The Effects of Using L1 and L2 Swear Words in German Advertising

Bachelor's Thesis

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Abstract

This paper investigates possible differences caused by using L1 and L2 swear words in advertising. Swear words are part of shock advertising which uses a norm-breach to attract attention. Shock advertising might be a useful tool to break through the information clutter and to attract the attention of consumers successfully.

The perception of L2 swears might differ from how L1 swears are perceived. Past investigations have shown that words in the mother tongue of participants seem to cause more emotional reactions than those in their L2.

This study contributes information about possible differences between participants regarding their reaction to swear words in advertisements, either in their L1 or L2. Many investigations have focused on students and their perception of swears, but companies need to know about the reactions and attitudes of other age groups, too.

It was investigated whether the use of an L1 or L2 swear in ads impacts the purchase intention of consumers, their attitude towards the ad and the product, and the emotional response of consumers. Also, the impact of swears in advertising on source credibility was investigated. In addition, it was tested whether gender leads to distinct attitudes regarding advertisements with swear words.

The results show that ads with swears are perceived as more offensive than those without. Gender was not found to influence the perception of ads with swears.

This study underlines that companies should remember that ads with swears are perceived as more offensive than those without.

Keywords: Swear words, shock advertising, L1 and L2 swears

Introduction

Shock advertising is a useful tool in a highly saturated advertising environment. Marketing specialists require new approaches to attract and keep the attention of consumers, and the use of swear words in advertising might be worth consideration regarding a possible increase in advertising success. Shock advertising might be the key to consumer attention thanks to its unexpectedness which could potentially facilitate attention-keeping and more intense information-processing. Nevertheless, not much is known about the possible effects of using swears in advertising. Also, there might be a possible difference in the perception of swear words in the consumer's mother tongue or second language.

L1 and L2 swears might cause different reactions, for example, due to a different perception of emotionality of words in a participant's mother tongue or second language. Companies need to be able to predict how consumers will react to ads with and without different swear words and this study aims to show how the use of L1 and L2 swears might influence the perception of consumers of ads. Further, this investigation wants to contribute essential information for companies and the marketing sector regarding possible the consequences of using swear words in ads.

Theoretical Framework

In recent years, the effects of various marketing approaches have been widely investigated (see Lasn, 1999; Urwin & Venter, 2014). As mentioned by Lasn in 1999, the average consumer is exposed to 3,000 ads every day. Consequently, the consumers have become used to seeing many ads and filter the most interesting ones while ignoring others to avoid wasting time. Thus, marketers must know how to create campaigns which catch their target group's attention.

Marketing specialists have tried many different approaches to attract the attention of their target group, one of them being shock advertising. Urwin and Venter's definition (2014), based on Pickton and Broderick (2005), states that "shock advertising is [...] the use of intentional, offensive, controversial and attention[-]grabbing advertising used to sell a particular product or idea" (p. 204). Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) define it as advertising "that deliberately, rather than inadvertently, startles and offends its audience" (p. 269). This perceived offensiveness can, for example, be caused by breaching a social norm. For example, by living in a community, people adopt certain beliefs about right and wrong (Dahl et al., 2003), and learn what is socially acceptable and what is not.

An example of a recent advertisement which illustrates breaching a social norm can be found

in multiple photoshopped photos used by the Benetton Group in 2011 as part of their "UNHATE" campaign. For example, they showed Pope Francis kissing and embracing the Egyptian Imam Ahmed Mohamed el-Tayeb ("Most Controversial Ad Campaigns", n.d.). This ad was criticised because it breaks with a widely spread social norm by showing two men kissing. In various countries, also in the Western world, homosexuality is still considered to be something wrong and, consequently, breaks a norm.

