
THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH ON PRODUCT BRANDING IN A NON-SPEAKING ENGLISH AREA: CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

This study detailed the impacts of English on products branding from customers' point of view. It was limited in food, electronics, and garment as the three most traded products in Palembang city as one of the five biggest trading cities in Indonesia. Using a qualitative method with individual and focus group interviews for data collecting techniques, there were 15 participants involved in individual interviews and 30 participants in a focus group interview. Due to physical restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic era, the interviews were conducted online with semi-structured interview questions. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis to unveil customers' perception in the terms of popularity, purchasing interest, sales and revenue, business competition, curiosity, vocabulary, a symbol of modernity, and prestige toward products with English branding. It was revealed that the use of English on product branding highly impacted popularity, business competition, buyers' curiosity, vocabulary, and the symbol of modernity of the users of the object products. Interestingly, electronics products were not affected by the use of English branding on purchasing interest, sales and revenue, and prestige, whereas food and garment products were. The English branding impacted the prestige of the customers only for garment products. Therefore, it is recommendable that certain products make use of English labelling for better recognition and acceptability in public.

Keywords: customers' perception, English, English as branding, impact of English

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Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in the world of products branding because it presents the image of the brand itself. The language of product branding is utilized to convey the brand's essence and influence the customer's understanding, memory, attitudes, and actions. Due to its ability to persuade customers' desire for a commodity, the use of language for branding will help businessmen be better at understanding the customer's interest in a certain product. However, Alan (2005, p. 248) confirmed that "the use of international languages alone is often a sign of globalism, as is apparent in other advertising contexts". Despite the use of icons, models, and colour combinations of advertisement to attract customers interest, language still plays an essential role both in catching the eye of the customers' and in explaining the qualities of products. This indicated that language has a very important role in marketing communication (Monigala, 2018).

The statement above is well connected with the following that emphasizes on the importance of language choice in product branding. It says that the use of language is obviously important to attract customers' desire or interest in marketing. Various perceptions may result from this labelling of certain products with a foreign language. Customers' perceptions and attitudes can be so much influenced by foreign brands. For that matter, a foreign language brand is an advertising concept to the added value of a product. Pronouncing and spelling brand names strategies in a foreign language which imitates a foreign culture will impact customers' perception and thoughts towards products (Flowers, 2020; Schiffman, 2002). For instance, using English for branding in a non-English speaking area will be one of the methods for persuading potential customers. As the first choice of language in the marketing world, English is widely used for branding neither product names nor stores in non-speaking English countries.

The impacts of English as a product branding in non-speaking English countries have been studied by some researchers. Mezek (2009) revealed that English proficiency was approved to correlate with wealth which is reflected in element branding in Slovenia. It was found most advertisements utilize English while only a small of street advertisements are in Slovene. Moreover, Thakor & Levack (2003) and Zhuang et al. (2008) found that the use of English for branding was an indication of the intellectual and international status of marketers or customers there. It aims at reaching a specific goal of marketing products on an international scale that covers a variety of countries which may or may not use English as their mother tongue. Soto, Mobarec, and Friedmann (2009) also found out that product branding with foreign language can have such positive impacts on customers' perceived values, attitude and evaluation especially in developing countries.

In some areas in Indonesia as a non-speaking country, the impacts of English as a product branding also have been studied by some researchers (Fhonna & Fidyati, 2018; Husnah, Azizah & Yahya, 2019; Muthmainnah, 2016). However, none of them detailed the three most traded products, namely food, electronics, and garments in a city. Having this situation, it was intriguing to learn about customers' perceptions of English for these three products branding in a non-English speaking area in Indonesia, namely Palembang city. Palembang was chosen because it was one of the best five business cities in Indonesia where massive products are traded (Stephanie, 2021). Food, electronics, and garments were branded in local language as well as in foreign language, especially English. Hence, it was interesting to know what the customers in Palembang had in mind concerning English labelling on the products they bought.

