



5 - 7 SEPTEMBER, 2007 • BERLIN MARRIOTT • GERMANY  
**Global Information Industry Summit**

# **“Can’t Read Won’t Buy”**

**Ben Sargent**, Senior Analyst, Common Sense Advisory

**Al Girardi**, Chief Marketing Officer, Innodata Isogen

**Jörgen Danielsen**, Managing Director, Eule Lokalisierung GmbH

# Global Consumers

How language, nationality, and brand recognition influence online buying behaviors

Ben Sargent, Senior Analyst  
Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

---



# Common Sense Advisory

- Founded 2002, based in Lowell, Massachusetts
  - Focus: online and offline operations that drive business globalization, internationalization, translation, localization
- Syndicated Market Research
  - Over 50 research reports published to date
  - 10 new reports scheduled for 2007
  - Qualitative and quantitative data techniques
- Consulting
  - People: Organizational design
  - Process: Optimization and best practices
  - Technology: Evaluation and selection
- Training
  - Customer Centric Selling®
  - Mastering Web Globalization
  - Trends in Translation Technology

For more information, [click here](#).

# Supply

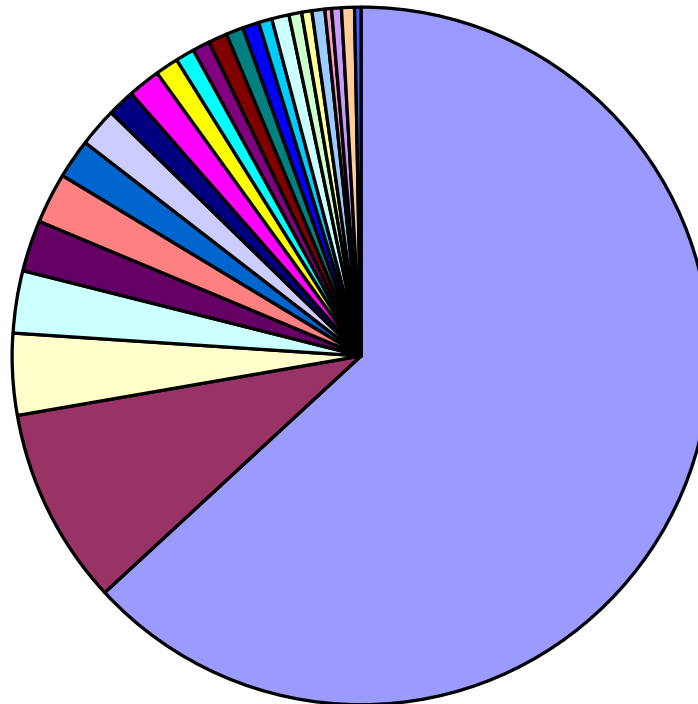
---

- Most web pages served today are in English
- Most web servers are based in English-speaking countries

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# Top 25 countries by number of hosts

United States	61%
Japan	9%
Germany	4%
Netherlands	3%
Australia	2%
Brazil	2%
United Kingdom	2%
Korea, South	2%
Taiwan	1%
Canada	1%
Mexico	1%
Sweden	1%
Belgium	1%
Spain	1%
Switzerland	1%
Denmark	1%
Austria	1%
Russia	1%
Italy	1%
Finland	1%
Argentina	1%
India	0.5%
Norway	0.4%
Turkey	0.4%
Czech Republic	0.4%