Shock advertising is considered a promising asset in a highly saturated advertising environment, thanks to its "ability to break through [the] advertising clutter and capture the attention of a target audience who then listens and acts on the related message" (Dahl et al., 2003, p. 269). Nevertheless, Urwin and Venter (2014) argue that "[s]hock has become ubiquitous [...] [and] [consumers] are used to violence and sex from films and television" (p. 206). However, Mortimer (2007) points out that a norm violation might allow marketers to "break through [the] advertising clutter [allowing for] a positive effect on information processing in terms of elaboration" (p. 1593). This could be due to its ability to increase the motivation of consumers to process information (MacInnis, Moorman & Jaworski, 1991). Mortimer (2007) underlines that ads often use offensive language because it is effective for catching attention. Further, it is "cheap due to extra media coverage and [can be] easily copied" (Mortimer, 2007, p. 1594).

Nevertheless, in 1999, Waller already pointed out that most research investigates the effects of "potentially offensive products [...] [rather] than [...] offensive advertising messages" (p. 269).

Swear words form one type of shock advertising. According to Dewaele's definition (2016) swearing either "refers to something taboo or stigmatised in the swearer's culture, [or] is not intended to be interpreted literally, [or] can be used to express strong emotions or attitudes" (p. 113).

It has been stated, for example, by Dahl et al. (2003), that swears in ads are especially useful to reach a younger audience. Young people are believed to be more rebellious, thus, more accepting of a norm breach (see Dahl et al., 2003). However, whether the potential target group is limited to such a young audience or if it actually is bigger remains unknown. A problem with the research which has already been done is that so far, many studies have only focused on students and their perception of swear words (see Urwin & Venter, 2014; Dahl et al., 2003). This is why for marketers, it is still difficult to narrow down the exact age of their potential target group. Nonetheless, to be able to attract more of the population and draw satisfactory conclusions, marketers must know about other age groups too. Only then will

they be able to focus their attention on the right group and maximise their efforts successfully.

Moreover, using swear words in ads might be beneficial for improved customer relationships. A study by Rassin and Van der Heijden (2005) has linked swearing and cursing to an increased perception of credibility. Rassin and van der Heijden's (2005) findings might be useful for companies which depend on being able to connect with customers and to build a close relationship with them. Consequently, it is important to investigate a possible impact of swearing on perceived source credibility of an advertisement and, consequently, also on the company.

Further, it has been found that swears, as part of informal language, lead to increased in-group identification (Baruch & Jenkins, 2007) which might also facilitate relationship-building with customers. Besides, Scherer and Sagarin (2006) found that curses and swear words can be more persuasive than neutral expressions. Scherer and Sagarin (2006) showed that speech which included a swear word at the beginning or the end, was perceived as more persuading than speech without swears.

As previously mentioned, using a swear word in an ad might breach a social norm or could otherwise cause surprise in the audience. Therefore, it might be that by using swear words in advertising, consumers are nudged into thinking about the ad. As investigated by Dahl et al. (2003), when the target group actively analyses the ad, it might be remembered best. The thought process induced by swear words in advertisements could, thus, be a different to the one caused by ads without them. This idea is based on models for advertising information processing (e.g. Yale Model of Information Processing based on McGuire, 1978, cited in Malin, Gudaitis, Holt & Kilger, 2017, pp. 77–124). Based on these models, "shocking stimuli should facilitate message […] elaboration, enhance message retention, and [consequently,] influence behavior" (Dahl et al., 2003, p. 269).

Vingerhoets, Bylsma and De Vlam (2013) point out that swearing "influences the perceived credibility, intensity, and persuasiveness of the swearer" (p. 287). It might be that people who express their feelings without any filter, thus, swear, are perceived as credible because they freely speak their mind. This could be interesting for companies as it is essential to build trust with customers. If swearing could be linked to increased credibility, ads which use swears might be a useful tool for improved relations between a company and their target group(s). Laeequddin, B. Sahay, V. Sahay and Waheed (2010) point out that the "[c]haracteristics perspective of trust deals with factors such as [...] reliability [and] credibility" (p.61). Accordingly, if a company is trying to build a relationship with their consumers, it has to also consider credibility. More research has to be done to investigate

whether the use of swear words in advertising can impact these characteristics positively or negatively.

