).

The age of acquisition of the second language plays a crucial role in the emotional affect of the language on the person. The younger the person is when he/she learns the second language, the less significant the emotional difference is going to be between the first and second spoken languages (Haris, Cleason & Aycicegi, 2005).

Native Swedish respondents that speak English started to learn English when they were about 8-9 years old. Due to the relatively young age of acquisition of the language, the emotional difference between the Swedish and English languages’ effect on the respondents is not significant. The respondents stated that they like seeing both languages in the advertisements. Moreover, native Swedish respondents perceive the English language as more emotional and persuasive than Swedish language in advertisements, which could be due to the constant exposure to the English catchy slogans and attractive messages in advertisements, popular TV shows and internet.

The majority of the immigrant respondents started to learn English language when they were between 4-9 years old, which increased the emotional affect of English language on the person. The Swedish language, however, is learned by the immigrant respondents at the age of 20-25 years old. Even the respondents that are fluent in the Swedish language still do not
perceive it as emotionally as they perceive English language. The immigrants like seeing Swedish language in advertisements, but most often out of the curiosity about how much of Swedish language they understand. When it comes to the interpretation of the message in the advertisement in terms of the emotional appeal – English is the language that was stated as the most emotionally perceived by the immigrant respondents.

Therefore, as was stated in the theory by Harris, Cleason and Aycicegi (2005) the emotional affect of the language depends on the age at which the language was acquired. Swedish respondents learn their second language in their childhood and perceive it with a little emotional difference from the Swedish language. Immigrants learn their second language, Swedish, on a much later stage in life, which increases the difference between the emotional affect of the first and second languages spoken.

Moreover, it is important to consider the way of the acquisition of the language – natural vs. school. According to the authors, if the language is learned through school, it is going to be perceived less emotionally than if the language was learned through communication, TV shows activities, etc.

Swedish respondents claimed that they learned English as a second language mostly in a natural way, even though most of the respondents were required to study it in school. Immigrant respondents, on the other hand, are learning the Swedish language mostly through school and only some of the respondents learned the language through a natural way. Some of the respondents said that it is hard for them to learn Swedish in a natural way, because the majority of Swedish population speaks English, TV shows and advertisements are in English. There is no need to hurry with the natural way of learning, so it slows down the process and pushes the immigrants towards a more academic or school approach of Swedish language acquisition. Therefore, the emotional affect of the Swedish language for the immigrant respondents is not significant and differs greatly from the emotional affect of English.

Swedish consumers perceive English language as emotional as, and sometimes even more emotionally than their native language due to the age and way of acquisition of English. Immigrant consumers perceive Swedish language on a much less emotional level than they perceive English, due to the later age of Swedish language acquisition and also due to the school versus natural way of learning of the Swedish language. Consequently, in the Swedish advertising context the English language is perceived on a high emotional level by both the native Swedish and immigrant consumer groups, even though it is dominant language only for on of the respondent groups.

**Language Death**
The three stages of Cultural Assimilation, described by Crystal (2002) lead to the death of language. Crystal states that when one culture assimilates to another, one of the first stages is the pressure to use the new language, English in the case of Sweden, on a daily basis; the pressure might come in a “form of fashionable trends or peer group pressures from within the society of which they form a part” (Crystal, 2002, p. 78). The second stage is the period of emerging bilingualism where inhabitants of the country become more natural in speaking both languages, English and Swedish in this particular case, remaining fluent and efficient in the native language, but becoming fluent in the second one. The third stage comes with the younger generation becoming more proficient in the new language than in native language and within one generation the native language is being overpowered by the second language.
The vast majority of the respondents claimed that they do not perceive the English language as a threat to the Swedish language in general. However, the vast majority also claimed that the English language is a threat to the Swedish language in the business sector and in the advertising industry.

Nevertheless, both native Swedish consumers and immigrant consumers perceive the use of English in the Swedish advertisements as a positive factor. The younger generation of Sweden and the English knowing population of the immigrants not only feel comfortable when seeing English in the advertisements; they see it as more persuasive, convincing and catchy than the Swedish language. Therefore, according to the stages of language extinction by Crystal, the first stage, where the second language is seen as fashionable or trendy. Moreover, 89 percent of the Swedish population is English speaking, which means that second stage where the population becomes bilingual is already taking place (Språkrådet, no date). It is too early to say whether the English language will overpower the Swedish language in the future. However, Sweden has already gone through two out of the three steps of the language extinction that are recognized by Crystal (2002) when it comes to language distinction.

