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# The use of English in job advertisements on the Dutch job site Monsterboard.nl and factors on which it depends

Frank van Meurs, Hubert Korzilius & Adriënne den Hollander

## Abstract

Previous studies on the factors that determine the use of English in product advertising and print-medium job advertisements in non-English-speaking countries have overwhelmingly analysed English in product advertising. Drawing on the reasons suggested in such studies, the present contribution analyses the use of English in job advertisements from the Netherlands Monsterboard.nl job site and the factors on which it may depend.

An analysis of a random sample of 120 advertisements revealed that 4% were completely in English, and that 88.5% of the remaining Dutch ads contained at least one English word. When we considered the number of English words as a proportion of the total number of words, we found that there was more English in job titles and logos than in other job ad elements. Advertisements for jobs in the 'financial institutions sector' contained less English than jobs in the 'transport, storage and communications' and 'commercial services' sectors. There was more English in ads placed by multinational organizations than in ads from domestic organizations. Ads for medium-level jobs contained less English than ads for higher-level and academic jobs.

Most of our findings confirm the relevance of factors mentioned in previous research as determinants of the extent to which English is used in advertising in non-English-speaking countries.

## 1. Introduction

Anyone searching for jobs on Monsterboard.nl (the Netherlands website of Monster Worldwide Inc.) on 17 February 2004 would have found vacancies for

“SAP HR with Payroll & Time Specialty” or “supply chain integration specialist”, offered through intermediaries such as “Computer Future Solutions”. Using English like this in job advertisements is one aspect of the use of the English language in the Netherlands. Berns (1995: 8-9) observes that English is used “in various social, cultural, commercial and educational settings” in Dutch society (see also Gerritsen & Nickerson 2004; Ridder 1995). A number of studies have quantified the use of English in Dutch product advertising which, like job advertising, is a form of external organizational communication through the Dutch media. In one such study, Gerritsen (1995) showed that English was used in 19% of the advertisement pages in newspapers and magazines published in the Netherlands in 1994. Another study reported that approximately one third of commercials broadcast on Dutch television in 1996 contained English (Gerritsen, Korzilius, Van Meurs & Gijsbers 2000). In the Dutch edition of the glossy women’s magazine *Elle* published in 2004, English was found in 64% of the advertisements (Gerritsen *et al.* forthcoming).

The use of English in product advertising and in job advertising is certainly not unique to the Netherlands. In fact, there have been many studies on the use of English in product advertising in non-English-speaking countries (see Piller 2003 for an overview of research in this area), but only relatively few have examined the use of English in job ads in such countries. We are aware of four studies outside the Netherlands of job advertisements in newspapers: in Finland (Taavitsainen & Pahta 2003), Germany (Hilgendorf 1996), Sweden (Larson 1990), and Switzerland (Watts 2003). None of these studies, however, *quantifies* the use of English.

Schreiner (1990: 7) and Renkema, Vallen & Hoeken (2001: 257) claim that English terms are widely used in Dutch job advertisements. It would seem important to gain more insight into how much English is actually employed in such ads, based on counts rather than on impressions. This would seem particularly important in view of the favourable and unfavourable comments that have been made about the use of English in job advertising in the Netherlands as well as in other non-English-speaking countries. For example, some have suggested that English is often used to enhance the status of the position advertised (e.g. Larson 1990; Peereboom 1991), but others have denounced the use of English, particularly in job titles, as “odd” and “exaggerated” (Peereboom 1991: 7; our translation) and as an “odd form of business jargon” (Taavitsainen & Pahta 2003: 8). In spite of these claims and comments, there have been few studies on the actual frequency of English words in Dutch job ads. In one such study, Gerritsen (2001) established that over a ten-year period there was a statistically significant increase in the number of English gender-neutral terms such as ‘engineer’ in job ad headings in the Dutch national daily newspaper *de Telegraaf* and the Dutch national weekly *Intermediair*: from 60% in 1989 to 81% in 1999. Korzilius, van Meurs & Hermans (2006) studied the use of English in job advertisements in one of the national daily papers in the Netherlands, *de Volkskrant*. They found that 2.4% of the 679 job ads published in August 2001 were completely in English. When they exam-

ined 119 partly or wholly Dutch advertisements in more detail, they found that 39% contained one or more English words.

As well as consulting the print media, highly educated job seekers in the Netherlands also search for jobs online (NOA 2004: 13). Until now, the use of English in this medium had not yet been studied. The present study aims to fill the gap in our knowledge about the use of English in external organizational communication through the Dutch media. Specifically, we set out to determine how English is used in job advertisements on the job site Monsterboard.nl, which is the best known job site in the Netherlands (NIPO 2003) and is consulted most often by highly educated Dutch job seekers (NOA 2004: 16).