Literature Review

Language and branding

Marketers consider some of elements to advertise their products. One of them is the language because it can be used to represent and translate both the identities and characters of the products being advertised. Widyahening (2015) in her study about language and branding, mentioned that 'language has only meanings in its context or situation'. It means that language in the world of advertisement has a crucial role to communicate what the company is trying to accomplish in advertising its products. As argued by Flowers (2020, p. 21) that "to make the products stand out in the market, a language brand may function to add meaning and nuance to the products". The specific target of language demographic for advertisement is people with various cultural backgrounds and ethnicities. Hence, to market their products, companies are required to invest in the language service. It is done as the translation and representation of their products' identities and characters toward the products' branding in a specific marketplace. In addition, Kasiyan (2008) in his book argued that language in an advertisement has absolute power to shape social phenomena of a broad culture in society such as clothes, food, habits, etc. It has a big impact to affect perception, attitude, behavior, and point of view of society. So, language for product branding is no longer limited to translating its meaning but also to shaping social reality.

According to Chiaravalle and Schenck (2014) in Kotler and Keller (2015) language in product branding has a role to seize every opportunity to express why customers should choose one brand over another. In line with that Wheeler (2013) stated that customers are made aware of the importance of making a choice and become loyal to the one product that fits them the most. To introduce their products to the world, companies pay most attention to the language being used in branding their products. They attend most to the words used in social media or even word-of-mouth in packaging and popularizing their products through their brand names. In quite the same opinion, Pan (2014) added that language also serves to communicate the meaning of a brand and effect perception, memory, attitude, and behaviour on customers as their responds to the brand itself.

Impacts of English for product branding

Batra et al. (2000) suggested that foreign language is regarded to have more valuable attraction than the local one to influence people in advertisement. This was strengthened by Ramaswamy et al. (2000) who stated that English, compared to other foreign languages, has developed as the first choice of language in the marketing world. In addition, it aims at reaching a specific goal of marketing products on an international scale that covers a variety of countries which may or may not use English as their mother tongue. Moreover, Kirkkopelto (2007, p. 15) mentioned that "in the rapidly changing global business environment, there is a need for a shared language, a lingua franca, and currently it is English". It is the fact that English has its power as the most commonly spoken language. It enables people of various cultural backgrounds and languages to interact and collaborate in a variety of ways even if there are other viable choices, English is always the business language. Dianti et al. (2018) confirmed that using English as a tool for foreign branding effectively manipulates customers' perceptions and attitudes toward the products.

Regarding the customers' perception, Batra et al. (2000) claimed that the use of English as product branding in non-speaking English countries is one of the factors influencing the customers to process and receive information about goods and services. It is a branding strategy to construct a brand name in a foreign language to be seen as an affecting brand image. Despite the peculiar to the language and struggle in pronouncing it, customers' perceptions and attitudes are affected positively. It occurs due to the status of English as the global language, which is in turn, becomes a tool of global brand (Soto et al., 2009). Especially in non-speaking English countries, the use of English for product branding has a great impact on their customers' perceptions. On one hand, it leverages the popularity of the products' brand since having or buying English brand products are believed increasing the customers' purchasing interest, curiosity, level of English vocabularies and even the symbol of their modernity and prestige. On the other hand, it sharpens sales and revenue as well as business competition among the marketers (Batra et al., 2000; Fhonna & Fidyati, 2018; Thakor & Levack, 2003; Zhuang et al., 2008).

Related studies

Studies regarding the impacts of English on product branding have been conducted by some scholars in Indonesia. Hutarabat (2013) revealed that the perception of quality and attitudes towards products with English brands were always more positive compared to products with local brands. The purchase intentions toward English brand products had a greater intention rather than local branded ones. Fhonna and Fidyati (2018) presented customers could increase his/her English vocabulary, and curiousness towards the products offered in English branded stores in Aceh, Indonesia.

However, those stores did not get an influence on the cost and profits. In her study, Setiadinanti (2019) found that the use of English for dessert products branding in Bandung, Indonesia has a significant influence on customers' purchase interest and marketers' sales and revenues. Tur (2019) discovered that the use of English for companies/stores branding in some rural areas in Yogyakarta, Indonesia offered and gave a guarantee of good quality for the customers and, and generated high income for the companies/stores. Even, the English names have become new vocabulary items for them. Learning from those related studies, this study filled the gaps on the locus, method and focus. The locus took one of the five biggest trading cities in Indonesia, while the prior studies were conducted in small trading areas. It was expected as representative of customers' perception in trading cities where products are being traded massively.

