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## **Multilingualism in advertising and a shifting balance of languages in Luxembourg**

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# Multilingualism in advertising and a shifting balance of languages in Luxembourg

## Abstract

Much research on multilingualism in advertising has been undertaken in comparatively monolingual settings. Whereas such research may provide insights into the connotations of languages used in advertising, research in more multilingual contexts can also provide different kinds of insights regarding the relative status of languages in a multilingual environment. This article focuses on multilingualism in written advertising in the highly multilingual setting of Luxembourg, where the language situation is currently undergoing significant change due to patterns of globalisation and migration. Analysis of a mixed corpus of advertisements, including 1,038 advertisements in the free daily newspaper *l'Essentiel* from 2009 to 2011, as well as selected further advertisements from elsewhere within Luxembourg's linguistic landscape, reflects a move within Luxembourg in general from a longstanding trilingualism in French, German and Luxembourgish to different kinds of multilingualism, incorporating both the presence of new languages and changes in the relative roles of French, German and Luxembourgish. Particularly significant is the presence of Luxembourgish as a written language of advertising, whereas it traditionally functioned mainly as a spoken language in Luxembourg. The article presents the results of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the advertisements and discusses how multilingualism in written advertising provides a pertinent window on changing forms of multilingualism in Luxembourg.

Keywords: Luxembourg, multilingualism, advertising, Luxembourgish

## Multilingualism in advertising

Research on multilingualism in advertising has been growing over recent decades. While we would be hard pressed to find any nation-state that could legitimately be described as monolingual, this research has tended to focus on advertisements produced in contexts where there is a clear default or majority language, including Japan (Haarman 1989), Germany (Piller 2001) and Ireland (Kelly-Holmes 2005). In such settings, the use of more than one language in advertising is marked, and researchers tend to focus on the (stereotypical) associations of language varieties that advertisers draw upon in an attempt to transfer the connotations of these language varieties onto the products advertised (Cook 2001, Myers 1999). We find, for example, French as the language of romance and sophistication, Italian as the language of food and the good life, German as the language of technical expertise, and English as the language of computing, business and the future (Haarman 1989, Piller 2001, Kelly-Holmes 2005). In these cases, researchers speak of the 'linguistic fetish', 'fake multilingualism' (Kelly-Holmes 2005) or 'mock language' (Piller 2003), given that the multilingualism of the advertisements fulfills symbolic (and fundamentally commercial) purposes rather than reflecting the linguistic realities of its target audience, in whose societies these languages do not perform a communicative function and many of whom may not understand the languages used at all.

The situation is quite different in societies with a substantial tradition of multilingualism, where a range of languages are used for everyday communicative purposes and society members have a diverse linguistic repertoire. While advertisers in these settings may still draw upon the symbolic associations of different languages in making language choices for their advertisements, the languages used may also reflect actual multilingual language practices in

the community or reveal aspects of how multilingualism is organised in the society. For researchers, the languages of advertising in these settings can provide different kinds of insights into the relative status of languages in a multilingual society, and in circumstances of language change reflect evolutions in the respective status of these languages. This article focuses on one such setting, the highly multilingual Luxembourg, where the languages used in advertising mirror important changes currently occurring within Luxembourg more generally.

## **Luxembourg's multilingual language situation**

The Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg is a small country with a geographical size of 2,586 square kilometres and a population of 511,800 (Statec 2011). Its largest city is Luxembourg city, located in the centre/south of the country, with a population of around 100,000 people (Statec 2011). Bordered by France, Belgium and Germany, Luxembourg is also located on the border of the Romance and Germanic language families, which has had an important influence on its unique language situation. Traditionally, French and German (and, earlier, Latin) were used for written functions. Luxembourgish, a Germanic language variety similar to the Moselle Franconian varieties spoken across the borders in France and Germany, functioned mainly as a spoken language, with a written literature beginning in the nineteenth century. It was not until 1984 that a language law formalised the existing language situation, making Luxembourg officially trilingual. Since then, Luxembourgish is the national language of Luxembourg, French the language of the law, and French, German and Luxembourgish all languages of administration. In contrast to some multilingual countries in Europe where multilingualism is territorially based (e.g. Belgium and Switzerland), Luxembourg's languages are used across the country on a daily basis but in different domains. French, for example, was the language chosen for street signs, German was for a long time the main language of the print media, and Luxembourgish was traditionally used for spoken interactions at all levels of society, from shopping to government discussions. Language use also varies geographically, with not only several different regional varieties of Luxembourgish but also greater use of German in parts of the country closer to the German border and greater use of French in parts of the country closer to France and Belgium.

This, in very brief terms, is the traditional picture of multilingualism in Luxembourg. There are currently several developments underway, however, which are changing this picture substantially. These developments relate primarily to patterns of migration and globalisation. Since the decline of the steel industry and the subsequent rise of the financial sector in the 1970s, Luxembourg has benefited from a highly favourable economic situation. Luxembourg's generous corporate tax regime has encouraged many multinational companies to establish a base in Luxembourg, and the prosperous economy in general has made Luxembourg an attractive destination for migrants. Migration has increased over the past few decades to the point that people of non-Luxembourgish nationality now make up 43% of the resident population of the country. This includes several different groups of migrants. The first relates to historical waves of long-term migration, including Italians and Portuguese, the latter of whom now make up 16% of the population (Statec 2011). These migrants initially came to Luxembourg as part of state-assisted migration schemes to assist in filling labour shortages in the country. Next are migrants who come to work at a range of EU institutions and multinational companies based in Luxembourg, sometimes only for a temporary period. Then there are daily migrants (cross-border workers) who live in Belgium, France and Germany and work in Luxembourg, and who currently make up 43% of the workforce (Statec 2011). This cross-border phenomenon reflects the much stronger economic situation of Luxembourg as compared to the border regions of France, Belgium and Germany. There are also a small number of migrants who come to Luxembourg as refugees, for example from the Balkans.



Luxembourg is thus characterised by the ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec 2007) that is a feature of many nation-states in Europe and around the world, where older patterns of migration have given way to new and more complex forms. Language-related aspects of super-diversity are especially marked in Luxembourg, where the existing multilingual situation is changing in several ways. The patterns of globalisation and migration described above have both brought new languages to Luxembourg - notably Portuguese as a result of migration, and English as a result of globalisation - and changed the balance of the existing languages of the country, altering the respective roles of Luxembourgish, French and German. One trend is the increased prominence of French as a spoken lingua franca among the diverse groups of Luxembourg, where previously it functioned as a mainly written language (see e.g. Fehlen 2009). Another is the decreasing importance of German in some areas, particularly the workforce, due to the large majority of cross-border workers being French or French-speaking Belgians. Also notable is the increased use of Luxembourgish as a written language, which may reflect a growing salience of Luxembourgish as a marker of (national) group identity (see Horner and Weber 2008 for a full discussion of these trends). These changes in Luxembourg’s sociolinguistic context do not go uncontested and, in addition to observable changes in language practices, there is a range of competing language ideologies among the resident and cross-border worker populations. These include resentment among Luxembourg nationals towards the use of French and an associated potential minoritisation of the Luxembourgish language on the one hand, and resistance among cross-border workers and foreign residents to the perceived use of Luxembourgish as a vehicle of exclusion on the other (see e.g. de Bres *fc*). One area where the changes above are particularly apparent is that of advertising, the subject of the following sections.