Further, if swearing could be used to influence how persuasive people perceive something, ads with a swear might be considered more effective than those without a swear word. Consequently, it might be interesting to find out more about how swearing influences a customer's behaviour, for example, in order to facilitate the persuasiveness of an ad.

Waller (2004) has found that shock advertising, which swearing is part of, can be a useful tool to increase both brand awareness and sales. Westerholm (2017) discovered that "many respondents found the language [containing swears] to be the best part of the advertisements. This may point to an increase in the acceptability of swear words" (p. 18). This result supports Baker and Broadus' (2014) theory that advertising is not negatively impacted by swear words. Besides, Westerholm's (2017) findings might also imply that swear words can improve the rating of ads, "as long as they are used in the appropriate context, and chosen with care regarding the tone of the advert as well as the product advertised" (p. 23).

In addition, possible negative consequences of using swear words in ads also need to be considered. Advertising which uses shock stimuli could potentially cause hostility and might, thus, lead to consumers avoiding the brand (Klara, 2012). Customers who feel embarrassed or ashamed may project these negative feelings towards the brand. As a result, they might avoid the ad or the brand itself (Williams, 2009; Urwin & Venter, 2014). Andersson, Hedelin, Nilsson and Welander (2004) have shown that an ad which is perceived as too shocking can negatively impact the brand image, causing a loss in sales.

Additionally, as mentioned above, consumers might already be too used to shock advertising for it to be successful. Dahl et al. (2003) state that this type of advertising is nothing extraordinary when it comes to announcing a new brand or product. Urwin and Venter (2014) point out that "[o]ffensive advertising no longer violates consumers' norms [...] and therefore no longer breaks through the clutter to leave a lasting impression on the consumer." (p. 206). These remarks raise the question of whether customers are, in fact, already too used to the offensive character of an ad to react to them as intended by the company. Looking at the results of Urwin and Venter's (2014) investigation, it can be hypothesised that many people actually are used to swearing and, therefore, are more accepting of swearing in ads.

When thinking about the possible effects of swearing in ads, it is crucial to also consider the moderating effects which "may influence the final perception of the advertisement." (Mortimer, 2007, p. 1597). Register (1996) mentions gender as one example and describes differences using the term "gender effect". Many studies have established that

there is a difference in how men and women use swears to express themselves (Dewaele, 2004; Dewaele, 2016). Register (1996), underlines that males also reported a more frequent use of swear words than female participants. It is possible that men swear more often because they try to adhere to the gender stereotype of a strong, powerful male (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008). Consequently, they might be more accepting of swear words in ads as they also use them more frequently than women. It could, thus, be beneficial to find out more about these differences to be able to tailor ads towards various target groups.

Dewaele (2004) found that a person's L1 has a more emotional effect than an L2. However, twelve years later, in another study he discovered that the majority of foreign language users judged "29 out of the 30 words [used in the study] to be significantly more offensive than L1 users" (Dewaele, 2016, p. 119). For companies operating in an international context a difference in perception of L1 and L2 words might, therefore, result in an ad in its consumer's mother tongue being more or less effective than one in the L2 of its consumers. The investigation at hand investigated a possible impact on German native speakers and how they rated ads with and without swears in German or English to offer insights into this field. Luna and Peracchio (2001) found differences in product evaluations for bilinguals depending on whether ads were in their first or second language. As a consequence, ads with swear words in someone's L1 might cause different effects than an ad with a swear in an L2. For companies, this is essential information which has not been investigated thoroughly. Depending on the results of this investigation, a global strategy which uses English in all ads could be rated as more or less effective than a local design. Consequently, a change in a company's marketing strategy might be needed to improve, for example, the evaluation of an ad.