Drawing on observations and previous empirical research on the use of English in non-English-speaking countries – particularly research that examined the use of English in product advertising and printed job advertisements – we formulated five research questions about the factors that might determine the use of English in job advertisements on Monsterboard.nl. In light of the observations about the spread of English in Dutch society generally (Berns 1995: 8-9; Ridder 1995), in Dutch product advertising (Gerritsen 1995; Gerritsen *et al.* 2000, forthcoming), and in print-medium job advertisements (Gerritsen 2001; Korzilius *et al.* 2006; Renkema *et al.* 2001: 257), we wished to ascertain to what extent English is used in job ads on Monsterboard.nl. Therefore, our first research question was:

*RQ 1: How many job advertisements on Monsterboard.nl contain English?*

Research into product advertisements has shown that the use of English varies per element of the advertisement (Alm 2003; Bhatia 2001; Cheshire & Moser 1994). Specifically with reference to job ads in the Netherlands, Schreiner (1990: 7) states that English is used frequently in job titles. Korzilius *et al.* (2006) have shown that the concentration of English in job ads in *de Volkskrant* was highest in job titles, headlines, and especially in 'end lines'. Question 2 was intended to generate comparable data on Monsterboard.nl ads.

*RQ 2: In which parts of job advertisements from Monsterboard.nl is English used the most?*

The use of English in the Netherlands is domain-specific. English is used more frequently in some areas of Dutch society than in others (Claus & Taeldeman 1989; Van der Sijs 1996). It has also been found that in advertising in non-English-speaking countries, English is used more for certain types of products than for others (e.g. Cheshire & Moser 1994; Griffin 1997). Although Korzilius *et al.* (2006) found no significant differences in the concentration of English in print-medium Dutch job ads from different sectors of the economy, we wished to establish whether this was also the case for the job ads placed on Monsterboard.nl. Hence question 3:

*RQ 3: Does the use of English in job ads on Monsterboard.nl depend on the economic sector of the organization with the job vacancy?*

There is some evidence that the use of English in commercial contexts may depend on the socio-economic and educational status of the target group. Interviews with representatives of Ecuadorian advertising agencies reveal that they use English especially when targeting the “upper-middle and upper classes” and that they avoid using it in advertising targeted at the lower and lower middle classes “with little educational background” (Alm 2003: 151). Although Korzilius *et al.* (2006) found no significant differences in the concentration of English between print-medium Dutch job ads advertising higher-level and academic positions and those advertising medium-level positions, we wished to ascertain whether the use of English in Monsterboard.nl job ads varied depending on the level of the position advertised.

*RQ 4: Does the use of English in job ads on Monsterboard.nl depend on the level of the positions advertised?*

Advertising agencies contend that one reason for the use of English in commercial advertising in non-English-speaking countries is that this is part of “a globally consistent marketing strategy” (Alm 2003: 150; cf. Gerritsen *et al.* 2000: 20). International organizations wish to use the same English-language advertisement, commercial, brand name or slogan in different countries. Larson (1990: 368) states that multinational companies use English-language job titles in job advertisements for the sake of international consistency. Korzilius *et al.* (2006) found that English was used more in print-medium Dutch job ads placed by multinational organizations than in those placed by domestic organizations (i.e. organizations that only had branches in the Netherlands). We wished to check this for the Monsterboard.nl job ads:

*RQ 5: Is English used more in job ads placed on Monsterboard.nl by multinational organizations than in ads placed by domestic organizations?*

The answers to these five research questions will, we hope, not only shed light on the use of English in job advertisements on the Dutch job site Monsterboard.nl, but will also provide a springboard for similar studies in other countries.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. The corpus

The corpus of job advertisements that we analysed to answer our research questions consisted of a sample of 120 ads chosen randomly from the 5000 displayed on Monsterboard.nl on 17 February 2004. This sample size allows us to say with

95% certainty that our sample results have a sampling error within the range of plus or minus 9% (Korzilius 2000: 111-112) which, to give a hypothetical example, would mean that a finding of 50% in our sample corresponds with a percentage between 41 and 59 in all job ads on Monsterboard.nl (the total population). The 5000 ads were found using the ‘search jobs’ option on Monsterboard.nl, without specifying location, job category or keyword. In order to make the random selection, each of the 5000 ads was numbered, the numbers of the ads were entered in a data file in the statistical program SPSS (version 12.0.1.), and the ‘random sample of cases’ option was used to select 120 numbers. On Monsterboard.nl, job ads can be viewed in three ways: 1) only the job title, the name of the organization and the location; 2) the job title, the name of the organization, the location, and a short excerpt from the advertisement; 3) the complete job advertisement. We opted to analyse complete job advertisements.