## Data and methodology for analysing multilingual advertisements

This article reports on selected results of a research project on multilingualism in written advertising in Luxembourg. The focus here is a selection of advertisements from 2009-2011 in the free French language daily newspaper *l’Essentiel*<sup>1</sup>. As mentioned earlier, German was traditionally the language of the print media in Luxembourg. This has recently changed, with a range of publications now available in other languages, including Portuguese, French and English, to cater to the increasingly diverse population of the country. Luxembourg currently has seven daily newspapers, a large number for such a small country, which is related to the generous subsidies the government provides to the press media. The four traditional newspapers (*Luxemburger Wort*, *Tageblatt*, *Zeitung vum Lëtzebuerger Vollek* and *Lëtzebuerger Journal*) are all mainly German-language, although also including some French - and to a much lesser extent Luxembourgish - content. These newspapers have been present in Luxembourg since 1848, 1913, 1946 and 1948, respectively. 2001 marked the appearance of two further daily newspapers published exclusively in French, *Le Quotidien* and *La Voix du Luxembourg*, the latter of which went out of print in 2011. In 2007, two further French language daily newspapers entered the media landscape: *Point 24* and *l’Essentiel*. These two newspapers differ from those above by being free of charge<sup>2</sup>. The newspaper that is the subject of this research, *l’Essentiel*, is read by a comparatively young, ethnically diverse, French-speaking and less wealthy audience (Lamour and Langers 2012). Its introduction to the Luxembourg context both represents a response to the growing French language readership and

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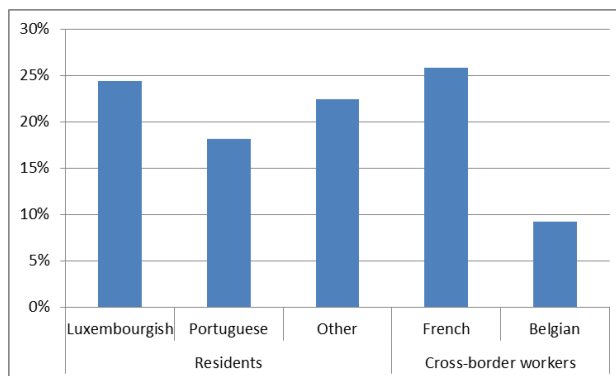
1 Given the focus on written advertisements in particular, it is important to note upfront that the results are not intended to be representative the languages of advertising in Luxembourg in general (e.g. radio and television advertising), which may exhibit quite different patterns.

2 *Point24* went out of print in December 2012.

forms part of a general rise in free daily newspapers across Europe, where they now exist in 33 countries (Lamour and Langers 2012).

The choice of *L'Essentiel* as a data source for analysing multilingualism in advertising is related to its close connections to the economic and demographic developments currently underway in Luxembourg. Distributed in areas of transit highly frequented by pedestrians (e.g. train stations, city centres, pedestrian zones, bus stops, service stations, as well as entries and receptions of numerous companies)<sup>3</sup>, the paper aims to reach both residents of Luxembourg and cross-border workers who commute to Luxembourg for work. By 2012, *L'Essentiel* had 192,000 daily readers, coming second after the most read daily newspaper, the *Luxemburger Wort*. These readers included 124,800 residents of Luxembourg, their nationalities mirroring the diversity of the resident population (46,900 Luxembourgish, 34,800 Portuguese, and 43,100 of other nationalities). The remaining readers consisted of 67,200 cross-border workers (49,500 French and 17,700 Belgian).<sup>4</sup> Cross-border workers thus made up just over a third of the *L'Essentiel* readership (35%), and the proportion of French cross-border workers in particular (25.8%) exceeded that of residents of Luxembourgish nationality (24.4%). The integral relationship of *L'Essentiel* to the diverse population of Luxembourg and the economic developments currently underway is well described by Lamour and Langers (2012: 18), who observe that 'the viability of [free daily newspapers] rests on the presence of a dense and mobile population that can be captured during its daily movement in spaces of transit' and that they 'capture a very eclectic readership made up of nationals and foreigners attracted by the grand-ducal urban economy' (author's translation)<sup>5</sup>. In these ways, *L'Essentiel* is a useful source of data on multilingualism in Luxembourg in a context of intense migration.

Fig. 1: *L'Essentiel* readership in 2012



The period chosen for analysis, 2009-2011, relates to the availability of data. Although back-issues of the newspaper are not publicly available, a contact at *L'Essentiel* has been saving a paper copy of each issue since she started working for the newspaper in late 2008, and lent

3 Personal correspondence with *L'Essentiel*, 18 October 2012.

4 Data from personal correspondence with *L'Essentiel*, 4 October 2012. These figures are taken from a 2012 national survey of media consumption by Luxembourg residents, undertaken by the survey company TNS, in addition to a supplementary survey that *L'Essentiel* commissioned this company to undertake, focusing exclusively on cross-border workers. In response to my question as to whether German cross-border workers also read *L'Essentiel*, *L'Essentiel* noted that, although such readers certainly exist, their number is not considered significant enough to merit including them in the survey. This low number of readers was attributed to the language of the newspaper being French.

