

English in Dutch Online Advertising:

A comparison of appreciation and persuasion effects between advertisements completely in English, completely in Dutch, and in Dutch with English words and phrases

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the difference in appreciation and persuasion effects of digital advertisements written completely in English, completely in Dutch, or in Dutch with English words and phrases. An overview of previous research on the subject of using foreign languages in advertisements is given, along with information about related concepts such as digital marketing goals and prescriptiveness in language attitudes. Based on previous research, it is determined that there is as of yet no consensus about the effects of the use of English in advertisements aimed at Dutch consumers. Moreover, as previous research was almost all done using traditional media outlets, a need for research on digital advertising media becomes clear. Using a between-subjects design, the concepts of appreciation, purchase intention, and click intention in relation to three versions of a Facebook advertisement are measured among Dutch young adults. The results of the study show that there is no difference in appreciation and persuasion between the three linguistic versions of the Facebook advertisement. This points the academic discussion in the direction that the use of English has neither a positive nor a negative effect on the appreciation and persuasion effects of this advertisement on Dutch young adult consumers. Further research into possible effects of foreign language use in digital advertisements is recommended.

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1. Introduction

It is not uncommon for advertisements aimed at Dutch consumers to contain English words and phrases or even to be completely in English. A study on the differences in Dutch people's appreciation of advertisement slogans in Dutch in comparison to easy English and difficult English slogans found that easy English slogans were appreciated more than their Dutch counterparts, and that difficult English slogans were appreciated equally as much as the Dutch slogans (Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010). Another study looked at the difference in effects on participants between radio commercials completely in Dutch and those in Dutch containing English words and phrases. This study found that for radio, the use of English in commercials did not have any advantages, and that using English may even have disadvantages (Smakman, Korzilius, van Meurs, & van Neeren, 2009). Considering these research outcomes, it is striking to see that in non-academic media there is a presence of people who do not agree that English is preferable over Dutch, or even equally preferable in advertising and branding. Evidence of this can be found on the Facebook page *Onnodig Engels taalgebruik* 'Unnecessary use of English' (n.d.), and in newspaper columns and articles like *LUL: We slaan door met al die Engelse titels* 'LUL: we're going too far with all those English titles' (Akyol, 2017), *5 keer onnodig Engels: Ergerlijk maar ook hilarisch* '5 times unnecessary English: annoying but also hilarious' (Dolaard, 2017), and *Stop eens met al dat Engels in reclames* 'Stop using so much English in advertisements' (Bouma, 2017). Contributors to these media mainly seem to be displeased by the use of English words and phrases in an overall Dutch-language context.

Where Smakman et al. (2009) suggested that the use of English in advertisements could have negative effects on appreciation by Dutch consumers due to a decrease in comprehension of the text, research by Hornikx et al. (2010) suggests that the use of English has no negative effect on appreciation, even when it decreases comprehension. Not only do

these research outcomes disagree with each other, but neither of them give any insight into why the contributors on the Facebook page and in the articles mentioned have such a negative opinion of English in Dutch advertising. To further investigate effects of using English in advertisements, it is useful to not just compare appreciation and persuasiveness of Dutch advertisements versus English advertisements, or those of Dutch advertisements versus Dutch advertisements with English words and phrases, but to compare these three linguistic possibilities within the same advertisement context to see if multilingual advertisements are perceived more negatively than advertisements that are written in one language.

1.2. Theoretical framework

In order to understand the possible effects of English in Dutch advertisements, theories about appreciation and persuasion effects, and foreign language use and perception in advertisements will be provided before a research question is formulated.

1.2.1. Appreciation and persuasion effects of advertisements

Advertisement research can focus on elements such as appreciation and persuasion effects. In most academic research about advertisements, appreciation is treated as a straightforward concept. Measures of appreciation often ask research participants about their attitudes towards something by asking them, for instance, if they like an advertisement, and whether they think it is a good advertisement, or an interesting advertisement (Hornikx & Hof, 2008; Raedts & Dupré, 2015). To persuade can be defined as “to influence, convince, motivate, sell, preach, or stimulate action” (Alberts, Nakayama & Martin, 2012, p. 335). In relation to advertisements with the objective to sell products, it could be said that measures of persuasion effects of an advertisement measure the overall effectiveness of an advertisement. Although measured separately from persuasion effects, appreciation of advertisements in general has

been shown to have positive effects on the persuasion effects of an advertisement, especially in media where consumers are in control of the amount of time they spend looking at an advertisement (Mehta, 2000). This control by consumers is the case in, for instance, print media and most many types of digital advertising.

A common way of measuring persuasion effects on participants is by measuring their purchase intention (Jiang, Chan, Tan & Chua, 2010; Raedts & Dupré, 2015; Till & Baack, 2005). Purchase intention measures whether or not the attempt to sell, as described by Alberts et al. (2012), has had the desired effect on consumers. In an ever-evolving digital climate, a large part of current advertising efforts is happening online. An important benefit of online advertising seems to be that targeting consumers online is cheaper than it is offline (Goldfarb, 2013). Goals of digital advertising can be summed up as creating traffic to brand websites in the form of website hits, and creating brand communities on social media networks (Tuten, 2008, pp. 9-10). In practice, creating online traffic means that digital advertisers want online consumers to visit their websites with product information and online shops. Compared to brand websites, the benefits of brand communities on established social media are that they are a quick, easy, and cheap way to spread brand content to a large group of consumers (Zaglia, 2013, p. 222). However, in order for consumers to see this content on their social media feeds without the brand paying for advertisements, consumers will have to subscribe to a brand's social media in some way. This subscription can take the form of 'liking' on Facebook or 'following' on, for instance, Twitter or Instagram. In relation to persuasion effects in communication, digital advertising goals can be linked to the persuasion effect of stimulating and activating consumers to click links and like pages.

1.2.2. Foreign language use in advertisements

The introductory paragraphs of this study paralleled the contradictory outcomes of the study done by Smakman et al. (2009), stating that the use of English in advertisements can have negative effects on appreciation by Dutch consumers because of a decrease in comprehension, and the study by Hornikx et al. (2010), stating that the use of English does not have a negative effect on appreciation by Dutch consumers, even when comprehension decreases. It also sheds light on the negative perception in various media of so called unnecessary use of English in Dutch-language contexts. An exploration of research done on foreign language use in advertisements will be continued in the following paragraphs.