Except for the older generation of native Swedish consumers, both immigrant and the native Swedish consumer groups view the use of English language as a sign of internationalization, modernity and globalization. It is perceived as the language of younger generations, business world, high technology, high quality and world known brands. The majority of the younger respondents, both native Swedish and immigrants, perceive the English language in advertisements as a positive characteristic of a product that is being advertised. They see the language as appealing to them. Immigrants feel “included and considered” when they see that the product is being advertised in English. Native Swedish consumers perceive the product as being of higher quality due to the English language in the advertisement. This positive attitude towards the use of the English language can be a threat to the Swedish language, even though the respondents do not perceive it as such.

To sum up the analysis for research question one, both consumer groups’ attitude towards the use of English language in advertisements can be described as positive. Many of the native Swedish consumers, especially the younger generation, perceive English as more emotional then the Swedish language. For this reason, these consumers regard the use of English in advertising messages as more persuasive and effective. This viewpoint was not however, shared by the older generation of the native Swedish consumers. Swedish consumers 40 years and older showed mixed attitudes towards the use of English; all learned basic English in school. However, since these consumers have more limited knowledge of the English language they did perceive Swedish as more emotional. However, they still thought that in many advertising messages, English is more persuasive and powerful and their attitudes could still be classified as more positive than negative. Native Swedish consumers 60 years and older did not at all shares these viewpoints. These consumers were negative towards the use of English in advertising messages simply because many times it made it difficult for them to understand the message. Moreover, these consumers regarded the use of the English language as inappropriate since it is not the dominant language in Sweden. The immigrant consumers all had positive attitudes of the use of English in advertising messages. Since Swedish is not their native language, the immigrant felt more “included” by the use of English in advertisements, especially for those consumers who were new immigrants.
5.2 What associations do the consumer groups have regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisement?

In connection to this research question, attention was paid to the consumers’ associations to the English language in general; the associations to the English language were also looked at in the advertising context, if it became different or if it was still similar to the general association. In addition to this attention was paid to if the consumers association to the English language had anything to do with their ability to decode the advertising messages.

Language in advertising Theory

The use of foreign language, spokespersons or models in domestic advertising has nowadays become very commonly used throughout the world. According to Neelankavil et al (1995) there are five different factors that can explain the usage of foreign language in advertisements. The first factor is country of origin of a product; this concerns the standardization of advertising campaigns. Standardization of advertising campaigns leads to the appearance of foreign words in a number of domestic advertisements. Secondly there is the product type, this refers to the use of foreign words and models in domestic advertisements are dependent on product type, “presumably for the purposes of product/model and product/message congruency. The third factor concerns the intended target audience; the target audience is the separate groups of consumers or segments that are most influences by the choice of words and models in advertisements. The fourth factor is presumed to be that the cultural and social environment of the customer country influences how the content of the advertisements are being perceived. The fifth and last factor, the use of foreign language, is dependent on all the above four factors. Taking all factors in consideration will determine to what extent foreign words are used in advertising (ibid).

Regarding the factor product type; the native Swedish consumers were clear about what type of products they perceived as not suitable for being advertised in English. The type of products that the native Swedish consumers wanted to see advertised in their native language was the products that require major spending, as well as medicine, technology, insurance and banking related services. However, the native Swedish consumers’ responses implied that there would be no problem in having additional English information included for these types of products; but the advertising language should in first hand be Swedish. Comparing the native Swedish consumers’ responses to the theory about product type, there is clear indications that consumers do not approve of the use of foreign words for certain products in the domestic advertising.

The immigrant consumers implied that they understand why these types of products foremost are being advertised in Swedish, the native consumers need to understand most details about the products in order to even consider buying the product. However, the immigrant consumers still felt like they wanted to be included in the target group for this kind of products, this is why the immigrant consumers implied that they would want to see more English language in advertisements for products such as medicine and technology. The immigrant consumers also mentioned that for very Swedish brands, such as IKEA, they wanted to see the advertisements as being language mixed. Taking IKEA as an example the immigrants responded that they still wanted to see Swedish as the main advertising language because the “Swedishness” of the brand would then be enhanced.

The native Swedish consumers also recognized that some products are better off being advertised in English, or with a majority of the English language. Example of these products
where cosmetics and hair products because the slogans and catch phrases looks, sounds and become more persuasive in English. In addition to this the native Swedish consumers thought that some foreign brands becomes more exclusive if they are being advertised in English rather than adapting the advertising message into Swedish. The immigrant consumer groups associations regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisements can be explained as world recognition, modern, international and high quality products.

The native Swedish consumers tended to be affected of the country of origin of a product, in relation to how the advertisement was designed as something that did affect their overall impression of the advertisement. For example, the native Swedish consumers revealed that products that they know are from USA or from England felt more natural to see advertised in English compared to seeing Swedish products or brands being advertised in English or with a mix of English. According to the theory about country of origin, standardizations of advertising campaigns commonly lead to the emergence of foreign words in domestic advertisements. The native Swedish consumers seemed to understand this since they tended to regard the appearance of English as more acceptable in advertisements for product that they knew were for foreign products.