5 'La viabilité de [la presse quotidienne gratuite] repose sur la présence d'une population dense et mobile pouvant être captée lors du déplacement quotidien dans les espaces de transit'; 'Elle capte un lectorat très éclectique fait de nationaux et d'étrangers attirés par l'économie urbaine grand-ducale' (Lamour and Langers 2012: 18)

them for the purpose of the research. Given the large number of advertisements in each issue, rather than collecting all the advertisements across the period it was decided to undertake a detailed analysis of advertisements from the available issues in three particular months: January 2009, June 2010 and December 2011 (the beginning, middle and end of the available period of newspapers). The aim was to gain a representative sample from each period and also to look for evidence of change across time in the languages used in advertising. The total number of issues analysed was 55 (out of an actual 63 issues produced<sup>6</sup>) and the total number of advertisements in the final data set was 1,038. This included 217 advertisements for January 2009 (an average of 14 advertisements per issue), 444 advertisements for June 2010 (an average of 22 advertisements per issue) and 377 advertisements for December 2011 (an average of 18 advertisements per issue). All of the advertisements in each issue were photographed, coded for date, page, company, sector and languages used, and analysed quantitatively to identify patterns across the period. Advertisements identified as especially salient in terms of multilingualism were then analysed qualitatively for aspects of language use, following established approaches to analysis of the discourse of advertising and linguistic landscapes (Cook 2001, Backhaus 2007)<sup>7</sup>. Where present, multilingualism in the advertisements took a range of forms, from single words to substantial stretches of text, and a variety of kinds of language mixing. These differences were not captured in the coding for quantitative analysis but were the subject of the qualitative analysis. In some instances advertisements from other data sources are also included in the results that follow, to support the points made. Throughout, the focus of the analysis is to link the results in relation to the advertising data in particular to the evolution from older to newer forms of multilingualism in Luxembourg more generally.

### **Multilingualism in advertising in *l'Essentiel*: the figures**

The main quantitative findings of the analysis of the *l'Essentiel* data across the time period are summarised below. Given the disparity in size of the corpus for each date period, the results are presented as percentages.

- *Main languages*: French was the dominant language of advertising in *l'Essentiel*, present in 96.0% of the advertisements in the data set. The next most frequent language was English (present in 32.9% of the advertisements), then Luxembourgish (present in 11.5% of the advertisements). German was present in 3.8% of the advertisements. Other languages (including Portuguese, Italian, Dutch, among others) were present but to a very minimal degree.

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6 Access was only possible to those issues that had been collected at the time, and some issues were missing. This involves four missing issues for January 2009 (16 out of 21 issues were available), one missing issue for June 2010 (20 out of 21 issues were available) and two missing issues for December 2011 (19 out of 21 issues were available).

7 Research on multilingualism in advertising can be seen to relate to the research fields of both the discourse of advertising and linguistic landscapes. The former has a strong focus on language use in advertising but often a minimal focus on multilingualism in advertising in particular (e.g. Cook 2001). The latter demonstrates a strong focus on multilingualism but includes alongside advertisements other kinds of data that would not generally be seen as being part of advertising (e.g. signs on government buildings, road signs, etc). Note that Backhaus (2007: 9-10) explicitly excludes newspapers from his definition of what constitutes the linguistic landscape, considering that 'the study object of linguistic landscape research should be confined to language on signs', so as not to 'water down the usefulness of the concept as a whole' (2007: 4). Nevertheless some of the analytical categories he proposes for analysing advertising texts in the linguistic landscape are equally useful for analysing multilingual advertisements that appear in press advertising.

- *Monolingual advertisements*: Monolingual advertisements accounted for 58.5% of the data set. French was by far the most common language of monolingual advertisements (93.9%), followed by English (4.6%) and Luxembourgish (0.8%). Other languages included German (0.5%) and Portuguese (0.2%).
- *Multilingual advertisements*: Multilingual advertisements made up 41.5% of the data set. 87% of multilingual advertisements were bilingual and 12.3% trilingual. There were two cases of advertisements with 4 languages, and one with 5 languages. Among bilingual advertisements, the most common language combination was French/English (72%), followed by French/Luxembourgish (18.4 %) and then French/German (5.3%). Among trilingual advertisements, the most common language combination was French/Luxembourgish/English (45.3%), followed by French/Luxembourgish/Portuguese (28.3%, attributable to one frequently repeated advertisement).
- *Most common language combinations*: Monolingual French advertisements were the most common overall (54.9% of the data set). Next most frequent were French/English advertisements (26.0%) and third most frequent French/Luxembourgish advertisements (6.6%).

Proportionately, the results were remarkably consistent across the three time periods, both in terms of the balance of multilingual and monolingual advertisements (see Figure 2 below) and the relative presence of the different languages (see Figure 3 below).

Fig. 2: Monolingual and multilingual advertisements

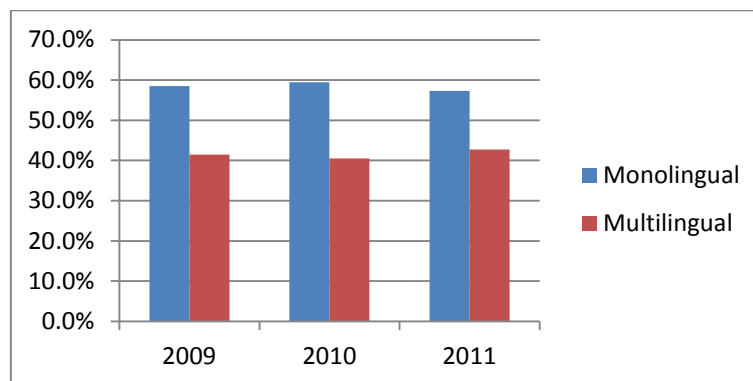
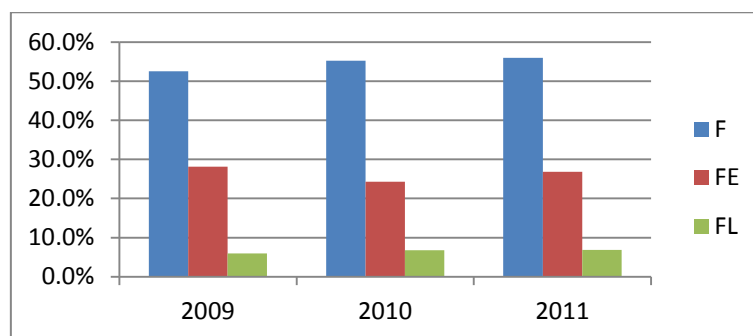


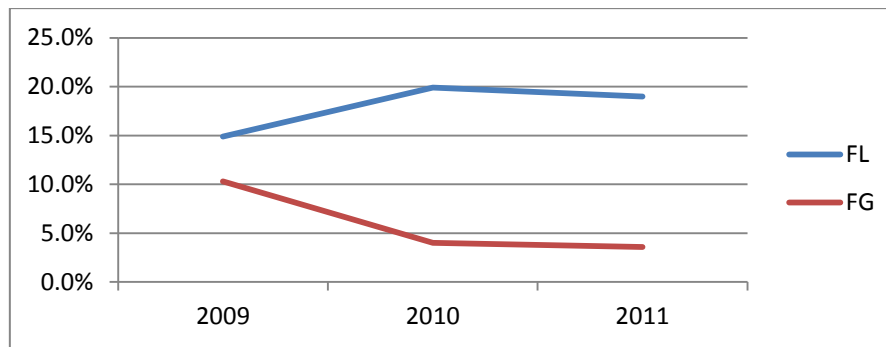
Fig. 3: Most common language combinations in advertisements



One difference of interest across the time period relates to a possible increase in preference for French/Luxembourgish over French/German in bilingual advertisements over time (see Figure 4 below).