A possible effect of using languages other than the local language in advertisements is that associations with the foreign language used in combination with the product may lead to higher appreciation and persuasiveness of the advertisement. Hornikx, van Meurs and Starren (2007) found that, although it is the case that some languages, like French and Spanish, can generate a high number of positive associations in Dutch respondents that may lead to higher appreciation and persuasiveness in print advertising, other languages, like German in the case of young Dutch participants, create more negative associations with participants and are therefore less likely to have an advantageous effect on appreciation and persuasiveness (p. 215). Unfortunately, the associations with English were not researched in this study. In another study, English was found to be associated with a modern company image by participants from Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands, but this study also suggests that English may be seen as a neutral advertising language that therefore does not have great impact on consumers' attitudes (Gerritsen, Nickerson, van den Brant, Crijns, Dominguez, van Meurs, & Nederstigt, 2007).

Advertising messages can be processed via a central route, in a detail-oriented approach to information processing, or via a peripheral route, as a more superficial way of

information processing (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983, p. 138). Van Meurs, Korzilius and Bergevoet (2015) investigated the possibility of English words and phrases functioning as peripheral cues that could increase the persuasiveness of a job advertisement when compared to the persuasiveness of completely Dutch job advertisements, and found some evidence that, when processed via the peripheral route rather than the central route, jobs in advertisements partly in English were seen as more attractive than jobs in completely Dutch advertisements. In the context of this study by van Meurs et al. (2015), this means that the English phrases in the advertisements were not read thoroughly and that the use of an additional language to Dutch did not spark an extra carefulness in readers through, for instance, extra effort that might be put into the reading in order to understand the English words used. The outcomes of this study, again, point the academic discussion about the effects of English in Dutch advertising in another direction than the study suggesting that English words and phrases in Dutch advertisements have no positive effects or could even have negative effects (Smakman et al., 2009), and provide no further insights into the relation between these findings by Smakman et al. and the higher appreciation of easy English advertisements compared to Dutch advertisements found by Hornikx et al. (2010). Moreover, a study on the effects of English in job advertisements comparing an advertisement in English, one in Dutch, and one in Dutch containing English words showed no effects of the use of English on the attitudes of potential applicants (van Meurs, Korzilius, & Hermans, 2004).

Returning to the Facebook page and the newspaper columns described in the introduction, comments on companies about their unnecessary use of English can be seen as clear examples of linguistic prescriptivism. Prescriptivism is the categorisation of language into so-called good and bad language (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Mesthrie & the remaining *ET* editors, 2010, p. 2). As described by Burrige (2010), those who categorise language as either good or bad often mean to keep language from changing and from letting in foreign

language influences (p. 4). It can be predicted that people with a prescriptive view on language would therefore condemn the use of English words instead of their Dutch translations in Dutch language contexts. In relation to advertisements, this could mean that these purists, as Burrige calls them, would have a lower appreciation of advertisements containing English words and phrases. Burrige (2010) does add that words that have a taboo over them stimulate a kind of arousal that has an effect on memory of those words, and predicts an emotional response to taboo words that extends beyond plain obscene words (pp. 9-10). If Dutch consumers in general are as annoyed by English words as some Facebook pages and newspaper articles make it seem, this emotional response might trigger advertisements with English words and phrases to be processed via a central route rather than a peripheral route. According to van Meurs et al. (2015), foreign words do not trigger a more central route of processing just because of being foreign (pp. 31-32). However, this study on central versus peripheral processing does not describe possible annoyances some people might have with English words. It remains hard to tell what the overall effect of English use in advertisements on the performance of those advertisements is. Another element that is unclear is how representative prescriptive popular media outlets are for the opinions of Dutch consumers as a group.

Overall, there is little agreement between the outcomes of research on the effects of English in advertisements aimed at Dutch consumers. It is also unclear to what extent results from research on job advertisements can be generalised to product advertisements and vice versa. What might be of help in finding out how the outcomes of different studies relate to each other is to do more research where Dutch advertisements are not just compared to either Dutch advertisements containing English words and phrases or to completely English advertisements, but to compare all three versions to each other in product advertisement. Another remark that can be made on the body of research presented above is that many

publications are from about ten years ago and that increasing globalisation may have changed Dutch consumers' attitudes to English in advertisements. As Kelly-Holmes (2006) pointed out over a decade ago as well: although English is a hypercentral language on the Internet, particularly smaller European languages are increasing their commercial presence on the web. If this trend has continued over the years, there is a possibility that non-native speakers' attitudes towards English as a commercial language have changed over the last decade. Most of the research presented in this section was done on advertisements in traditional media, so when designing a new study it may be useful to focus on advertisements in new media to fit the modern form of advertising.

1.3. Research question

The points raised in the academic discussion above lead to the following research question: what is the difference in appreciation and persuasion effects on Dutch consumers of digital advertisements written completely in English, completely in Dutch, and in Dutch containing English words and phrases?

2. Methodology

In the following section, the design of the research materials and the procedures of data collection and analysis are explained. The final paragraphs of the methodology section give an overview of descriptive data of the 120 individuals who participated in the study.

2.1. Materials

The materials for this experiment were designed for a between-subjects design. Three versions of a survey were constructed, each containing the same questions but a different version of one advertisement.

2.1.1. Advertisements

The original advertisement was found online in an article called “142 Best Facebook Ad Examples (2018 Update)” (Karson, 2018) on a marketing blog written by a professional growth marketer. Other than being selected as a good example of a Facebook advertisement by a professional marketer, this particular advertisement was chosen because its simple layout allowed for easy manipulation, and unlike most of the other advertisements it clearly showed the product it was trying to sell. The product advertised is a meal replacement shake, produced by the company Soylent. This original version of the advertisement can be seen in figure 1.