The method used qualitative descriptive using individual and focus group interviews whereas others used quantitative methods. The different research method tried to dig deeper into the customers' perception so that the benefits were more impressive in terms of research results both in linguistics and business science. The focus was on three most products branded in English: food, electronics, and garments, while others were mostly focused on branding of stores and one food product (dessert) only. Out of these all differences, the study was projected to carter all the gaps.

Methodology

Research design, site, and respondents

Using a qualitative method, this study was related to something that involves the type or quality. The knowledge is not necessarily in the form of numbers. It is the process of understanding inquiry based on a tradition of district inquiry methodology that explores social or human problems (Creswell, 2013). This study aimed to investigate the impacts of English for products branding on customers' perceptions by describing the problems thematically. It was conducted qualitatively by having individual and focus group interviews. The individual interviews were performed preceding the focus group interviews. The researchers asked participants using open ended questions and recorded the answers. Afterwards the records were transcribed into typed data in computer files for analysis.

The research site of this study was one of the five biggest trading cities in Indonesia namely Palembang. Palembang as a non-speaking English business area in Indonesia was chosen purposefully based on the need of the study (Bryman, 2012). It was where massive products like food, electronics, and garments were traded (Stephanie, 2021). The object of the study was strongly influenced by the approach used in this research, namely the qualitative method. Since the object of this research was in the form of an abstract social phenomenon so that it needed an in-depth study by looking at the facts behind the phenomenon in this city. It was intended to investigate the facts of the abstract phenomenon of Palembang customers' perception on the impacts of English usage in products branding. Whereas, this study was to explore the impacts of customers' perception in Palembang on the most traded products with English brands.

They were fifteen participants to be interviewed individually, and thirty participants have participated in focus group interviews. All the individual interviews participants were included in the focus group interviews. The number of participants was decided as this study involved various customers as heterogeneous samples and broad scope. They were from various ages, levels of education and occupation who lived in Palembang. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggested having more than twelve interviews to reach the saturation of themes. Due to the physical distance restriction during the Covid-19 pandemic, all the interviews were conducted online via ZOOM Cloud Meetings at their convenience. They were approached using snowball sampling in which the participants were asked to find other potential participants (Neuman, 2003). The participants were intended to provide suggestions and comments to analyse the impact itself. As a consequence, the sample of this research was considered as a study participant (Creswell, 2013). The participants (P) were numbered 1, 2, 3, so on and written as P1, P2, P3, so on in the findings section.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection techniques were carried out by interview, observation, and documentation. The interview is a data collection technique by asking questions to respondents and recording respondents' answers (Mahmud, 2011). In-depth interviews were conducted with all research sources. This interview was conducted to obtain more in-depth information about the form of the role of parents in assisting children's online learning from home during the pandemic that has been carried out by parents, identifying problems encountered by parents, and finding solutions in the online learning mentoring process. Observations are carried out to control and check how far the

results of the interviews were following the facts. Documentation is carried out to provide strong evidence of the research findings.

Test the validity of research data used triangulation of sources and techniques. Triangulation in credibility testing can be interpreted as checking data from various sources in various ways and at various times (Sutama, 2019). The triangulation of sources in this study was data from parents of students, teacher of grade 1, and grade 1 students of Public Elementary School of 01 Girilayu. While triangulation techniques used in this study are interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis technique used interactive analysis from Miles & Huberman in Sutama (2019) these include: a) data reduction, which is derived from raw data collected and then reduced by researchers, b) the stage of presenting data, researchers do it in the form of a narrative text, which is then adjusted to the research results with relevant theories and research, and c) drawing conclusions, namely looking for the meaning of the data collected as the research findings according to the research topic.

Findings

The interviews data revealed the impacts of the use of English for food, garment, and electronics products branding according to the participants' points of view. They were (1) popularity, (2) purchasing interest, (3) sales and revenue, (4) business competition, (5) buyers' curiosity, (6) English vocabulary, (7) symbol of modernity, and (8) prestige.