Fig. 4: Bilingual advertisements in French/Luxembourgish and French/German





Although *l'Essentiel* is a monolingual French language newspaper, it is clear from the above that the advertisements are not, with almost half of the advertisements multilingual. This multilingualism for the most part involves French alongside other languages. The dominance of French in the advertisements is not surprising, given that they appear in a French language newspaper. Nor is it especially surprising that English takes up second place in the advertisements, given the contemporary prominence of English in advertising internationally (Piller 2003), although its presence in approximately one third of the advertisements is striking. What is notable is the very minimal presence of German, which has a long tradition as a written language in Luxembourg, particularly in the context of the print media. Also especially notable is the presence of Luxembourgish, which has a more recent history as a written language in Luxembourg. There is no evidence of an increase in Luxembourgish in advertising over time in this data set and Luxembourgish is minimally present as a language of monolingual advertisements. Nevertheless the analysis suggests that Luxembourgish is well established as a language of advertising in *l'Essentiel*, being present in over 10% of all advertisements. It is used more frequently than German in the dataset overall and consistently so in monolingual, bilingual and trilingual advertisements. It may also be increasing at the expense of German in bilingual advertisements. The implications of these results will be discussed further below.

Rather than focusing in further detail on the quantitative aspects here, the rest of this article concentrates on the results of the qualitative analysis. The aim is to build on the findings above through examining three themes that provide insights into the changing multilingual situation of Luxembourg. The first theme is advertisements that themselves appear to construct language status in Luxembourg, the second is connotations and use of languages other than the main language of the newspaper in the advertisements, and the third is the role of Luxembourgish in particular as a written language of advertising.

## Advertisements constructing language status

In 2012, the Luxembourg City Tourist Office released a new logo including the slogan *Luxembourg – meng stad, ma ville, my city*, which was placed on flags throughout the city's main shopping streets during the summer. This slogan is notable both in that it presents multilingualism as a fundamental aspect of the city and in that the choice of languages used differs from those traditionally associated with written multilingualism in Luxembourg. The two traditional languages of official written communication in Luxembourg are French and German, and it is still common to receive official communications bilingual in these languages, for example a letter from the tax department printed in French on one side and in German on the other. Since the language law of 1984, the authorities are legally required to respond to letters in the administrative language they were written in (French, German or Luxembourgish) but it is still very rare to receive official correspondence in Luxembourgish. In this official slogan, however, Luxembourgish appears in first place, followed by French, with the addition of English, and German is not present at all. Prominently placed in the city's linguistic landscape,

this advertisement reflects a range of themes that will recur in the analysis below. It is also a case of an advertisement that itself provides a strong representation of language status in Luxembourg, a category of advertisements which is the subject of the current section.

The advertisement in Figure 5 below, by the insurance company DKV, provides a further striking construction of language status. Most important here is size and position of text. The largest part of the advertisement includes the text *for you* in several languages. First, largest and attached to the person in the foreground is French. Second, smaller and attached to the person in the middle distance is Luxembourgish. One observer noted that this person's suit in combination with the language use calls to mind a stereotypical image of a Luxembourgish state employee. In third place, in small font and far in the background is German. This language is attached to a mother with a child, wearing jeans rather than work clothes, orienting perhaps to a lesser use of German in many workplace environments in Luxembourg. In the text under the main picture, Luxembourgish appears in the company's slogan *Voilà, de richtige Choix* (voilà, the right choice). French, however, is present as the language of the main body of text, providing information addressed to all readers of the advertisement. Finally, English appears at the bottom right of the ad, indicating the membership of this Luxembourg subsidiary of a German-owned insurance company in the broader international grouping Munich Health. In an advertisement with comparatively little text, this quadrilingual advertisement provides several different indicators, then, of the evolving status of the different languages of Luxembourg.

Fig. 5: DKV advertisement, © l'Essentiel, December 2011



If the DKV advertisement constructs Luxembourg as a fundamentally diverse – if not exactly equal - multilingual environment, other advertisements place particular emphasis on one language above all others. The best example of this comes not from the *l'Essentiel* data analysed, but from a billboard at Luxembourg airport in 2012 (Figure 6 below). Part of a global campaign run by the telecommunications company Orange using different local languages in different local contexts, this advertisement shows the translation for *hello* in a range of different languages. Here Luxembourgish in the form of *Moien* has the clearly dominant position, located in the centre of the advertisement and in by far the largest font. The other languages traditionally associated with Luxembourg appear (*bonjour* in French and *hallo* in German), as do more recent languages present through migration (*buongiorno* in Italian, *bom dia* in Portuguese) and globalisation (*hello* in English). But the presentation of these languages does little to indicate their relative importance in the Luxembourg context. Notably, among the further languages present on the sign Polish (*dzień dobry*) is bigger than German, and Spanish (*hola*) is bigger than French.

Fig. 6: Orange advertisement, Luxembourg city airport, July 2012



The DKV and Orange advertisements can be seen as representing two differing perspectives on language status in Luxembourg, which can be related to Horner's (2004) description of two contrasting language ideologies in Luxembourg. One is a monolingual ideology, allowing for monolingual identification with Luxembourgish, and the other is a trilingual ideology, promoting identification with the three languages recognised by the language law of 1984 (Luxembourgish/ German/ French). From this point of view, the DKV advertisement appears to be oriented more closely to the trilingual ideology (although note the prominence of French, the extension of the established trilingualism to include English, and the foregrounding of Luxembourgish over German). In contrast, the Orange advertisement positions itself closer to the monolingual ideology, presenting a primary place for Luxembourgish as the main language of Luxembourg, with all other languages minor in comparison. In these ways, these advertisements mirror competing discourses on the status of the different languages of Luxembourg.

### Use and connotations of languages other than French

This section discusses another aspect of multilingualism in the advertisements in *l'Essentiel*, that of the use and connotations of specific languages within the advertisements. This represents a classic focus of analysis of multilingual advertisements (e.g. Haarman 1989, Piller 2001), but it is complicated in this instance by the multilingual nature of Luxembourg. Connotations of French and German are likely to be quite different in Luxembourg, where these are to some degree 'local' languages, compared to some other European countries where they may operate as national symbols or stereotypes (see e.g. Piller 2001 on connotations of French in Germany, or Kelly-Holmes 2005 on connotations of German in Britain). The connotations of French in particular are not considered here for a further important reason. French represents the default choice for advertising in *l'Essentiel*, and is used for all categories of products, from banking services to food to clothing to telecommunications. In this context where French functions as a vehicle of everyday communication, it is difficult if not impossible to identify instances where French is used for its international connotations as the 'language of love' and where it is simply used as a language of communication with readers of French. This would equally apply to identifying the associations of English in a dominantly

Anglophone context. The associations are arguably still present, but teasing them out in a setting where they represent the dominant language choice is a difficult task.

