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English in Spanish and Polish advertising: the comprehension of the text

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English plays an increasingly important role in the advertising discourse globally. The frequent use of English in non-English advertising is often seen as symbolic in that it is designed to exert an emotional impact on the receiver of the ad, evoking a number of positive connotations that are believed to enhance the persuasiveness of advertising. According to this symbolic view, the literal meaning of English in ads is of lesser importance as compared to its symbolic value (Haarmann, 1989; Piller, 2001 and 2003; Kelly-Holmes, 2005). The overall purpose of this study is to investigate, through the use of questionnaires, the Spanish and Polish target audiences' comprehension of the English language employed in print advertising in Spain and Poland. The study focuses on the degree of the respondents' comprehension, and analyses whether this comprehension leads to a better ad and product appreciation and a higher intention to buy the advertised goods (Hendriks et al., 2017).

The results have shown vast differences between the Spanish and Polish respondents as far as their actual comprehension is concerned. Also, a link has been found between the respondents' comprehension and their attitudes. Thus, the present study contributes to the view that comprehension affects the perception of advertising, which in turn means that the English language functions not only as a symbol but its literal meaning is of importance as well.

Biographical note(s) of the author(s)

Dr. Katarzyna Anna Nowak holds an MA in English linguistics and a PhD degree in the discourse of advertising and its reception from the University of Murcia (Spain). Currently, she teaches English and Spanish for specific purposes at the Universidad Católica de Murcia. Her lines of research include the reception of advertising discourse and translation, non-translation and neologisms in advertising, as well as pedagogical translation.

Recommendation (for student section)

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