Contrary to this, the immigrant consumers did not feel that the country of origin of the product was of any major significance in relation to how they perceived an advertising campaigns layout. Because of this, there is no comparison to theory to make for the immigrant consumer group.

Common for both consumer groups was that they claimed, depending on the country of origin of a product, it is favorable to get a “touch” of the specific country from the advertising. However, the native Swedish consumers responded that the advertising message should still be either Swedish or English in order for the advertisement to be viewed as appropriate.

**Swedish:** The majority of the native Swedish consumers associations with and of the English language in general can be generalized as associating it with USA. 12 respondents claimed that the main associations was to USA, in addition to USA the respondents also associated the language to a large extent to TV, movies and the Internet. Most of the respondents answered that they got the same kind of associations when seeing or reading English that is used in advertising. Sweden and the Swedish way of living are to a large extent influenced by the America, not only in terms of TV and movies, but also product, clothing trends and so on. This was the main explanation as to why many respondents got the same associations when thinking about the language in general as when putting in into the advertising context. Respondents that answered differently follow below.

**Immigrant:** Only one out of all the immigrant respondents said that she has some sort of associations with English language in general. The rest of the respondents claimed that English language does not trigger any images in their mind, when they are asked to give associations with it. The respondent that had associations with the English language said, that it represents internationalization, globalization and modernity (Female 24, China).

However, during the interview occasions the respondents had very strong opinion about the usage of English in Swedish advertisements. When the respondents were given the samples of print advertisements they paid careful attention to the language and described precisely what associations they had regarding English language in the advertisements. Most of the respondents said, that they perceive the brands that are advertised with language mix or only
English, as the brands that are worldwide recognized, international, modern and oriented towards a younger generation. Therefore, even though the respondents did not have any specific association with the English language in general, they still were able to associate brands with English advertisements with internationalization, modernity, worldwide recognition, etc.

**Communication Process Model**

Regarding promotional message communication should be as clear as possible; factors that can make it harder for the target audience to interpret the advertising message correctly should be avoided (Wild et al, 2008, p 402-404). Language is explained as one of the most common barriers to miscommunication between companies and their potential consumers (ibid).

At the other end of the communication process, **decoding** can be found. Decoding is when the message symbols are being transformed back into thoughts; it is the opposite of encoding and this step is controlled by the receiver. Both factors are mental processes; the message itself is the result of the encoding process and is the tool used to share a thought with the receiver.

Most native Swedish consumers tend to think that, whether the English language becomes a barrier or a tool to understand an advertising message varies depending on the overall layout of the advertisement and the actual product being advertised.

Most of the immigrant consumers found English helpful to perceive the message of the advertisement. This is due to the fact that English language is their primary language in the Swedish context. Swedish language, on the other hand, was characterized as more of a barrier for the immigrants in terms of the interpretation and understanding of the message of the advertisements in Swedish language.

According to the data acquired during the research, the interpretation of the advertisement messages by the two consumer groups were compared and the results show, that in the advertisements that were interpreted equally by the two consumer groups the dominant language was English. The advertisements that were interpreted differently by the two groups were in mixed language or dominantly in Swedish.

Therefore, the results of the research go in line with the theory by Wild et al (2008, p 402-404), which states that language is one of the most common barriers to miscommunication between companies and their potential consumers (ibid). Both of the consumer groups are fluent in English and it affects them emotionally to a large extent. Consequently, the advertisements where English language is dominant are perceived by the immigrants and Swedish consumers in the same way.

Swedish, however, is not the immigrants’ dominant language, and their lack of knowledge of this language and different emotional perspective of it affects the way they interpret the message of the advertisement. Consequently, native Swedish consumers perceive the advertisements in Swedish in a different way than immigrant consumers, which also supports the Language and Emotions theory by Harris, Cleason and Aycicegi (2005).

To summarize the analysis regarding research question two; the consumer groups associations regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisements varied among the consumer groups. The native Swedish consumers’ associated foreign product and brand as becoming more exclusive if being advertised in English or an English mix; rather than adapting the
advertising message into Swedish. The immigrant consumer group tended to associate English mixed or English advertising messages is international, modern and including product of high quality. The immigrant consumer group’s association of English mixed advertising messages was not at all influenced by the featured products country of origin. Contrary to this, the native Swedish consumers associations of English language mix in Swedish advertisements did tend to be influenced by the products country of origin. Both consumer groups shared the belief that depending on the country of origin, it can be favorable to get a hint of the specific country from the advertisement. The consumer groups associations to English language mixed advertising messages also tended to depend on whether the language became a barrier or a tool in term of understanding the advertising message. For the immigrant consumers the English mixed advertising messages was found to be helpful in terms of understanding the message. This was also true for most of the native Swedish consumers, however the native Swedish consumers pointed out that the overall layout of the advertisement is important in terms of understanding English mixed messages. The consumers that did not have any positive associations towards English mixed advertising messages were the older native Swedish consumers, 60 years and older. Because of their weaker knowledge about the language, interpretation and understanding became harder than for other consumers; hence, these consumers’ associations towards English mixed advertisements became more negative than for other consumers.