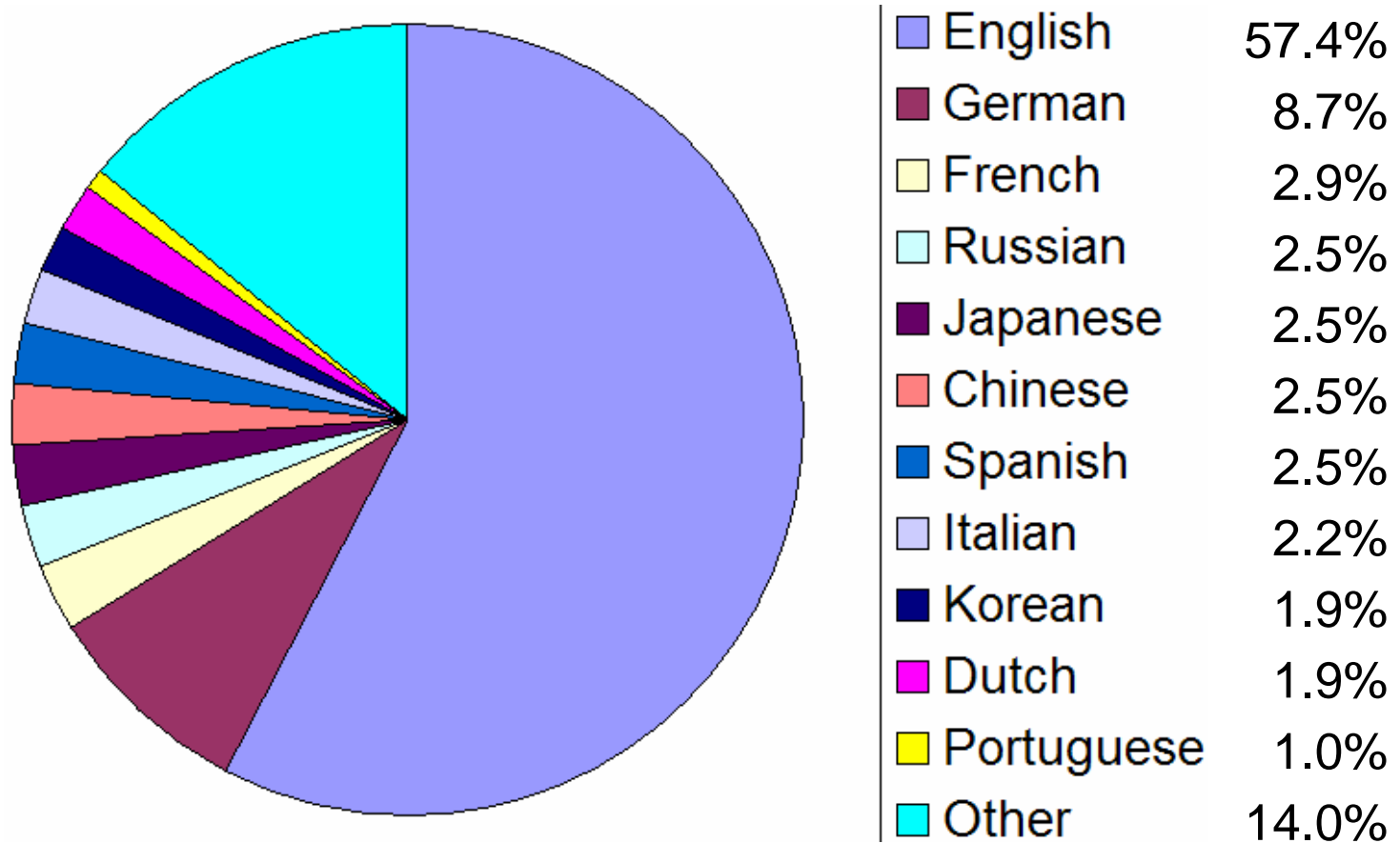


**67% in English-speaking countries**  
as of June 2007 (CIA World Fact Book)

Country	# of hosts
United States	195,139,000
Japan	28,322,000
Germany	11,859,000
Netherlands	8,363,000
Australia	7,773,000
Brazil	6,508,000
United Kingdom	6,065,000
Korea, South	5,434,000
Taiwan	4,320,000
Canada	3,934,000
Mexico	3,427,000
Sweden	2,958,000
Belgium	2,871,000
Spain	2,521,000
Switzerland	2,443,000
Denmark	2,416,000
Austria	2,062,000
Russia	1,980,000
Italy	1,731,000
Finland	1,634,000
Argentina	1,612,000
India	1,543,000
Norway	1,364,000
Turkey	1,313,000
Czech Republic	1,267,000

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# Top 25 languages by web page volume



Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

**English-speakers as a percentage  
of total online population has  
fallen to ~30%.**

Source: Common Sense Advisory 2007

# Demand

---

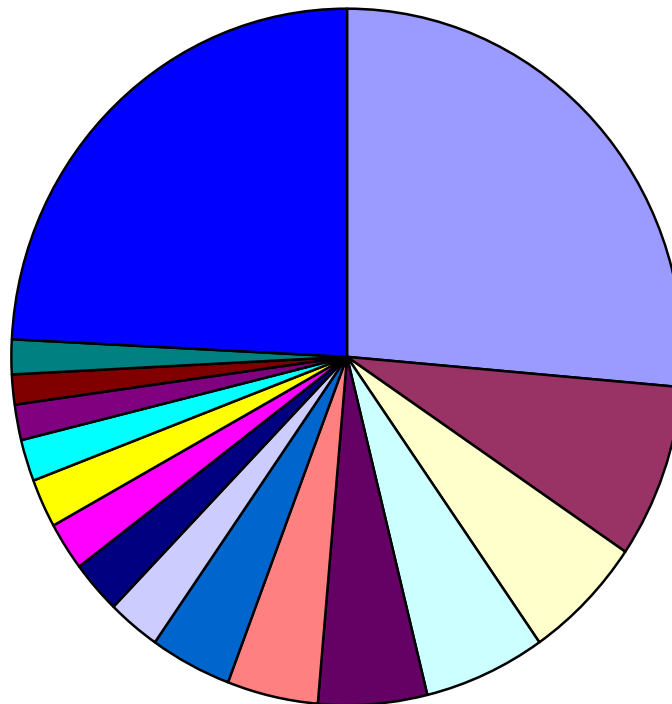
- Most web users are outside English-speaking countries
- Most web users speak languages other than English
- Most of the available market (GDP) is outside English-speaking countries

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.



# World GDP by country

USA	26%
Japan	8%
Germany	6%
China	6%
UK	5%
France	5%
Italy	4%
Spain	3%
Canada	2%
Brazil	2%
Russia	2%
India	2%
Mexico	2%
Australia	2%
South Korea	2%
All Others	24%



US\$ trillions

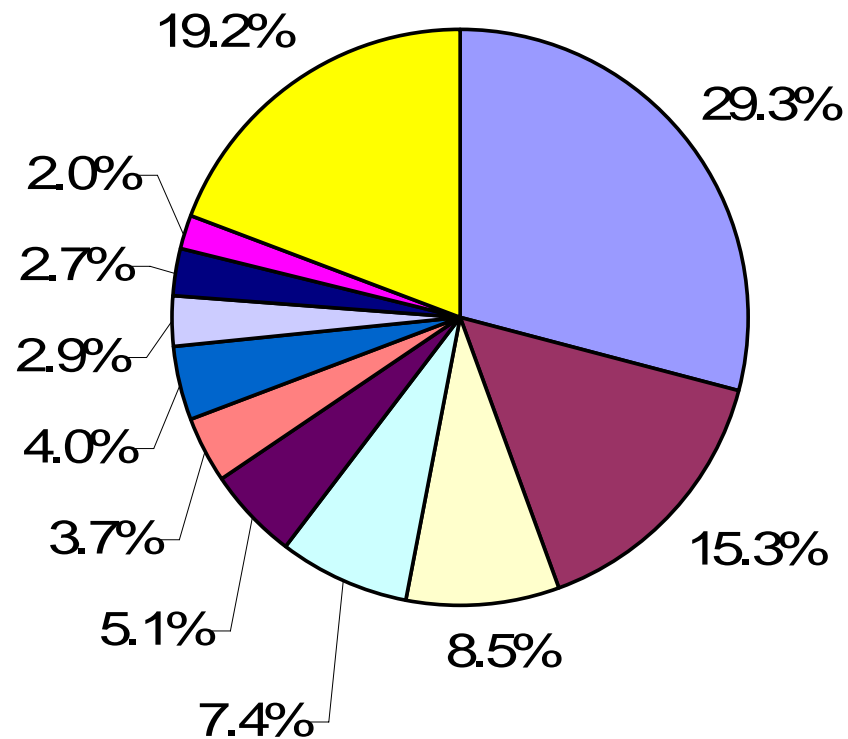
USA	\$ 13,770
Japan	\$ 4,302
Germany	\$ 3,081
China	\$ 3,051
UK	\$ 2,661
France	\$ 2,401
Italy	\$ 1,994
Spain	\$ 1,359
Canada	\$ 1,266
Brazil	\$ 1,178
Russia	\$ 1,167
India	\$ 984
Mexico	\$ 897
Australia	\$ 822
South Korea	\$ 788

**Just 15 countries create 75% of  
World GDP**  
as of June 2007 (CIA World Fact Book)

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy.](#)" Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# The 10 Mega Languages Online

English	29.3%
Chinese	15.3%
Spanish	8.5%
Japanese	7.4%
German	5.1%
French	3.7%
Portuguese	4.0%
Korean	2.9%
Italian	2.7%
Arabic	2.0%
All Others	19.2%