## 2.2. *Elements of a job advertisement*

On the basis of Van Dalen (1999: 103-110), we distinguished the following elements of job advertisements:

- job title: the appellation indicating the position advertised;
- job description: the tasks and responsibilities involved in the vacancy that is on offer;
- job requirements: the requirements an applicant should meet, for instance in terms of education, experience, and personal characteristics;
- headline: serves to draw the reader’s attention; not necessarily located at the very top of the ad, but always distinctive because in a large font;
- company information: information about the organization offering the vacancy, e.g. core activities, number of employees;
- offer: what the successful candidate will get for filling the vacancy, e.g. salary, fringe benefits, training opportunities, career prospects;
- application procedure: how the interested candidates should apply for the job that is on offer;
- logo;
- illustration;
- end line: a sign-off line, containing a message from the organization.

Van Dalen’s (1999) division of elements was based on print-medium job advertisements. In the job ads from Monsterboard.nl that we analysed, headlines were rare and there were no illustrations or ‘end lines’. The template of the Monsterboard.nl job ads yielded four other distinctive textual units that are not found in job ads from newspapers or magazines:

- a location printed in bold on a separate line at the top of the ad;
- a textual unit headed “Additional Information”, containing information

about the type of job (e.g. whether it is “permanent” and “full time”, and a reference number);

- a textual unit headed “Contact Information”, containing contact details for candidates interested in pursuing the job opportunity;
- a section with hyperlinks at the bottom of the ad, i.e. a link to other job ads from the same organization, a link that enables the ad to be forwarded, and a link enabling the applicant to apply directly to the organization.

All the Monsterboard job ad elements are listed in Table 1, with examples of English words used in each element. For an advertisement from our sample illustrating these elements, see Appendix 1.

### 2.3. Defining ‘word’ and ‘English’

In order to be able to determine how many English and Dutch words were used in our corpus of job advertisements, we needed to define what a word is. A word was defined as ‘a character or consecutive string of characters appearing between spaces, or between a space and a punctuation mark’ (based on *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). Thus, the abbreviations “HR” and “CV” were each regarded as one word, as was the compound noun “retail-team”.

To decide whether a word was English or Dutch, we applied criteria that could be objectively verified. We made a distinction between English words used in a completely English context and English words used in a Dutch context. For words in a completely English context, we used the following definition:

If all the words in a job advertisement or a phrase from a job ad (except for names) could be found in English dictionaries or on English websites, and the grammar and syntax were English, all the words in the ad or the phrase were classed as English. All the words in the phrase “EMAIL THIS JOB TO A FRIEND”, for example, were counted as English words.

For English words adopted in a Dutch context, we used a restrictive definition of English. A word of English origin was not classified as English if it had become part of the Dutch language, which we operationalized as 1) an English word that was an entry in the latest edition of the authoritative dictionary of the Dutch language, the thirteenth edition of *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal* (Geerts, Den Boon, Geeraerts & Vos 1999), or 2) an English word that was spelt according to Dutch spelling conventions. Our rationale was that words of English origin included in Geerts *et al.* could be considered to be loanwords that had been accepted as part of the Dutch language<sup>1</sup>, and that words spelt the Dutch way

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<sup>1</sup> In their introduction, Geerts *et al.* point out that new words, meanings and idioms are considered for inclusion in the dictionary “when they have been current in daily speech for a considerable amount of time and are accepted by opinion leaders” (p. xi), whom they describe

would not be encountered in this form in English. Basically, our classification criteria for words in a Dutch context were:

If a job advertisement or a phrase was not completely in English, we classified a word as English if it was in an English dictionary or on an English website, was not (in the meaning intended) in Geerts *et al.* (1999), and had not been spelt the Dutch way. In the phrase “ontwikkelen van technische solutions” [developing technical solutions], for instance, the word “solutions” was classified as English because it was in an English dictionary (Summers 1998) and not in Geerts *et al.* In the phrase “medewerkers en managers” [staff members and managers], the word “manager” was not classified as English, because it was in Geerts *et al.* In “onderstaande consultancyskills” [the consultancy skills listed below], “consultancy skills” was classified as a Dutch word, because it was spelt as one word, in accordance with Dutch spelling conventions, and not as two words, as it would be spelt in English (see, for example, Burrough-Boenisch 2004: 71-73).

Our criteria were based on earlier Dutch studies of English in Dutch product advertising and job advertising (e.g. Gerritsen 1995; Gerritsen 2001; Gerritsen *et al.* 2000; Gerritsen *et al.* forthcoming; Korzilius *et al.* 2006). For a more detailed description of the Dutch/English classification procedure we followed for advertisements that were not fully in English, see Appendix 1, which also includes more examples.

#### 2.4. Determining sector and job level of the positions advertised

In order to determine whether the frequency of English words depended on the type of the organization advertising the job or on the type of position that was advertised, we classified the organizations and positions according to the official categories of the Dutch Bureau of Statistics (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, CBS):

- the Standard Company Classification 1993 (‘Standaard bedrijfsindeling 1993’; CBS 1993);
- the Standard Job Classification 1992 (‘Standaard beroepenclassificatie 1992’; CBS 1992).

