

Identity constructions in multilingual advertising

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary social identities are hybrid and complex, and the media play a crucial role in their construction. A shift from political identities based on citizenship to economic ones based on participation in a global consumer market can be observed, together with a concomitant shift from monolingual practices to multilingual and English-dominant ones. This transformation is here explored in a corpus of German advertisements. Multilingual advertisements accounted for 60–70% of all advertisements released on various television networks and in two national newspapers in 1999. The subject positions that are created by multilingual narrators and multilingual narratees are characterized by drawing on the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism, and on point-of-view more generally. In order to test the acceptance of or resistance to these identity constructions outside the discourse of commercial advertising, the uses of multilingualism in nonprofit and personal advertising are also explored. All these discourses valorize German–English bilingualism and set it up as the strongest linguistic currency for the German business elite. (Advertising, discourse analysis, multilingualism, identity, English, Germany, Bakhtin, point-of-view, linguistic capital)*

Advertising helps us to make sense of things. It validates consumer commodities and a consumer life-style by associating goods with personal and social meanings and those aspirations and needs which are not fulfilled in real life. We come to think that consuming commodities will give us our identities. (Dyer 1982:185)

In December 1999, an advertisement for Goldpfeil, a producer of leather bags, was released in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a conservative national German newspaper which mainly targets businesspeople, executives, and professionals with higher education and above-average incomes and spending power (see *Smart Paper*). The advertisement clearly addresses this societal segment: the implied reader, or “narratee” (Goddard 1998) of the headline’s question – German (G.) *Sie stecken doch auch sonst alle in die Tasche?*, English (E.) ‘Isn’t it the case that

you usually put everyone else in the shade?’ – is someone who is positioned as high achiever. The idiom *jemanden in die Tasche stecken* roughly translates as ‘to put someone in the shade’, although a comparison of the paraphrases given in two monolingual dictionaries (*Duden* and *Longman*, henceforth *LDEL*C), suggests that the degree of comparative superiority is greater in the German expression. The pun on *Tasche* ‘bag’ functions as attention-seeking device and also creates cohesion with the advertisement’s body copy. In addition to the lexical choices made in the headline, the grammatical choices reinforce the representation of the implied reader’s superiority as a “given fact”: the particle *doch* serves to mark a proposition as knowledge shared between addresser and addressee (Erben 1980:194); the presupposition expressed in a rhetorical question is virtually undeniable; and all that distinguishes this question from a declarative is the question mark, since the sentence does not contain any structural properties of a German question (e.g., subject-verb inversion). The body copy of the advertisement constructs the narratee more specifically as a corporate executive, someone who needs to carry “documents, cellular phone, and all essential business utilities” in a briefcase. The text goes on to assert that any briefcase can hold these items, but briefcases other than Goldpfeil’s would not fit the narratee’s personality. Goldpfeil symbolizes “tradition” (this is the model name of the particular briefcase shown in the picture) and quality because it has been handmade since 1856.

What really sparked my interest in this particular advertisement comes in the signature line, “GOLDPFEIL GERMANY 1856.” Its striking feature is not that it reinforces the product qualities of “tradition,” “quality,” and “authenticity” by locating the brand’s roots in time and place, but rather the fact that the national name is given not as *G. Deutschland* but rather in its international version, *E. Germany*. The intertextual allusion to the common phrase “Made in Germany” suggests high quality, usually of technical and craft products, reinforces the connotations of “quality,” and, crucially, constructs the implied reader as someone who knows English. Given the facts that the rest of the advertisement is in German and that it appears in the context of a German newspaper, the implication of this linguistic choice is that the implied reader is constructed as bilingual in German and English. Bilingualism is an element of the narratee’s sophistication as a superior business executive who holds values of tradition and quality. Other details reinforce the construction of the narratee as cosmopolitan: the use of the symbol # before the telephone and fax numbers (# is not normally used as the number sign in German), and the country code 49, which is not needed in calls within Germany – implies that the narratee may be calling from London or New York to order a Goldpfeil briefcase.

I will show that the Goldpfeil advertisement is not an isolated instance; German advertising now uses multilingualism, mainly in the form of English–German code-switching, to position consumers in various ways. I explore the different types of identities that are constructed in a corpus of bilingual print and TV commercials. This exploration is guided by theories of identity construction

that see identity as crucially linked to difference and similarity (Morley & Robins 1995, Jenkins 1996). I show that, although German advertising may construct both identities of the national Self and of the national Other as multilingual, bilingualism in English and German is set up as the “natural” option for successful middle-class Germans, while other languages (e.g., Italian, Russian, or Spanish) are presented as languages of the cultural and national Other. As in the introductory example, I appropriate the literary concept of point-of-view as an analytical framework (Cook 1992, Simpson 1993, Goddard 1998); that is, I will focus on the multilingualism of narrators and narratees, as well as on the multilingualism associated with particular product groups. I chose to do so because identity formation in advertising tends to work through identification with narrators and narratees (O’Barr 1994). In the next section, I introduce my theoretical assumptions about the construction of consumer identities in the discourse of advertising. I then introduce my data and explore the characteristics of multilingual narrators and narratees in those data. Finally, I relate multilingual constructions of identity in commercial advertising to those in nonprofit and personal advertising, and I suggest implications of this study for approaches to the discursive construction of modern identities more generally.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES AND IDEOLOGIES IN ADVERTISING

Feminist and critical linguists conceive of the relationship between language and social identity as constitutive (e.g., Cameron 1995, Harvey & Shalom 1997). Unlike variationist sociolinguists, they believe that social identities are constructed and co-constructed in discourse, which is perceived as a site of contestation. Discourses, in Foucault’s much-quoted definition, are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (1972:49). In this article I explore one linguistic discourse within the discourse of advertising: the uses of multilingualism, which I define as the use of more than one linguistic code.

Contemporary cultural identities are hybrid, complex, and often contradictory, and the media play a crucial role in their reconfiguration. In many contexts, the identities displayed and offered to TV audiences are no longer political ones, that are based on citizenship in a national community, but rather economic ones that are based on participation in a global consumer market (Morley & Robins 1995). In the first half of the twentieth century, advertising contributed to the configuration of national unified cultures organized around commodity consumption (Ewen 1976, Williams 1980, R. Marchand 1985). Although advertising continues to invest in the creation of consumer identities, these have become global and transnational (Goldman & Papson 1996). The contingency of capitalism and nation-state is an issue of intensive debate in the social sciences dating back at least to the writings of Karl Marx (e.g., Tilly 1975, Giddens 1987, Anderson 1991). Although the original interdependency of the two may be debatable, it is

clear that in contemporary societies, capitalism has outgrown the confines of the nation-state – as the buzzwords “world capitalist economy” (Wallerstein 1974) and “globalization” amply testify. Both terms refer to the fact that capitalist and economic relations of production and consumption exist on a global, transnational scale. In the European experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the linguistic identities that accompany nation-states are typically monolingual (Giddens 1987:172¹; Anderson 1991), while the linguistic identities of global consumers have become multilingual and English-dominant. I explore the transformation of monolingual German national identities into multilingual, English-dominant economic identities in German advertising.

It is a key claim of studies of advertising and consumer culture that they allow us to examine the relations among acts and styles of consumption and the identities of consumers (Nava et al. 1997:8f). In accordance with pioneering works on the relationship among people, objects, and consumption (Bourdieu 1984, Miller 1986, 1998), I posit the acquisition of commodities and goods as the very basis of consumer identities in capitalist societies. A discourse that is vital to the construction of these identities is the discourse of advertising, which the critical theorist Raymond Williams refers to as “the official art of modern capitalist society” (1980:184). Williams points out that the discourse of advertising is not one of materialism – as might be assumed at first glance – but one of magic: although ostensibly concerned with the selling of goods and services, advertising can achieve that primary aim only by teaching social and personal values. Williams explains: “It is clear that we have a cultural pattern in which the objects are not enough but must be validated, if only in fantasy, by association with social and personal meanings which in a different cultural pattern might be more directly available” (1980:185).

Other theorists are equally adamant that advertising does ideological work which buttresses a particular distribution of power in society by representing model identities and idealized images, and by reflecting and constructing social relationships (e.g., O’Barr 1994, Goldman & Papson 1996, 1998). By manipulating social values and attitudes, advertising is fulfilling functions traditionally met by religion (Dyer 1982:2). All these scholars concur that advertising does not simply reflect social life; rather, the relationship between advertising and society is a two-way street. Representations of society in advertising have their basis in the social order, but at the same time, the social order is constantly being re-created by reference to model discourses such as advertising (see Corston-Oliver 1998).

In this discussion of multilingual identities and ideologies of multilingualism in German advertising, I follow O’Barr (1994) in distinguishing between primary and secondary discourses of advertising. “Primary discourse” denotes the messages about commodities that are expressed in advertising: this car is safer, this soft drink is more refreshing, this perfume is more alluring. “Secondary discourse” denotes the messages about society that emerge in the context of showing how the car works, how the soft drink is consumed, or how the perfume is used.

As O’Barr writes, “In depicting the context of use of a commodity, the advertisements also depict a number of things about society, such as who does the laundry, who prepares breakfast while someone else sits at the table, and who drives and who rides as passengers in a car” (1994:3).