5.3 How can the consumer groups decoding process of the language mixed advertising be described in term of how the advertising message is being interpreted?

The decoding process and the consumers’ interpretations of the advertising messages were measured in terms of whether the symbolism used in mixed advertisements is in line with the consumers’ self-image. Furthermore, attention was paid to whether different cultural groups in Sweden respond to the advertising messages differently.

Construction and formulation of advertising messages

An advertising message should not only be based on facts, it should include some emotional arguments as well (Schmitz, 2009, p 73). In addition to this, an advertising message should also be easy to understand, matter of fact and effective; it needs to stand out to its intended target audience. In order to reach the mentioned factors, the most important variable to consider when constructing an advertising message is the language (ibid). According the author, constructing advertising messages is all about putting fourth the message so that it fits the situation.

Both consumer groups, native Swedish and immigrants, were asked about how they perceived the advertising messages in the advertisements chosen for this study. The aim was to find out if the consumer groups found the messages appropriately formulated in regards to the product being advertised as well as if the consumers perceived that the message fitted the overall layout of the advertisements. Respondents from both consumer groups were asked if they found the message of the advertising clear and how they interpreted the message.

The native Swedish consumers, which in general had a good understanding of the English language found that they were able to interpret most of the advertising messages. The advertisement most native Swedish consumers found out to be confusing was the Orrefors advertisement; which was mainly written in Swedish. A few of the native Swedish consumers
had however some problems in understanding advertising messages if they were stated in English. These consumers were the older generation of the sample population. The younger consumers had no problem in decoding and interpreting the messages. An example would be the Diesel Apparel advertisement, the younger consumers decoded and perceived the message to be about lifestyle and an easygoing way of living; the older consumers on the other hand did many times not even understand that the advertisement was for clothing apparel.

For the immigrant consumers, the response was commonly that they liked to see a mix of both English and Swedish in the advertising messages. This was because incorporating the two languages meant understanding the message but also in the same time they found it educational to see Swedish in the advertisements. The immigrant tended to perceive the use of Swedish expression and words as a challenge to understanding and decoding the messages. However, in terms of interpreting the messages, this consumer group found the use of English more helpful in terms of understanding product features and catch phrases. Some immigrant found itself achieving to be able to interpret advertising messages if the message was written in Swedish.

In summary, the decoding process of the language mixed advertisements in terms of how the advertising message is being interpreted resulted in different viewpoints among the consumer groups. Overall, most of the native Swedish consumers’ level of the English language made it possible for them to decode and to interpret the advertising messages. The immigrant consumers perceived the use of English as most helpful in terms of interpreting and decoding advertising messages. However, new immigrant consumers tended to perceive the language mixed advertising messages as educational when it came to the decoding process. The only consumers that found the decoding process and the interpretation of language mixed messages difficult, was the older generation of native Swedish consumers, 60 years and older. If the advertising message constituted of a majority of English, these consumers decoding and interpretation abilities decreased. However, these consumers tended to think that the overall layout of the advertisement played a major part in terms of to their decoding abilities.

5.4 How can the consumer groups' perception of symbolism in language mixed advertisements be described?

The aim of research question four was to paid attention to if the symbols featured in the advertisements were perceived as suggested by theory; or if there are other reasons explaining how symbolism was perceived. In addition to this, a comparison between the two consumer groups was made to see if either relationships or deviations amongst the groups can be found.

Symbolism
Symbolism in advertising has a significant meaning in terms of the consumers’ perception of the product and advertising message. According to Levy (1999), all commercial objects have a symbolic character and the choice of the consumer to purchase the product involves the evaluation of this symbolic character in the advertisement (ibid, p. 208).

One of the main aspects of symbolism theory is the persuasion of the consumer to purchase the product (De Mooij, 2010). This is achieved through the match of the symbol in advertisement with the self-concept and self-congruity of the customer (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004, Aaker, 1997, Sirgy, 1997, Dolich, 1969). This implies that if the symbol of the advertisement matches or meshes in with the way the consumer sees or perceives him/her
self as a person, the consumer is most likely to buy the product, because he/she will think that it matches his/her personality. Moreover, the consumer that sees that the symbol of the advertisement matches his/her personality is most likely to see the message of the advertising as favorable and appropriate for the context.