To classify the organizations in our corpus, we used the highest level at which economic activities are categorized in CBS 1993, that of the ‘sections’, such as ‘Manufacturing’ and ‘Transport, storage and communications’. To classify the positions in our corpus, we used the highest level at which jobs are categorized in CBS 1992, i.e. the classification by job level (e.g. medium- and higher-level jobs).

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as “writers, educators, scholars, journalists, radio and television producers” (pp. xi-xii) [our translation].

### 2.5. *Determining the multinational status of an organization*

To ascertain whether the use of English depended on the multinational status of the organizations where the vacancies were to be filled, we defined a particular organization as a multinational if any of the following conditions applied:

- branches in the Netherlands as well as in other countries were mentioned in the job advertisement or on the organization's website;
- the company was part of a larger organization that had branches in the Netherlands and in other countries, according to the information in the job ad or on the organization's website;
- the job ad specified that the organization was international.

Websites for branches of the organization outside the Netherlands were found by changing the website's extension from '.nl' (the country code for the Netherlands) to '.com' or '.org', or to the extensions of other countries, for instance '.be'.

If none of the three conditions was met and the organization's website only mentioned Dutch locations, we classified that organization as domestic. In the absence of sufficient information on any of these points (in many cases the name of the organization was not mentioned in the job advertisement), we assigned the status 'unknown'. When considering multinational status, we only looked at the status of the organizations with the vacancies to be filled, and ignored the status of any intermediaries placing the job advertisements on behalf of these organizations.

### 2.6. *Statistical analyses*

Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were calculated with the statistical program SPSS 12.0.1. Since the independent variables, i.e. the number of English words, were not normally distributed (determined by means of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test), non-parametrical statistical tests were used to determine statistically significant differences. To determine the significance of differences between two independent groups, the Mann–Whitney test was used, and the Kruskal–Wallis test was used when more than two independent groups were involved. We carried out the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, which determines differences between two dependent samples, in order to establish whether there was a statistically significant difference in the amount of English between the various pairs of job ad elements (e.g. job title vs. job description, job title vs. job requirements, etc.). When we used multiple pairwise statistical tests, we applied the Bonferroni correction, dividing the alpha level by the number of pairwise comparisons, in order to reduce the risk of wrongly declaring a difference to be significant.

### 3. Results and discussion

In this section we will present the results of our corpus analysis of job advertisements from Monsterboard.nl, arranged by research question. For each research question, we will first present the findings, and then place them in the context of earlier studies.

#### 3.1. How many job advertisements contain English?

In our sample of 120 job advertisements, five (4%) were completely in English. One job ad was largely in German, with a number of English words, and one ad was partly in English and partly in Danish. These advertisements containing German and Danish words will be excluded from the remainder of our discussion. Of the remaining 113 advertisements that were not wholly in English, but wholly or partly in Dutch, 100 (88.5%) contained one or more English words.

On average, the five all-English job advertisements contained 306 words (min. 156, max. 630, SD = 191). In the 113 advertisements that were wholly or partly in Dutch, the mean number of English words was 50 (min. 0, max. 545, SD = 98). The mean total number of words in these 113 advertisements was 325 (min. 73, max. 695, SD = 129). In the 100 partly Dutch advertisements that contained one or more English words, the mean number of English words was 57 (SD = 103; min. 1, max. 545), while the mean total number of words was 327 (min. 73, max. 695, SD = 131).

It is clear that most of the job ads we analysed contained English, in line with observations about the widespread use of English in Dutch society generally (e.g. Berns 1995: 8–9). A comparison with the findings of earlier corpus analyses indicates that English was used more frequently in our sample of Monsterboard.nl job ads from 2004 than in other forms of external organization communication through the Dutch media: TV commercials from 1996 (Gerritsen *et al.* 2000), advertisements from the glossy magazine *Elle* from 2004 (Gerritsen *et al.* forthcoming), and job ads in the national daily paper *de Volkskrant* in 2001 (Korzilius *et al.* 2006). The eight-year difference in the data sets might have affected the comparison with the TV commercials, but an analysis of 150 *Volkskrant* job advertisements from February/March 2004 (i.e. including the date of our Monsterboard.nl sample) has confirmed that English is less frequent in *de Volkskrant* ads: only two ads were completely in English and 38% of the remainder (56 ads) contained at least one English word<sup>2</sup>. On average, Monsterboard ads contained more English words than the 2001 *Volkskrant* ads: 50 versus 2.2 for all not completely English

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<sup>2</sup> We thank Daan Belgers, Tamar Euser, Michella Felleman, Maarten Ooms, and Jelle Peeters for providing us with data on the use of English in job advertisements from *de Volkskrant* published in February and March 2004, analysed for their BA theses for the Department of Business Communication Studies of the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

job ads, and 57 versus 5.5 for ads not completely in English but containing at least one English word (comparable data were not available for the other ads and TV commercials). These comparisons suggest that the frequency of English depends on the genre and medium.