Primary advertising discourse about multilingualism is rare and typically pertains to language schools or translation services. Linguaphone, for instance, released a commercial on *Sky News* in early 1999 which shows a woman wearing a headphone who says:

Would you like to speak another language in just twelve weeks? It’s easy with Linguaphone. Just follow our simple three-step technique. You listen, repeat, and you understand. It’s easy. Six million people have started speaking one of thirty languages with us. And you can, too, with our fourteen-day no-risk trial. Call [. . .] today, for more information. Linguaphone. It’s easy in any language.

As she speaks, *easy* and its equivalents in various languages – *c’est facile*, *lätt*, *latwy*, *fácil*, *furasta* – appear on the screen. In another example, a German print advertisement for vwd, an information provider, the headline reads *Vy govorite po-russki?*² (‘Do you speak Russian?’). Below, in much smaller print, a German translation is provided. The advertisement goes on to say that vwd offers business and economic information for those who want to enter the Russian market successfully. This is primary discourse about multilingualism, because a language-related service is on offer. However, this example also contains secondary discourse about multilingualism: the slogan is, in English, “The Information Company.” Because the use of English is not related to the commodity, its use functions as a secondary discourse about the interrelationship between knowledge of English and success in international markets. All the examples discussed below can be considered secondary discourse about multilingualism.

THE DATA

The data for this study come from two sources: a corpus of more than 600 commercials broadcast on German television in February 1999, and a corpus of more than 400 print advertisements from two national newspapers, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ), which were collected in two two-week periods in September/October (SZ) and November/December (FAZ) 1999. Occasionally, I also draw on an unsystematically collected corpus of posters, fliers, and product containers and packaging.

The corpus of TV commercials was subjected to a quantitative analysis (Piller 2000), in which I showed that more than 70% of the commercials incorporated a language other than German (an L2) in some way (see Fig. 1). Given the strong monolingual ethos prevalent in German society, this high incidence of L2s was quite surprising. The most frequently used L2 was English (70%), followed by French (8%), Italian (6%), and a number of other languages. Not only did an unexpectedly high proportion of commercials use an L2 in some way³; in addition,

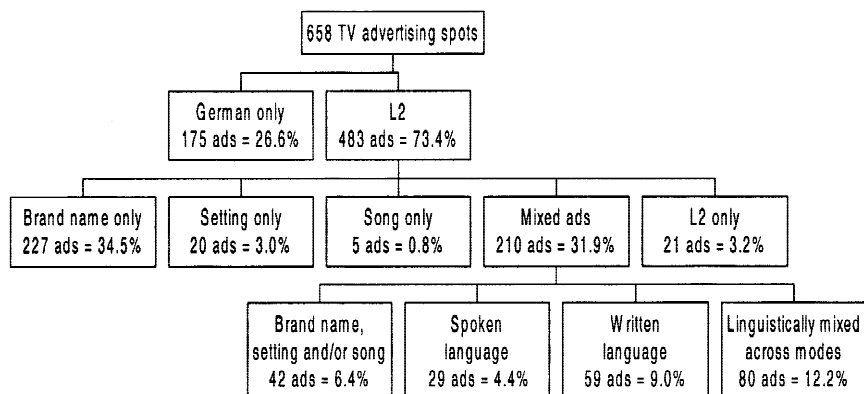


FIGURE 1: Proportion of German and other languages in a corpus of 658 TV commercials (source: Piller 2000).

tion, L2 use was not exclusively, or even to a large degree, a lexical phenomenon. In contrast to previous studies of the use of English in German advertising (e.g., Römer 1976, Carstensen 1984, Fink 1995, 1997) that were concerned mainly with lexical borrowing, my study showed that L2 use in German commercials is primarily a discourse phenomenon. It is multidimensional and occurs in all advertising modes – brand names, setting, background songs, the written mode, the spoken mode, and combinations of these.

POINT OF VIEW IN ADVERTISING

The work of Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1981, 1984, 1986, Bakhtin [Medvedev]⁴ 1978; Vološinov 1975; see also Clark & Holquist 1984, Hirschkop & Shepherd 1989) provides an illuminating framework for understanding the relationship between the identity of language users and linguistic meaning. Bakhtin pioneered the idea that linguistic meaning cannot be understood without reference to speakers' and hearers' identities; indeed, linguistic meaning does not even exist independent of identity. Through a number of "voices," both speakers and hearers may be present in a text or within a discourse. Furthermore, through reported speech or through intertextuality, a number of other users may achieve voice in a text, which thus becomes "dialogic," "heteroglossic," "polyphonic" or even "carnavalesque." In this view, no instance of language use is ever completely original, but rather is always an activation of voices that have been heard before (see also Silverstein & Urban 1996). Bakhtin, who was a literary and cultural critic, considered novels to be the prototypical examples of heteroglossic texts, which he regarded as the democratic ideal of language use – in contrast to monologic texts, in which there is only one voice, or one dominant, hegemonic voice and a number

of submerged voices. Bakhtin's "dialogism" and "heteroglossia" have been celebrated by recent critics as liberating and democratic, and much has been made of the "Bakhtinian program." However, as Hirschkop pointed out in 1989 (p. 3), "The hard work has not really begun":

What are [the] actual cultural forms [of dialogism], its social or political pre-conditions, its participants, methods and goals? When we first meet this concept in Bakhtin's work it describes a certain relation between distinct 'voices' in a narrative text, in which each takes its shape as a conscious reaction to the ideological position of the other; but even then it is a metaphor for a broader principle of discourse. 'Heteroglossia', when first mentioned, is a description of stylistic and generic stratification and conflict within the confines of a national vernacular. But what are the consequences of this stratification? Do all such divisions have political significance? (Hirschkop 1989:3)

Sociolinguists, in particular, have largely failed to explore the implications of Bakhtin's theories for their work, with the notable exception of critical discourse analysts (Fairclough 1992, Ivanič 1998), scholars of the language of advertising (Cook 1992), and students of stylistics more generally (Simpson 1997). In this analysis, I aim to demonstrate that the concept of "point-of-view," as pioneered by Bakhtin, is a useful analytic tool for understanding the use of multilingualism in German advertising. The meaning and concomitant interpretation of these texts is fleeting, which makes dialogism – with its acceptance of the necessary presence of gaps in analytic schemes and systems – seem like an attractive option. Bakhtin points out, however, that the various voices of a text do not form "a conglomeration of heterogeneous linguistic and stylistic forms" (1981:48). Instead, there exists

a center of language (a verbal-ideological center) for the novel. The author (as creator of the novelistic whole) cannot be found at any one of the novel's language levels: he [sic] is to be found at the center of organization where all levels intersect. The different levels are to varying degrees distant from this authorial center. (Bakhtin 1981:48f.)

MULTILINGUAL NARRATORS

Although the narratives of the novel may begin with a hegemonic voice, they usually have an open ending, in which polyvocality is no longer editorially commented on. Cook (1992:187) points out that the reverse is true in advertisements, where a hegemonic, authoritative voice occurs or recurs at the end: "There is in advertisements a reluctance to leave matters open, which results, even in the most heteroglossic advertisements, in the assertion of a single monologic and authoritative voice at the end" (1992:190).

The voice of authority that (re)establishes itself most unequivocally at the end of an advertisement occurs either in the form of the voice-over in TV commer-

cial, or in the form of slogans at the bottom of print advertisements. Significantly, this is also the place where the switch from German into English most often occurs, thereby vesting English with the meaning of authority, authenticity, and truth. A commercial for AXA Colonia, an insurance company, provides a clear example of this strategy. The voice-over accompanies a sequence of visuals with the following text:

Was bedeutet Aufbruch? Warum wagen manche Menschen den ersten Schritt? Vielleicht weil jemand sie begleitet, der sie sichert und an ihre Zukunft glaubt. Reden Sie mit uns. AXA Colonia. Die neue Kraft. Für Ihre Sicherheit. Für Ihr Vermögen. The Future. Together. Now. AXA Colonia. ('What is the meaning of departure? Why do some people dare to make the first step? Maybe because someone accompanies them, someone who gives them security and believes in their future. Talk to us. AXA Colonia. The new power. For your security. For your fortune. The Future. Together. Now.⁵ AXA Colonia')

The English part of the utterance is also printed on the screen while it is uttered by the voice-over. Since written discourses tend to be more authoritative, formal, and credible than spoken ones, the meaning of English as authoritative is strengthened by presenting it through both the written and spoken modes, while German is only spoken.

Slogans, short phrases that accompany the brand name, are meant to encapsulate the identity or philosophy of a brand (Piller 1997). Their status as identity markers is also reflected in the fact that they often enjoy the same legal protection as the brand name and the trademark (Piller 1996, 1999). Therefore, the language used in the slogan of an advertisement becomes the language of the advertisement's "master voice," the voice that expresses authority and expertise. Significantly, the language of the slogans in my corpus of print advertisements is English in 45% (tokens, not types) of all cases. While the body copy and standing details are mostly in German (if they are present at all), advertisements end on sentiments such as the following (chosen at random):

Allianz. The Power On Your Side.
 C&A. Fashion for Living.
 Clariant. Performance. Exactly your chemistry.
 Deutsche Börse. We provide access.
 DuPont. The miracles of science.
 Hallhuber. nothing but clothes.
 Moeller. Think future. Switch to green.
 Siemens. Information and Communications.
 Star Alliance. The airline network for Earth.
 Toshiba. In Touch with Tomorrow.
 Xerox. The Document Company.