The participants of the study analyzed the advertisements that they found as favorable, they described why they found the advertisements as favorable and what factors exactly influenced their perception of the symbol matching their personality. Since symbols in the advertisements are characterized as intangible signs or things representing and typifying something, the respondents defined different characteristics as favorable. However, all of the consumers equally said that the message of the advertisement matches their personality in one way or the other and represents them in some way.

The advertisements that were chosen by the participants were either fully in English or with the mixed languages of both English and Swedish. The consumers that chose the advertisement in English described it as international, modern and trendy, which, according to their response, matches their lifestyle and perception of themselves as being a part of younger generation, travelling a lot and following the trends. For instance, the symbolism of the advertisement of Diesel apparel was fully in English, and was perceived as favorable by both Swedish and immigrant consumer groups even though not all of the respondents who found it favorable purchase Diesel apparel.

Some of the symbols in advertisements were not only the language, but also the colors and images represented. The respondents related the bright colors of urban hairstyle product advertisement to their lively and emotional lifestyle. On the other hand, the advertisements that had a favorable image, but unfavorable message were not approved by the respondents. Some of the participants said that the advertisement of the Orrefors glass has a very appealing picture – it is classy, elegant and contains dark color with beautiful shapes of the glasses, which seems to match the self-congruity of the customer. However the text did not appeal to the consumers as much and therefore ruined the positive perception of the advertisement by the consumer.

To sum up research question four, the consumer groups’ perception of symbolism in language mixed advertisements tended to be related to their personal life and interests. Moreover, habits and personal character were revealed as important factors as to how consumers perceive symbolism in advertisements. Overall layout, the use of colors, models and images, as well as the use of text and slogans influenced the two consumer groups’ perception of symbolism in the language mixed advertisements that were chosen for this study.

In the discussions above, the consumer groups responses to each of the research question has been put forth. To further summarize the analysis chapter, a table has been put together to provide an overview of the empirical data in accordance the established theoretical framework. In Table 2 below, **Summary of consumer group responses according to theory**, information on the two consumer groups’ answers is presented in a very short and concise manner. Furthermore, the answers found to differ between the consumer groups is presented.
Table 2: Summary of consumer group responses according to theory.

The table includes information on how the two consumer groups responded to each of the theories presented to support the research questions established. In addition to this, the Table 2 also point out the variables that turned out to differ among the consumer groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Swedish Respondents</th>
<th>Immigrant Respondents</th>
<th>Different variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to Swedish language in general</td>
<td>Do not consider English language as a threat to Swedish language in general</td>
<td>Do not consider English language as a threat to Swedish language in general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to Swedish language in advertising and business sector</td>
<td>Majority considers English as a threat only in advertising or business sector</td>
<td>Some consider English as a threat only in advertising or business sector</td>
<td>Older Swedish respondents do not see English as a symbol of internationalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalization</td>
<td>English represents internationalization, modernity and globalization</td>
<td>English represents internationalization, modernity and globalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Younger respondents have positive emotions towards English</td>
<td>Younger respondents have positive emotions towards English</td>
<td>Some older respondents have negative emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of second language acquisition</td>
<td>Younger generation learned second language at 8-9 years old</td>
<td>Most of the respondents learned second language in their 20’s</td>
<td>Older generation of Swedish consumers learned English later than the young one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of second language acquisition</td>
<td>Mostly natural way</td>
<td>Mostly school way</td>
<td>Older generation learned English naturally, but perceive it less emotionally than Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional perception</td>
<td>Younger generation perceive English as emotionally as Swedish</td>
<td>Most of the respondents perceive more emotionally than Swedish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language in Advertising</td>
<td>Medicine, technology, insurance and banking related services and genuinely Swedish products are to be advertised in native language</td>
<td>Prefer mixed language in advertisements for medicine, technology, insurance and banking related services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin</td>
<td>For the products that require less spending – English is preferable in advertisements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations with English in general</td>
<td>Prefer to have a ‘touch’ of the country of origin</td>
<td>Prefer to have a ‘touch’ of the country of origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations with</td>
<td>Majority of respondents had</td>
<td>No associations in general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis of the empirical data and the established theoretical framework supporting the four research question was carried out in the above chapter. This analysis constitute as the foundation for the coming chapter, were a discussion about the results of this particular research will be presented.
In this final chapter, an in depth discussion regarding the results of the research is presented. In addition to this contributions made from this study are presented; finally, conclusions as well as a connection to the purpose of the study are presented. This chapter is followed by the contributions of the study, and suggestions for the future research. Finally we present our conclusions and connection to the established research purpose, through the research questions.