### 3.2. Which job ad elements contain the most English?

Table 1 shows the extent to which English was used in the various elements of the 113 Monsterboard ads not completely in English. The three elements that most frequently included one or more English words were (in decreasing order): *logo*, *links*, and *job requirements* (column 3). The three elements that were most frequently completely English were: *application procedure*, *offer*, and *job requirements* (column 4). The mean number of English words was the highest in the elements *job description* and *job requirements*. For examples of English words in the various elements, see column 8 of Table 1 and Appendix 1.

Since not all the elements of a job advertisement contained the same number of words, we calculated the concentration of English per job ad element, i.e. the percentage of English words out of the total number of words in such an element (see Table 1, column 7). On average, 15.9% of the total number of words in the 113 not-completely-English job ads were in English. To ascertain in which elements the concentration of English was significantly higher, we compared pairs of job ad elements, using Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests with a Bonferroni correction of  $\alpha < .001$  (for reasons of space, the detailed results of these tests are omitted here). We excluded the element *headline* because so few of the ads contained headlines. We found that the elements *job title* and *logo* more frequently contained a larger concentration of English than the other job ad elements, and that in the element *additional information*, the concentration of English was frequently smaller than in the other elements.

A general conclusion is that the frequency of English varied in the various elements of the job advertisements. Others (e.g. Alm 2003; Bhatia 2001; Cheshire & Moser 1994) have reported similar findings for English in the elements of product advertisements in non-English-speaking countries. In our sample, there was generally more English in job titles and logos than in the other job ad elements. The finding for job titles is in accord with Schreiner (1990), who compiled a long list of English job titles in use in the Netherlands. It is also in partial agreement with the finding in Korzilius *et al.* (2006) that in job ads from *de Volkskrant* the concentration of English was higher in the elements *job title*, *headline* and especially *end line* than it was in the other job ad elements, particularly so when we recall that in our sample there were no end lines and hardly any headlines. The preponderance of English in job titles and logos would also appear to link up with the remark by Cheshire and Moser (1994: 457) that “the English words usually appear in key positions in the advertisements” (see De

**Table 1.** Elements of the 113 not-completely-English job ads from Monsterboard.nl containing one or more English words

Column							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Job ad element	Total number of ads containing a particular element	Number and % of elements with one or more English words <sup>a</sup>	Number and % of completely English elements <sup>a</sup>	Mean number of English words (SD)	Mean number of Dutch words (SD)	Mean percentage of English words (SD)	Examples of English words in element <sup>b</sup>
Location	113	6 (5.3%)	0 (0%)	0.07 (0.32)	3.22 (1.29)	3.8 (17.4)	NL-UT-The Netherlands
Job title	113	36 (31.9%)	18 (15.9%)	1.27 (1.9)	3.38 (2.97)	26.6 (35.7)	<u>Customer Service Medewerker</u> (technisch)
Job description	113	44 (38.9%)	17 (15.0%)	16.88 (44.63)	65.16 (49.34)	17.5 (36.0)	Het opstellen van periodieke <u>forecasts</u>
Job requirements	113	45 (39.8%)	18 (15.9%)	12.56 (26.11)	55.12 (50.92)	19.0 (36.2)	Je kunt goed werken met <u>Word</u> en <u>Excel</u>
Headline	3	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.00 (0.00)	0.31 (2.07)	0 (0)	–
Company Information	98	30 (30.6%)	11 (11.2%)	6.49 (18.69)	45.46 (59.13)	13.7 (31.6)	<u>All Options</u> is een jong, ambitieus en zeer succesvol...
Company information intermediary	98	20 (20.4%)	1 (1.0%)	1.43 (7.87)	20.69 (27.84)	4.7 (14.7)	Computer Futures
Offer	79	10 (12.7%)	13 (16.5%)	3.45 (10.39)	20.14 (29.35)	16.9 (36.8)	Solutions is het grootste...
Application procedure	60	21 (35.0%)	13 (21.7%)	3.53 (9.74)	15.32 (22.81)	23.3 (39.5)	Een gedegen 'training <u>on the job</u> '. ...contact opnemen met de afdeling recruitment...
Logo	113	51 (45.1%)	14 (12.4%)	0.95 (1.35)	1.33(1.05)	30.1 (36.6)	<u>Manpower</u> , <u>your work</u> , <u>our job</u>
Additional information	113	8 (7.1%)	4 (3.5%)	0.65 (2.27)	8.36 (3.73)	5.8 (20.3)	<u>Benefits Package</u>
Contact information	112	44 (39.3%)	4 (3.6%)	1.26 (2.71)	12.54 (5.66)	9.3 (21.0)	<u>Huxley Associates</u>
Links	113	46 (40.7%)	4 (3.5%)	1.97 (5.04)	21.87 (6.94)	7.8 (18.6)	<u>Scientific Resources</u>
Total	113	100 (88.5%)	–	50.43 (98.19)	275.3 (155.46)	15.9 (28.2)	

Note. <sup>a</sup>The percentages refer to the number of times a particular job ad element occurred. <sup>b</sup>In the examples the English words are underlined.