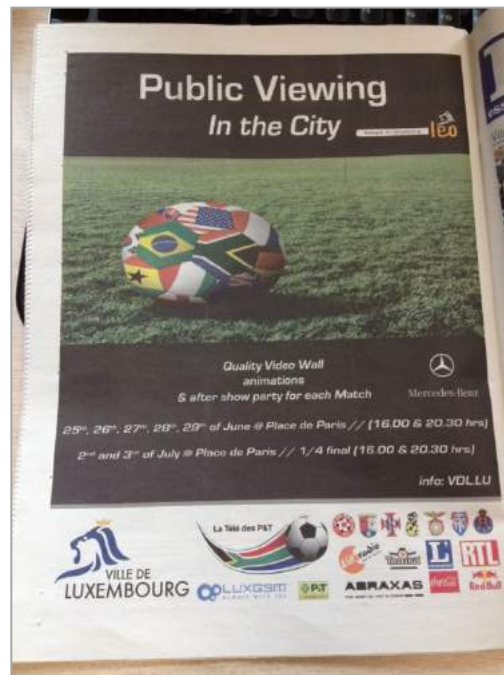
Connotations of languages that do not represent the default language of the newspaper are in some cases easier to identify, English being a case in point. The strong presence of English in the data relates to the global spread of English, which is now ‘near-universal’ in advertising around the world (Piller 2003: 175). English is present in the advertisements to varying degrees, from slogans in advertisements mainly in other languages to full text advertisements in English. For the most part, English is used for advertising cars, travel, music, consulting companies, further education and technology. As in other contexts researched, English in *l’Essentiel* only rarely invokes national connotations of English. One example is an advertisement by the travel company Sales-Lentz advertising a USA and Canada travel brochure using a picture of an Elvis impersonator alongside the text *discover USA*, orienting to a North American context. Usually, as in other non-English-dominant countries, English functions as a ‘non-national language’, appropriated by advertisers to index a social stereotype of modernity, progress and internationalism (Piller 2003). In this sense, while reflecting the effects of globalisation in Luxembourg, use of English in the advertisements says more about the international connotations of English than its presence in Luxembourg in particular. One interesting aspect, however, is the use of English by the Luxembourg local authorities, including the advertisement for a public event sponsored by the *Ville de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg city) in Figure 7 below, where the main body of the text is in English. This use of English could reflect the functions of unification and neutrality identified by Cheshire and Moser (1994), who note that in Switzerland, another officially multilingual country, use of English in advertising avoids having to favour one language group over another, thereby ‘transcending a problematic national identity’ (1994: 467). This advertisement also reflects a trend in the data for a special variety of English in the Luxembourg context, showing the influence of German/Luxembourgish/French. This is evident here in the use of superfluous capital letters for nouns such as *Match* (as used in Germanic languages) and the use of the twenty-four hour clock format for times of the day, i.e. *16.00 & 20.30 hrs*. In other advertisements, features showing a Germanic influence include using a hyphen for compound nouns (*Penalty-Contest*, *World-Cup-Games*) and French syntactical influences are evident in non-standard forms such as ‘Rockhal recommends to use public transport’ instead of ‘Rockhal recommends using public transport’<sup>8</sup>.

*Fig. 7: Advertisement for event sponsored by Ville de Luxembourg, © l’Essentiel, June 2010*

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<sup>8</sup> See, in this regard, Blommaert (2005: 211-213), on local appropriations of non-standard English internationally.





If the use of English in the advertisements reflects globalisation in Luxembourg, albeit with a Luxembourgish flavour, the presence of Portuguese is a clear indicator of migration. Portuguese full text advertisements are used to advertise Portuguese cultural events such as music concerts and one advertisement for a finance company, although mainly in French, includes the text *Falamos Portugues* (we speak Portuguese). These examples indicate the presence of a Portuguese-speaking element of the newspaper readership, reflecting recent migration patterns in Luxembourg. Such advertisements are however very rare in the data, appearing much more extensively in the fully Portuguese-language newspapers in Luxembourg. The relative absence of Portuguese in the advertisements is in some ways surprising, given that Portuguese readers made up 18.1% of the readership of *l'Essentiel* in 2012. This could reflect a lack of perceived place for Portuguese outside specific Portuguese-language domains and/or an assumption that Portuguese speakers have easy access to French, due to both being Romance languages. In general, written Portuguese is minimally present in the public sphere in Luxembourg, despite the relatively high proportion of Portuguese residents in the population.

The case of German in the advertisements is more complex, and provides an example of how the international connotations of a language can be applied in advertising alongside other forms of multilingual communication. A classic example of the stereotypical connotations of German appears in the trilingual advertisement for VW shown in Figure 8 below. The advertisement, showing a VW car with a Luxembourgish number plate, has text mainly in French, with some use of English and the slogan *das Auto* (the car) in German. This use of German invokes the connotation of German technical expertise, particularly in relation to car production (the use of the definite article in *das Auto* perhaps inferring that no car comparable to the Mercedes exists). German also appears in this form in similar versions of this advertisement in other national and linguistic contexts, for example Belgium, where the main text of the advertisement is in Flemish. It is an instance of what Kelly-Holmes (2005) refers to as the German 'linguistic fetish', exploiting connotations of German that relate to Germany the nation.

Fig. 8: VW advertisement, © l'Essentiel, December 2011



On the other hand, German is also used as a language of communication in some advertisements, including the almost full text German advertisement advertising books published in German in Figure 9 below. Here, no national stereotypes appear to be at play, as the books advertised relate to the national history of Luxembourg. Instead German assumes its function as one of the two traditional written languages of Luxembourg.

In advertising in *l'Essentiel*, therefore, it seems that both international and local uses of German combine, this language performing two different kinds of functions. Given that German does in some cases play the role of a language of everyday communication in advertising, one can ask why it appears so rarely in the data. One answer to this question is that *l'Essentiel* is a French-language newspaper, but as we have seen this does not prevent the substantial presence of English in the data, this despite the fact that German has a longer history in Luxembourg. A perhaps more important answer relates to the theme discussed in the following section, the phenomenon of Luxembourgish as a written language of advertising<sup>9</sup>.

Fig. 9: Editions Revue advertisement, © l'Essentiel, December 2011



<sup>9</sup> *l'Essentiel* has recently begun to produce a German language version of its internet edition *l'Essentiel Online* ([www.lessentiel.lu/de/](http://www.lessentiel.lu/de/)). It will be interesting to see if this has an effect on the amount of German in the print version over time.