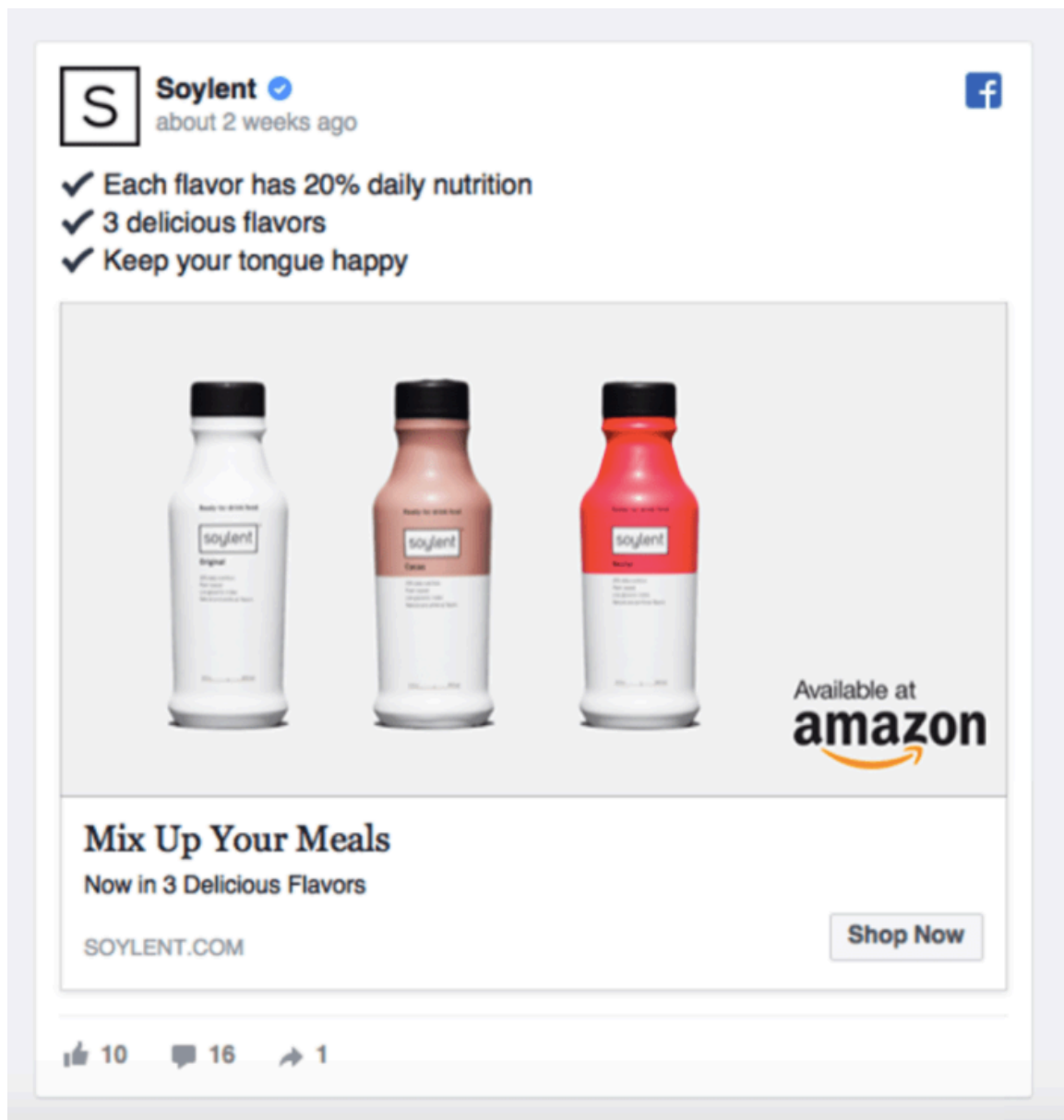


Figure 1. Original Soylent advertisement (Soylent as shown in Karson, 2018).

The advertisement shown in figure 1 was manipulated to create three different versions aimed at Dutch consumers using Adobe InDesign CC. Version one is the manipulated English advertisement. Version two is the manipulated advertisement translated to Dutch. Version three is the advertisement that was manipulated to be written in Dutch containing English words and phrases, and will be referred to as the Dutch/English advertisement or version from now on.

In all three versions of the advertisement, the date of posting and the Amazon web shop logo were edited out to avoid possible confusion or distraction by the date and the web shop whose Dutch branch does not yet distribute items other than books. The 'buy now' button was also translated into Dutch in all three versions to signal that all advertisements are aimed at Dutch consumers. The advertisement versions were modernised by covering the Soylent logo and company name in the original advertisement with the current Soylent company logo and a clearer screenshot of the company name. Other measures taken to modernise the advertisement were covering the Facebook button layout at the bottom of the advertisement by screenshots of the current button layout, and by editing out the blurry Facebook logo in the top right corner. Furthermore, in all versions, all text was covered and rewritten in the same font to ensure an equal look. Without a translation of the advertisement text, these changes led to the English version of the advertisement that can be seen in figure 2.

Soylent

- ✓ Each flavor has 20% daily nutrition
- ✓ 3 delicious flavors
- ✓ Keep your tongue happy