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the perception and decoding of language mixed advertising messages between consumer groups in Sweden: native Swedish consumers vs. immigrants, the following research questions were established in order to fulfill the purpose:

RQ1. What associations do the consumer groups have regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisement?

RQ2. What associations do the consumer groups have regarding English language mix in Swedish advertisement?

RQ3. How can the consumer groups decoding process of the language mixed advertising be described in term of how the advertising message is being interpreted?

RQ4. How can the consumer groups’ perception of symbolism in language mixed advertisements be described?

The research came to the following discussion:

The results of this study showed that the perception on the use of English language in Swedish advertisements was similar for the younger native Swedish consumers and the immigrant consumers. Both of these consumer groups perceived the English language as emotionally as or even more emotionally than Swedish. Furthermore, younger native Swedish consumers and immigrants found English to be more persuasive, convincing, modern and powerful when used in advertising messages. The results also revealed that this view was not shared by the older generation (from 45 years and older) of the native Swedish consumers. These consumers tended to have a more negative attitude towards the advertising messages stated in English, or with a majority of text in English. This can be explained by their lower level of English knowledge; these consumers risk missing out on information given in the advertisements if stated in English, hence the more negative perception of these advertisements. This discussion was based on the results for Research Question 1, which covered the connection between the age of language acquisition, the level of language knowledge and the emotional perception of the language, which affect the attitude towards the language mixed advertisements.
Due to the different levels of English knowledge amongst the consumers (which is covered in the analysis of Research Question 1), the results of the study also pointed out the difference between the decoding ability of consumers. Specifically, younger generation of native Swedish consumers with higher level of English knowledge and immigrant consumers with higher level of Swedish knowledge had no difficulties with the language-mixed advertisements. However, those immigrant consumers that had only been in Sweden for a short period of time felt that their ability to decode advertising messages decreased if Swedish was the major language used.

Consumers with a medium level of English (for Swedish consumers) or Swedish (for immigrant consumers) language had some difficulties in terms of advertising message interpretation and the decoding process. Consumers with a medium level of the specific language preferred to see at least a mix of language in the advertising message, to increase the chances of decoding the message right.

Consumers with a low level of English (older generation of Swedish consumers, 60 years old and older) and Swedish (recent immigrant consumers) preferred to see the advertisements in their dominant language. Both of the consumer groups with low level of language knowledge could not decode the advertising message.

The attitude towards the language mixed advertisements is highly linked with the level of language knowledge, which in turn is related to the ability to decode the advertising message (Research Questions 1 and 3).

The decoding process of the consumers was also affected by the way the advertising message matched their personality, habits and lifestyle, which is covered by Research Question 4. The results showed that respondents were more in favor of the advertisements that were similar to the way the respondents perceived themselves. The younger native Swedish consumers and all the questioned immigrants found English more appealing to them personally as it represents modernity, high quality and internationalization, which covers Research Question 2. The older generation of native Swedish consumers found advertisements only in Swedish as more appealing to their self-image. Again the results pointed to similar responses from the younger native Swedish consumers and from the immigrant consumers; while the older generation of the native Swedish consumers differed in their responses.

Moreover, decoding also showed to be dependent on the construction of the message itself. The native Swedish consumers claimed that even though some of the advertisements are in their dominant language, the message was still difficult to decode because of the unclear structure of the advertisement: image, length of text, overall layout in connection to the product that is being advertised. Immigrants that spoke Swedish fluently also reported some difficulties in interpretation of the advertising due to the unclear message (Research Question 3).

For both of the consumer groups the results of the study showed that the country of origin of the product, the brand name and the type of the product affected the perception of the use English language in the advertisements. The products of world-known brands are preferred to be advertised in English, due to the associations that the consumers have with English language in advertisements, i.e. internationalization, modernity, high quality, world recognition and globalization (Research Question 2). In addition to this, native Swedish consumers of the older generation (45 years and older) tended to view the country of origin of
the product featured in a certain advertisement as more accepted regarding the use of English; in spite of the English use not being preferable.

The majority of the respondents, both native Swedish and immigrant consumers, perceived that the English language represents a threat to the Swedish language in the advertising industry as well as within the business sector. However, none of the respondents, neither native Swedish nor immigrants, claimed that they perceived the English language as a threat to the Swedish language in general (Research Question 1). Comparing the two consumer groups regarding this, the results pointed to equal opinions.

None of the immigrant consumers claimed to have any associations with the English language. However, when talking about English language in Swedish advertisements, they associated it with internationalization, globalization, modernity and high quality; this made the immigrant consumers’ perception towards language mixed advertisements, and in particular English advertisements positive (Research Questions 1 and 2). Native Swedish consumers had associations with USA, mass media like TV, movies, and Internet when thinking about the English language. These associations became mostly the same when putting English into the advertising context; making their perceptions of language mixed advertisements different then the immigrant consumers’. The native Swedish consumers see products that are advertised in English not as products of high quality or modernity, per se, but just as the products that are trendy and more popular to use.