## Luxembourgish as a written language of advertisement

Horner and Weber (2008) argue that the rise in the salience of Luxembourgish in Luxembourg is particularly apparent in its increased use as a written language. This has been facilitated by ongoing processes of standardisation over recent years. While previously regarded by many as a spoken dialect of German, Luxembourgish was progressively standardised over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries so that a standard written variety now exists, with an official orthography, dictionaries and grammar. This written standard is taught to migrants but only minimally at school and is not widely known. Luxembourgish is, however increasingly used in written domains, particularly the new media (see e.g. de Bres and Franziskus under review, de Bres and Belling under review), with wide orthographic variation, from non-standard to standard. Although the status of Luxembourgish as a minority language in Luxembourg is questionable (Horner and Weber 2008), in written contexts it exhibits similarities to minority languages in processes of standardisation in other nations. Present in 11.5% of advertisements in the data, Luxembourgish is not a major language of advertising in *l'Essentiel* but its presence is significant given its only relatively recent history as a written language.

Luxembourgish appears in the advertisements to varying degrees, referred to here as minimal, medial and maximal Luxembourgish. *Minimal Luxembourgish* refers to the use of Luxembourgish in slogans of companies, often in otherwise French language advertisements (see also Reddeker 2011). Examples of Luxembourgish companies adopting this practice include the bank Spuerkeess, using *Äert Liewen. Är Bank.* (Your life. Your bank.) (see Figure 10 below) and the insurance company Foyer, using *Äert Vertrauen a sécheren Hänn* (your faith in safe hands). These are formulaic and easily repeatable forms of language use that are associated with the use of minority languages in other contexts, and perform a symbolic rather than communicative function (Kelly-Holmes 2005). Knowledge of Luxembourgish is not necessary to understand the main message of the advertisement. Luxembourgish slogans are also used by some foreign companies in the data, two of whom appear to have adopted these during the period of the data collection. Pearle opticians and the supermarket Delhaize had French slogans in January 2009 and Luxembourgish slogans in June 2010 (*Är Aen a gudden Hänn* – your eyes in good hands, and *Einfach méi fir äert Geld* – simply more for your money, respectively).

Fig. 10: Spuerkeess advertisement, © l'Essentiel, January 2009



*Medial Luxembourgish* is a broader category covering less extensive to more extensive uses of Luxembourgish, all of which involve using Luxembourgish to convey meaning specific to the text, in advertisements otherwise in other languages. An example of this is the text *Mamma, ech hunn dech gär* (mum, I love you) framed in a heart shape and attached to a bouquet of flowers in an advertisement for Match supermarket, around the time of Mothers' Day in June 2010. This represents a more creative, text-specific, use of language than a slogan, but it is not essential to understanding the text, which remains largely in French. A more complex example is an advertisement by Mercedes, which shows the Luxembourgish national football team coach smiling and standing on a football field, where three cars are arranged as if play-

ing football, alongside other football players. The header text of the advertisement says in quote marks *och wa mir net a Südafrika ginn, kënne mir awer gewonnen* (even if we don't go to South Africa, we can still win). Run during the Football World Cup in June 2010, this text draws on stereotypes about Luxembourgers, both self-deprecatingly playing upon Luxembourg's dismal national record at football and suggesting they can nevertheless be winners by engaging in the stereotypical Luxembourgish practice of buying a new car. Readers need to be able to understand Luxembourgish to get the humorous message of the advertisement, but the main information about the offer remains in French. This advertisement thus performs a mixture of symbolic and communicative functions. A still more extensive example of this category is the advertisement by Brico Plan-It, a hardware store in Belgium, shown in Figure 11 below. This advertisement includes a slogan in Luxembourgish (*alles fir d'Haus*, everything for the house) and much of the text is in Luxembourgish, so that readers must be able to understand Luxembourgish to understand the message about the offer. Still, other details remain in French. This advertisement is a good example of a polyphonic advertisement (Backhaus 2007), in that readers need to be able to understand both French and Luxembourgish in order to get the full information, the advertisement thereby assuming a multilingual audience.

Fig. 11: Brico Plan-It advertisement, © l'Essentiel, June 2010



*Maximal Luxembourgish* refers to advertisements fully in Luxembourgish. In the data these are only used by Luxembourgish organisations, including for example the Luxembourgish Ministry of Transport and the cultural broadcaster Radio 100,7. Here readers must be able to understand Luxembourgish to get the message of the advertisement and the Luxembourgish use thus serves a primarily communicative function.

A further interesting finding is cases where Luxembourgish replaces German in the advertisements. An instance of this is the change in the supermarket Match's bilingual slogan from the traditional French/German to French/Luxembourgish, sometime between June 2010 and December 2011 (see Figure 12 below). Alongside the quantitative results showing the greater presence of Luxembourgish as opposed to German in the advertisements, qualitative analysis of the use of Luxembourgish in the advertisements supports the hypothesis that in this French-language newspaper at least Luxembourgish has overtaken German as a written language of advertising.




Fig. 12: Match advertisements, © l'Essentiel, June 2010 (left) and December 2011 (right)



There are a number of possible motivations for the use of Luxembourgish in these advertisements. Researchers have suggested that the rise in written Luxembourgish in general may represent a response to recent developments in migration and globalisation in Luxembourg (Horner and Weber 2008, Fehlen 2009). This is because its increased use as a written language dates largely from the 1980s, when these developments had begun to make themselves felt (Horner 2004: 185). Use of Luxembourgish in written domains, alongside its declaration as a national language and its increasing standardisation and codification, can be interpreted as moves to position Luxembourgish as a ‘real’ language that can compete with German alongside French. While these arguments may also apply to written Luxembourgish in the context of advertising, other factors may also be at play. Advertisers appear to pursue a range of strategies in using Luxembourgish in advertising. A first strategy is that of appealing to Luxembourgish national identity in order to foreground authenticity in advertising products with a national or local character (see also Reddeker 2011). Luxembourgish is used in the data by a filmmaker to advertise a film about Luxembourg, by political parties to advertise national elections, and by locally-owned businesses that market themselves based on local considerations (e.g. regional produce or local employment). Foreign companies may also use Luxembourgish in order to *appear* local. An advertisement by the Belgian supermarket Delhaize uses a Luxembourgish slogan and reminds readers to celebrate *Liichtmëssdag*, a Luxembourgish cultural practice involving children processing from house to house carrying lanterns (*n’oubliez pas de fêter Liichtmëssdag*, don’t forget to celebrate Liichtmëssdag). Leaving aside the potential patronising effect of a foreign company reminding locals to maintain their own cultural practices, this recalls the example of minority language use provided by Kelly-Holmes (2005) in which the foreign supermarket Tesco adopted Irish-English bilingual signage in Ireland, imitating the local supermarket Superquinn, ‘perhaps to make it look more Irish, or perhaps to show goodwill and an openness to the local culture’ (Kelly-Holmes 2005: 134). Advertisers may also use Luxembourgish to target a specifically Luxembourgish audience. For example, a retail association across the border in France ran an advertisement in June 2010 wishing readers a good Luxembourgish national day and inviting them to come to Thionville where shops would remain open on the public holiday (see also Figure 11, for a comparable example originating from Belgium). In addition to the use of the pronoun *vous* (you) referencing Luxembourg nationals in the main text in French, Luxembourgish was used to say *Hierzlech Wëllkomm zu Diddenuewen* (a warm welcome to Thionville), even using the Luxembourgish version of the town’s name, *Diddenuewen*, albeit in markedly non-standard spelling. Residents with Luxembourgish nationality are a significant part of the *l’Essentiel* readership (at 24.4% of readers) and are perceived as being relatively wealthy, meaning they are especially targeted by retailers in France, Belgium and Germany. Use of Luxembourgish forms part of this attraction strategy.