Mix Up Your Meals
Now in 3 Delicious Flavors

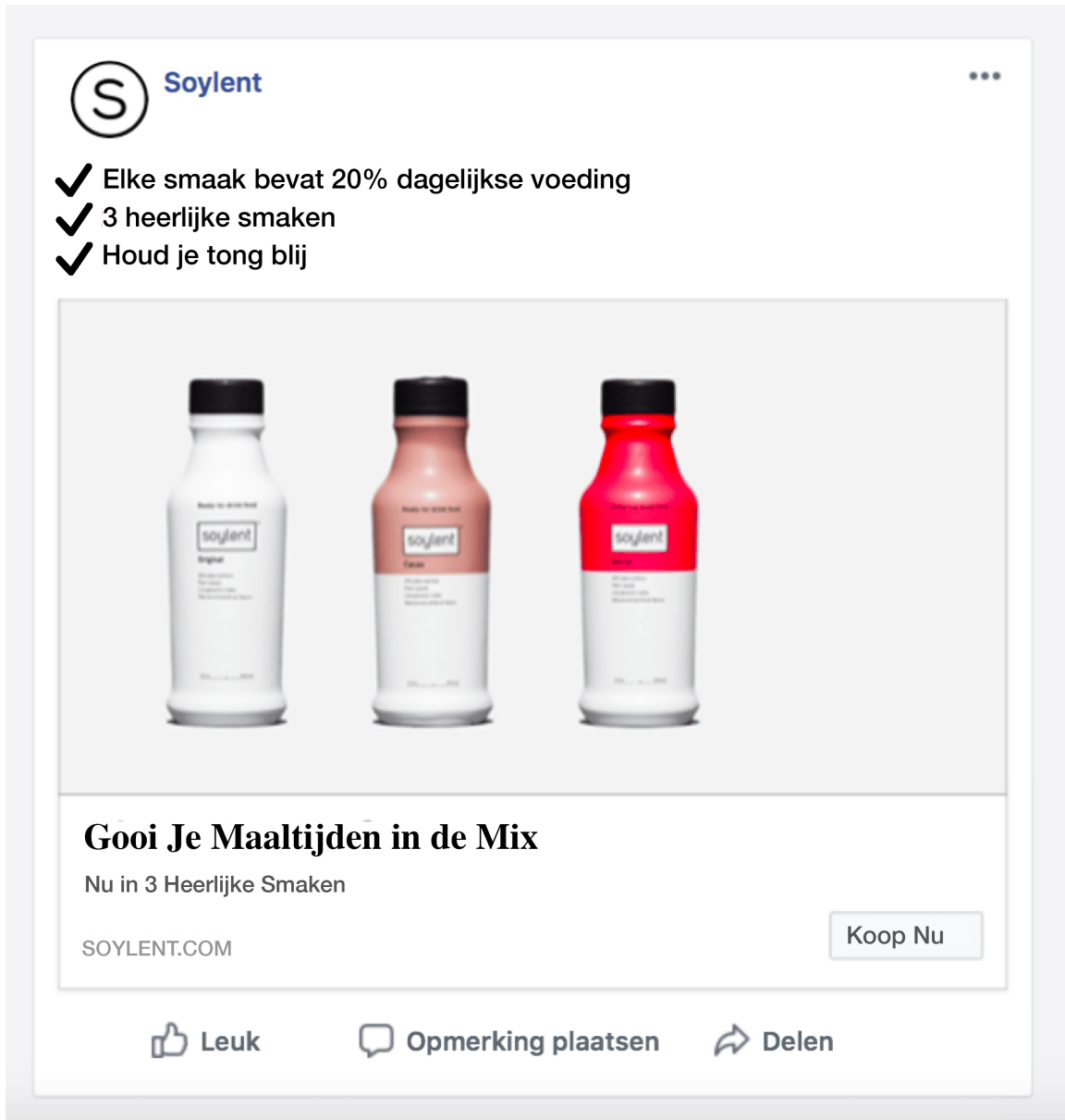
SOYLENT.COM [Koop Nu](#)

Leuk Opmerking plaatsen Delen

Figure 2. Manipulated English advertisement.

For the Dutch version of the advertisement, the researcher, who is a native speaker of Dutch, translated the original English text into Dutch. The quality of the translation was checked by the supervisor of this study, who is a native speaker of Dutch and a university lecturer and researcher of English linguistics. The body of the text was translated as literally as possible, but a little creative liberty was taken when translating the slogan ‘Mix Up Your Meals’ into *Gooi Je Maaltijden in de Mix*, which can be translated back into English as

‘throw your meals into the mix’. This was done to preserve the double meaning of the slogan ‘mixing meals into a liquid form’ and ‘changing up your meals’ as best as possible. These manipulations led to the advertisement as can be seen in figure 3.



S Soylent

- ✓ Elke smaak bevat 20% dagelijkse voeding
- ✓ 3 heerlijke smaken
- ✓ Houd je tong blij

Gooi Je Maaltijden in de Mix
Nu in 3 Heerlijke Smaken

SOYLENT.COM [Koop Nu](#)


Leuk Opmerking plaatsen Delen

Figure 3. Manipulated Dutch advertisement.


For the Dutch/English version, some words and phrases from the original English text were placed back into the Dutch translation. Previous research shows that 57% of

advertisements in a corpus of Dutch glossy magazines had a slogan in English (Gerritsen et al., 2007, p. 8). Although these numbers are from a more traditional media genre, it is not unlikely that similar or higher numbers of English slogans could be found in digital advertisements. Therefore the Dutch/English advertisement used for this experiment contains an English slogan. Percentages ranging from 0% to 52% of English words in Dutch radio commercials with an average of 5% (Smakman et al., 2009, p. 112) and a 6.5% average of English words used in Dutch magazine advertisements (Gerritsen et al., 2007, p. 7) suggest that roughly one or two words in the 19-word advertisement text should be in English.

A pre-test was done to decide whether to use one or two English words in the main text of the Dutch/English advertisement. Native speakers of Dutch were asked via Facebook messenger to rate one of two versions, one version containing one English word and one containing two English words, of the advertisement on naturalness on a scale of one to five with one being 'very unnatural' and five being 'very natural'. The text used for the pre-test can be found in appendix A. The two versions of the advertisement used in the pre-test can be seen in figures 4 and 5. For the design of the pre-test version of the advertisement with one English word, *happy* was chosen as the most natural English word to be part of the Dutch text. The second most natural English word to keep in the Dutch text seemed to be *nutrition*, so this was added as a second English word in the pre-test version of the advertisement with two English words. The decision of what English words to include in the pre-test advertisements were made on the judgment of the researcher as a native speaker of Dutch who views online advertisements on a daily basis.

 **Soylent** ⋮

- ✓ Elke smaak bevat 20% dagelijkse voeding
- ✓ 3 heerlijke smaken
- ✓ Houd je tong happy



Mix Up Your Meals
Nu in 3 Heerlijke Smaken

SOYLENT.COM Koop Nu




 Leuk  Opmerking plaatsen  Delen

Figure 4. Manipulated Dutch/English advertisement for pre-test with one English word.