To sum up, it might be that consumers make different decisions based on whether an ad that they saw was in their L1 or another language. Dewaele (2004) emphasises that how monolinguals perceive, and use swear words has been the focus of many studies. It has, for example, been found that for monolingual speakers "emotional words, and in particular taboo words, are usually remembered better than neutral words" (Pavlenko, 2012, p. 414). In contrast, the knowledge about how bilinguals react towards these words has yet to be established and supported using scientific methods. Research, for example, by Heckler and Childers (1992) has shown that unexpected stimuli can boost cognitive processing, which in turn results in improved memory. As previously mentioned, someone watching TV or reading a magazine might not expect to come across swears in an ad. Thus, it can be argued that this unexpectedness of a swear in whatever type of ad can also be considered a stimulus for

cognitive processing.

Again, the differences between the L1 and L2 of the consumers must be considered when deciding to use a swear word in an ad. Until now, this is still not supported by much research.

Although various studies have investigated the possible effects of swear words (see for example Baker & Broadus, 2015; Dahl et al., 2003; Mortimer, 2007), it could be argued that they do not allow for general conclusions yet because most of them focus on one group of participants, namely students. However, companies and their marketing departments must be able to base their decisions on scientific results for more than one group.

In line with previously-mentioned results, for example by Mortimer (2007) and Westerholm (2017), it is also essential to remember that the use of swear words in ads "has long been a taboo, and its use is highly regulated by law" (Westerholm, 2017, p. 10). Marketing specialists might come across obstacles when trying to publish ads which use swearing. Consequently, it would be useful for companies to know if the use of swearing in their advertisements is worth the effort.

Moreover, loaning curse or taboo words, for example the English "fuck" or "shit" are frequently used in various languages (see Dewaele, 2004; Westerholm, 2017) In German, the words "shit" and "fuck" are frequently used. Nevertheless, research has to investigate if they have less impact than their German equivalent "Scheiße". Until now, to the knowledge of this study's conductor, no research has been done to investigate the effects on consumers when ads use swear words in a person's L1 or a foreign language. This could be a factor which influences the audience's attitude towards the ad and the brand. For a company, it is crucial to know how to attract customers and keep them connected to the brand. Thus, it is vital to investigate these possible effects.

According to Dewaele (2016), the perceived offensiveness, thus, the emotional effect, of a swear word might be highly influenced by mitigating factors like the situation that a swear is said in. Based on Beers-Fägersten (2012), there are eight types of situations in which swears can be used: To express distress, humour, anger, empathy, support, rebellion, sarcasm, and seriousness. Mortimer (2007) has explained that there are several ways how swears can be applied to the advertising industry: To bring across humour, to emphasise something, to show intimacy or gain trust or to shock the consumer. The intimacy factor could be of great interest; it possibly allows companies to communicate with their customers on a personal level. Mortimer (2007) underlines that this way to communicate can facilitate building "a closer relationship between the brand and the consumer resulting in the message being more

convincing and acceptable" (p. 1595). Following Mortimer's (2007) conclusion, it might be proposed that using swear words could result in a closer relationship between a company and its customers. A swear word might lead to increased persuasion and acceptance of an ad. Nevertheless, this assumed consequence has yet to be supported by further research.

Based on results of other investigations in the field of shock advertising, and the previously mentioned research gaps, the following research question will be studied: What are the effects on German consumers' responses towards advertisements which use swear words in their L1 or their L2 English?

The following sub-questions will be investigated:

- Does the participant's perception of swear words in their L1 and an L2 differ?
- Does the use of swears in ads influence the product and brand appreciation of consumers?
- Does gender have an influence on the perception of ads with swears?

Methodology

Materials

The material for the investigation consisted of three fake advertisements for three different types of low-involvement products: Beer, coffee and chewing gum. As described by Holmes and Crocker (1987), low-involvement products usually do not influence people's opinions because the public tends not to have an opinion on these products. This, in turn, might be caused by the considerably lower price of low-involvement products in comparison with high-involvement ones. Based on this idea, the products mentioned before were chosen. This study did not want to measure already existing opinions but compare the impact of swears and non-swears on the dependent variables.

Three distinct swear words were used in the advertisements: *Asshole* for the chewing gum ad, *damn* for the coffee and *idiot* for the beer ad. The three swears were chosen because they were considered to have a different strength. Further, there was a group which analysed German and Dutch participants which means that comparable words had to be found for both groups.