Popularity

All participants agreed that the use of English for the products in Palembang was becoming more popular. They mentioned that there was a quite significant increase in the use of English for branding the products. P4 said that food products of restaurants, coffee shops, or even small businesses in Palembang were used English for their brands.

P4: "Sales of food products with English labels in Palembang have been increasingly popular and have been even offsetting or even exceeding the labels that use the local language [Bahasa Indonesia] ... for example, the names of food products listed on restaurant menus or food places used English a lot, such as chicken steak, chicken black pepper, and others."

P2 said that the English label made electronic products more appealing and attractive.

P2: "The use of sales labels during the current globalization era is increasingly dominated by the use of foreign languages, especially English. This can be caused by the developers feeling that the product they are selling will be more attractive because they use a foreign language... to sound international."

P9 and P7 from FGI said English was getting more famous day by day to the extent that many brands use English as a sales label to attract customers to buy garment products.

P9: "In my opinion, the cause of the more foreign language brands is appearing because English is getting familiar. The young generation thinks that everything in English seems modern as it is a foreign language ... and this can spark interest because it sounds exclusive."

P7-FGI: “At this time, there are many online and offline shops selling garment products using English labels to attract buyers... and they are very high demands.”

The data in this section revealed that the use of English for products brands effectively for increasing and dominating the product popularity in the markets.

Purchasing interest

Thirteen participants (P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15) agreed that the use of English as a label for food and garments products in Palembang had the potential to influence purchasing interest. They mentioned that English on food products caught attention because it was such a new thing in the branding world in Palembang. So, it was very influential in increasing the buying interest of customers.

P2: “The label of food products in English can greatly influence buying interest. When people don't know the meaning of the food or drink products, they will be curious and try it which leads to an increase in buying interest. I remember a drink named B*ue Oc**n [*sensored]; people are confused why the drink is named blue ocean. As they were curious, so they bought it. So, ...yes... the use of English label affects customer's buying interest.”

They also stated that the use of English on the customer's perception influenced the purchasing interest for garment products because. It was undeniable that most Indonesians, especially people in Palembang city, thought that foreign languages, especially English, were more impressive than the local language.

P5: “There are still many friends of mine who think that garment products using English-language brands are better in quality because most of them think that these clothes are imported, even though not all products with the English brand are imported. Most people I know still tend to love imported clothes more than local ones, which causes the interest in buying English-labelled products to become higher.”

Interestingly, twelve participants (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P13, P14) stated that the English label did not influence the purchasing interest for electronic products because the purchasing interest was influenced by the quality of the products. These participants thought that when they bought electronics products, they hoped for the long period of use, not the branding so they were more focused on the quality and after-sales service.

P1: “The customer's purchase interest is determined by the quality and marketing promotion of the product, and the use of English does not affect buying interest... whatever the brand, the quality is number one.”

P13-FGI: “Sometimes a brand has nothing to do with the quality and service of electronic [products]... English [brand] does not guarantee the quality... also hard to find trusted after-sales service, not the brand.”

In the case of purchasing interest, the use of English for product brands indicated only impacting for increasing customers' purchasing interest for food and garments products but not for electronic products.

Sales and revenue

Eight participants (P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13,) claimed that the use of English for food and garments products branding had a large impact. They mentioned that if customers' buying interest was increasing, so were the sales and revenue. English is also an international language, so it can expand the target of the market to increase more income.

P13: "I think people tend to like to try something new, so they want to try and eventually buy products with English labels. With the increase in product purchases, income is also affected. That is why the name change from Indonesian to English can be a factor in increasing sales turnover due to the curiosity of buyers."

They also stated that it was because of the popularity of English to attract foreigners to buy the garment because of English as an international language.

P11: "The use of English affects sales and revenue well because it can increase the number of buyers from Palembang, after all, the language is one of the communication media, so people will be able to encourage tourists to know garment products that use English."