Witte 1989: 212 for eye movement research which indicates that the job title is the element that makes readers of job advertisements in newspapers decide whether to read on).

### *3.3. Does the amount of English in the job advertisement depend on the economic sector of the organization with the vacancy?*

The majority ( $n = 69$ ) of the 113 job ads not completely in English were for jobs in organizations from the following four economic sectors (according to the CBS 1993 classification at section level): Commercial Services (23 ads, e.g. commercial ICT companies); Financial institutions (19 ads, e.g. banks); Transport, storage and communications (15 ads, e.g. telecommunications); Environmental services, culture, recreation and other services (12 ads, e.g. commercial provision of labour). Each of these sectors accounted for more than 10% of the 113 job ads, with the other sectors that could be distinguished accounting for 6% or less. For ten advertisements (9%), it was impossible to determine the economic sector of the organization with the vacancy.

If the four sectors with the largest number of not-completely-English job ads are ranked by concentration of English in the total job ad, the order is (from high to low): Transport etc. ( $M = 35\%$ ,  $SD = 38\%$ ); Commercial Services ( $M = 25\%$ ,  $SD = 31\%$ ); Environmental services etc. ( $M = 16\%$ ,  $SD = 28\%$ ); and Financial institutions ( $M = 2\%$ ,  $SD = 2\%$ ). A Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there were significant inter-sector differences in the concentration of English ( $\chi^2(3) = 16.80$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Further analyses (pairwise comparisons using Mann-Whitney tests with a Bonferroni correction of  $\alpha < .008$ ) revealed that advertisements for jobs in the Financial institutions sector contained less English than ads in the Transport, storage and communications and Commercial Services sectors.

It can be concluded that the economic sector of the organization with the job vacancy does have an effect on the extent to which English was used in the Monsterboard.nl job advertisements. This confirms observations that the use of English in Dutch society generally is domain-specific (Claus & Taeldeman 1989; Van der Sijs 1996), and is in line with studies demonstrating that English in advertising in non-English-speaking countries is used more for certain types of products than for others (e.g. Cheshire & Moser 1994; Griffin 1997). Our finding that less English occurred in advertisements for jobs in the Financial institutions sector than in the Transport, storage and communications and Commercial Services sectors may be attributable to the fact that the latter two sectors contain organizations involved in ICT, a domain in which much of the jargon is English (cf. Van der Sijs 1996: 322).

### 3.4. *Does the amount of English used in job advertisements depend on the level of the job advertised?*

Classifying the 113 not-completely-English job advertisements according to the Standard Job Classification of the Dutch Bureau of Statistics (CBS 1992) revealed that there were two elementary-level jobs, 44 (39%) medium-level jobs and 67 (59%) higher-level and academic jobs. We compared the jobs at medium level with those at higher/academic level, in terms of the concentration of English in the total job ad. The ads for medium-level jobs contained less English ( $M = 7\%$ ,  $SD = 20\%$ ) than the ads for higher-level and academic jobs ( $M = 22\%$ ,  $SD = 32\%$ ;  $Z = 2.73$ ,  $p < .01$ , tested with the Mann-Whitney test). Although the differences in socio-economic and educational status between potential applicants for medium-level and higher-level/academic positions are not extreme, this finding is in line with claims from Ecuadorian advertising agencies that they use English especially in product advertisements targeting consumers with a high socio-economic status, and avoid using it when targeting less-educated lower and lower middle class groups (Alm 2003). Since English in advertising in non-English-speaking countries is claimed to be associated with prestige (e.g. Haarmann 1989: 234), the greater use of English we found in advertisements for higher-level and academic jobs may reflect the higher prestige of these jobs compared with medium-level jobs.

### 3.5. *Does the amount of English used in job advertisements depend on the multinational status of the organizations offering the vacancies?*

All five of the completely English advertisements in our sample of 120 job ads were for jobs with multinational organizations. Of the 113 ads that were not fully in English but partly or wholly in Dutch, 48 (42.5%) were for jobs in multinationals and 13 (11.5%) were for jobs in domestic organizations. For the remaining 52 cases (46%), the status of the organization on this point was unknown. Ranking these three categories of organization according to the concentration of English in the total job ad gave (from high to low): multinational organizations ( $M = 26\%$ ,  $SD = 34\%$ ); organizations of unknown status ( $M = 9\%$ ,  $SD = 20\%$ ); and domestic organizations ( $M = 8\%$ ,  $SD = 25\%$ ). A Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there were significant differences in the concentration of English among the three categories of organization ( $\chi^2(2) = 17.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Pairwise testing with Mann-Whitney tests (with a Bonferroni correction of  $\alpha < .017$ ) revealed that the job ads placed by the multinational organizations contained significantly more English than the ads placed by the other two categories of organization.