Soylent

- ✓ Elke smaak bevat 20% dagelijkse nutrition
- ✓ 3 heerlijke smaken
- ✓ Houd je tong happy

Mix Up Your Meals
Nu in 3 Heerlijke Smaken

SOYLENT.COM Koop Nu

Leuk Opmerking plaatsen Delen

Figure 5. Manipulated Dutch/English advertisement for pre-test with two English words.

In total, 23 participants responded to the request to participate in the pre-test. 11 of them had seen the version with one English word or pre-test version one, and 12 had seen the version with two English words or pre-test version two. An independent samples t-test showed no significant difference between the naturalness of the advertisement text of pre-test version one ($M= 2.45$, $SD= 0.67$) and the advertisement text of pre-test version two ($M= 2.25$, $SD= 0.62$); ($t(21)= 0.75$, $p= 0.46$).

Because of the lack of a significant statistical outcome of the pre-test, the decision of what advertisement to work with in the final survey was made on the basis of comments that some pre-test participants provided, although they were not specifically asked to do so. The comments about the sentence containing the word *happy* ranged from calling it weird and unattractive to calling it a typical hip sentence. The comments about the sentence containing the word *nutrition* were that it was weird, very unnatural, or that the sentence went too far. A complete overview of the comments can be found in appendix B. Overall, *nutrition* elicited more negative comments than *happy* did, so it seemed more appropriate for the experiment to leave *nutrition* out of the Dutch/English version of the advertisement for the main experiment. This means that 5 out of 19 words in the Dutch/English advertisement are in English, which makes for a percentage of 26.3. Compared to the averages found in previous studies (Gerritsen et.al., 2007; Smakman et al., 2009), this is a rather high percentage but because the advertisement contains few words this is inevitable when keeping the slogan and at least one word in the body of the text in English.

2.1.2. Survey

To test the appreciation and persuasion of the three versions of the advertisement, each participant was asked to fill in a survey with a brief introduction and eighteen questions. The Dutch survey and its English translation can be found in appendix C. Five of the questions are about participants' demographics. Participants were asked to fill in their age, gender, native language, and highest level of education. Participants were also asked to report on their level of English proficiency. The question used was based on a survey question by Hendriks, van Meurs and Poos (2017). Hendriks et al. asked participants to rate their own proficiency on a seven-point scale (p. 188). In line with the rest of the survey used in the current experiment, participants were asked to rate their own proficiency in English on a five-point scale where 1

was ‘not proficient at all’ and 5 was ‘very proficient’. The other thirteen questions were meant to test the appreciation and persuasion effects of the advertisement. In the final question about the advertisement, participants were asked to rate their appreciation of their version overall on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the worst score and 10 being the best. The scale of 1 to 10 was chosen because this scale is used in most Dutch school systems to rate the quality of work done by students, so it was assumed that this scale would be easy to use for the participants of this study to translate their overall appreciation of the advertisement into a number. The other twelve questions consist of three constructs that are made up by four questions, each measured on five-point scales with anchored end values. A scale with an unequal number of answer categories was chosen to ensure a neutral option on the scale. A literature review by Lietz (2010) suggests that a middle option on a scale increases reliability and validity, because it does not push participants with a neutral opinion to randomly choose another option on the scale (p. 262). Five answer categories were chosen because any more categories made the survey look very crowded and because research suggests that a scale of five categories is optimal for agree-disagree scales (Revilla, Saris & Krosnick, 2013).

The construct of appreciation was tested by using four of the five semantic differential scales used by Hornikx and Hof (2008) and Raedts and Dupré (2015) to test the appreciation of an advertisement by letting participants choose a position on a five-point scale between two contrasting positive and negative adjectives. The Dutch adjectives used were *slecht/goed*, *niet leuk/leuk*, *niet origineel/origineel*, and *niet aantrekkelijk/aantrekkelijk*. The corresponding English translations of these adjectives are ‘bad’/‘good’, ‘not nice’/‘nice’, ‘not original’/‘original’, and ‘not attractive’/‘attractive’. The item *saai/boeiend*, ‘boring’/‘interesting’, used by Hornikx and Hof (2008) and Raedts and Dupré (2015), was left out of the survey so appreciation was measured with the same number of items as the other constructs.

The persuasion effects of the versions of the advertisement were measured by focusing on the purchase intention of the participants after seeing their version of the advertisement. The purchase intention was measured by adapting four statements used by Raedts and Dupré (2015) to fit the Soylent products. Participants could rate their agreement with a statement on a five-point scale between ‘completely disagree’ and ‘completely agree’. The statements and their English translations can be found in appendix C, containing the Dutch survey and its English translation.

Because this study is about digital advertising, and more specifically Facebook advertising, a third construct was added to measure another element of the persuasion effect of the Facebook advertisement. No previous research has been found on this construct, so in this study it will be named the click intention. Where purchase intention measures the extent to which a participant is persuaded to buy the product that is advertised, the click intention is meant to measure how much the advertisement has persuaded the participant to click the links in the advertisement in order to create traffic to the brand’s online outlets, or to like the post or the brand’s page, which adds to the brand’s goal of establishing an online brand community. The four statements used to test the construct of click intention are ‘I would like to visit the Soylent website’, ‘I would like this advertisement on Facebook’, ‘I would follow the link in this advertisement’, and ‘I would click the ‘buy now’ button’. Similarly to the statements on purchase intention, the statements on click intention could be rated on five-point scales between ‘completely disagree’ and ‘completely agree’.

The survey was pre-tested by three participants. All versions of the advertisement included the same survey but for the purpose of the pre-test the survey was attached to the English version of the advertisement. The participants had little to no trouble understanding and filling in the survey. They took between 2.5 and 4 minutes to complete the survey. The only change made to the survey based on the results of the pre-test was the wording used to

ask about the gender of the participants from *genderidentiteit*, or ‘gender identity’, to the more common Dutch word *geslacht*, or ‘gender’.

2.2. Procedure

Data collection for this study was conducted by asking participants at several buildings of Utrecht University to look at one of three versions of the Soylent advertisement. Participants were not approached for any other reason than being Dutch-speaking young people, roughly looking somewhere between 15 and 30, present in or around university locations. These participants were asked to read the instruction on the survey and answer the questions. All advertisements and surveys were handed to the participants in a printed version. Participants saw only one of the three versions of the advertisement.