There is no difference in the use of English slogans between German companies such as Allianz, Deutsche Börse, Hallhuber, Moeller, or Siemens, and international ones such as C&A, DuPont, Star Alliance, Toshiba, or Xerox. Everyone wants to be perceived as a global player, and such a perception is best achieved through the use of English. It is noteworthy that this “globalist rhetoric” of the advertisements does not necessarily mean that, in real life, nationalist ideologies are eschewed by the producer of the advertisement.⁶ An ironic example is the slogan used by Arcor Mannesmann, who like to be thought of as “the telephone people.” The headline of their advertisement reads *Pfennigfuchsing*, combining the G. noun *Pfennigfuchser* ‘penny-pincher’ with the English present participle morpheme *-ing*. The combination is quite ingenious: it turns a derogatory designation (cf. *Duden*) into a hip action designation. Since both English and German place the determinant of complex lexemes after the determinatum (H. Marchand 1969), the combination as a whole is perceived as an English one. This anglicization affects only the connotation; the denotational meaning of *Pfennigfuchsing* continues to derive from the lexical meaning of *Pfennigfuchser* (*-ing* has only categorical meaning). Thus, the Arcor Mannesmann advertisement uses bilingualism in the headline, a German-English blend, and in its slogan, “the telephone people.” The result of these choices is the perception of the company as competent and hip – they save you money, no longer a sign of a mean personality but rather a fun thing – and also as vested with authority as global players. But even though the rhetoric of Arcor Mannesmann is global, a bid by the British company Vodafone Airtouch to take over Arcor Mannesmann resulted in a national outcry in which even Chancellor Gerhard Schröder voiced concern over a “sell-out” of German companies. The conflict was resolved in February 2000 after Vodafone Airtouch’s offer had been significantly increased; up to then, Vodafone Airtouch had been running an advertising campaign aimed at Mannesmann stakeholders in which they extolled the advantages of the merger. The arguments in these advertisements were in German, but their slogan was in English: “Vodafone Airtouch. A global leader in mobile telecommunications.” In comparison with the authoritative definite article in “the telephone people,” “a global leader in telecommunications” sounds almost modest. This example shows that ideologies used in advertising may follow values diametrically opposed to those of business strategies.

Another strategy that constructs English as the authoritative voice of the advertisement is its use in a headline or in particularly large and striking print. These two strategies are significantly rarer than the use of English in the slogans at the end of the advertisement, but they also occur – and frequently they co-occur, as in the Arcor Mannesmann advertisement, the Deutsche Börse advertisement (headline, “all in one”; slogan, “We provide access”), or that of Siemens (headline, “Surpass. Switching and networking beyond limits”; slogan, “Information and Communications”). In all these examples, the headlines are salient because of their function, large fonts, strong colors, position, and form. All these

graphic devices serve to make the English text “stronger” than the German one. English becomes the dominant voice of the advertisement. If an English headline and an English slogan co-occur, English may be the most salient language. For example, two posters distributed on the campus of Hamburg University in 1997 advertise events organized on campus. The first, for a “dance-event,” has the headline “Feel the night.” The product description, “Das ultimative Dance-Event,” is a German-English hybrid, and the names of the performers are exclusively in English: “Inusa’s Groove Factory (Funk), Freak Out – the crazy 70’s musical, O.T.-Company (Dance-Performance), Hitch-Up (Artistic & Show/walk-acts).” Time, place, and organizers are given in German. The other poster advertises a workshop on international marketing strategies, and the English text – in large, colored type in a special font – occupies more than three-quarters of the poster. It says “Challenge Days ’97. Look for details near you. [...] An event designed for the future by animus.” The body copy and standing details, both in very small, black print, are in German, and again provide essential information about the time, venue, organizers, and sponsors.

In sum, there is a sizable portion of German advertisements in all media in which the slogan and the headline, both of which represent the central voice of the advertisement, are in English. These data are very similar to those reported by Lee (1992:167–184) in a study of the linguistic varieties used in Swiss advertising slogans. Lee found that the majority of slogans reinforced the authority and expertise that are inherent in their “comment position” by the use of a male (see below) Standard German-speaking voice, while the remainder of the commercials was usually in Swiss German. That the slogan is preferredly expressed by Standard speakers rather than by dialect speakers was also confirmed in a study by Sussex (1989; cited by Lee 1992), who showed that the slogans of Australian commercials are spoken predominantly by speakers of Educated Australian rather than of Broad Australian. However, my observations differ from both these studies in two respects: first, German-speaking Switzerland has long been characterized by a diglossic situation (Ferguson 1959) in which Standard German is the formal, public language and Swiss German the authentic, private code; and second, English and German in Germany cannot be considered to be in a dialect/standard relationship like that obtaining between Educated and Broad Australian in Australia. It may be argued, however, that the linguistic practices in advertising that I am reporting can be characterized as texts of an emergent diglossic situation. Other possible signs of incipient diglossia may be discerned: an increasing number of German universities teach at least some of their courses in English; the national conferences of an increasing number of scientific and scholarly organizations are conducted in both German and English; academic books and articles are increasingly published in English, even if their market is national; and in February 2000, Hamburg University issued guidelines in German and English on how to avoid academic malpractice.

The authority of the English voice is usually reinforced by paralinguistic devices such as large print, color, uncommon fonts and forms in print media, or male voices and co-occurrence in the spoken and written mode in TV commercials. The body copy and all the factual information (outlet, statutory declarations, contact details, etc.) in these advertisements is in German, signaling doubt about the bilingual proficiency of the audience. If the producers of these advertisements prefer to transmit factual information in German, it follows by implication that English is chosen largely for its connotational value. Even if the audience does not understand the denotational message of the English part – and sometimes the message is so garbled that the (pseudo-)English is not understandable – they will recognize that the message is in English, and they will activate their stereotypes about English and English-speaking persons and cultures and transfer them to the product (Cheshire & Moser 1994, Haarmann 1986, 1989, Piller 1999, Wienold 1995). A general advantage of the use of a foreign language is that it impedes automatic processing and thereby arrests the attention of recipients for a longer timespan than monolingual native-language advertisements would.

MULTILINGUAL NARRATEES

In the introductory example, I pointed out that the implicit reader of the Goldpeil advertisement is constructed not only as bilingual in English and German but also as a successful business executive who values quality, tradition, and authenticity. The characteristics of the bilingual narratee that emerge from the great majority of bilingual advertisements in my corpus are (1) international orientation, (2) future orientation, (3) success orientation, (4) sophistication, and (5) fun orientation.

International orientation

In *Language and Power*, Fairclough notes, “People’s involvement in politics is less and less as citizens and more and more as consumers; and their bases of participation are less and less the real communities they belong to, and more and more the political equivalents of consumption communities” (1989:211). The mere fact that the implied readers of the advertisements under consideration are bilingual suggests that they are addressed not as citizens of the national community of monolingual Germans, but as members of a transnational, international community constituted around common lifestyle choices, common consumption values, and elitism. In addition to the language choices, some advertisements directly spell out the internationalism of the implied reader. For instance, a recruitment advertisement for Mercer Management Consulting, with the slogan “Join the growth!,” has a passport-size photo of a young, smart- and enthusiastic-looking man who is quoted as saying, *Meine ersten drei Projekte? London, New*

York, Brackwede ('My first three projects? London, New York, Brackwede').⁷ He is obviously a recent recruit whose work has brought him to the metropolises of London and New York, but also to the provincial backwater of Brackwede. Readers are asked to identify with the good humor with which this recruit has accepted a mixture of internationalism and regionalism. The body copy addresses the reader as someone who wants to work internationally: *Wieviel Internationalität suchen Sie?* ('How much internationalism are you looking for?'). An international career is implied for someone who cares about excellent career perspectives, excellent training, attractive income for a demanding job, and fun (these are offered in the body copy).

In the vast majority of advertisements that use English, it is the language of international communication and not the language of a particular national community. Thus, very few of the advertisements that use English are explicitly oriented toward U.S. or British values. Most of those that offer U.S.-related products. A Lufthansa advertisement, for example, offers flights to the U.S. over the winter break and combines the English and German versions of the song "Oh Christmas Tree": *O Tannenbaum, o CHRISTMAS TREE, HOW LOVELY ARE YOUR Blätter. Du grünst nicht nur zur...*⁸ The stars-and-stripes font of the English text reinforces the American association. Some products do not have an explicit connection to the U.S. but have traditionally been associated with an American lifestyle, such as blue jeans or cigarettes. "Come to Marlboro Country" thus does not invite the reader into an international realm but into the American West. The mythic American West with its wild horses, pristine nature, tough guys, frontier spirit, and freedom can be conjured up in the most unlikely places. The beer Valley Lager, for example, takes its name from the Rottal, a valley in Bavaria where the brewery is located and which has only the most mundane mythic associations (if any) in the German imagination. However, the name "Valley Lager" (instead of, e.g., "Talbir") transposes the beer into an English-speaking world. The connections to the American West are reinforced by the picture of stampeding mustangs which accompanies the name on the bottles and beer mats. The visual is clarified by a small-print German text, *Ein Geschmack wie Natur und weites Land* ('A taste like nature and wide country'). The much larger slogan "Let's have a Lager," printed in red script, invites the readers to leave their everyday lives behind and be refreshed by the bounteous landscape of the American West, insofar as it can be appropriated through beer consumption.⁹ All in all, bilingual advertisements that invite the reader to identify with American values are far fewer than those in which English is presented as the language of the world. However, it should also be noted that the two concepts, "the world" and "America," may not be totally distinct in the German imagination. There is a tradition in German thought that sees America as the prototypical nonnational country, and Americans as the prototypical internationalists and globetrotters (Geisler 1985:63, Morley & Robins 1995:93–98).