The consumer groups perception towards language mixed advertisements also showed to be dependent on the type of product that was being featured in the certain advertisement. Native Swedish respondents preferred to see Swedish language in the products that require major spending, as well as medicine, insurance, banking related services. Contrary to the native Swedish consumers, immigrant consumers preferred to see a mix of languages in the advertisements of these product categories. Both immigrant and native Swedish consumers preferred to see the language mixed advertisements for the genuinely Swedish products, like IKEA.

It was not an aim of the study to make a generalization towards the whole population of Sweden. However, the differences between the younger and older generation of the Swedish consumers show that attitudes and decoding process of language-mixed advertisements differ significantly. The younger generation of Swedish consumers and English-speaking immigrants have positive attitudes towards English language in Swedish advertisements, and seem to share similar decoding process due to their high level of English knowledge. The older Swedish respondents had a different opinion about English language in Swedish advertisements, and, therefore, are an interesting subject for further research. Suggestions for further research are stated below in the chapter.

6.1 Contributions of the study

The results of this study contributed to the marketing theory in terms of new and deeper knowledge of the Swedish consumer market in aspects like decoding, symbolism, associations and attitudes towards language mixed advertisements.

Furthermore, marketing managers can benefit by the results of this study since it can help increase their understandings of how the consumers in Sweden perceive this marketing strategy. In addition to this, it can also help marketing managers to understand how to
communicate with target customers in terms of a better understanding as to which extent the target customers view the marketing strategy of language mixed, or English language advertising messages. As pointed out, it is not preferred by everyone in the Swedish consumer market. Therefore, English language can be used more successfully towards the younger generation of Swedish consumers as well as immigrant consumers; more Swedish language is to be used towards the older generation of Swedish consumers.

Moreover, according to the results of the study, product categorization and country of origin also has an effect on the perception of the advertisement by consumers. Since a number of respondents mentioned that the interplay between the country of origin of the product and the language of the advertisement should match in order to enhance the characteristic of the product; furthermore, the consumer groups prefer to have a ‘touch’ of the country of origin in the advertisement (words or images that characterize a country, i.e. Donna Karan perfume, and New York City skyline in the reflection of the bottle).

In terms of product categorization, the core Swedish products and more expensive and complex products (medicine, insurance, banking service) are more acceptable to be advertised with the majority of Swedish language; whereas the commonly used products (clothes, cosmetics, perfume, entertainment) are more acceptable to be advertised in English. This is valuable information for the advertising agencies in those particular product industries. These factors are a valuable contribution to the marketing industry of Sweden, as they can attract the attention of the consumers in a greater way.

In addition to this, the results of this particular study could also be of use for policy markers. The theory about language death and the results of this study point to the fact that the Swedish language is in stage two of language death; consumers do not mind. This implies that consumers in Sweden do not perceive English as a threat to Swedish and do not mind the use of English; this can have negative consequences for the Swedish language unless politicians take action.

6.2 Conclusions and connection to the purpose

To conclude, the results of this study revealed that native Swedish consumers and immigrant consumers’ attitude towards English language in Swedish advertisements is positive. None of the consumer groups perceived this marketing strategy as a threat to the Swedish language in general; however, both consumer groups regarded English as a threat to Swedish in both the advertising and the business sector. In spite of this, the immigrant consumers, the use of this marketing strategy implied a sense of being integrated. Everyday life in Sweden is to a large extent influenced and exposed to the English language; because of this, native Swedish consumers tended to think that the use of English language or language mixing in advertising messages as natural.

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the perception and decoding of language mixed advertising messages between consumer groups in Sweden; native Swedish consumers and immigrants. The perception and decoding of language mixed advertising messages showed to be very similar between the immigrant consumers and the younger generation of native Swedish consumers. The older generation of the native Swedish consumers had some difficulties with decoding and more of a negative perception of English language and language mixed advertisements. Hence, the results of this particular study revealed that the con-
consumers’ level of English knowledge was closely linked to their decoding abilities. The consumers’ decoding abilities in turn affected the individuals’ perception of the marketing strategy; a higher level of English knowledge lead to a more positive perception of the use of English or language mixed advertisements, and vice versa.

6.3 Suggestions for future research

The researchers’ suggestions for future research within this area would be to carry out the research from the advertising agencies perspective instead of from a consumer perspective as this study already covers that. It could be interesting to look deeper into why advertising agencies actually use a foreign language, either completely, or either mixed with Swedish since many times the Swedish language have the suitable words and phrases needed. To see what is in it for them, regarding the use of this marketing strategy since they risk not getting through to the intended audience by using a foreign language.