To analyse the collected data, the results of the survey were entered into SPSS Statistics 22. First, the separate items were checked for inter-item reliability per construct with a Cronbach’s alpha analysis. Scores for these items were then combined into mean scores per construct. These mean scores and the overall rating for appreciation of the advertisements were then compared using one-way ANOVAs. An alpha level of 0.05 was used to measure significance of the results.

2.3. Participants

120 participants were found for this study. Recruiting participants intentionally took place in a university setting. Judging by the pictures and videos on Soylent’s website and the text on the ‘about’ page, the product in the advertisement is clearly marketed at busy and ambitious young adults (Soylent, n.d.; About Soylent, n.d.). Although it is debatable whether university students actually have a very busy schedule or not, students are the young urban professionals of the near future. This means these students are likely to be or become a target consumer

group for a product like Soylent. Participants were assigned to conditions as randomly as possible and without previous screening. The average age of participants for the English advertisement was 21.65 (SD= 2.2), the average participant age for the Dutch advertisement was 21.58 (SD= 2.6), and that of the participants for the Dutch/English advertisement was 21.38 (SD= 2.6). The other demographics of the participants divided over the three test conditions can be seen in table 1.

Table 1

Frequencies of Participant Demographics per Condition

		English (N= 40)	Dutch (N= 39)	Dutch/English (N= 40)
Gender	Male	14	20	18
	Female	26	19	22
	Other	0	0	0
Education level	Preparatory middle-level vocational education	1	0	0
	Higher general continued education	1	1	0
	Pre-university secondary education	7	10	11
	Middle-level vocational education	0	0	0
	University of applied sciences	3	4	3

	Academic university bachelor programme	26	17	23
	Academic university master programme	2	7	3
	Other	0	0	0
Native language	Dutch	40	33	38
	Dutch and other	0	6	1
	Other	0	0	1

No significant difference was found between the three participant groups in the distribution of age ($F(2, 117) = 0.134, p = 0.875$), English proficiency ($F(2, 115) = 0.772, p = 0.464$), gender ($\chi^2(2, N = 119) = 2.169, p = 0.338$), education level ($p = 0.458$, Fisher's exact test), and native language ($p = 0.006$, Fisher's exact test). This means that the discrepancy between the distributions of these descriptive categories of participants is not larger than would be expected by chance. Any differences in results of the survey between the versions can therefore not be attributed to differences between participants in the samples. An informative factor is that, although other native languages than Dutch were reported in the survey, none of the participants were native speakers of English.

As can be read in table 1, one participant was not a native speaker of Dutch. The language this participant reported as their native language was Aramaic. Because recruitment of participants for this study was done face to face, only participants who sounded native or near native in Dutch and were able to fill in a Dutch survey were asked to participate. This means this non-native speaker did speak Dutch on a near-native level. Although it is not certain that this participant is a permanent resident of the Netherlands, the participant's

language competence and their presence at a university building suggest this person has a long-term connection to Dutch society and will therefore be regarded as a Dutch consumer in this study.

3. Results

The results section will start with a description of the reliability analysis used to determine whether groups of individual questions in the survey measure the same construct. Next, the mean scores for each construct and for the overall appreciation score will be presented.

3.1. Reliability analysis

According to the reliability analysis, four out of four items about appreciation of the advertisement measured the same construct ($\alpha = 0.80$). The four items about purchase intention also measured the same construct ($\alpha = 0.84$). Therefore the results for these constructs were analysed by taking the means of the four results per construct.

The four items about click intention showed a lower value for inter-item reliability ($\alpha = 0.69$). Although a minimum Cronbach's alpha score of 0.7 is commonly used as a cut-off point for internal reliability, analysis by Lance, Butts, and Michels (2006) suggests a cut-off point at 0.7 is quite arbitrary (pp. 205-207). Although a higher cut-off point is always recommended over a lower one, because the score for inter-item reliability for the click intention is so close to 0.7, the decision was made to combine the scores for the separate items into the mean for the construct as a whole.

3.2. Appreciation

The mean scores of the three versions of the advertisements on the appreciation construct can be seen in table 2.

Table 2

Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) on the Appreciation Construct of the English Advertisement, the Dutch Advertisement, the Dutch/English Advertisement, and in Total

	English (N= 40)	Dutch (N= 40)	Dutch/English (N= 40)	Total (N= 120)
Appreciation	2.22 (0.81)	2.02 (0.75)	2.33 (0.73)	2.19 (0.77)

No significant difference between the scores of the three versions on appreciation was found ($F(2, 117) = 1.705, p = 0.186$). The scores show a medium to low appreciation of all three versions of the advertisement.

3.3. Purchase intention

The mean scores of the three versions of the advertisements on the construct of purchase intention can be seen in table 3.

Table 3

Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) on the Purchase Intention Construct of the English Advertisement, the Dutch Advertisement, the Dutch/English Advertisement, and in Total

	English (N= 40)	Dutch (N= 40)	Dutch/English (N= 40)	Total (N= 120)
Purchase intention	2.08 (0.89)	1.78 (0.63)	2.11 (0.77)	1.99 (0.78)

No significant differences in purchase intention scores were found between the three versions ($F(2, 117) = 2.350, p = 0.100$). For all three versions of the advertisement, participants' purchase intention is medium to low.

3.4. Click intention

The mean scores of the three versions of the advertisements on the construct of click intention can be seen in table 4. Note that the average of the Dutch/English advertisement and the overall average were based on one less score than in the other constructs. This is because one participant of the Dutch/English condition did not have Facebook and did not give a score to one of the questions in this construct.

Table 4

Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) on the Click Intention Construct of the English Advertisement, the Dutch Advertisement, the Dutch/English Advertisement, and in Total

	English (N= 40)	Dutch (N= 40)	Dutch/English (N= 39)	Total (N= 119)
Click intention	1.57 (0.53)	1.41 (0.59)	1.65 (0.57)	1.54 (0.57)

No significant differences in click intention scores were found between the three versions of the advertisement ($F(2, 116) = 1.970, p = 0.144$). Participants' click intention is low on all versions of the advertisement.