Future orientation

The implied reader of bilingual advertisements frequently is addressed as someone who wants to shape the future. This is evidenced by the fact that advertisements for computers and information technology, which are often heralded as “future technologies,” make greater than average use of English. In the subcorpus of TV commercials, for instance, there were 32 spots for computers and information technology, and of these, only 5 (15.6%) did not use any English at all, while the remaining 27 (84.4%) did. The lexical choices of many of the English advertisements put the future or “tomorrow” at the heart of their presentation:

the future in metal (corus)
 See you tomorrow (Engel & Völkers)
 Engineering the future (MAN)
 Think what the future could be (Mannesmann)
 Tomorrow’s Classics (Maurice Lacroix)
 In Touch with Tomorrow (Toshiba)

Readers are also addressed as future-oriented in bilingual advertisements. A good example comes from a recruitment advertisement by A.T. Kearney, which has most of its text in English:

Is it possible to redefine the
 future
 of the consulting industry
 while defining the shape of your career?
 Yes.
 The future is here at A.T. Kearney

When was the last time that you helped a paradigm shift? Or helped determine the rules of the game? As the fastest growing high value-added management consultancy, A.T. Kearney is looking for individuals who can help build our business – while they build world-class skills and experience. It’s about making an impact in an industry, and on your career.

It goes without saying that the future in these advertisements is not unknowable; instead, it is goal-directed, as the picture of a compass in the A.T. Kearney advertisement suggests. A common means to suggest a bright, promising future where everything will be “up” is to use charts or text that ascends from left to right (as in the Deutsche Börse advertisement discussed above), or to picture people whose visual focus is to their right and higher than they are. The implication is that they are looking forward to a better future (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996), as in the advertisement for interlift 99, an elevator trade fair, reproduced in Fig. 2.




interlift 99
Internationale Fachmesse
für Aufzugtechnik
und Kongress
12. - 15. Oktober 1999
Messe Augsburg

WELCOME TO YOUR FUTURE

interlift 99:
Komplettanlagen, Komponenten,
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Normen, Gesetze. Über 350
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präsentieren Neuheiten, Trends
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**MESSE
ZENTRUM
AUGSBURG**

FIGURE 2: Advertisement for interlift 99.

Success orientation

Another characteristic of the implied readers of bilingual advertisements is their orientation toward success in a challenging, professional executive career. The initial example of the Goldpfeil briefcase advertisement is a case in point, as is the A.T. Kearney advertisement just discussed. Certain frequently occurring words that are linked to success further make this orientation of the implied bilingual reader obvious: *surpass* (Siemens), *Performance* (Clariant), *We m@ke your business faster*. [...] *Damit sind Sie immer der Schnellere* (ixos) ('With that you will always be faster than your competitors').

If we learn anything about the occupational background of the implied reader, it tends to be an executive function in business, although the effort entailed by such a position is downplayed. A Hewlett Packard advertisement, for instance, has a picture story about a young, white-clad, smart-looking man who sits leisurely on a Nordic beach (Picture 1), looks intently at the minicomputer placed in front of him on a white pullover (Picture 2), holds the computer in his hands and presses a button (Picture 3), and has his dog retrieve the computer (Picture 4). The comment that goes with each picture directly addresses the reader with an imperative. The comment with Picture 2 says *Checken Sie per Infrarot und GSM* das Börsengeschehen* ('Check the stock markets via infrared and GSM*'), and the sequence with Picture 3 adds, *Surfen Sie im Web und machen Sie den Deal* ('Surf the Web and complete the deal'). The body copy tells readers that their place of work is their own choice. The references to the stock market, the completion of a deal, and to the workplace make it clear that the man in the pictures is a businessman, despite his leisured appearance. The image of the business executive in these advertisements is not of someone who works hard for a living, but of someone who is endowed with wealth and a desirable lifestyle, expressed in terms of leisure, smart appearance, or life in desirable locations. Such characteristics have traditionally been the prerogative of aristocratic and, later, bourgeois elites.

The fact that the implied occupation "business executive" is used as prototype for success and elitism is best exemplified by an advertisement for the *International Herald Tribune*, which was released in *FAZ* and is fully in English:

There's no such thing as the outside world.

Just outsiders.

The global class of decision makers and opinion leaders would agree. As they move easily across continents and cultures they rely on the *International Herald Tribune* for the most complete, credible and focused briefing on major issues and events worldwide. They value its perspective on how these events may affect their business and personal lives. They read the IHT because they *want* to read it.

THE WORLD'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

In many ways, this advertisement could serve as a vignette for this article. It spells out quite clearly what the use of English in German advertising is about, almost in Darwinist terms. If you read English, fine; if not, you are an outsider. Tough luck. The advertisement is about an elite target group, “the global class of decision makers and opinion leaders [. . . who . . .] move easily across continents and cultures.” The readers are not addressed as a member of that elite; instead, its opinions and practices are set up as an example for readers to emulate. For the reader who wants to belong to this global elite – rather than being an outsider – the product, the *IHT*, is there to make aspirations to success come true. The promise of future success in the elite is also implied in the advertisement’s iconography, since the picture of a rolled-up *IHT* is positioned at an upward angle from left to right.

Sophistication

Another characteristic of bilingual narratees is their sophistication, most frequently expressed by the term *style*. A Mont Blanc advertisement for “Writing Instruments * Watches * Leather * Jewellery * Eyewear” provides a good example: the headline “Stainless Style” puns on “stainless steel,” and this pun implies that the reader is sophisticated enough to appreciate a pun in an L2. The featured watch is not referred to by its most common German designation (*Armband*)*Uhr* but rather by the term *Chronograph*, thus implying familiarity with Greek-derived “hard words,” a familiarity that comes only with educational sophistication. Finally, the slogan “The art of writing your life” implies readers who are actively shaping their lives through “writing” it and who view their lives as art. Appreciation of the arts is a recurrent theme in bilingual advertisements. The unique selling proposition of “Movado. The Museum Watch,” whose makers use the headline “Pushing the Artform,” is their claim that their watches are a part of the permanent collections of museums around the world. The unique selling proposition of Engel & Völkers, who sell condominiums in Berlin and use the slogan “See you tomorrow,” is the fact that residents will be living next door to the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The implication of such selling propositions for the identity of readers is that the latter are sophisticated enough to appreciate these symbols of high culture and civilization.

Fun orientation

The implied readers of bilingual advertisements are also constructed as people who want to have their share of the good life, typified in an orientation toward fun. One of the promises in the Mercer recruitment advertisement discussed above is *Spaß* (‘fun’). Commercials for music (CDs, tapes, videos) and movies, which can be regarded as leisure products par excellence, never use German alone. Of the 21 commercials in the TV subcorpus, 15 (71.4%) mix English and German, and the remaining 6 (28.6%) are monolingual in English. A German-English slogan for the store Kaufhof, used in all advertising media in late 1999, was *Lust*

for Life. *Die neue Lust am Einkaufen*.¹⁰ This is a pun on the interlingual homograph *Lust*; G. *Lust* is polysemous and means ‘1. joy, pleasure, fun’, ‘2. inclination’, and, least frequently, ‘3. desire, lust’. Therefore, the second part of the slogan translates as E. ‘The new pleasure in shopping’.

In print advertisements, English has supplanted French, and Romance languages more generally, as the languages which traditionally connote *joie de vivre* for Germans. In TV commercials, on the other hand, French and Italian continue to be vested with these functions, mainly through the use of setting and accents. French is the language of love and carries erotic connotations whenever it occurs; Italian is the language of the good life as expressed through food. The following advertisement for *duplo*, a chocolate snack, is representative of advertisements using French. Two young male flatmates talk about a French exchange student who is about to arrive. Neither is enthusiastic, and they discuss who will have to share his room with the new arrival. The door bell rings and a very attractive young woman in a tight red dress says, “*Allo. Isch bin Pascal*” (‘Hi. I’m Pascal.’). The two young men are dumbfounded because they expected someone named “Pascal” to be male. Now they trip over themselves to welcome Pascal and offer her coffee, which she accepts with a “*Oui*” (‘Yes’).¹¹ They also offer her a chocolate snack (*ein Schokoriegel*), but Pascal raises her eyebrows disdainfully, implying that coffee and chocolate snacks do not go together. So the men arrange the chocolate snacks on a silver plate and offer it with “*Voilà. Die wahrscheinlich längste Praline der Welt*” (‘Here you go. Probably the longest pralines in the world.’). Pascal takes one, munches it dreamily with half-closed eyes, and says in a breathy voice, “*Sind die lang. Hhmm. Und isch dachte, deutsche Männer ‘aben keine Phontasie*” (‘How long they are. Hhmm. And I thought German men did not have any imagination.’). The final shot shows Pascal wedged between the two men while they argue who will be allowed to share his room with her. Pascal’s French identity is clearly marked: she is not only introduced as French (*der französische Austauschstudent*, ‘the French exchange student’) but also uses a French word, *oui*, and has a French accent in her German. She drops her [h]s in *allo* instead of *hallo* and *aben* instead of *haben*, replaces [χ] with [ʃ] in *isch* instead of *ich*, and [a] with [ɔ] in *Phontasie* instead of *Phantasie*. The two German men accommodate their speech to Pascal’s by also using a French word, *voilà*. This advertisement is representative of all the advertisements in my corpus that use French in that French is associated with pervasive eroticism. All advertisements that employ French feature heterosexual couples in situations potentially leading to or following sexual encounters. All these encounters are between a French female and a German male, except for the Maggi Gratin (precooked meals) advertisements, in which a German male presents the dish – garnished with some French – to a German female. The close link between French and heterosexual eroticism in German TV advertising is another instance of the metaphor of the French–German marriage that pervades public discourse in both countries (Varro 1997). Since the end of World War II, French–German political and cultural

relations have come to be seen as sexual ones, and a high number of actual intermarriages between citizens of the two nations provide some justification for the metaphor.