**Just Ten Mega-languages Represent  
80% of Total Online Population**

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# Today's theme

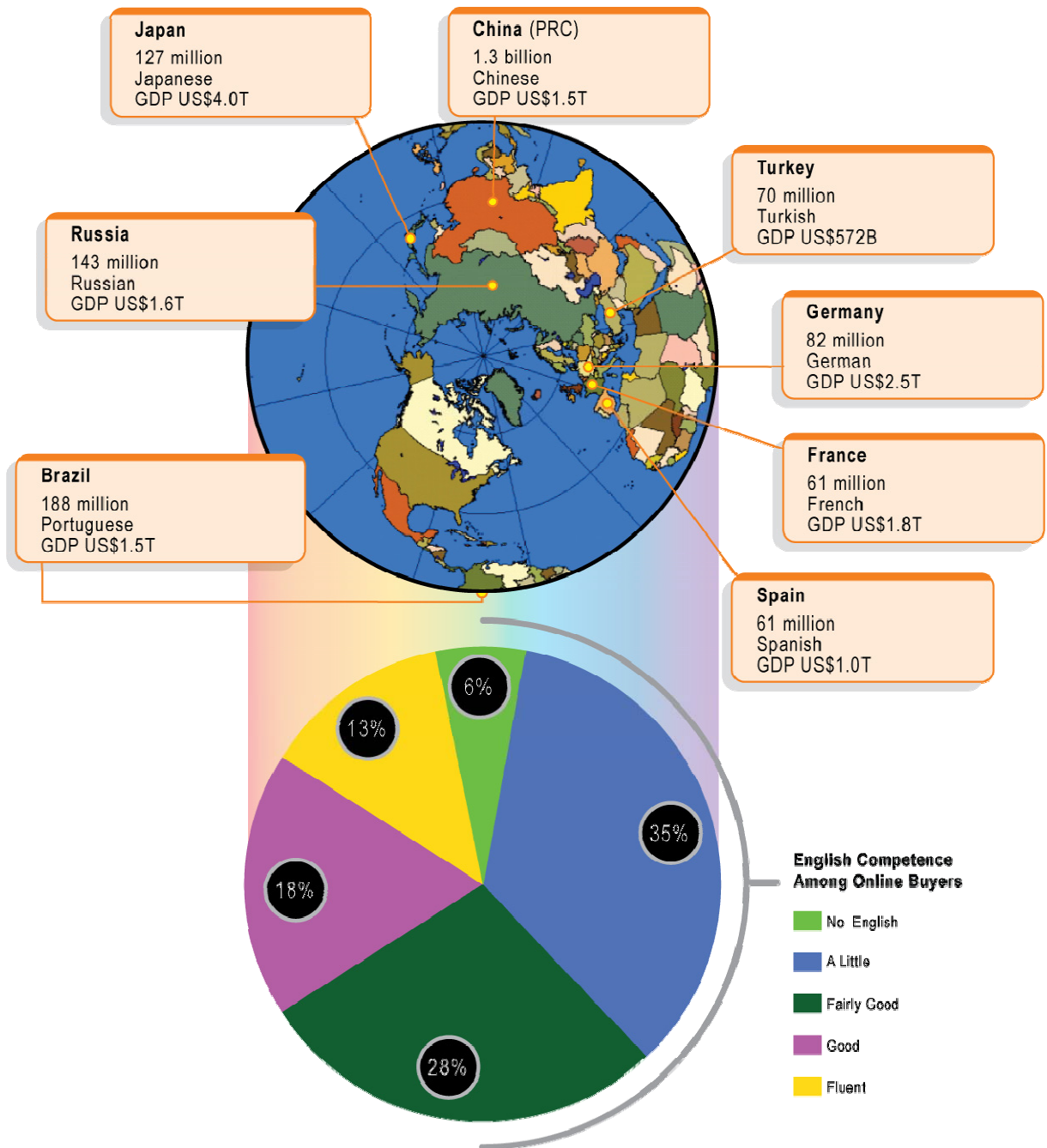
- Business Localization vs. One Size Fits All
  - The choice: Adapt your selling proposition or make everyone read English
  - The reality: Most people prefer buying in their own language
  - The “duh” factor: People won't buy what they can't understand
- Companies need hard data to justify spending real money on translation
- Data from 2006 survey of 2,430 consumers in 8 non-Anglophone countries

Source: “[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#),” Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# About the Survey

2,430 respondents in 8 non-Anglophone countries:

- Brazil, China (PRC), France, Germany, Japan, Russia, Spain, Turkey
- Sample included participants with little or no English (41.2%) and with some proficiency in English (58.8%)
- Results validate qualitative surveys on European markets