Table 1. *Slogans for the English and German ads*

Product	Chewing gum	Beer	Coffee
Main slogan	Freshen up your breath, asshole!	Don't be the idiot that arrives empty-handed	Drink away your damn morning

			mood
Description and brand name	Der neue erfrischend minzige Kaugummi von AirMint	ein Bier das jedem Freude bereitet, Bottled	Bremers Kaffee
Extra		unter 16 kein Alkohol	

Each ad consisted of a main slogan and a short description with the brand name (Table 1).

The swear *damn* acts like an intensifier. The function of the word *idiot* is a personal insult, and *asshole* can be seen as another, stronger personal insult (McEnery & Xiao, 2004, pp. 257-260). The swear *damn* originates from a religious domain (Bostrom, Baseheart, & Rossiter, 1973) and a*sshole* describes a body part which is often seen as a taboo topic (Beers Fägersten, 2007). I*diot* is based on a social insult (McEnery & Xiao, 2004, pp. 257-260).

For the control group, the swear words for each ad were substituted by a non-swear or left out. For the chewing gum ad with an English slogan the swear was left out, for the coffee ad as well and for the beer ad *idiot* was interchanged with "don't be the *person* who arrives empty-handed". For both English groups, the slogans featuring L2 words were translated to German. These German translations were used for two other groups, one which saw German swear words and one without swear words and fully German slogans. All versions of the ads can be found in Appendix A.

As the questionnaire was distributed amongst one native language group but included either a slogan in English or German, the translatability of the chosen swear words had to be ensured. This was achieved by comparing the different words to see whether their meaning, both semantic and emotional, is the same in both languages. In total, four versions of the questionnaire were created, each featuring either mixed ads in English and German or fully German, with or without swears.

A pre-test was conducted with one, two and three filler ads. After the pre-test, it was decided not to use any filler ads to keep the questionnaire as short as possible.

Subjects

In total, 136 German native speakers finished the questionnaire; those who started but did not finish were excluded from the data analysis. A total of 66 participants were exposed to the version of the questionnaire with swears, 32 of which saw them in English and 34 in German. In total, 70 participants saw the version without swear words, 38 of which saw them in English and 32 in German (see Table 2).

In total, 55 male and 79 female participants filled in the questionnaire, while one participant identified with another than those two genders and one did not want to say their gender (see Table 3).

The age range of the participants was 18 to 66 years (M = 28.14, SD = 11.83) (see Table 4).

The most frequently indicated level of education was a Bachelor's Degree with 39.7%. The range was primary education, secondary education, vocational training, a Bachelor's Degree, a Master's Degree, a Doctoral Degree or no finished education (see Table 5).

The most frequent context of L2, English, acquisition was a mixed one with 88%, followed by an instructed setting with 44%; 5% of all participants learned English in a naturalistic context (see Table 6).

The majority of participants learned English aged 0-12 (58.8%), 36.8% acquired the L2 aged 12-18 and 4.4% learned the language after turning 18 (see Table 7).

The participants' self-assessed English skills, consisting of speaking, writing, reading, and listening comprehension skills ranged from 2 (poor) to 7 (excellent) (M = 5.36, SD = 1.04) (see Table 8).

The majority of participants (30.1%) indicated about their swearing behaviour, ranging from never to very frequently (M = 5.36, SD = 1.04), that they swear sometimes (see Table 9). Further, the majority of participants indicated that they consider the use of swear words slightly inappropriate (30.9%) or neither inappropriate nor appropriate (30.9%) (M = 3.69, SD = 1.16) (see Table 12).

When asked about how frequently they used chewing gum (M = 3.83, SD = 1.75), the majority (24.3%) said they consume it frequently. When asked about how frequently they consumed coffee (M = 4.53, SD = 2.21), the majority (25%) said very often. Finally, when asked about how frequently they consumed beer (M = 3.72, SD = 1.70), the majority (26.5%) said sometimes (see Table 21).