Just as French is made out to be the language of “fun” as heterosexual eroticism, Italian is used as the language of the good life, unambiguously connected to food. The product advertised is also food, in all cases. In an advertisement for Barilla, a brand of spaghetti, we see an elderly, good-looking Italian cook in his restaurant, and then in his kitchen putting spaghetti into a pot. At the same time he says “*La pasta.*¹² *Meine Leidenschaft. Für mich gibt es nur Barilla. Die ist immer perfetta*” (‘The pasta. My passion. For me there is only Barilla. Barilla is always perfect.’). When the pasta is in the pot, he looks out the window, sees some boys playing soccer, and joins them. As he is about to score a goal, a window opens and an exasperated woman cries imploringly “*Giovanni, la pasta!*” Giovanni gestures at her reassuringly and says “*Nur die Ruhe. Es ist doch Barilla. Barilla ist al dente und bleibt al dente*” (‘Take it easy. You know it is Barilla. Barilla is al dente and will remain al dente.’). He takes the time to score his goal and then returns to the kitchen, drains the pasta, adds some sauce, and serves it in the restaurant. Having tasted it, a young woman flourishes her fork and praises the food as *perfetta*. The camera takes in the whole restaurant of happily eating people, and the voice-over comments, “*Barilla. Die beliebteste Pasta der Italiener*” (‘Barilla. The Italians’ favorite pasta.’). Again, the Italian setting is unambiguously identified by nonlinguistic (Italian restaurant; pasta as typically Italian food) and linguistic (*Die beliebteste Pasta der Italiener*) markers. Italian is used in the form of phonetic interference (all the [r]s are rolled), lexical borrowings (*pasta*, *perfetta*, *al dente*, and the name *Giovanni*), and syntactic borrowings (*La pasta*). It might be argued that paralanguage is Italian, too, since all the characters make liberal use of gestures, a German stereotype about Italian interactions. Another stereotype, that Italians are very passionate, is served up in Giovanni’s confession “*La pasta. Meine Leidenschaft*” (‘Pasta. My passion.’). Food as “passion” sounds like overly strong attachment, and a comparable advertisement for Knorr Soße für Schweinebraten, a brand of sauce to go with pork roast, is an illuminating contrast: it features a German butcher, about the same age as Giovanni (50–60), who talks about the nature of things, responsibility, and tradition. Though he too is supposed to convey his love for pork roast, a word like *Leidenschaft* – or any other reference to fun and joy – would certainly sound out of place in his narrative.

In sum, “fun” as connoted by French is equated with heterosexual eroticism, and “fun” as connoted by Italian is equated with the enjoyment of good food. In most cases, both these languages are used by (presumably) native speakers. Thus, German TV advertising shows images of the Other using their – supposedly – own voice in these cases. This is not true of advertisements using English, where fun accrues to the ethnically German implied reader by virtue of a “fun attitude.” Characters may prove their fun attitude by listing London, New York and Brackwede in the same category, or by embracing a philosophy in which life is about

having fun (“Lust for Life”; “More Risk. More Fun. More Money”). Bilingual (English–German) fun-loving narratees are furthermore characterized by youth, either as an implication of the advertised product (e.g., toys, computer games, sports gear) or by pictured or “embodied” narratees. Generally, pictures of people are a powerful device to indicate a corporeal presence in advertising, where the visual often takes precedence over the verbal. These visual embodiment practices of advertising are central to the discursive construction of identities because the body is “the rhetorical instrument of expression” (Butler 1997:152). Embodiment through pictures is even more central to the construction of a gendered implied reader, which I will discuss in the next section, than to the construction of age.

Gender

The vast majority of bilingual advertisements, if they make any implication about the gender of the implied reader, imply a male reader, either by picturing men exclusively (cf. the Mercer advertisement, discussed above), by picturing groups in which men greatly outnumber women (cf. the interlift ’99 advertisement, discussed above, with a female:male ratio of 1:4), or by featuring products whose use is gendered. A case in point are watches; not a single bilingual advertisement in my corpus features a woman’s watch. Thus, the bilingual narratee is usually male, but there is an exception to this pattern in those advertisements that also imply sophistication. This is true of some fashion advertisements that address women who wish to “power-dress” (Entwistle 1997). Power-dressing women display a form of the “performing self,” which many sociologists (Entwistle 1997:314 quotes Sennett 1977, Featherstone 1991, and Giddens 1991) consider a new form of self typical of the twentieth century. This new self “places greater emphasis upon appearance, display and the management of impressions” (Featherstone 1991:187). The power-dresser FASHIONS herself as career woman; she “dresses for success” in a skirt suit of sober color and accessories marking sophisticated femininity, such as muted make-up and discreet jewelry. Fashion advertisements for this type of garb are frequently characterized by bilingualism. In a C&A advertisement (Fig. 3), the product is described as “Your sixth sense” to the reader who, it is implied, identifies with the woman in the picture. Significantly, the construction of the implied reader does not work through discourse here, but mainly through the pictorial mode – as in most fashion and perfume advertisements. In many of these, the model functions as locus of identification: together with the dress, other characteristics that the reader supposedly aspires to will accrue to her. The sartorial code of the model – suit of sober color, muted make-up, classical jewelry, perspicuous watch, and notebook – identify her as a professional dressed for success.

The bilingual narratee of the advertisements in my data is gendered as male in most instances. However, it is clear that the relationship between bilingualism and maleness that the advertisements espouse is not a direct one. Rather, it de-

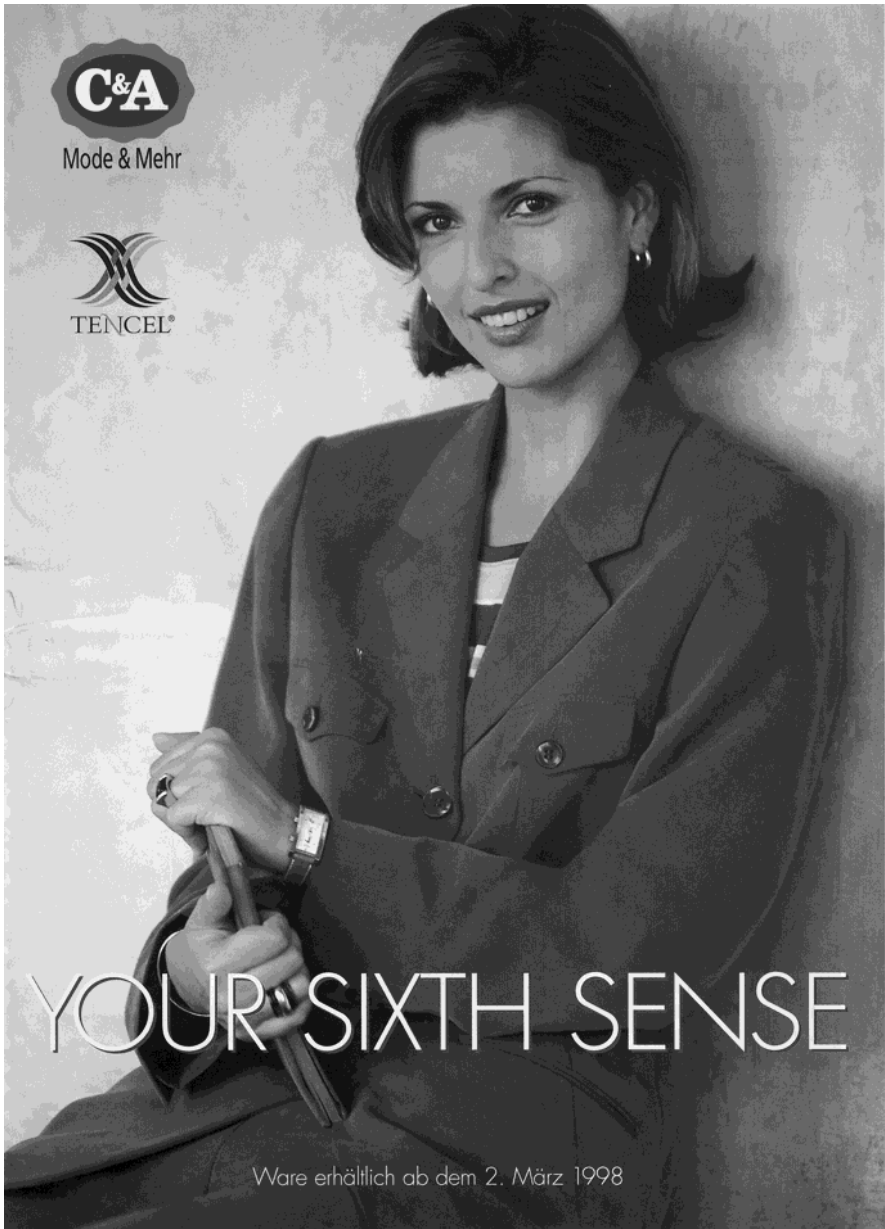


FIGURE 3: Advertisement for C&A.