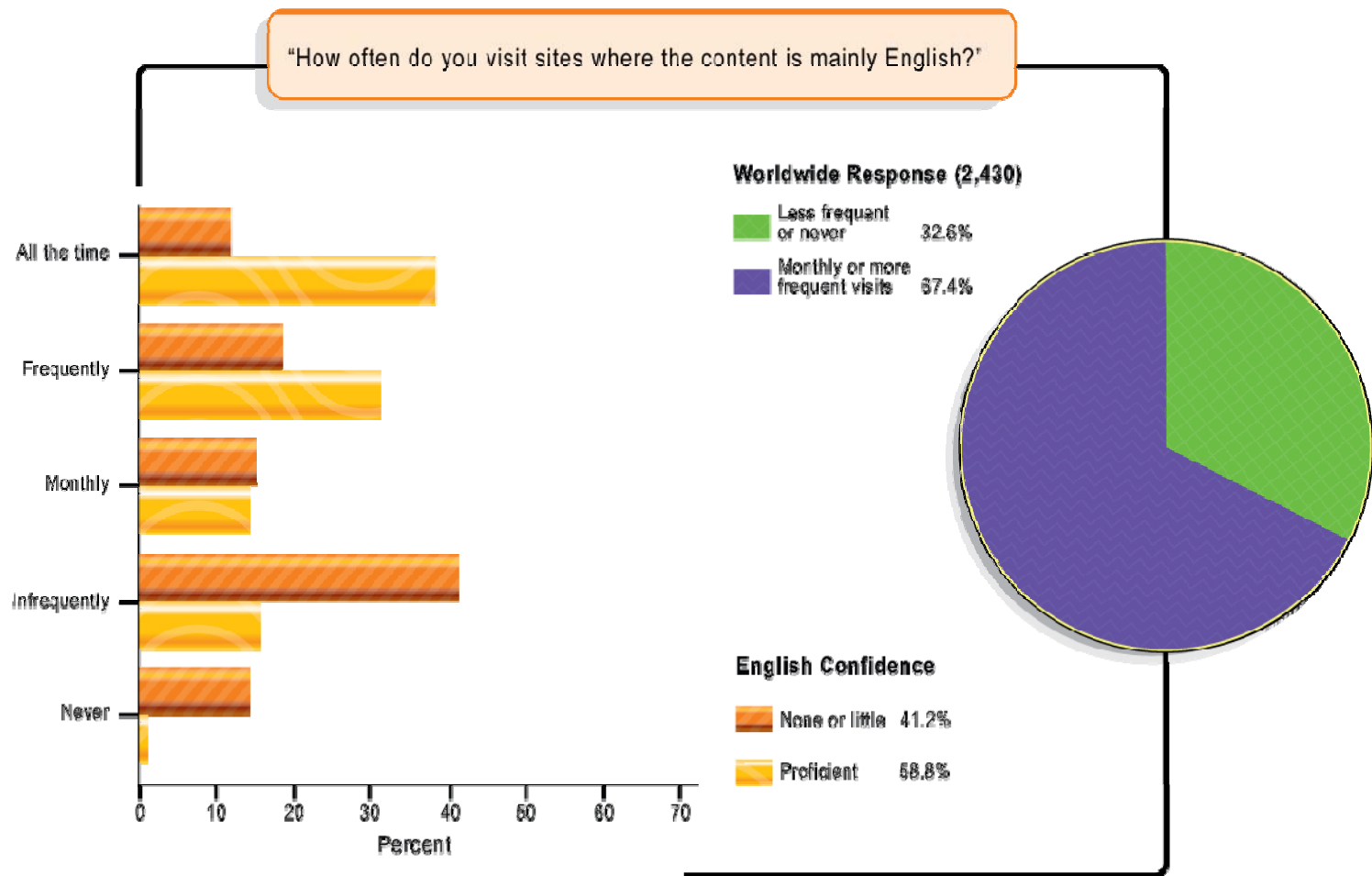


# People prefer visiting and buying from mother-language websites

- People from non-Anglophone countries visit English-language websites monthly or more frequently:
  - 67.4% of total sample visit frequently vs. 45% of those with no/little English
- Survey participants spend more time at websites in their own language than at English-language ones:
  - 72.1% of total sample spend most or all of their time at local-language sites
  - But the number goes up to 89.1% for those with no/little English
- Time spent at websites converts into sales:
  - From the data, statistical tests show a strong correlation between the amount of time someone spends on local-language websites and whether s/he buys from that site

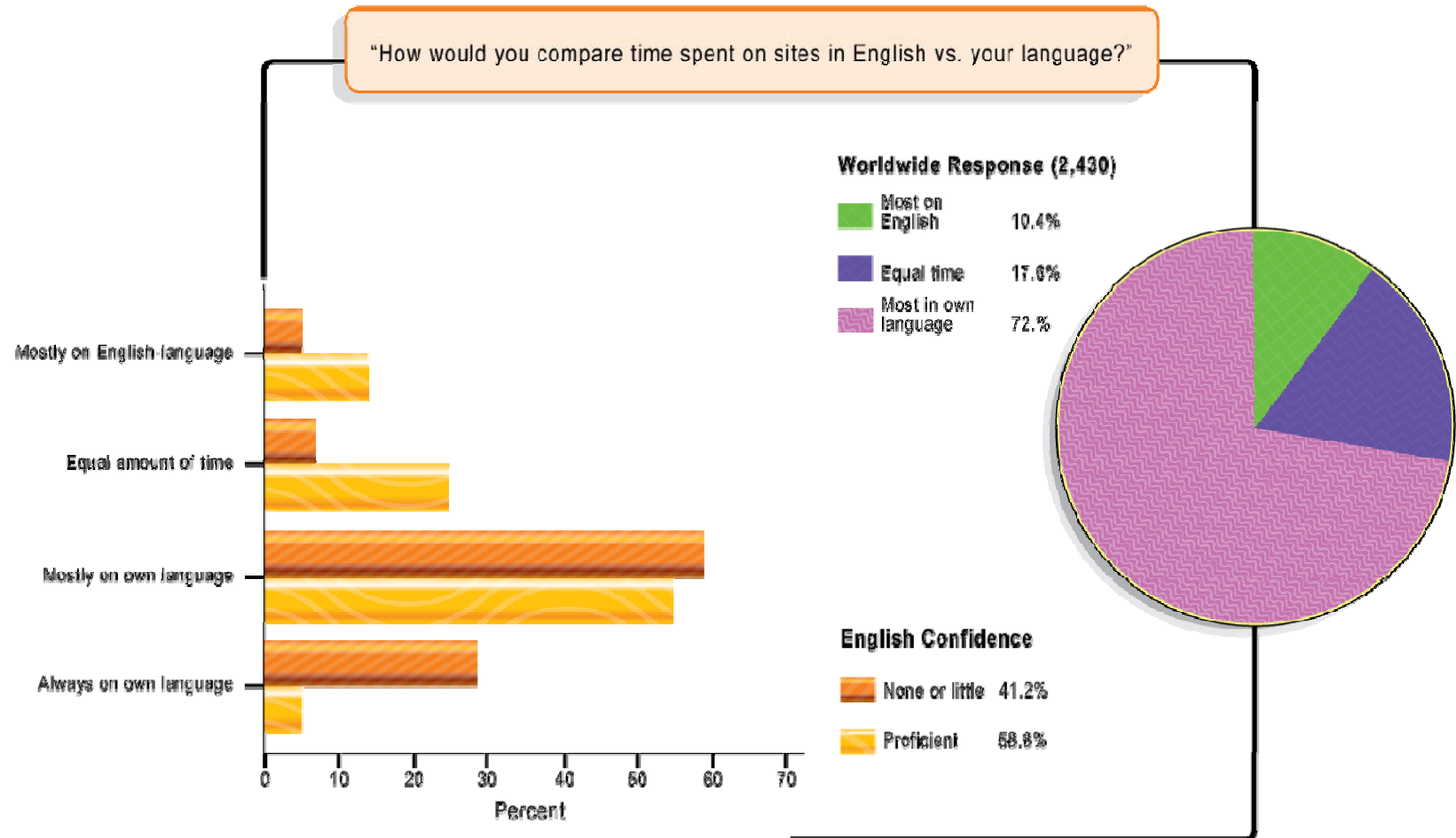
Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# "Foreign" visits to Anglophone sites