This finding corroborates earlier findings for *de Volkskrant*. In that newspaper, too, English was used more in job advertisements from multinational organizations than in ads from domestic organizations (Korzilius *et al.* 2006). This is in

line with claims that multinational organizations use English to internationally standardize terms, job titles, slogans, and product and organizational names in (job) advertisements published in different countries (Alm 2003; Larson 1990).

#### 4. General conclusions

We set out to analyse the use of English in job advertisements on the Dutch job site Monsterboard.nl, and especially to test whether this depended on factors that were claimed by previous researchers to determine the use of English in non-English-speaking countries, particularly in product advertising and print-medium job ads. The results reported above indicate that most of the factors mentioned in the literature were indeed relevant to the use of English in our sample of Monsterboard.nl job ads. We found that the extent to which English was used depended on the job ad element, on the sector of the organization with the vacancy, on the multinational status of the organization, and on the level of the job that was advertised.

Our findings can be summarized as follows. English was used in the majority of advertisements on Monsterboard.nl. Job titles and logos contained more English than other job ad elements. There was more English in ads from the Transport, storage and communications and Commercial services sectors than in ads from the Financial services sector. English was used to a greater extent in ads from multinational organizations than in ads from domestic organizations. Ads for higher-level and academic jobs contained more English than ads for medium-level jobs.

English words were used in more job advertisements on Monsterboard.nl than in the Dutch national paper *de Volkskrant* (Korzilius *et al.* 2006). Three of the factors that determine differences in the use of English in Monsterboard ads may also explain differences in the use of English between Monsterboard ads and *de Volkskrant* ads, thus providing further evidence of the relevance of these factors. First of all, more job ads on Monsterboard.nl than in *de Volkskrant* were placed by multinational organizations. Secondly, more advertisements on Monsterboard.nl than in *de Volkskrant* were for jobs in the Transport, storage and communication sector: a sector whose job ads contained a relatively large concentration of English words. Finally, job ad elements in Monsterboard.nl ads that contained a relatively large concentration of English (contact information, links) were not found in ads from *de Volkskrant*.

English was also used more frequently in Monsterboard job ads than in commercials on Dutch television (Gerritsen *et al.* 2000) and product advertisements from the Dutch glossy magazine *Elle* (Gerritsen *et al.* forthcoming). It was not possible to ascertain whether the above-mentioned factors play a role here, because for these commercials and product ads we have no data on the sectors and

nationality of the advertisers, or about the level (e.g. price) of the products advertised.

One potential limitation of our study is the method we used to determine whether a word is English. We may have been too liberal when classifying words as Dutch and too strict when classifying words as English. Certain other studies of the use of English in countries where English is not the primary language (e.g. Griffin 1997; Martin 2002) have used a broader definition of what is to be considered English, which does not take into account the extent of a word's integration into the receiving language as evidenced by the word's inclusion in an authoritative dictionary of the national language, or by the use of non-English spelling. Our assumption was that if words of English origin were spelt the Dutch way or were in the Dutch Van Dale dictionary (Geerts *et al.* 1999), they were part of the Dutch language. Clearly, a less restrictive definition of English would increase the number of English words in our sample of job advertisements. Thus, if words of English origin included in Geerts *et al.* and words of English origin spelt the Dutch way had been counted as English, the proportion of ads not completely in English containing at least one English word would have risen from 88.5% to 100%.

Given that differences have been found among a number of non-English-speaking European Union countries in the use of English in product advertising (Gerritsen 1995; Gerritsen *et al.* forthcoming), it would be interesting to compare the use of English in job advertisements aimed at job seekers in the Netherlands with the use of English in job advertisements aimed at job seekers in other countries where English is not the primary language.

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## Appendix 1: Criteria used to determine whether a word in a partly Dutch job advertisement was English or Dutch

If a job advertisement was not completely in English but partly in Dutch, we classified as English any word found in an English dictionary or on an English website, providing it did not occur (in the intended meaning) in the thirteenth edition of the Van Dale dictionary of the Dutch language (Geerts *et al.* 1999)<sup>3</sup>, and had not been spelt according to Dutch conventions. Our rationale was that words of English origin included in the Van Dale dictionary could be considered loanwords that had been accepted as part of the Dutch language, and that words spelt the Dutch way would not be encountered in this form in English<sup>4</sup>. Examples:

– Because ‘consultant’, ‘engineering’, ‘manager’, ‘service’, ‘support’ and ‘team’ are included in Geerts *et al.* in the sense intended in the job ads, they were classified as Dutch, not English;

– ‘Professional’ was always classified as an English word, because in the job ads it was used in the sense of “someone who does a job requiring special education” or “someone who is very experienced, has a lot of knowledge, and does things very skillfully” (Summers 2000), and not of “someone who practices a sport as profession” (“iem. die een tak van sport als beroep uitoefent”), as it is defined in Geerts *et al.*;

– Because the compound noun ‘teampayer’ was written as one word (and not as two separate words), in accordance with Dutch spelling conventions (see, for example, Burrough-Boenisch 2004: 71-73), it was classified as Dutch, not English. Similarly, a compound noun formed from an English word plus a Dutch word was classified as Dutch. Thus, the word ‘huntersmentaliteit’ (‘hunter’s mentality’) was classified as Dutch.