rives from the other characteristics of the typical implied reader; a business executive who thrives in an international environment, is future-oriented, successful, sophisticated, and wants to enjoy the good things in life. With the possible exception of the last two characteristics, these characteristics happen to be associated with men in German society, as elsewhere, and advertisers can count on making a much more convincing statement about their product if they gender the implied reader as male. This mediation of the relationship between language and gender through social meanings within a prestige system in which maleness is more valued than femaleness has been observed in a number of linguistic communities (see Pavlenko & Piller 2001 for an overview). Valued linguistic practices, such as bilingualism in English and German, are not specifically male, but they are associated with the professional sphere to which men happen to have predominant access. However, access is not exclusive, as we see from the model identity of the professional woman which emerged in the early 1980s (Entwistle 1997:312). Thus, some advertisements suggest that bilingualism, success, and sophistication may be linked not only in men but also in businesswomen. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this connection is rarely, if ever, made in recruitment, car, insurance, or computer advertisements, but almost exclusively in clothing advertisements, suggesting that dress is the main concern of the executive female (cf. Egging & Iedema 1997:189 for similar results in their analysis of the model identities presented in Australian women's magazines).

Summary

Already in the late 1970s, advertising allocation had effected a substantial shift in the media which encouraged not only conservative domination of TV and the press but also an increasing orientation toward the young middle class (Dyer 1982:183) – a process that has continued and accelerated since. The messages of advertising usually support the hierarchy of bourgeois values by defining desirability as attached to social status and prestige.¹³ In contemporary German advertising, multilingualism has been incorporated into this prestige system. Despite the fact that the identities of narratees of bilingual advertisements are not uniform, there is a strong trend to picture them with all or some of the attributes of internationalism, future orientation, success and elitism, sophistication, fun, youth, and maleness. In contrast to the ways other languages are used in German TV advertising, bilingualism in English allows for complex and even contradictory images. Advertising resolves such contradictions – like the one between leisure and work in the Hewlett Packard ad – through product use. The use of English has become one of the means to maintain credibility in the face of such contradictions. If Hewlett Packard used the German equivalent of its slogan, “Expanding Possibilities,” (*Möglichkeiten Erweitern*), there would be an implicit concession to the limits of expansion, national, linguistic, or environmental. The use of English, however, iconically transcends these confines and passes into a mythical global, unbounded realm where nothing but the sky is the limit.

COMPETING AND CONVERGING DISCOURSES

Discourses about identity are heavily contested sites of cultural production (Jenkins 1996). In keeping with the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia embraced in this article, I will now look briefly at two other discourses that relate multilingualism and identity in ways similar to or different from the discourse of commercial advertising. In the advertisements of some nonprofit organizations, the use of English may be subverted to challenge precisely those consumerist identities that are constructed in multilingual commercial advertisements. Nonprofit organizations may also run advertising campaigns against the use of English in advertising, thereby upholding traditional nationalist identities in the face of emerging postnational ones. Personal advertisements, on the other hand, show that individuals indeed accept the nexus set up by a large segment of commercial advertising that links multilingualism with a successful, attractive, desirable personality.

Non-profit advertising

I have found two advertisements that are implicitly or explicitly critical of the use of English in German advertising. The first one is by Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club (ADFC), a nonprofit organization lobbying for the interests of bicyclists. Its headline says *Rush hour = Rasch aua*, with the equation sign formed by two strips of Bandaid. The German homophone of *rush hour* translates literally as 'quick ouch', so that the whole sequence may be read as 'The rush hour quickly leads to injuries'.¹⁴ The advertisement goes on to caution readers against losing their cool in traffic, and provides information on a new legal provision which allows bicyclists to leave the bicycle lane for the road under certain circumstances. The ADFC, which promotes bicycle use as an environmentally friendly alternative to automobile use, promotes political goals such as grass-roots organization, protection of the environment, use of renewable energy sources, and a sustainable lifestyle. Such goals are necessarily critical of the wasteful lifestyle of the rich capitalist market economies and consumer societies. The advertisement makes none of these political statements explicitly, but rather through its equation of *rush hour* with an increased potential for injuries. The same equation could also be set up with *G. Stoßverkehr* – albeit without the homophonic pun, which serves as an attention-seeking device – but the use of the English term intertextually alludes to commercial advertising in which English is used precisely to endorse the values of capitalist market economies and consumer societies. As I showed above, English is typically constructed as being used by young adult, successful, high-achieving businesspeople whose very identities are consumerist. The use of English in the ADFC advertisement manages to point out the harmful consequences of such a lifestyle without specifying them in so many words.

While the ADFC advertisement uses English to challenge the values that usually go with the use of English in commercial advertising, an advertisement by another nonprofit organization, Verein Deutsche Sprache, (German Language

Society) is concerned solely with the use of English in contemporary German advertising. The headline of their ad asks, *Merry Christmas – oder lieber ‘Frohe Weihnacht’?* (‘Merry Christmas – or preferably “Frohe Weihnacht”?’). (Rather contradictorily, *Merry Christmas* is printed in large, bold type and serves as the advertisement’s attention-getter.) The body copy complains:

Haben auch Sie die Nase voll von “X-mas-shopping,” “Power-Weihnachten” und “church-events”? Wollen auch Sie kein “Country-Bike” zum Fest geschenkt bekommen und die Feiertage lieber unter einem Baum als unter einem “tree” verbringen? (‘Are you, too, fed up with “X-mas-shopping,” “power-Weihnachten” and “church-events”? Do you, too, not wish to be presented with a “Country-Bike,” and do you prefer to spend the holidays under a “Baum” instead of under a “tree”?’)

Readers are then exhorted to join the organization and pledge money to its cause. I should probably add that VDS with its purist concerns is a fringe group, though a very vocal one. Their advertisement is clearly “home-made,” without the involvement of a professional advertising agency, since they use a negative attention-seeking device that contradicts their message, the body copy is too long and contains irrelevant information, the unique selling proposition is missing, and too much emphasis is placed on the money to be pledged to their cause (the bank transfer form takes up about two-thirds of the advertisement). However, the size of the advertisement (a quarter page in *FAZ*) and the frequency of its release suggest that donations must have been coming in. In contrast to the ADFC advertisement, which appropriates the English discourse of contemporary German advertising for its own purposes and thereby subverts that discourse, the VDS advertisement is a head-on challenge to that discourse. It constructs an implied reader who is as fed up with English loanwords in German as the writer is, and with him “more than 8,000 members aged 9 to 99 from all walks of life.”¹⁵ Exasperation at loanwords is taken for granted throughout the advertisement. As Cameron (1995) convincingly argues, purism, or “verbal hygiene” more generally, is much more than a misguided and pernicious exercise. Rather, it represents a symbolic attempt to impose order on the social world. From this perspective, the VDS advertisement is no longer about loanwords but about social identities. As I have shown above, commercial advertising constructs postnational, multilingual model consumers. But the discourses of national belonging do not simply go away. The idea of national belonging as transcending differences of age and class is clearly expressed in the advertisement (*über 8000 Mitglieder von 9 bis 99 Jahren aus allen Schichten der Bevölkerung*).

These contestations of the construction of multilingual, transnational consumer identities continue to occur within mass communication, where it is difficult to know about the reactions of the audience. One of the main tenets of contemporary discourse analysis, however, is that texts take on meaning only in interaction, and that audiences are active participants in this process of making

meaning (Bucholtz 1999, McIlvenny 1996). In the following discussion, I explore not the direct audience responses to the mass advertising discussed so far, but the appropriation of the multilingualism of commercial advertising into a personal genre that is created not by an anonymous team of advertisers but by individuals seeking to address not an anonymous mass audience but one special person, the desired other.

Personal advertisements

Personal advertisements are a prime site for studying the discursive construction of self- and other-identities (Coupland 1996). A look at the personal advertisements section of any German national newspaper shows that 10 to 25% of advertisers have indeed taken over the identity construct of the successful, desirable multilingual from commercial advertising.¹⁶ Personal advertisements testify to the identity investment of the individual advertisers as they publicly expose their hopes and wishes for a desired other.