Furthermore, in a near future it might be interesting to carry out a new study like this in Sweden, as the researchers pointed out in the problem discussion, the perception towards the use of the English language is not time consistent, so the research need to be carried out periodically.

Another suggestion for future research is to conduct a study with the same structure and outline as this study, but on different consumer groups. One example can be the younger generation of Swedish consumers versus older generation; since English is obligatory to study in the Swedish school system already from a young age, it might be interesting to see how a younger consumer group responds to language mix advertisements and how it differs from the older generation responses.

Moreover, analyzing the advertising industry in Sweden, for example what kind of product use only English, only Swedish and why? (Insurance companies for example, seem to use only Swedish information in their advertisements, why?)

Another suggestion is to carry out quantitative study regarding the topic of English language in Swedish advertisements, in order to provide more generalizable results for the study.

By analyzing the empirical data that was gathered during this research process, the established research questions were answered. Answering the research question made it possible to fulfill the purpose of the particular study. The researchers of this particular study has through this research process have through investigation and analytical methods gained a deeper knowledge and understanding of the perception and decoding process of both native Swedish consumers as well as immigrant consumers in Sweden.
List of References


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APPENDIX 1. Interview Questions

General Questions:

1. Age, Gender, Nationality, Language spoken, How long in Sweden if Immigrant

2. Tell us what you think about this advertising. Do you like it? What do you feel? What are the emotions? What symbols do you find most standing out? How do you interpret the message? Do you find it appealing to you? Do you think that the use of English is appropriate? (start up the discussion, nothing too specific, just getting the respondents familiar with the topic)

Language and Emotions (Research Question 1)

3. Which language is dominant?

4. When did you learn English (for Swede and Immigrant)
   When did you learn Swedish?

5. How did you learn the language (natural vs. school acquisition)?

6. What is your attitude towards the English language use in the advertising? (English ads were shown)
   a. What do you think about the ad?
   b. Do you find the language used in the ad appropriate for this specific product?

7. When you see an advertisement with English language, whether it’s fully in English or mixed, what emotions do you have?
   a. Do you feel positive, negative, resentment towards English language, appealing (make sure to compare the immigrants’ response vs. Swedish.)

8. Do you perceive one language more emotionally than the other? Do you find an ad more emotionally appealing depending on the language used?

Language Death

9. Do you think that ads in English are appropriate in Sweden?

10. Do you think that English could be a threat to Swedish language?

Communication process (Research Question 2)

11. Do you have associations with English language in general?

12. When you see English in advertising, do you have similar associations? (For example, if you associate English language with modernity, do you think that the advertisement in English is communicating the message to modernity to you as well?)

Decoding (Research Question 3)

13. Do you find the language-mixed advertising clear?
14. Do you understand the message of the advertising?

15. How would you interpret the message? (Make sure to compare the Swedes vs. Immigrants)

16. Do you perceive the language helpful or as a barrier for you to understand the message of the advertising?

**Construction Formulation of an Advertising Message** (Research Question 3)

17. Do you think that the message of the advertising fits the advertising itself: is the language used appropriately, is it persuasive, emotional, serious, convincing?

**Language in Advertising** (Research Question 2)

18. Are there certain categories of products that should be advertised in only English, only Swedish or mixed? Why?

19. Does the country of origin affect your perception of the language in the advertising (British goods should be advertised in English)?

**Symbolism** (Research Question 4)

20. Are there any of the advertisements that match your personality?

21. Would you consider this product’s advertising as something that is close to you personally (your character, habits, and lifestyle)?

Thank you for your time!
APPENDIX 3. Diesel Perfume
APPENDIX 5. INTERSPORT – Asics

I always recommend ASICS for their cushioning and support, as you just can’t afford to get injured when training for an event.

Simon Storey - Training Consultant
EN STOR STARK

GE DIG SJÄLVEN STÖRRE, STARKARE UPPLEVELSE.
I serien Difference för Pils, Ale och Porter har varje detalj utarbetats för att framhåva ölens olika egenskaper. Glas formgivna av Erika Lagerbielke, känt för sin skickligt handverk.

DIFFERENCE
Isn’t it same, same...

Orrefors
my world. my style. my ecco
APPENDIX 10. L'Oréal
ADD SOME LIGHT

Känner du dig trött i mörkret? Ladda om med Vitamin Wells senaste litskott - Reload. Reload är fylld med D-vitamin och ger dig kraft att driva med övriga sällskapets skindar.
APPENDIX 11. PhoneHouse – SonyEricson
ÄR DET DAGS FÖR EN NY CADDY?

auto motor & sport testar
ALLA nya bilar.

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