The distribution of participants was homogeneous for version of the ad and ad language for gender, age, level of education, frequency of swearing, perceived appropriateness of swearing and frequency of product use for chewing gum, coffee, and beer. All ps were > .05 (see Tables 2-23).

Design

The following independent variables were investigated: Language of the ad and use of a

swear word.

The experiment had a 2x2 between-subject design. The factors were language of the ad (mother tongue or English as L2) and use of a swear word (with or without swear words).

Instruments

The dependent variables which the study aimed to investigate were attitude to the ad, attitude to the product, purchase intention, perceived offensiveness, emotional response, and perceived source credibility. The complete questionnaire with the statements measuring each variable can be found in Appendix C.

Attitude towards the ad was measured using Villegas' (2012) scale with the following items: "I like this ad", "This ad is entertaining", "This ad is useful", "This ad is important", "This ad is interesting", "This ad is informative", "I would like to see this ad again", and "This ad is good". The scale was a 7-point Likert scale anchored by *totally disagree* - *totally agree* and the scale reliability for attitude ad was very good with α = .91, based on Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait (2015).

Attitude towards the product was measured using a scale developed by Villegas (2002) consisting of the following items: "I like this product", "This product is useful", "This product is interesting", "This product is good", and "I like to use this product". The scale was a 7-point Likert one anchored by *totally disagree* - *totally agree*. The level of reliability for product attitude was α = .90, which is, according to Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait (2015), a very good value.

Purchase intention was measured with a 7-point Likert scale, anchored by *totally disagree* - *totally agree*, and developed by Che In and Ahmad (2018). The following items were used: "My willingness to buy this product is high", "I am likely to buy this product", "I would intend to buy this product", and "I have a high intention to buy this product". The scale reliability for purchase intention was very good with α = .90, based on Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait (2015).

For perceived offensiveness, a scale developed by Christy and Haley (2008) was used, and the 7-point Likert scale was anchored by *not at all offensive* - *extremely offensive* for the statement "I consider this ad … ". The level of reliability for perceived offensiveness was α = .60, an acceptable value according to Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait (2015).

The emotional response of participants was measured with a scale by Erickson and Ritter (2001), on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by *totally disagree* - *totally agree*. The following items were used: "This ad makes me happy", "This ad makes me excited", "This ad makes me

angry", "This ad irritates me", "This ad makes me feel guilty", "This ad makes me feel ashamed", and "This ad makes me sad". The level of reliability for emotional response was α = .82, which is, according to Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait (2015), a very good value.
Perceived source credibility was measured with an adapted version of Nan's scale (2013). The statement "The advertiser has expertise in the product advertised" was measured with a scale anchored by *low – high* and "The advertiser is trustworthy" was measured with a 7-point Likert scale anchored in *totally disagree - totally agree*. The scale reliability for perceived source credibility was acceptable with α = .72.

Further, the following background variables were measured: Age, gender, level of education, the context of L2 acquisition, age of L2 acquisition, self-assessed English proficiency, frequency of product usage and swearing behaviour of the participants.
The participants were asked to fill in their age in a blank space and their gender by selecting either male, female, other, or prefer not to say.

Further, the participants were asked to indicate the highest level of education which they had finished or were currently attending.

The learning environment of the L2 was operationalised using the following answer options: naturalistic, instructed, and a mix of both, based on Dewaele (2004). The age of the L2 acquisition was measured by offering the following answer options, based on Dewaele (2004): 0-12 (before puberty), 12-18 (during puberty) and 18+ (after puberty).

Self-rated proficiency in English was measured using a 7-point semantic differentials scale from *very poor – excellent*, based on Krishna and Ahluwahlia (2008) for speaking, writing, listening and reading. The scale reliability for all four items combined was α = .92, which is a very good value (Ursachi, Horodnic & Zait, 2015).

In addition, the participants were asked to indicate how often they used the products which were featured in the ads, using a 7-point Likert scale anchored by *never* and *very often*.