3.5. Overall appreciation of the advertisement

In a single item, participants were asked to score the advertisement overall on a scale from 1 to 10. The mean scores for the three versions of the advertisement can be seen in table 5.

Table 5

Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) on Overall Appreciation of the English

Advertisement, the Dutch Advertisement, the Dutch/English Advertisement, and in Total

	English (N= 40)	Dutch (N= 40)	Dutch/English (N= 40)	Total (N= 120)
Overall score	4.39 (1.75)	4.15 (1.81)	4.48 (1.82)	4.34 (1.78)

No significant difference was found between the scores on overall appreciation received by the three versions of the advertisement ($F(2, 117) = 0.351, p = 0.705$). In accordance with the scores on the constructs discussed in the previous paragraphs, the overall scores for all three advertisements are relatively low.

4. Conclusion and discussion

The research question that was investigated for this study is: what is the difference in appreciation and persuasion effects on Dutch consumers of digital advertisements completely in English, completely in Dutch, or in Dutch containing English words and phrases? As demonstrated in the results section, no significant differences in appreciation and persuasion effects were found between the three different versions of the advertisement. Overall, the constructs of appreciation, purchase intention, and click intention all received relatively low scores. The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that the use of English, in the form of words and phrases in a Dutch context or in the form of a complete advertisement text, has had

neither a positive nor a negative overall effect on the appreciation and persuasion effects of this advertisement on Dutch young adult consumers. In the next paragraphs, these findings will be compared to those of previous studies, and shortcomings of this study and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

Following the theory of Hornikx et al. (2010) that Dutch participants appreciate easy English slogans more than Dutch slogans and difficult English slogans equally to Dutch slogans, a possible explanation for the outcome in appreciation might be that the English words and phrases in the advertisements were too difficult to be appreciated more than the Dutch advertisement text. However, since the English version in this experiment had the same scores as the version of the advertisement that only had a few English words and phrases, this explanation seems unlikely. The Dutch text with English words would arguably be easier to understand for Dutch speakers than the text written completely in English, so an equal score between both advertisements containing English words and phrases suggests that there is no difference in difficulty of the language used in the advertisements.

In line with studies done by Hornikx et al. (2010), van Meurs et al. (2004), and van Meurs et al. (2015), but contrary to the study done by Smakman et al. (2009), the current study found no disadvantages to using English in advertisements, compared to completely Dutch advertisements. An important difference to note is that the study by Smakman et al. was done on radio advertising, which may cause Dutch consumers to experience more difficulty in the comprehension of the English in the advertisement than visual advertisements do. This might explain why the visual advertisement used in this study does not seem to be disadvantaged by the use of English in it.

The outcome of this study, with no difference in appreciation and persuasion of advertisements in English, in Dutch, or in Dutch with English words and phrases, ties in with the conclusions of studies done by van Meurs et al. (2004) that the use of English in job

advertisements has no effects on the attitudes of potential applicants. This similarity between outcomes suggests that research on job advertisements can be used as a source in research about product advertisements.

As stated by Gerritsen et al. in 2007, English has a history of being associated with modernity by Dutch consumers. Gerritsen et al. also suggested that English might be seen as a neutral advertising language, which would minimise the impact of the language on consumers' attitudes. This neutrality of English may explain why the use of English had neither a positive nor a negative effect on the appreciation of and persuasion by the advertisements tested in this article. Whether the neutrality of the English language in advertising has increased since 2007 is not clear, but a possible association of English with modernity has had no effects on the performance of the advertisements studied in this article.

Overall, the outcomes of this study provide a counterargument against the prescriptive articles and comments presented in popular media. If the use of English in a Dutch language context had truly been as generally annoying as it is sometimes made seem, it would have been likely that the versions of the advertisement containing English, and especially the version with English words and phrases in a Dutch context, would have been valued much lower than the Dutch advertisement. Since this is not the case, it can be concluded that the taboo, as Burrige (2010) would call it, on English words in Dutch advertisements is not widespread in the population of Dutch young adults.

As the low overall scores for the versions of the advertisement suggest, a possible shortcoming of this study is that the product advertised is so unpopular that it overpowers any possible differences in appreciation and persuasion effects triggered by the language used. In future research, it could be informative to use a more generally available or more popular product to advertise to see if that generates different outcomes.

Three errors were made in the creation of the survey that unfortunately were not noticed in the pre-testing phase. Firstly, one of the education categories described in Dutch is ‘*MBO/MAVO*’. While ‘*MBO*’ means middle-level vocational education, ‘*MAVO*’ should actually be on the same level as ‘*VMBO*’, which means preparatory middle-level vocational education. Secondly, many participants gave as feedback that the question about the highest education that participants followed did not make it clear whether this meant current or finished education. This may explain a larger than expected discrepancy between the education levels of the participants as reported in the methodology of this article. These errors do not seem to have had a large impact on the outcomes of the study. Finally, a spelling error in the introductory text of the Dutch survey remained unnoticed in the pre-test phase of the survey. It is unlikely this error had any impact on the outcomes of this study.

The concept of click intention did not prove to be perfect as it is yet, in view of to the low Cronbach’s alpha score. However, with adaptations, the click intention may be a useful tool for similar future research. As can be seen in the results section, the scores for click intention are not the same as the scores for purchase intention. Although both constructs measure persuasiveness of an advertisement, measuring click intention could provide data that is especially useful for businesses that generate revenue from online communities.

A possible approach to future research on the subject of language use in digital media advertising is to focus more on testing language effects on the processing of advertisements via the central or peripheral route by looking at appreciation and persuasion effects in a context that requires more stimulation of participants’ memory. This could for instance be achieved by letting participants scroll through a manipulated social media timeline containing a version of an advertisement before answering a survey.

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Appendix A – Pre-test text

Original Dutch text:

Hoi, zou je mij willen helpen met een pretestje voor mijn scriptie? Ik heb je een afbeelding van een facebookreclame gestuurd en wil je vragen hoe natuurlijk je de reclametekst vindt op een schaal van 1 tot 5, waarbij 1 ‘heel onnatuurlijk’ is en 5 ‘heel natuurlijk’.