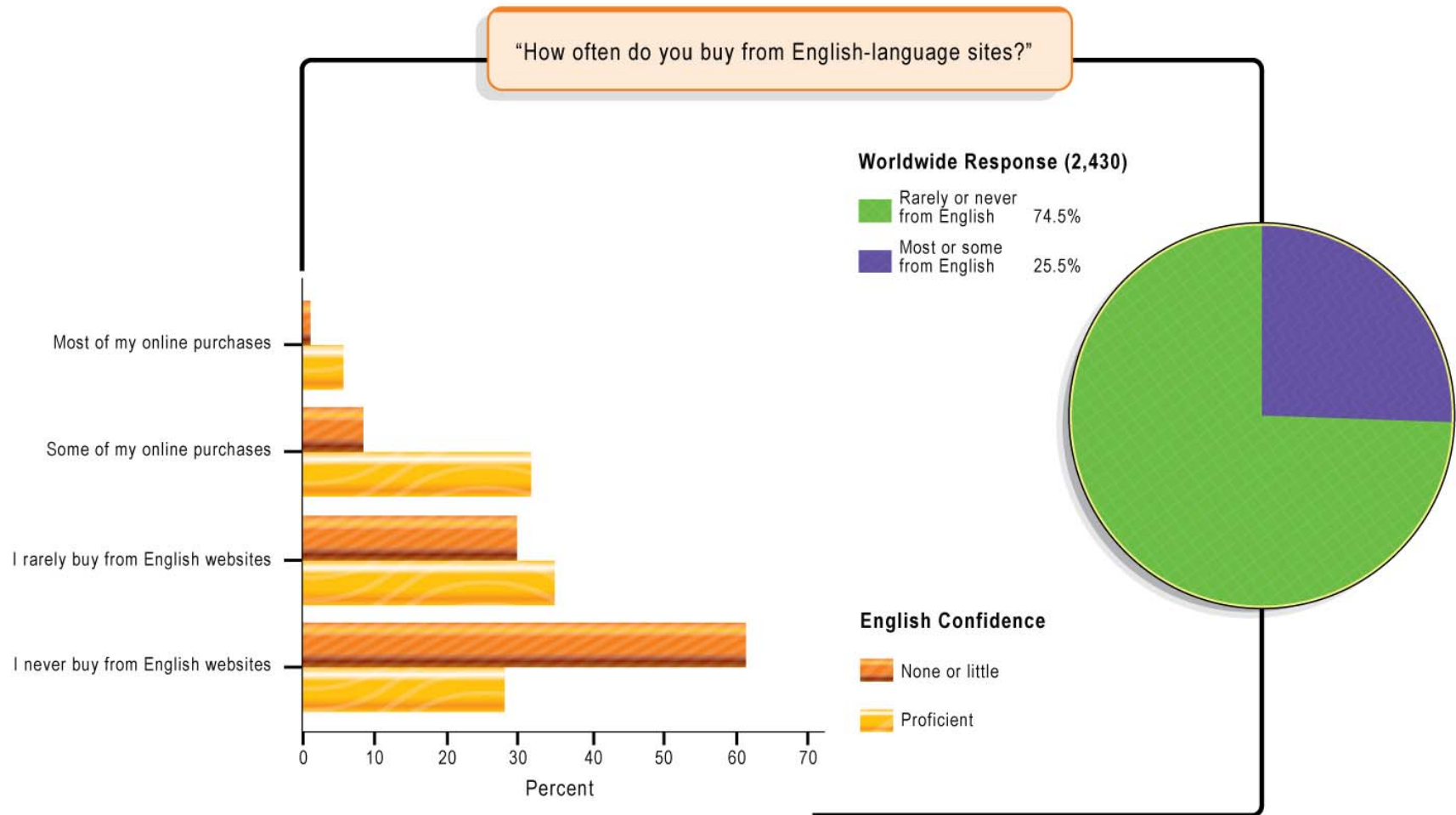
Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy.](#)" Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# More time spent at in-language sites



Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

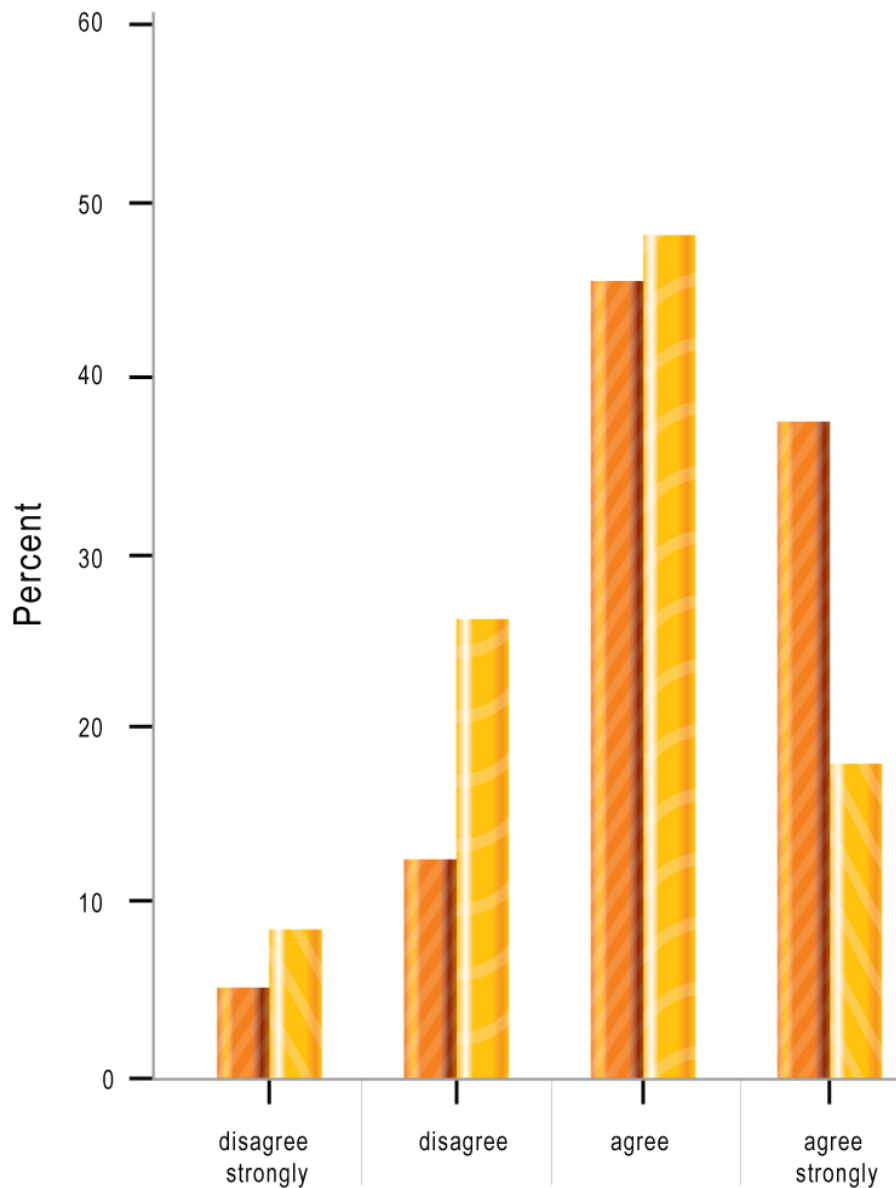
# In-language sites get the buyers



Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.



