Bilingual Processing of Advertising Information: a Psycholinguistic Approach - the Link Between Attributes Remembered and Attributes Preferred

jaime noriega, University of Houston

For many years, advertisers have been translating their selling messages into ethnic populations’ dominant languages. However, not much theory-based consumer research; at least not from an information processing perspective, has been conducted to validate this strategy. Comparing the correspondence between attributes recalled and attributes preferred (as revealed by conjoint analysis), we propose that bilinguals reading a second language advertisement will recall more of the attributes they prefer in the advertised product class, than monolinguals reading an ad in their only language. This effect is believed to occur as a result of cross language generation effects, and selective processing.

[to cite]:


[url]:

http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/12408/volumes/v33/NA-33

[copyright notice]:

This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at http://www.copyright.com/.
work is needed in this area. In addition, despite the apparently strong influence of religion and religiosity on a wide variety of consumer attitudes, values, and behaviors, this area has received much less attention than some other similar areas of influence (e.g., race or ethnicity). Although the results of the present research are limited in scope, it appears likely that religion and religiosity may have important implications for segmentation, targeting, and advertising strategy development and may serve as the basis for an important area of transformative consumer research.

References:

Bilingual Processing of Advertising from a Psycholinguistic Perspective: The Link Between Attributes Remembered and Attributes Preferred
Jaime Luynes Noriega, University of Houston

When marketers first studied cross cultural communications the focal audience was African-Americans and the usual issue was the ethnic match between perceiver and spokesperson(s) (For a review see Whittler, 1991).

As immigration from the south increased, researchers set their sights on the Hispanic market. In order to study this group, language necessarily became an operant variable. However, researchers seemed to be accepting the theoretical implication of an invalidated premise—the Whorfian hypothesis of linguistic relativity (Whorf 1956)—by treating language and culture as if though they were completely dependent on each other. As a result, most studies looked at cross cultural communication from a strictly cultural/social perspective and demoted language to the status of a corollary variable.

Seemingly justified by this type of research, Madison Avenue came up with a most disingenuous solution to the issue of how to communicate with ethnic target populations: simply translate the message to their dominant language. However, very little theory-based research exists to validate such an approach (Luna & Peracchio 2002).

The psycholinguistics literature suggests there are universal aspects of language learning and production, including characteristics of second language acquisition, encoding, and recall regardless of what language(s) we consider. Working from this knowledge, Luna & Peracchio have begun to study cross cultural marketing communications from a psycholinguistic perspective (Luna & Peracchio 1999, 2001, 2002).

Although Luna & Peracchio have looked at the quantity of recall by bilinguals when processing a second language message, and have concluded that the extra cognitive effort results in less recall for bilinguals than monolinguals, they have not considered the possibility that the information bilinguals do recall may be more valuable from a cognitive and/or affective standpoint than the information monolinguals are able to recall.

Contrary to what Kroll & Stewart’s Revised Hierarchical Model and the Conceptual Mediation Model have suggested, Silverberg and Samuel (2004) found that bilinguals who had learned their second language past the age of seven, did not exhibit any cross language semantic priming regardless of their second language proficiency. The cut off age of seven was based on research which found that during the planning of second language words, bilinguals who learned their second language after the age of seven, showed significantly different brain activation patterns than bilinguals who had learned their second language before the age of seven (Kim et al, 1997). This information leads us to believe that bilinguals who learn their second language after the age of seven (highly representative of U.S. adult immigrants), are likely to engage in more lexical activity than many theories would suggest.

For bilinguals, second language lexical to first language lexical activation results in a form of elaborative rehearsal as information is linked between short term and long term memory and both a lexical link and a conceptual link are activated. Elaborative rehearsal has been shown to improve episodic memory (Kellog 2003). It is believed that the extra elaboration undertaken by bilinguals, will result in a generation effect: better memory for target items that are generated (Slamecka & Graf 1978). Research has shown the occurrence of a bilingual generation effect (O’Neill, Roy, & Tremblay, 1993).

We intended to show that presenting a second language selling message to a bilingual may actually result in better recall of personally relevant attributes for any given product category, than would be the case for monolinguals.

It has been said that “recognition of the impact of attribute importance on information search is so widespread... that information acquisition behavior is accepted as a direct measure of attribute importance” (Mackenzie 1986, p.174). It therefore stands to reason that in an advertising context, a developing bilingual will begin to learn, recognize, and pay special attention to words representing the attributes he/she feels are most important in the focal product category. Because second language word recognition is not as automatic as first language recognition, a bilingual is better able to focus on the “important” words and essentially ignore the rest.

Our research began with a pilot study; a nested 2 x (2 x 2) between-subjects design: Hi/Lo-Motivation, Monolingual/Bilingual-Language, Forced/Unforced-translation (for bilinguals only). Subjects were randomly assigned to each of the controllable conditions.
Low-motivation subjects were only told they would be asked to judge an advertisement; additionally, hi-motivation subjects were told they would have to explain the ad to another subject at a later time. Within the bilingual group, half the subjects were asked to make a conscious effort to think of the words in the ad in a language other than English.

Subjects were then exposed to an advertisement for a backpack which featured seven distinct attributes. Immediately after the exposure, subjects were asked to complete a standard attitude toward the ad scale, they were then asked to list all of the product information they could recall from the ad. This was followed by language usage, demographics, and product involvement questions and a measure of lexical activity.

One week later, subjects were asked to complete a conjoint task meant to assess their revealed preferences for a subset of the different product attributes presented in the stimulus advertisement.

It was hypothesized that bilingual subjects’ revealed preferences for certain product attributes would be more highly correlated with the attributes they recalled after exposure to the stimulus ad during week one, indicating that bilingual subjects had better recall for the attributes they preferred in the focal product category than monolinguals.

Through a series of binary logistic regressions, we regressed the relative importance of all attributes on the likelihood that a given attribute was recalled. We expected to find more and higher significant betas corresponding to our dependant attribute for bilinguals than monolinguals.

Examination of the data revealed sampling problems related to self reported language proficiencies by American bilingual subjects; however, tests on a small sub-sample of international bilinguals yielded strong directional support for the hypothesized effects.

Future studies will be conducted with subjects whose language proficiency can be objectively assessed; specifically, individuals enrolled in English as a Second Language programs.

References

Advertising Claims About Search and Experiential Attributes and Their Effect on Post-Trial Evaluations of Functional versus Hedonic Products
Camelia Micu, Fairfield University

Introduction

Advertising and product trial are often used by companies to encourage consumers to buy their products. One focus of ad-trial research has been on type of attribute information provided by advertising versus trial. A key finding is that product trial provides maximum information relative to experiential attributes (e.g., taste, speed, softness); whereas advertising provides maximum information for search attributes (e.g., price, ingredients, calorie content) (Wright and Lynch 1995).

Several researchers have speculated that other factors are important in the ad-trial experience. In particular, Devi and Ang (2001) argue that advertising can more effectively communicate products’ hedonic dimensions, and product trial can more effectively communicate the utilitarian dimensions. Additionally, research indicates that message claims affect advertising’s degree of effectiveness (see Darley and Smith 1993; Edell and Staelin 1983; Ford, Smith, and Swasy 1990; Holbrook 1978), and in the context of trial, the extent to which a claim provides more objective versus more subjective information may be important.

To-date, no ad-trial research has examined the effect of advertising claims on post-trial evaluations. Specifically, the objective of this study is to investigate whether objective versus subjective pre-trial advertising claims about experiential versus search product attributes differentially affect consumers’ post-trial perceptions of a functional versus a hedonic product.