Als je nou denkt ‘Iris rot op met je schoolopdracht in mijn vrije tijd ik zit net lekker het Eurovisiesongfestival te kijken’, negeer dit bericht dan vooral. Als je wel mee wil doen, heel erg bedankt alvast:)

Translated English text:

Hi, could you help me with a pre-test for my thesis? I sent you a picture of a Facebook advertisement and would like to ask you how natural you would rate the advertisement text on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means ‘very unnatural’ and 5 means ‘very natural’.

If you’re thinking ‘Iris stop bothering me with your school work in my free time I was just watching the Eurovision Song Contest’, please ignore this message. But if you would like to participate, thank you very much:)

Appendix B – Comments on pre-test

Commenting participant 1:

Version 1 (happy)

“Vind de ‘houd je tong happy’ vooral een beetje naar haha”

[I think the ‘houd je tong happy’ is mainly a bit unpleasant haha]

Commenting participant 2:

Version 1

“Ik vind ‘houd je tong happy’ vrij onaantrekkelijk klinken”

[I think ‘houd je tong happy’ sounds fairly unattractive’

Commenting participant 3:

Version: 2 (happy and nutrition)

“Op zich prima, maar nutrition vind ik raar”

[Fine in general, but I think nutrition is weird]

Commenting participant 4:

Version 2

“Nutrition” gaat te ver ook al wordt tegenwoordig bij alles Engels gebruikt ook waar dat niet nodig is. En “houd je tong happy” is wel zo’n typisch hippe zin, maar ehh.”

[Nutrition is a step too far although English is used everywhere nowadays even when it’s not necessary. And “houd je tong happy” is one of those typically hip sentences, but ehh]

Commenting participant 5:

Version 2

“het enige wat ik echt onnatuurlijk vind is ‘dagelijkse nutrition’”

[the only thing I think is really unnatural is ‘dagelijkse nutrition’]

Appendix C – Original Dutch survey and English translation

[Picture of advertisement on separate cover page]

Enquête Soylent

Beste deelnemer,

In deze enquête worden dertien vragen gesteld over de bijgevoegde Facebookadvertentie. Twaalf hiervan zijn te beantwoorden op een vijfpuntsschaal met aan de uiterste zeiden helemaal mee oneens/helemaal mee eens of een tegengesteld woordenpaar. De laatste vraag is een open vraag waarin gevraagd wordt naar een rapportcijfer voor de advertentie. Hierna volgen vijf vragen over persoonlijke gegevens. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden en bij elke vraag hoef je maar één antwoord in te vullen, aan te kruisen of te omcirkelen.

Dit onderzoek maakt deel uit van mijn bacheloreindwerkstuk aan de Universiteit Utrecht en deelname is geheel vrijwillig en anoniem. Dit onderzoek is niet in opdracht van Soylent.

Hartelijk dank voor de medewerking!

Vragenlijst

1. Ik zou de website van Soylent willen bezoeken.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

2. Als ik kon kiezen, dan zou ik overwegen de producten van Soylent te kopen.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

3. Ik vind deze advertentie:

Slecht 1 2 3 4 5 Goed

4. Ik zou deze advertentie liken op Facebook

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

5. Ik zou de producten van Soylent graag eens proberen.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

6. Ik vind deze advertentie:

Niet leuk 1 2 3 4 5 Leuk

7. Ik ben van plan de producten van Soylent te kopen

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

8. Ik zou de link van deze advertentie volgen.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

9. Ik vind deze advertentie:

Niet origineel 1 2 3 4 5 Origineel

10. Als ik de kans had, zou ik de producten van Soylent kopen

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

11. Ik vind deze advertentie:

Niet aantrekkelijk 1 2 3 4 5 Aantrekkelijk

12. Ik zou op het 'koop nu' knopje klikken.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 Helemaal mee eens

13. Op een schaal van 1 tot 10, waarbij 1 het slechtst is en 10 het best, geef ik deze advertentie een:

14. Wat is je leeftijd?

15. Wat is je geslacht?

- Man
- Vrouw
- Anders, namelijk _____

16. Wat is/zijn je moedertaal/talen?

17. Wat voor score zou jij je Engelse taalvaardigheid geven?

Helemaal niet vaardig 1 2 3 4 5 Heel vaardig

18. Wat is je hoogst genoten opleiding?

- VMBO
- Havo
- VWO
- MBO/MAVO
- HBO
- WO Bachelor
- WO Master
- Anders, namelijk _____

[picture of advertisement on separate cover page]

Soylent survey

Dear participant,

In this survey you will be asked thirteen questions about the attached Facebook advertisement. Twelve of these can be answered on a five-point scale with at the far ends completely disagree/completely agree or a pair of words with opposite meanings. The last question is an open question where you will be asked to rate the advertisement overall. After this, you can answer five questions about personal details. There are no right or wrong answers and every question only requires you to fill in or tick off one answer.

This study is part of the final paper form my bachelor's degree at Utrecht University and participating in it is completely anonymous and voluntary This research is not commissioned by Soylent.

Thank you very much for participating!

Survey

1. I would like to visit the Soylent website.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

2. If I could choose, I would consider buying Soylent's products.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

3. I think this advertisement is:

Bad 1 2 3 4 5 Good

4. I would like this advertisement on Facebook.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

5. I would like to try Soylent's products.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

6. I think this advertisement is:

Not nice 1 2 3 4 5 Nice

7. I'm planning to buy Soylent's products.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

8. I would follow the link in this advertisement.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

9. I think this advertisement is:

Not original 1 2 3 4 5 Original

10. If I had the opportunity, I would buy Soylent's products.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

11. I think this advertisement is:

Not attractive 1 2 3 4 5 Attractive

12. I would click the 'buy now' button.

Completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Completely agree

13. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is the worst and 10 is the best, I would give this advertisement a:

14. What is your age?

15. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other: _____

16. What is/are your native language(s)?

17. How would you rate your proficiency in the English language?

Not proficient at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very proficient

18. What is your highest level of education?

- Preparatory middle-level vocational education
- Higher general continued education
- Pre-university secondary education
- Middle-level vocational education
- University of applied sciences
- Academic university bachelor programme
- Academic university master programme
- Other _____