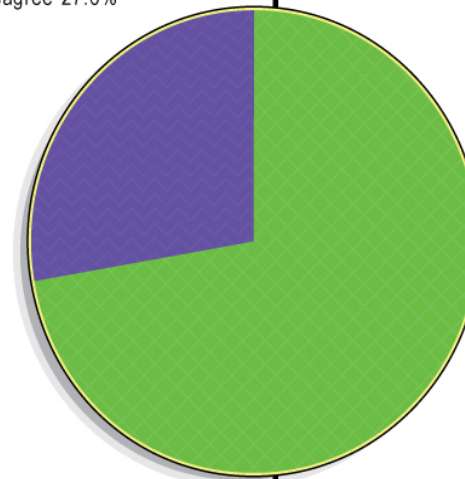
"I am more likely to purchase products with information in my own language."



Worldwide Response (2,430)

Agree 72.4%

Disagree 27.6%

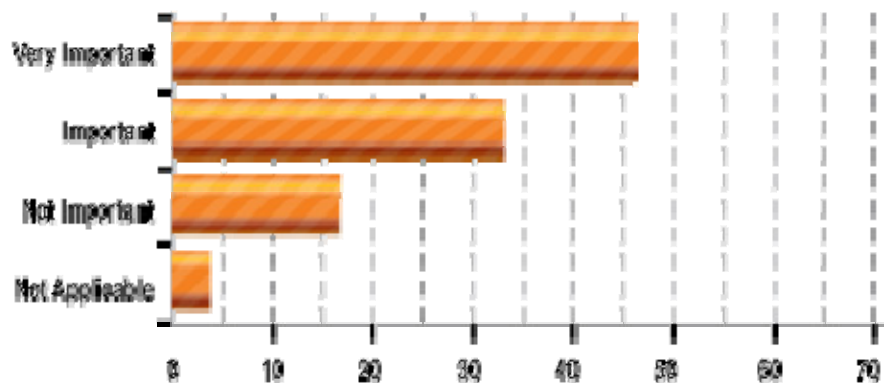


English Confidence

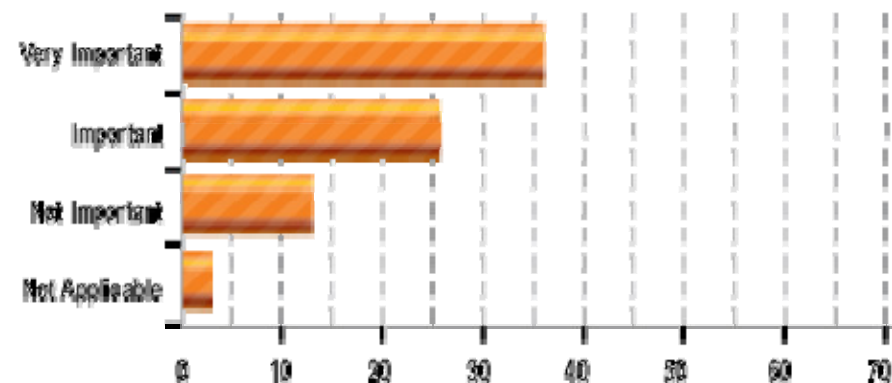
None or little 41.2%

Proficient 58.8%

All other things  
being equal:  
consumers prefer  
buying in their  
language

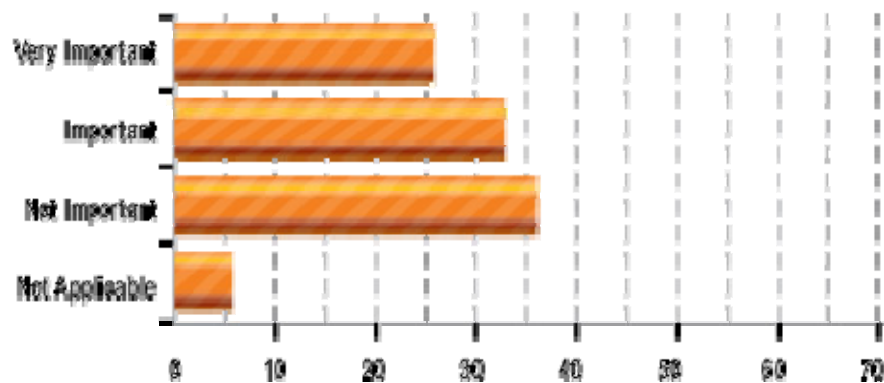


Services (financial and travel): 80%

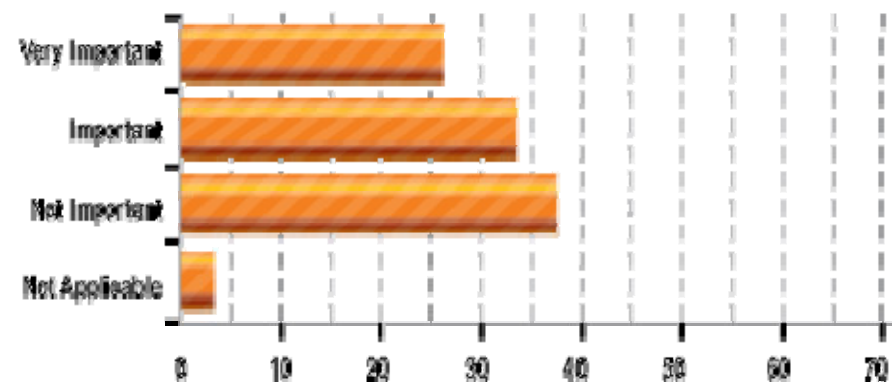


Big ticket (autos and computers): 70%

## Variance by product type: Importance of language in the buying decision



Personal care and household products: 60%



Commodities and consumables: 60%

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

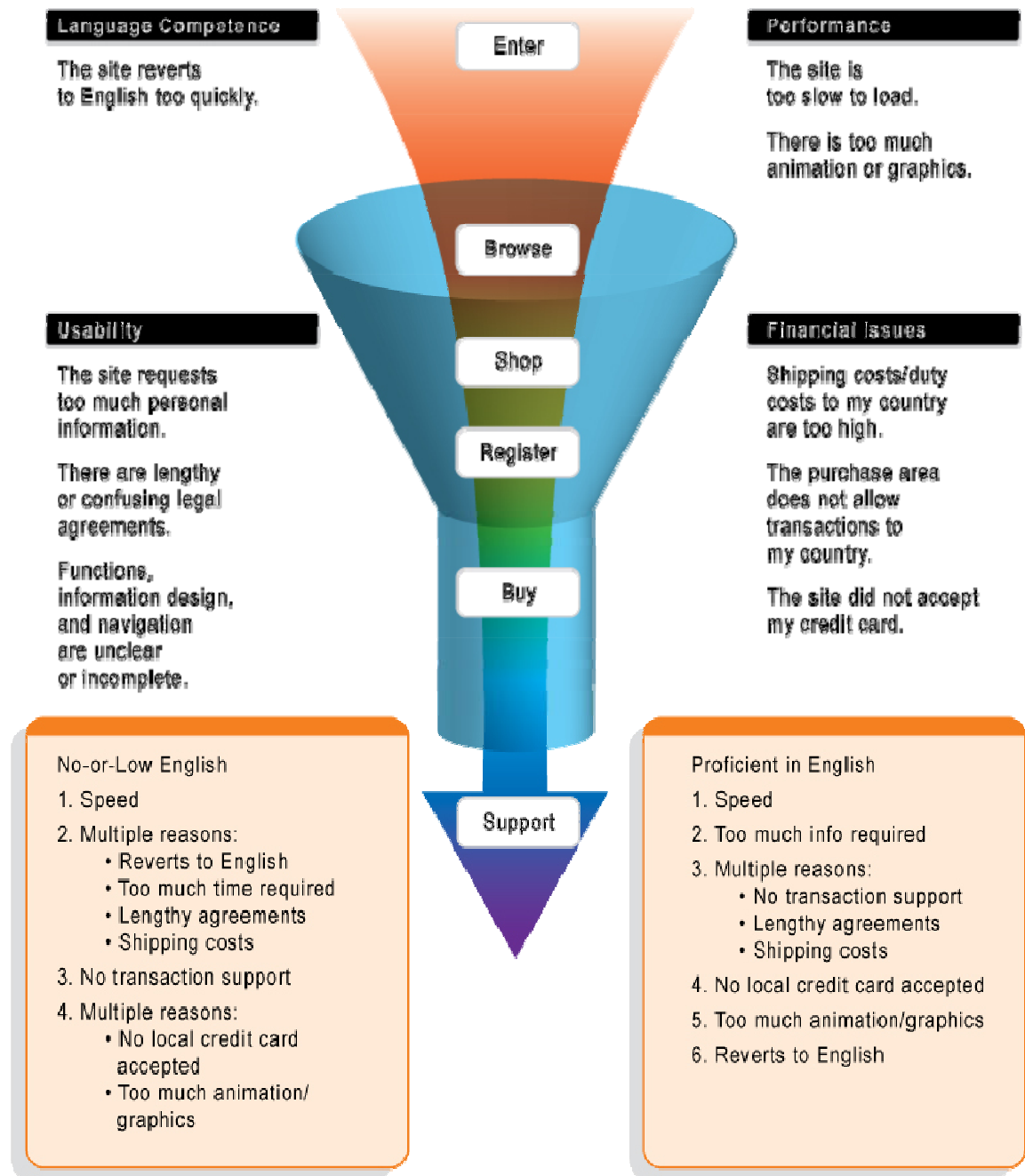
# Service buyers demand own language

- Language is a more important factor with different purchase categories:
  - Services including travel: 79.6% say communication in their own language is important, with number rising to 85.1% for those with no/low English
  - Expensive goods: 68.8% want own language, 78.7% for no/low English
  - Food, personal care, household: 58.4% want own language, 66.7% for no/low