However, fourteen participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15) mentioned that the sales and revenue were not affected by the use of English as a sales label of electronic products. As stated in the previous paragraph, when it came to purchasing electronic products, English-label cannot be the only factor to influence the customer to buy certain electronic products. They focused on its specification and quality. As a result, English-label would not affect the sales and revenue. Clearly, P4 stated, "*Because people buy a product based on their needs and are also more interested in the specifications of the product so the use of labels in English will not affect sales and income.*" Also, the data from the FGI stated that the use of English as a sales label affects less to sales and revenue. P8 thought that the quality of the product plays a more crucial role in affecting sales and revenue as P8 stated,

P8: "I think some people who do not understand English when they want to buy the electronic product, will not care about the label instead; they will directly ask the seller about the products. As result, sales labels cannot be a parameter that is able to influence sales and revenue."

Similar to purchasing interest, the data unveiled that the use of English labels had a high impact on sales revenue to food and garments products, but less impact on electronic products.

Business competition

As English could attract more customers' interest, eleven participants (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P15) said it was very effective to increase business competition because it

was a good strategy in persuading customers to buy a product. Additionally, they said it was exciting to use English as an international language in either for food, electronic, or garment products. P12 said his opinion about food products as follows:

P12: “Now, there are many places such as cafes or restaurants using English menus. It will trigger other restaurants or cafes to use the same or similar techniques or strategies to catch the attention of customers, so it will cause business competition.”

Furthermore, they believed that by using English sales-label, the electronic products might have seemed more modern and imported which is, in turn, affected the business competition. English label is one of the media to attract customers to know about their products, and that is the way how the producers competed with other products to make their products more impressive and attractive. P8 stated it as follows.

P8: “Because in my opinion, though the existences of products that are English-labelled which indicate that the product is imported or modern, it makes people will select the products that meet the customer’s desire, and at the end, it may increase the business competition.”

In line with P8, P28 in FGI also mentioned that business competition can be increased through the use of English for sales labels. She said, “*Because people have a mindset that foreign products are more durable, it will further increase the desire to buy electronic products with English labels.*” This desire will lead the customer to purchase the products on a certain label (in this case, the one that is English-labelled) and at the end, it will affect the business competition. For garment products, it was also reported to create business competition because entrepreneurs believed on the issue of the big impact of English language. P5 stated that:

P5: “With the high interest of people with foreign cultures, garment entrepreneurs take advantage of this to increase their business competition. So, we can see that today there are so many garment manufacturers who are competing to create products with brands in English that are more innovative and interesting to win the competition.”

It can be concluded that business competition was affected by the use of English for branding or labelling the products.

Buyers’ curiosity

All of the participants admitted that the use of English as a sales label for food products in Palembang could increase buyers' curiosity about the goods being offered. They said it triggered the curiosity because there was a foreign language label that was still rarely heard by them.

P13: “English is still quite common for some people to be unique. With foreign language labels that are rarely heard, many people are curious about what kind of [food] product that is? Especially with advances in technology in which information spreads more quickly.

People will quickly find out something that is rarely heard of and will not hesitate to buy the product because of their curiosity.”

P2 stated that because of the product’s name uniqueness (the English label), it increases their curiosity to know more about the products.

P2: ...with English-labelled, they [the electronic products] will be more interested in sales, because people are curious to know the meaning, whether it matches with the quality... to find out how good the products are.

The participants believed that garment products with local language labels were familiar to them. So, the use of English for garment products branding was going to make it more stylish and more reliable. P7 mentioned,

P7: “I am personally curious if this garment brand uses English because the first thing I think of when I hear an English brand is its modern and cool impression, so I think that the brand is trusted and has high quality.”

In line with P7, P26 in the Forum Group Interview mentioned, *“I will be more interested because the English label can make me more interested to know those products because if the label uses the local language, it already sounds familiar so no need to look for it.”* So, the use of English for garment products had the potential to take the buyer’s curiosity. The interviews data implied that English labels could trigger buyers’ curiosity about the products, especially food, electronics, and garments. Since the labels used English, which was not familiar to the customers in Palembang, it initiated them to buy the products.