The linguistic expression of this takes place through a compressed, carefully selected text using general, catch-all lexis or lexis that sets off resonances in the reader. The reader, in turn, interacts with this lexis, questioning if she or he is the intended/desired audience for the advertisement. (Shalom 1997:202)

The two best-known German national marriage agencies that claim to work only for the rich, the famous, and the beautiful liberally mix their advertisements linguistically. In their advertisements, Claudia Püschel-Knies GmbH identify themselves as follows: “*Vertrauenspartner weltweit allererster Kreise und Familien*. ‘If you are a cosmopolitan, we shall be active for you all over the world.’ Please call us: *Rufen Sie an*: [. . .].” I am not sure whether the first English sentence is meant to be a translation of the German one that precedes it, just as “Please call us” is followed by the German translation. Literally, *Vertrauenspartner weltweit allererster Kreise und Familien* translates as ‘partner in confidence of the very first circles and families worldwide’. The second large agency, Gabriele Thiers-Bense, also uses English to identify its services: the name of the service, “worldwide exclusive marriage agency,” is English, as is one of the two slogans. The German one is *Feiner Stil ist die Krönung guten Verstandes* (‘Exquisite style is the culmination of a good mind’). Although this sounds as bizarre in German as it does in the translation, it seems to be a statement about elitism. Through the second, English, slogan, elitism is associated with multilingualism: “My personal guidance especially for you around this planet!” The connection between elitism and use of English is also made in the headline *weil, DIE BESTEN HEIRATEN BEI UNS DIE BESTEN, ungeniert . . . ‘IN THE EVENT OF LOVE . . .’* (‘because with us the best marry the best without being embarrassed’). The bizarreness of the sentiment is matched only by the oddity of the syntax: in Standard German, a subordinate clause introduced by *weil* must have the verb

(*heiraten*) in final position. Verb Second Position (V2), as in this slogan, is normally restricted to main clauses. In spoken language, a change is under way from verb-final to V2 in subordinate clauses introduced by *weil* (Uhmann 1998). In the present case, the explanation for the use of this particular structure is probably multi-layered: the text may have been produced by a speaker for whom the change is no longer restricted to spoken language, and as such, the text may be evidence of the diffusion of an ongoing syntactic change from spoken to written genres. However, given the fact that the placement of such an advertisement is a considerable financial investment (Gabriele Thiers-Bense has a one-sixth page advertisement regularly once a week in both *FAZ* and *SZ*, and possibly in other papers), a linguistic investment can be expected, too. Therefore, I assume that the use of *weil* + V2 is not just an oversight but serves as a contextualization marker (Gumperz 1992) which connotes that the advertisement is to be read as informal, spontaneous youth communication (cf. Uhmann 1998:130 on these functions of *weil* + V2 in spoken German).

Many of the women in the Thiers-Bense advertisements are described as multilingual: *Sie spricht professionell sechs Sprachen*, 'She speaks six languages professionally'; or *Sie praktizierte viele Jahre in den USA, in Australien & Kanada, spricht fließend fünf Sprachen*, 'She practiced in the USA, Australia and Canada for many years, speaks five languages fluently'. Men, on the other hand, are not described as multilingual. Their multilingualism is expressed in the linguistic choices of the description, as in the following example:

In Germany, Vize-Präsident, 44/182, eines U.S.-Konzerns. Ein Südstaatler, elegant, konservativ, Elite-Absolvent. Die prädestinierte Führungspersönlichkeit, distinguert & unendlich easy going, casual & souverän. Seine Familie zählt zu den Tradierten, die Geschichte machten in den Südstaaten. Er wünscht – weil seine roots zurückfahren¹⁷ nach Deutschland & England – eine Amerika-orientierte, gebildete Nordeuropäerin in den Dreißigern, die a la long mit ihm in den USA leben möchte. Einige Jahre wird er noch hier sein – a good opportunity to get to know each other – [...] Seine Aufgabe bedingt, dass er die ganze Welt kennt [...] schätzt space & freedom, klassische Qualitäten, Literatur, Musik, Antiquitäten & sammelt alte Kunst [...] ('In Germany,¹⁸ vice-president, 44/182, of a US corporation. A Southerner, elegant,¹⁹ conservative, Ivy League graduate. The predestined leader, distinguished & infinitely easy-going, casual & superior. His family belongs to those who have been handed down by history,²⁰ those who made history in the South. Because his roots go back to Germany & England, he is looking for an America-oriented, educated Northern European in her thirties who wants to live a la long²¹ with him in the USA. He will be here some more years – a good opportunity to get to know each other – [...] due to his position he knows the whole world [...] appreciates space and freedom, classical qualities, literature, music, antiques & collects old art [...]').

The qualities of the desirable person who is advertised with such heavy code-switching are exactly the same as those found for bilingual narratees in commercial advertising. He is described as having an international orientation (“knows the whole world”) and to top it all, he is American; he is future-oriented (“plans to live some more years in Europe, and later on in the US”); he is successful and a member of an elite (“vice president,” “Ivy League graduate,” “leader,” “superior,” “traditional Southern family”). He is sophisticated, expressed through his search for an “educated” wife, his classical tastes, and his appreciation of the arts and tradition. He does fall short on the fun orientation, although one might read the descriptors “infinitely easy-going and casual” as an expression of that quality.

Not only the personal advertisements of partner agencies use a mixture of English and German to signal the high quality of their services and the desirability of their clients. Private personal advertisements use the same strategy. Like commercial advertisements, they place the English part of the advertisement in the most prominent position, which, in the absence of a slogan, is the headline. These headlines are most often quotes from movie titles (“Message in a bottle”), songs (“The Melody At Night, With You”), or other prefabricated chunks from various English discourses. These may be fairy tales (“Once upon a time in Frankfurt”), famous speeches (“I Have a Dream . . . ,” where Martin Luther King’s vision of racial and social justice has boiled down to nothing more than *die Traumfrau*, ‘the woman of my dreams’), popular sayings (“No Risk, but Fun!” from “No risk, no fun”), advertising slogans (“Just do it!” appropriating the Nike slogan), or collocational idioms (“Are you ready?”). Sometimes the English headline is a descriptor of the advertiser (“Fantastic Charming Beauty (und Baby-Boy),” “Professional Writer,” “Unique opportunity”). The fact that most of these headlines are prefabricated chunks and quotes confirms the observation that the use of English here, and also in commercial advertising, is not necessarily intended to convey factual information but to construct identities. Consequently, English is only rarely used in the body copy of the personal advertisements where the “factual” characteristics of the advertiser and the desired other are set forth. If English is used in the body copy, it may actually be an embarrassing collection of malapropisms. The “Message in a bottle” advertisement continues:

Mein Leben bestand bisher nur aus Buisness [sic] und Erfolgsdruck [. . .] Bin kein großer Redner – eher ein Macher, kein Kevin Costner – jedoch haben wir einiges gemeinsam, kein Hochstapler – lieber Understatement [sic], kein Supermann [. . .]. (‘So far my life has only consisted of business and the pressure to succeed [. . .] I am not a big talker, more of a man of action; no Kevin Costner – although we have a couple of things in common; no con man – understatement preferred; no superman [. . .].’)

The symbolic functions of English in the personal advertisements are even more fragmented than in commercial advertising. As in commercial advertising,

there are references to internationalism (e.g., *Kosmopolit* ‘cosmopolitan’; *Edles Sylt und lebendiges Rom?* ‘Classy Sylt and vibrant Rome?’; *Ihre Welt endet nicht an Ihrer Landesgrenze?* ‘Your world does not end at your national border?’); to success (*sehr erfolgreicher, vermögender Unternehmer/Entrepreneur*, ‘highly successful, wealthy businessman/entrepreneur’; *erfolgreich im Job* ‘successful in my job’; *unabhängig, in leitender Position, promov., gutsituiert* ‘independent, in executive position, Ph.D., well-off’); to elitism (*Klassefrau* ‘woman of class’; *Mann der Extra-Klasse* ‘man of extra-class’; *mit Stil und Klasse*, ‘with style and class’); to sophistication (*promoviert* ‘Ph.D.’; *dreisprachig* ‘trilingual’); to fun (“No Risk, but Fun”; *mit Flausen im Kopf* ‘mischievous’; *mit Lust auf viel* ‘who enjoys many different things’); and to youth (*gerade 60 jung* ‘just turned 60 years young’; *junggeblieben* ‘has remained young’). However, these desirable attributes are not specific to the English/German ads. Rather, they are characteristics of the advertised self or the desired other in a large number of advertisements, irrespective of language use. English certainly can be used to suggest all these characteristics, but it does not do so in contrast to advertisements that use only German. It seems more likely that personal advertisers take over the use of English from commercial advertising as a strategy. In commercial advertising as a discourse about commodities, the use of English has become so frequent that an association between the genre and English–German code-switching is being created. This association between genre and language choice is then taken over into personal advertising as “a discourse about the commodified self” (Coupland 1996).

In this account, English would not signal much about the identity of the personal advertiser beyond “Hey, this is an ad; as such it is about selling; and I am an adept of the genre; I’m using a strategy that seems to work for professional advertisers, so it might just as well work for me.” In her study of British personal advertisements, Coupland (1996) observed comparable strategic uses and appropriations of commodification strategies. Some writers of personal advertisements resist such commodified identities by using a language other than English, most frequently French but sometimes Italian or Spanish, as their attention-seeking device. For instance, an advertisement with the French headline *Nous prendrons le temps de vivre, d’être libre, mon amour* (‘We will take our time to live, to be free, my love’) challenges the idea that identity is created in the use of objects: *Sie sind eine emanzipierte Frau, die ihre Identität nicht über Statussymbole bezieht, sondern über ihre intellektuellen und sinnlichen Fähigkeiten?* (‘You are an emancipated woman who does not derive her identity from status objects but from her intellectual and sensual abilities?’). In effect, the use of French becomes a challenge to materialistic discourses as they are symbolized through the use of English. Somewhat ironically, the author ends with a self-description that states *stud. und in ltd. Position* (‘university graduate in executive position’) – some markers of success just seem indispensable in the construction of a desirable self.