  - Commodities, low-cost goods: 59.3% want own language, 71% for no/low
- Travel/entertainment and financial services rank highest in preference for local-language communications:
  - Financial services: 85.3%
  - Travel & entertainment: 74.0%
- **Over half the respondents said they are willing to pay more for products in their own language**

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# Language takes you only so far

- Language is key, but not the only key in a successful sale:
  - Performance
  - Language competence
  - Usability
  - Financial issues
- For non-Anglophones:
  - Site speed, quality, and language cause them to abandon sites
- For those with English proficiency:
  - Once in the sales funnel, financial and logistical issues can flush them out



Local language becomes more important over the life of a product

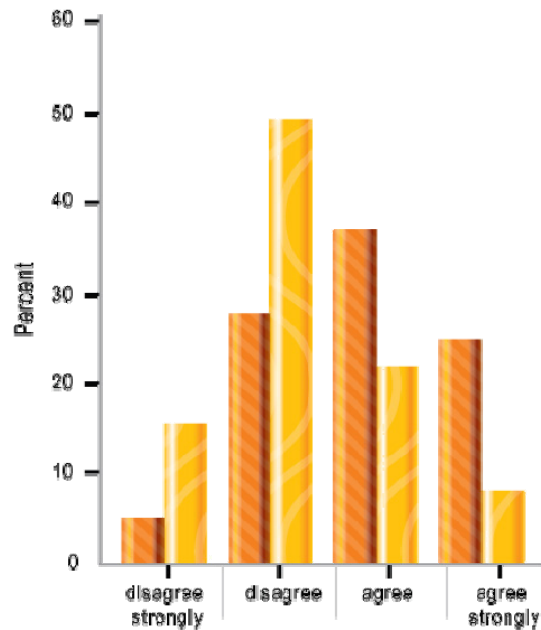
Initial sale



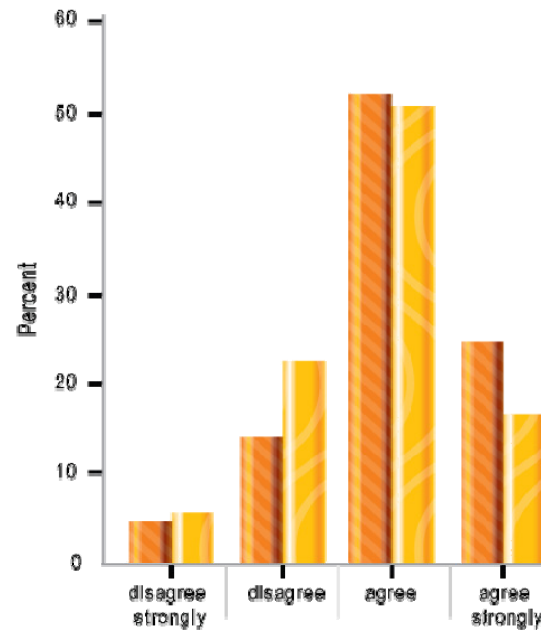
After the sale

# The research shows:

It's not just about the sale. Post-sales interactions in language are even more important.



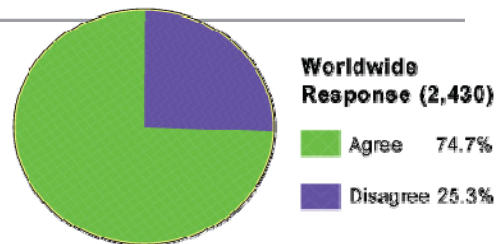
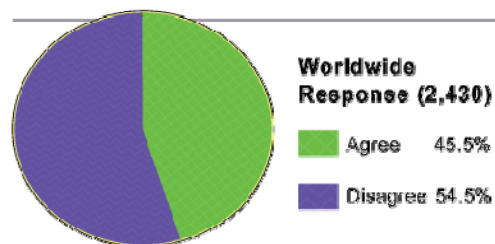
"I will only purchase something if the user guide or owner's manual is in my own language."