English vocabulary

All participants agreed that getting more insight and vocabulary was one of the impacts of the use of English as a sales label for food, electronics, and garment products in Palembang. They said that the use of English on the product labels not only could educate the public or buyers to find but also create curiosity about the meaning of the label itself. P11 mentioned it as follows, *“To be honest, I used to know a lot of English from food labels and food packaging of food products back then. Because I like reading the label, it adds to my knowledge and vocabulary.”* In line with the P11, P7 also mentioned that,

P7: “The more we are exposed to foreign languages that we have just known; it will certainly increase our vocabulary. However, depending on the respective subject whether there is a sense of curiosity about the equivalent words of English vocabulary or not.”

Interestingly, the FGI also revealed that the use of English for products branding created a threat to the existence of local languages and Bahasa Indonesia. The majority of participants agreed that English is a popular language which is used in all countries as an international language. As a result, English was increasingly fantastic in giving the significant results of selling the garment products as well. The use of English for branding potentially levitated the self-esteem and prestige of the users. In this case, the participants believed that English was a part of the modern thing that had

to be owned in all aspects, including food, electronic, and garment. It possibly turns people start to forget the importance of their national and local languages as a cultural heritage with unique characteristic. As P11 in FGI mentioned that,

P11: “Bahasa Indonesia and local languages have a crucial role in preserving the cultures as the uniqueness of our country. Unluckily, most people are being attracted by modernization nowadays...which harms the use of our language... and I believe it is going to be a big threat [for the use and existence of the local and national languages] later. The worst possibility is Bahasa Indonesia and our local languages will be replaced, and slowly.... People will prefer to use English than Indonesian, and it will be forgotten in the future.”

The participants believe that the more famous English as an international language, the more national and local languages will be forgotten as people will use English more. It may endanger the existence of Bahasa Indonesia and local languages. Bahasa Indonesia and local languages will not be noticed as it rarely used and becomes less popular. The local product producers were expected to use local languages or Bahasa Indonesia as a branding label so people internationally will know that the products were made in Indonesia. Sharing the thought, P15 in FGI said,

P15: “If the products use English as the label, most people probably believe that those are foreign garment products. There are a lot of local products that use English even those are produced in Indonesian. People will not know that those were made in Indonesian. So, Indonesia is going to lose its existence internationally even if the products in Indonesia are incredibly popular.”

In this English vocabulary section, interestingly, there was a conflict regarding the use of English for product brandings. On one hand, all participants agreed that the use of English could enrich their English vocabulary because created curiosity about the meaning. On the other hand, the use of English for local products was assumed to be threatening to the existence of Bahasa Indonesia and local languages.

Symbol of modernity

Regarding the symbol of modernity, ten participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P14) agreed that English for products branding showed a modern change because it is a foreign language. P14 said his concern regarding food products as follows:

P14: “It can be said that the use of English in food products is a symbol of modernity because of the developments of the international language status in the world. Moreover, the increasing number of food products that use English labels in this era will further enhance modernity which indicates that the food industry in Palembang is getting more advanced.”

Meanwhile, the participants also believed that the electronic products would be impressed as modern tools when it uses English labels. P3 stated, “*The use of English as sales label makes the product becoming more modern than the former products that use local language... sound more guaranteed.*” Moreover, regarding garment products, P1 said her concern as follows:

P1: “It cannot be denied that the pioneers of fashion today come from abroad, especially English-speaking countries, so of course this makes garment products branded in English and triggers various foreign and local companies to use English as well... to follow the pattern or branding.”

The use of English for products labelling was symbolised their modernity according to the participants. Due to the status of English as an international language, having or buying the products with English labels were expected to impress them as modern and updated people.

Prestige

Eight participants (P1, P3, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, P14) did not agree that food sales in Palembang with English labels could increase self-esteem/ prestige. They said that it was not a good idea to purchase food products by believing the English labels.

P10: “I’m also confused whether it has anything to do with self-esteem or not...you know... buying food. But I have never bought food by looking at the English label, to feel or look good to others. Perhaps other people might do it, but I have never felt that way when buying food products labelled in English, the priority is on the quality or taste, not labels.”