Finally, Luxembourgish may be used alongside other languages in advertising as way of targeting multiple audiences at once. This is the case in the advertisement in Figure 13 below, taken from a brochure for the restaurant *Mama Loves You* in Luxembourg city. This trilingual advertisement in French, Luxembourgish and English has content that is different in each language but all shares the theme of describing a son or daughter who behaves badly (doing poorly at school, cutting off their sister's pigtails, putting the hamster in the microwave, etc) but whose mother still loves them. Text in French in advertisements in Luxembourg can be used to address a general French-speaking audience made up of Luxembourg nationals, French and Belgian residents, and a range of further migrants who have knowledge of French. In this advertisement, however, it appears to target a French audience in particular. This is evident from the references to magazines produced in France (*Voici* and *Gala*) and a credit card available only in France (*carte bleue*). These cultural references, along with the colloquial style (*mec* for boyfriend and *plaqué* for dumped, contraction of pronouns such as *t'as* for *tu as*, among other features) call to mind a stereotypical image of a French cross-border worker in Luxembourg. The text in Luxembourgish, itself standard in form, orients to a specifically Luxembourgish audience, through references to the Luxembourgish practice of going out late on Wednesday nights (*och wanns du all Mëttwoch ze spëit eraus gees*) and the Luxembourgish singer Fausti, who was especially popular in the seventies and is not well-known among non-Luxembourg nationals. The target audience of the English language text, which is markedly non-standard compared to the Luxembourgish text, is harder to pinpoint. It may address a general English-speaking audience in Luxembourg. Alternatively, given the clientèle of this particular restaurant, it could reflect the connotations of English as a language of cool urban culture, appealing to those who wish to associate themselves with such a lifestyle. In this advertisement then, language choice assists advertisers in directly targeting a range of different national and language groups in Luxembourg, the use of different stylistic varieties orienting further to the super-diverse nature of their audience. Once again, the absence of German is notable. There would be space for German in the top half of the advertisement, which includes two sections in French (each section seen as separated by the restaurant name 'Mama Loves You'), compared to the single sections allocated to Luxembourgish and English in the lower half of the advertisement. The advertisers have not opted to use this language, however, opting instead for a double use of French.

Fig. 13: *Mama Loves You* advertisement, brochure, 2012



Même si ton film préféré c'est Titanic, si t'as plus rien à te mettre, si tu t'habilles comme Lady Gaga, si t'es abonné à *Voici* ou à *Gala*, même si t'as cramé ta *carte bleue*, si t'es pas mariée, si t'as *plaqué* ton *mec* pour un barman, même si tu sais pas faire la cuisine. **Mama Loves You.** Même si tu manges avec tes doigts, que tu écoutes Justin Bieber, que tu as coupé les nattes de ta soeur, que tu as mis le hamster dans le micro-ondes, même si tu es nul à l'école, si tu as scrashé la voiture des films X cachés, si tu as de ton père, si tu as sous ton matelas, des films X cachés. **Mama Loves You.** *Och wanns du all Mëttwoch ze spëit eraus gees,* wanns du keen däätschen Auto fiers, wanns du dem Fausti seng Lidder auswenneg kenns, wanns du nach bei dengen Eltere mat 40 wunns. **Mama Loves You.** Even if you don't eat your vegetables, if you didn't do your homeworks, if you wake up in a place you do not know, even if you do not close your mouth while you chew, even if you watch the *Jersey Shore*, **Mama Loves You.**

**Mama Loves You.** 42 - 44 rue de Hollerich L-1740 Luxembourg  
www.mamalovesyou.lu Livraison gratuite a partir de 15 euros  
Lundi-Vendredi 11h30 - 14h et 18h30-22h30. Samedi-Dimanche 18h30-22h30.

Overall, Luxembourgish as a written language can be described as being present with restraint in the data. Quantitatively it is an established language of advertising in *l'Essentiel*, and qualitatively it is used for various purposes by advertisers. Nevertheless, the current research did not show a progression in the proportion of Luxembourgish in advertising, it remains a minor phenomenon proportionately, and minimal forms of Luxembourgish are still the most common. At times lack of Luxembourgish appears marked, for example the rather minimal use of the language around the time of Luxembourgish national day, when other national icons such as the Luxembourgish flag and red lion symbol were strongly present in advertisements<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, companies vary considerably in their language use, for example using Luxembourgish in an advertisement one day and French only in a similar advertisement in the same week. The Luxembourg-owned supermarket Cactus, while frequently using Luxembourgish to index a local identity, generally only uses minimal forms of Luxembourgish in otherwise French language advertisements, despite running full text advertisements in Portuguese in the Portuguese language weekly newspaper *Contacto*. Analysing Luxembourgish in the advertisements, one has the general impression that advertisers are holding back from more extensive use of the language. This may be due to a fear of not reaching and/or alienating non-Luxembourgish nationals, who make up such a high proportion of residents of Luxembourg. It could relate to the large number of cross-border workers among the *l'Essentiel* readership, few of whom have skills in Luxembourgish. It might be because the great majority of Luxembourgish nationals are known to read French, and have not formally learnt to read Luxembourgish. It could relate to a perception of Luxembourgish as a not yet fully standard language, or to the weight of the triglossic tradition in Luxembourg. It could simply be that advertising agencies and companies lack staff with written Luxembourgish language skills to draw upon (see Reddeker 2011). Despite all of these potential constraints, to this analyst it seems that use of Luxembourgish in advertisements is likely to increase over time. A feature of the evolution of written Luxembourgish in general is that it seems to be more available - or permitted - in some domains than others (e.g. it is more prominent in the new media as opposed to the print media). Advertising - at least in *l'Essentiel* - seems to be one of those domains where written Luxembourgish is present at a higher level than elsewhere. This is not surprising given that advertising is often a site of transgressive, creative or progressive language use (Cook 2001).