"I am more likely to purchase the same brand again if the after-sales care is in my own language."

## English Confidence

None or Little  
Proficient

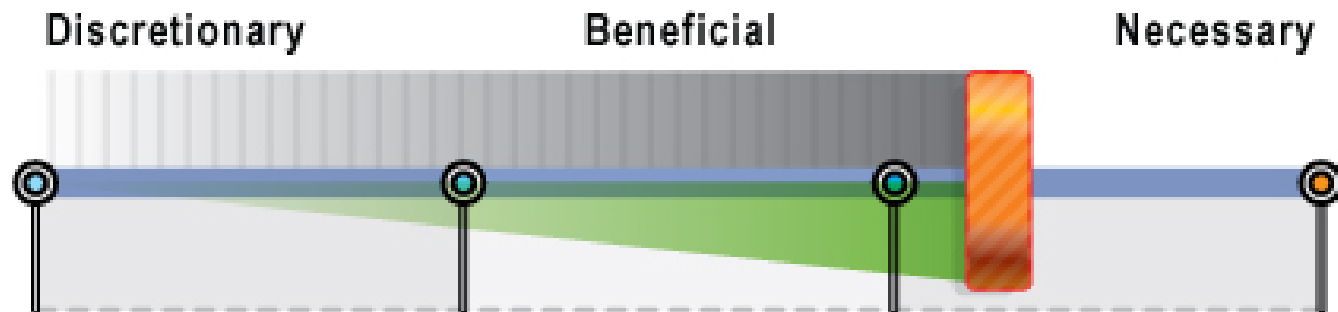


Source: *Can't Read, Won't Buy*  
Common Sense Advisory, 2006

# Conclusions:

## Language and localization matter

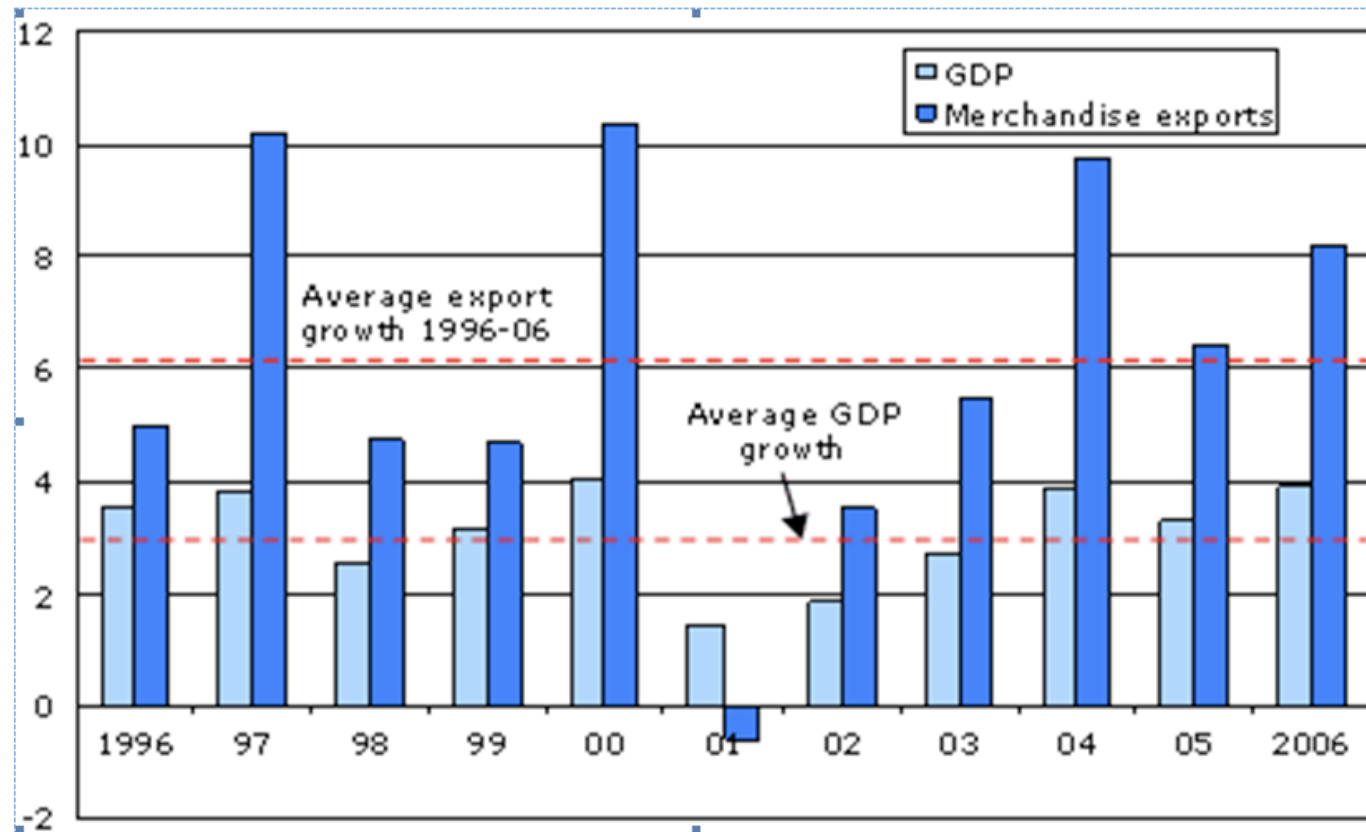
- Language draws prospects into the sales funnel
- More information in their language keeps them browsing
- Properly localized forms, transactions, and logistics increase the likelihood of conversion
- Discretionary purchases – such as financial services – demand the highest level of language and localized transactional support



Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# Globalization by the numbers

- Growth in the volume of world merchandise trade and GDP, 1996-06



Source: WTO

Source: [Call it Read, won't Buy](#), Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

# Bibliography of cited research

- [Can't Read, Won't Buy: Why Language Matters on Global Websites](#)
- [Global Content Management Technology](#)
- [Translation Management Technology](#)
- [Translation Management Technology Scorecards](#)
- [Design Practices for Global Gateways](#)
- [Real World Enterprise](#)
- [Localization Maturity Model](#)
- [Beyond Global Websites](#)
- [Business Without Borders: A Strategic Guide to Global Marketing](#)

- These reports (and book) are available as part of a membership with Common Sense Advisory. Call +1.978.275.0500 for details.

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.



# Thank you.

Ben Sargent

[ben@commonsenseadvisory.com](mailto:ben@commonsenseadvisory.com)

+1.978.275.0500 x 1003

[www.common sense advisory.com/research/reports.php](http://www.common sense advisory.com/research/reports.php)



**Insight for global market leaders**

Source: "[Can't Read, Won't Buy](#)," Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

COMMON SENSE ADVISORY, INC.

Copyright © 2007 by Common Sense Advisory, Inc.