Moreover, thirteen of the participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P13, P14) denied that purchasing the electronic products in English-label could increase their self-esteem/prestige. They thought when they purchased the electronic products, it was not for showing it to other people, and instead, they purchased them for their daily use. P1 stated,

P1: “In my opinion, giving a label does not increase self-esteem, because in a product, what determines the value of the product is the brand. And usually, the brand does not come from a single English vocabulary, but comes from the creativity of the brand founder and the sales process and quality.”

In contrast, purchasing labels for garment products branding in Palembang with English labels could increase the buyers’ self-esteem/prestige. Seven participants (P2, P5, P6, P11, P12, P14, P15) thought that it was going to look high class because most people thought that garment products with English labels were imported and classy. P11 said the English branding for garments levitated the buyers’ prestige because many people believed that the labels sound international.

P11: Purchasing a garment product label in English in Palembang city affects a person's prestige because that person will feel that the garment product is cool and people who see it will be more curious about that person's product because it sounds foreign, luxurious, and has good quality.”

The interviews data uncovered that customers’ perception about self-esteem or prestige for food and electronic products with English-branded was different with garment ones. The participants approved that having or buying food and electronic products with English-branded did not affect the level of their prestige, in fact, they had or bought the products due to the taste and quality.

However, they agreed that garments with English labels could make them classier and globally as the status of English as an international language. The themes and the sub-themes of the interviews data are presented in the following table.

Table 1. *Themes & sub-themes of the impacts of English branding on products*

Themes	Sub-Themes/Products		
	Food	Electronic	Garment
Popularity	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing
Purchasing Interest	Rising	No Impact	Rising
Sales and Revenue	Affecting	No Impact	Affecting
Business Competition	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing
Buyers' Curiosity	Triggering	Triggering	Triggering
Vocabulary	Enriching	Enriching	Enriching
Symbol of Modernity	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing
Prestige	No Impact	No Impact	Reinforcing

Discussion

The discussion focuses on the characteristics of proper English language for products branding and how the language has the power to influence customers' perception in buying a product. For its characteristics, English is still a foreign language in Indonesia, but it holds a prestigious position due to its status as an international language. Many Indonesian companies now use English brands to name their products. It does not imply that they are not proud of their native tongue; they use English words for a go-international purpose. It has been suggested by some scholars that target groups with characteristics such as modernity, quality, innovation, and glamour (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2004) are most suited with the use of English in international advertising or branding (possibly after being combined with the local language) and that these attributions will contribute more to their positive attitudes to the products being advertised as well as to their behavioural intentions or purchasing intentions in those groups being referred to.

The language of branding or advertisement, including English, is naturally different from the language used in daily life. Gaw (1961) states that this differentiation happens because branding or advertisements have several targets such as the tool of selling products and as a media of education. There are four distinct general characteristics of the branding or advertising language that make it different from other languages. They are edited and purposeful, rich and arresting, involving readers or listeners, and using simple language.

First, the language of branding or advertisement is edited and purposeful. The language that is used in the branding or advertisements is chosen whether it is suitable for the products and services they offer or not. As Wheeler (2013) argues that the language must be appropriate to the product, since, the purpose of the advertisement is to transfer the message to the customers. For instance, in English branding for food, *B*rg*r K*ng* (the character '*' hereafter used as 'censored'), one of the burger's brands in Palembang. The language used in that brand is suitable for the

products they offer. The brand transfers the message to the customers that they are the king of burger, or on another sides it is a brand which offers burgers with high quality and best taste.

Second, the use of language in branding and advertisement has its own depth and quite challenging. It is targeted to attract the readers or listeners' attention. In addition, Hutabarat (2013) also mentions that language has variation and its uniqueness to present the message and information to customers, it is also attractive. So, by using attractive language, the customers will be easily catching the message of the advertisement. An example is *Brand T&K*, a bakery brand which sells various kinds of bread. The brand uses attractive words so it can attract customers' attention to buy its product.

Third, the language of branding or advertisement involves readers or listeners. In effect, the readers or listeners complete the branding message. In line with this statement, Anholt (2003) said the language of branding or advertisement is a form of communication, and communication needs two side relations between the addresser and the reader or listener. From that relation, it will raise a response from the customers. For example, *Fruit*, a brand of a healthy snack which contains low calories. "Fruit" in the brand implies that it is healthy food product and "Brand" itself implies the form of the product.