If a phrase or sentence in a partly Dutch job advertisement was completely in English, that is, all its component words could be found in an English dictionary or on an English website, and the grammar and syntax were English, all the words in the phrase/sentence were classified as English, even though outside this context they could also be Dutch.

– For example, in a not-completely-English advertisement, the word ‘CV’ in the sentence “Please send your CV to ...” was counted as an English word even though ‘CV’ is also a Dutch word. Another not-completely-English ad included

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<sup>3</sup> This dictionary uses ‘[Eng]’ to indicate words of English origin.

<sup>4</sup> Originally, we had stipulated that if an English word was inflected, conjugated or spelt in accordance with Dutch language rules, it would be classified as Dutch. However, our sample of Monsterboard job ads contained no examples of English words not included in Geerts *et al.* that were inflected or conjugated according to Dutch grammar rules. (An example of such a word from a *Volkskrant* job ad was the past participle ‘ge-outsourced’, with its Dutch prefix ‘ge’, which was classified as a Dutch word; see Korzilius *et al.* 2006).

the sentence “Click here to apply direct or contact [name] of Computer Future Solutions, phone number [...] if you have any questions.” All the words in that sentence were classified as English.

– Since sequences of nouns are possible both in English and in Dutch, we analysed each noun in such a sequence separately. Thus in ‘business opportunities’, ‘business’ was classified as Dutch because it is in Geerts *et al.* (1999), but ‘opportunities’ was classified as English because it is not.

Unless it was being used in a completely English job ad, an English proper name was not classified as an English word because in the case of names there is usually no choice between a Dutch and an English variant, since the name of a person or of an organization is usually ‘a given’. However, if the name of an organization, department or product contained *meaningful* English words, these were classified as English, since in these cases a non-English option was available (for the importance of English words in names in product advertising and other commercial contexts in non-English countries, see also, for example, Alm 2003 and Bhatia 2001).

– For example, ‘Logistics’ in the company name ‘Hays Logistics’ and the abbreviation ‘VBA’ (Visual Basic for Applications) used as the name of the ICT product were each counted as one English word. ‘Hays’, however, was not counted as an English word, because it was a proper name without meaning.

The English monolingual dictionaries we used to determine whether a word was English included the *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* (Summers 1998) and the *Longman Business English Dictionary* (Summers 2000). If a word was not in either of these dictionaries, we used the ‘advanced search’ option of the Google search engine (‘language: English’; ‘site: UK’) to find out if it was used on an English-language UK website.

Figure 1 shows a Dutch job advertisement in which the words we classified as English have been underlined. English is used in the company information sections (‘Travel Active’; ‘High School’), job title (‘Program’, ‘Work’, ‘Travel’), job description (‘Sales’, ‘Operations’), job requirements (‘MS Office’), offer (‘Travel Active’), application procedure section (‘Managing Director’), contact information and links sections (‘Travel Active’). The advertisement also contains words of English origin that we did not classify as English because they were included in Geerts *et al.* (1999) in the sense intended in the job ad: ‘manager(s)’ (in the job title and the job description), ‘team’ (in the offer), ‘e-mail(en)’ (in the application procedure and the links), ‘full time’ (in additional information), and ‘fax’ (in contact information). The word ‘staff’ in the application procedure and contact information sections was not classified as English, because it was part of ‘staff@travelactive.nl’, which we treated as a closed compound containing a Dutch word (‘nl’).



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9	<b>Contact Informatie</b> Mariëlle Alders staff@travelactive.nl <u>Travel Active</u> Postbus 107 Venray Limburg 5800 AC Tel: 0478-551900 Fax: 0478-551911
10	Klik hier voor alle vacatures van " <u>Travel Active</u> " E-mail deze vacature naar een vriend
	<b>SOLLICITEER DIRECT</b>

Figure 1. Example of a job advertisement found on Monsterboard.nl on 17 February 2004. Note. Words we classified as English are underlined.

Legend (advertisement elements): 1 = Company information, 2 = Location, 3 = Job title, 4 = Job description, 5 = Job requirements, 6 = Offer, 7 = Application procedure, 8 = Additional information, 9 = Contact information, 10 = Links.