## Conclusion

This article has discussed a range of trends relating to multilingualism in written advertising and their relationship to changing forms of multilingualism in Luxembourg, based on data from the French language daily newspaper *l'Essentiel* and elsewhere in the Luxembourg linguistic landscape. Alongside the expected dominance of French in the newspaper advertisements, the results reveal a substantial presence of English as a language of globalisation and a more minimal place for Portuguese as a language of migration in Luxembourg. The results also indicate a shifting balance between those languages with a longer history in Luxembourg, with the traditional main language of the print media, German, giving way to Luxembourgish as a language of written advertising, within certain constraints. We should be cautious of inferring a direct relationship between the languages of advertising and the languages used in a society in general, especially in a context as diverse as Luxembourg. Both residents and cross-border workers vary considerably in their use of languages in Luxembourg, depending on their ethnic background and personal migration history (see e.g. Fehlen 2009, de Bres *fc*).

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<sup>10</sup> This article has discussed two advertisements involving use of Luxembourgish alongside reference to Luxembourgish national day, including the one pictured in Figure 11, but these examples represent the exception rather than the rule.



Moreover, even in a country as small as Luxembourg, patterns of multilingualism differ depending on the region, so that a description of the language profile of the north of the country will differ markedly from that of the south. Nevertheless, the analysis of the advertisements does reflect several trends currently observable in other parts of the sociolinguistic environment of Luxembourg, including the rise of French as a lingua franca, the increasing prominence of English as an international language, the growing salience of Luxembourgish as a marker of national identity, and the decrease of German in some domains where it once was strong. Thus we appear to have a situation where multilingualism in written advertising provides a useful window onto changes currently underway in Luxembourg more generally, reflecting a shifting balance of languages from older (trilingual) to newer (multilingual) forms of multilingualism.

The research presented here could be extended in a range of directions. One is to consider how the results in relation to advertising relate to multilingualism in other parts of the linguistic landscape. Research on 600 signs from 5 locations in Luxembourg (Gilles et al 2011) showed some patterns similar to the present research, including that multilingual signs made up about half of all signs, that French was used most overall, and that English played an increasingly important role (2011: 93). But these multilingual signs were mostly French/German or French/German/English, reflecting a higher prominence of German than in the current research, and Luxembourgish was used relatively rarely. In general the researchers describe their results as being characterised by ‘the dominance of French’ or by ‘multilingualism without the participation of Luxembourgish’ (2011: 102). A comparison between Luxembourgish in advertising and in other such areas of the linguistic landscape could provide insights into the limits of the current potential for Luxembourgish as a written language in more official contexts.

Another direction would be to examine how advertisements in the more traditional Luxembourg newspapers might differ in terms of language use. Would a primarily German-language paper such as the *Luxemburger Wort* provide more space for Luxembourgish - given an assumed Germanic language-reading audience of mainly Luxembourg nationals - or less space, given a default to the traditional approach of using German to write down what is thought or said in Luxembourgish (Fehlen 2011)? In line with the growing prominence of French in Luxembourg, would French be more present in advertisements in such newspapers than German is in French-language newspapers? A related topic would be to consider the history of multilingual advertising in newspapers with a longer presence in Luxembourg. There has been no historically focused research on multilingualism in advertising in Luxembourg, despite the availability of an online database of issues of the *Luxemburger Wort* going back to 1848, as well as some other newspapers from the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>11</sup>. A corpus analysis of these historical issues could reveal trends in the languages of advertising over a much longer time period in Luxembourg, and enable tracing just how far back Luxembourgish goes as language of written advertising. For instance, issues of the *Luxemburger Wort* from 1944 on this database include several full-text advertisements in Luxembourgish, putting into question the notion of Luxembourgish as an especially recent language of written advertising. Kmec et al (2007) also includes images of several advertisements involving Luxembourgish slogans, e.g. for Maryland cigarettes in the 1980s (2007: 302) and Bofferding beer in the 1990s and 2000s (2007: 312, 315-316). Whether the current level of use of Luxembourgish as a written language of advertising represents a substantial increase remains a matter for empirical verification. Such research could also incorporate analysis of the particular varieties of Luxembourgish used in advertising, investigating a potential trend towards increased use of standard

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<sup>11</sup> See [www.eluxemburgensia.lu](http://www.eluxemburgensia.lu).



written Luxembourgish in advertising, as evident in many – although not all – of the advertisements in the current data set.

Given that the current research focuses only on written advertising, another related direction would be to compare the findings of this research with that of other advertising genres, such as radio, television and internet advertising. Results in relation to spoken advertising are likely to differ from the results presented here, given the differing patterns of language use in speech as opposed to writing in Luxembourg.

A further important angle would be to concentrate on the intentions of the ‘senders’ (Cook 2001) of multilingual advertisements in Luxembourg, i.e. companies and advertising agencies (see Reddeker 2011 for research focusing on a combination of linguistic and non-linguistic aspects in relation to advertisers’ choices in Luxembourg). A related area, which has not been researched to date, is the reactions of the ‘receivers’ of these advertisements. Cook (2001) places great emphasis on taking into account the role of the receiver in the discourse of advertising, noting that ‘the ‘meaning’ of discourse is always partial and relative to particular hearers’ (2001: 204). In multilingual societies, when we have multilingual advertisements we also have multilingual receivers. It would be interesting to investigate how the diverse population of Luxembourg responds to multilingual advertising, and to the use of Luxembourgish as a written language of advertising in particular<sup>12</sup>. Finally, this article has illustrated the difficulties of applying a monolingual lens to a multilingual context, where languages of advertising may be simultaneously used for their symbolic and communicative value, and where the meanings that are attached to them may diverge significantly depending on whose eyes are on the page. There is a need for more research on multilingualism in advertising in highly multilingual contexts and for more teasing out of the relationship of the languages of advertising to the linguistic repertoires of receivers. These are all important directions for future research.

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<sup>12</sup> Santello (2012) investigated how Italian-Australians responded to advertisements using Italian in Australia, the research revealing two main trends. First, Italian in advertisements was seen ambivalently, as on the one hand representing stereotypes about Italians that could then be transferred onto migrants, but on the other hand appealing to Italian-Australian identity. Second, mixtures of Italian and English in advertisements were viewed positively, as they were seen as reflecting bilingual life and promoting wider understanding of the message of ads. It would be interesting to see if similar trends are apparent among multilingual audiences in Luxembourg.

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