Fourth, the language of branding or advertisement does not hold secrets from the readers or the listeners. It is a simple language. Chiaravalle and Schenck (2014) mention that the language of branding or advertisement is offered and announced to common listeners and readers, so it uses general language without secret in order to making the customers catch and understand the message without difficulty. Taken as an example here, *Brand T&K*, a bakery's brand which sells various kinds of bread. The brand takes an advantage of simple and straight forward language. Customers who read or listen to this brand might directly know and understand that it is a brand which sells bread.

For its power to influence customers' perception in buying a product, language is known as one of the crucial tools in the marketing section. As argued by Kasiyan (2008, p. 133), "in the beginning, the function of language was as a tool of persuading naturally". It is very capable of meeting the customers' expectations of the garment products in society by its presentation of image ideology association. Language has such power which has been, at first, quite unfamiliar to people before it finally rises to the surface with such great strength of influence in social structure. It is considered as mediating equipment in the world of business that will create the future behaviour of customers of the certain products. It has such power that the world cannot move without in terms of persuading customers. Kasiyan (2008) states that language symptom is not merely confined to the meaning of written language or oral language, it might as well reach a wider range of impact in all social phenomena of broader culture in society, such as clothes, food menu, ritual, and others. So, it has a big impact on the customer's perception in psychology for affecting the behaviour of the customers through the language. Language expresses the thinking patterns of customers' behavior.

English as the international language is known as the language in marketing strategy that influences the mindset of the society. "In the rapidly changing global business environment, there is a need for a shared language, a lingua franca, and currently it is English" (Kirkkopelto, 2007, p. 15). It is the most used language in the trade and commerce landscape in almost every country because it is in the highly competitive corporate world. It is the leading language in business. As English spreads worldwide, it is stated as a sign of modernization that sounds interesting and not outdated. So, English is the best choice for marketing because it gives the impression because of its popularity. The examples of popular garment products that use English as a label are *the Xcitive, 3s***nd, L** Jeans*, and others. Even those brands are local, but the majority of customers believe that those are

imported so they are interested because the labels make them curious due to the foreign words being used.

Limitation of the study

This study has its own limit due to its locus, method, and focus. First, because this study was only conducted in one trading city, namely Palembang, the findings should further be done in more cities so the data may differ. Another disadvantage is that this study is only using qualitative data; as a result, further quantitative data (using questionnaire and survey) are needed for more holistic findings. Furthermore, to enlarge the previous scope of the products (food, garments and electronics) more products are needed to be explored such as automotive, service, and furniture in order to increase comprehensible impacts towards the use of English for product branding.

Conclusion and recommendation/implications

The product label is often the first point of the interaction between a customer and a product, later becoming the placeholder under which, the buyer records in their memory all the characteristics of the concerned product she/he has become familiar with. The choice of a product's brand name can influence customers' perceptions of the product and their purchase decision-making process. The use of English for products branding, namely food, garment, and electronics based on the customers' point of view in Palembang was reported to have a great impact. It was potentially in increasing popularity, business competition, buyers' curiosity, vocabulary, and symbol of modernity of the users of those products. Interestingly, electronics products were not affected by the use of English branding on purchasing interest, sales and revenue, and prestige, whereas food and garment products were. The English branding impacted the prestige of the customers only for garment products.

As an international language, English is known as a language for products branding. However, the more famous English is used for products branding, the more threat is to the existence of the national and local languages. Even English can be used as a trick to boost product sales because of its high impacts, it also needs to preserve the existence of both national and local languages. Furthermore, as this study was conducted in qualitative research, it is hoped that there will be further studies relating to the customers' perception towards the impacts of English for food products branding especially in Palembang which will be conducted in quantitative research with a bigger number of participants. So, it can complete the customers' perception both in qualitative and quantitative research.

In addition, the implications of this study for pertinent stakeholders cover such characteristics as being reflective of the message of the product; attractive and representative of the product; and effective in getting customers' curiosity to buy the product. Besides, the pertinent stakeholders will also learn about the kinds of products that are most appropriate to be branded in English.

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