CONCLUSION

The use of English and other L2s in German commercial advertising is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Although the prevalence of lexical borrowing from English into the language of German advertising has been described and often deplored throughout the twentieth century (e.g., Wustmann 1903, Urbanova 1966, Römer 1976, Sauer 1998), it has hardly ever been discussed as a discourse phenomenon, and there has been much less attention to the ideological work this strategic use of English – and, to a lesser degree, other languages – does in the formation of consumer identities. I have tried to explore the major aspects of the bilingual identities that are being created in this discourse. Based on studies in the sociology of advertising, I treated as given the fact that advertising does ideological work and that it plays an important role in identity formation. Within discourse analysis, I suggested that an analysis of point-of-view taken in a specific advertisement might be the most promising avenue to an understanding of the discursive construction of identity. The work of Bakhtin offers a number of concepts such as voice, heteroglossia, and polyvocality which allow for an analysis that acknowledges that both entities under discussion – identity and advertising discourse – are fluid, hybrid, complex, and sometimes even contradictory. Within this framework, I explored English-speaking narrators and characteristics of the implied reader in bilingual advertisements. The English-speaking narrator is typically the dominant, hegemonic voice of an advertisement. English is the language of the most important parts of the advertisement, the voice-over and the written medium in TV commercials, the slogan in all media, and sometimes also the headline. In print advertisements, both the slogan and the headline derive authority not only from the fact that they encapsulate the brand's philosophy (slogan) and the attention-seeking device (headline), but also from paralinguistic features such as large print, bold fonts, lettering different from the body copy, or striking colors. In many bilingual advertisements, German is relegated to the language of mundane factual information. The factual transmission of boring details (venue, contact information, legal restrictions, etc.) is effected through German, probably because advertisers have some doubts about their audience's proficiency in English. This leaves English to do mainly symbolic work, to work through stereotypical associations with the language, its speakers, and the cultures where it is spoken. However, it is important to note that these are not necessarily native speakers or native English-speaking cultures. Rather, English has become thoroughly associated with a certain segment of German society as it appears through advertising discourse: the young, cosmopolitan business elite. That these are the bilinguals of the advertisements becomes clear from an analysis of the characteristics of the implied reader. The implied reader of bilingual advertisements is not a national citizen but a transnational consumer; as such, he (and I have shown that the implied reader is usually male) is characterized by internationalism, future orientation, success, and elitism, as well as youth and a proclivity to enjoy the good things in life.

Commercial advertising is but one of many discourses available in contemporary Germany that offer people ways to think about their identities and their social and societal relations. Political nationalist discourses, for instance, set up quite different ideals in which national belonging is foregrounded and internationalism is perceived as a threat to one's identity (e.g., discourses about immigration, dual citizenship, or Germany's role in the European Union). Not all such discourses about identity pertain to multilingualism, and some that do pertain to the multilingualism of immigrants (as in the debate about German language testing in the naturalization process; Piller 2001) rather than that of ethnic Germans. In order to see how the construction of bilingual, English–German identities for a certain segment of consumers in commercial advertising is accepted, reflected, and possibly resisted, I also drew on examples from two distinct but related discourses: those of nonprofit advertising and personal advertising. Nonprofit advertising is in itself a highly diverse body of discourse, simply because the aims of different not-for-profit groups are highly diverse. One such group, ADFC, which lobbies for the interests of bicyclists and a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle, uses English in its advertising to denounce the consumerism of commercial advertising as it is often expressed through English. Another nonprofit organization, VDS, uses English as a negative example in their purist aims. Like all efforts at verbal hygiene, their concern is only at one level about language (Cameron 1995, Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity 1998); at another, it betrays a fear that the national will be lost in the transnational hybridization of late modernity (Morley & Robins 1995). English headlines are also a frequent phenomenon in personal advertising, where authors use this device to present a desirable self that is well-versed in the lingua franca of the marketplace.

The present analysis makes the more general point that national or cultural identity is not static, but continuously renegotiated. The discourse of advertising, even though supported by larger resources than most other public discourses, is only one of many discourses that people can draw on in their various identity projects in contemporary Germany. The discourse of advertising itself is not uniform. Those advertisements that set up multilingual, transnational model identities for consumers constitute only a limited segment, and within that segment the characteristics of this emergent identity category are not uniform, either. Given that each person participates in multiple discourse communities, and each such discourse goes only so far in setting up aspirations, the identities I have described are of restricted currency. Furthermore, even as people appropriate the discourses of multilingual consumerism for their own ends, the ways in which they do so are no longer controlled by the original advertisers. The audience may draw on multilingual advertising as a resource in their personal marketing (personal advertising) or as a means to construct oppositional ideologies (the bicycle lobbyists), or they may draw on multilingualism to decry it (the purists).

What is clear from my data is that a process of the valorization of bilingualism in English and German, and possibly of multilingualism more generally, is being

effected in the discourse of advertising. Spitulnik (1998:164) points out that all linguistic practices do ideological work: "Ideology is . . . implicit in practice, embodied in lived relations." Therefore, the practice of using multilingualism in the prestigious and ubiquitous discourse of advertising, and the practice of using English in the most authoritative parts of the advertisements – and as the language of people who are characterized as having one of the most desirable model identities available in that discourse – helps to vest German–English bilingualism with a highly valued form of linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1991). In its valorization of multilingualism and postnational discourses, advertising is in unison with academic perceptions of late modernity. According to Berman (1983:345) it is the project of modernity "to make oneself at home in the maelstrom." For him, to be modern means

to find ourselves in an environment that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology; in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind [sic!]. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity; it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. (Berman 1983:15)

In its multilingual practices, advertising shows an avant-garde-like readiness to embrace postnational discourses of unsettled, hybrid identities as expressed through the use of different linguistic codes. With regard to the conflict between national and transnational identities, advertising has become the late modern discourse par excellence.

NOTES

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¹ Giddens (1987: 172) also points out that, on a global scale, a common language is the exception rather than the rule in nation-building

² My transliteration; the original advertisement uses the cyrillic font.

³ The figure of about 70% L2 use was corroborated in a similar study by Bolm (2000).

⁴ It is commonly assumed, though disputed, that the work published by Bakhtin's friends Pavel N. Medvedev and Valentin N. Vološinov was also authored by Bakhtin (see Clark & Holquist 1984).

⁵ Underlined items are in English or another L2 in the original, rather than part of the translation.

⁶ I use the term "producer" to refer to the company that commissioned the ad.

⁷ Brackwede is the name of a suburb in Bielefeld, the proverbial German "Middletown." However, it is unlikely that anyone who is not familiar with Bielefeld will know that Brackwede is the name of one of its suburbs (I had to look it up). So I suggest that most readers will read the sequence as "London, New York, some provincial backwater in Northern Germany."

⁸ One of the anonymous referees for *Language in Society* pointed out to me that this is also the tune of the British Communist Party anthem "The Red Flag," and that this ad has therefore quite different

connotations in Britain and in Germany. However, as far as I know, this ad was not used outside the German context, where only the Christmas song is sung to that tune.

⁹ The appeal to refreshing Arcadian nature in contrast to the reader's urban environment is a mainstay of advertising, as Spitzer noted already in 1949.

¹⁰ The print ads and posters even contain a reference to the Web site www.lustforlife.de, which as of 15 Feb. 2000 contained nothing but an "Under Construction" note.

¹¹ French parts of the text are underlined.

¹² Italian parts of the text are underlined.

¹³ This is, however, no longer universally true in the fragmented landscape of postmodern advertising (Goldman & Papson 1996).

¹⁴ From a phonetic point of view, they are not true homophones because English and German /r/ are realized differently; the vowel in *rush* is [ʌ], while the one in *rasch* is [a]; and the second vowel in *aua* is a full one, in contrast to the schwa of *hour*. However, these differences are inconsequential because *Rush hour* and *Rasch au* are meant to be perceived as homophones.

¹⁵ As far as I am aware, all their spokespersons are male, so the implied speaker may just as well be thought of as male, too.

¹⁶ I am not claiming that the latter preceded the former diachronically. My corpus does not allow for such a judgment. Indeed, the use of English – and, to a certain extent, French – in both commercial advertising and personal ads may be an expression of a larger societal discourse which also finds expression in educational policies that have made the teaching of English (and often a third language too) mandatory in most German schools; or in the political discourse endorsing European integration.

¹⁷ *Zurückführen* would be correct. *Zurückfuhren* may be a typographical error or an imitation of an English accent in German. As above, the verb of the subordinate clause is in second instead of final position.

¹⁸ The underlined items are in English in the original also.

¹⁹ Interlingual homograph, E. *elegant* = G. '*elegant*'.

²⁰ I assume that *die Tradierten* 'the handed-down ones' is a malapropism for an intended derivation from G. *Tradition*, E. 'tradition', i.e. an intended message such as "He's from a family with a long tradition."

²¹ The meaning of this phrase is unclear. I suppose it means "in the long run."

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