The participants also answered two questions about their swearing behaviour, that is how often they swear with a 7-point Likert scale from *never-very often*, for the statement "How often do you swear?" (adapted from Dewaele, 2017). Further, the participants indicated their opinion about swearing by rating the statement "In general, I find the use of swear words…" using a 7-point Likert scale (adapted from Dewaele, 2017) anchored in *absolutely inappropriate-absolutely appropriate*. This was done to investigate the participant's general attitude to swear words as this attitude might impact their perception and rating of ads with and without swear words.

Procedure

The possible effects of using swear words in foreign language ads were investigated with an online questionnaire using the online software Qualtrics. Filling in the questionnaire took 39 minutes on average (M = 38.82, SD = 182.29). Independent of the language of the ads, all questions and statements in the questionnaire were in German. Apart from pointing out that the participant's answers were vital for the Bachelor students conducting the study, no further rewards were offered to motivate participation. To reach as many people as possible, the questionnaire was shared by the Bachelor students on various online platforms: WhatsApp, Facebook and via email.

The participants first read an introductory text and then were exposed to the ads one after the other. In the introduction to the questionnaire, the participants were informed about how their answers would be used anonymously for this study and were asked to give their consent to their data being used by clicking "I agree". They answered several questions to measure the effects of the ad on the dependent variables. At the end of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to fill in personal background information. This information was collected at the end of the questionnaire to prevent the participants from guessing the aim of the study. The question asking for their swearing behaviour is not typical for background information in a questionnaire and, thus, could uncover the real intent of this study.

To conclude this section, it should be underlined that external factors such as distractions or difficulties due to, for example, a bad internet connection might play a role when conducting an experiment online. The average duration time was much higher than the expected 15 minutes, which might have been caused by people opening the questionnaire and then doing different things before resuming and finishing it.

Statistical treatment

The data collected by Qualtrics was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. To analyse the reliability of the scales used for this study, Cronbach's α was computed. Further, the collected data were analysed by using two-way Anovas with version (swear or no swear) and language of the ad (German or English as L2) as factors, as well as χ^2 tests for nominal variables and independent samples t-tests to compare the distribution of means for male and female participants.

Results

Table 24

Means and Standard Deviations for purchase intention (1 = low; 7 = high) in function of ad version (swear word, no swear word) and ad language (mixed English and German, German).

Version	Ad language	*M*	*SD*	N
Swear word	Mixed English and German	2.84	1.13	32
	German	3.05	1.18	34
	Total	2.945	1.15	66
No swear word	Mixed English and German	3.03	0.92	38
	German	3.04	1.07	32
	Total	3.03	0.98	70
Total	Mixed English and German	2.94	1.01	70
	German	3.05	1.12	66
	Total	2.99	1.06	136

A two-way analysis of variance with version of the ad (swear or no swear) and language of the ad (mix of German and English) as factors showed a non-significant main effect of version of the ad on the purchase intention of German native speakers ($F(1,132) < 1$). Further, there was no significant main effect of language of the ad on purchase intention ($F(1,132) < 1$). The interaction effect between version of the ad and language of the ad was statistically non-significant ($F(1,132) < 1$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 24.

Table 25

Means and Standard Deviation for attitude towards the ad (1 = low; 7 = high) in function of ad version (swear word, no swear word) and ad language (mixed English and German, German).

Version	Ad language	*M*	*SD*	N
Swear word	Mixed English and German	3.16	0.82	32
	German	3.31	0.88	34
	Total	3.24	0.85	66
No swear word	Mixed English and German	3.21	0.86	38

	German	3.13	0.80	32
	Total	3.18	0.83	70
Total	Mixed English and German	3.19	0.84	70
	German	3.27	0.84	66
	Total	3.21	0.84	136

A two-way analysis of variance with version of the ad (swear or no swear) and language of the ad (mix of German and English) as factors showed a non-significant main effect of version of the ad on the attitude towards the ad of German native speakers ($F(1,132) < 1,$). There was no significant main effect of language of the ad on attitude towards the ad ($F(1,132) < 1$). The interaction effect between version of the ad and language of the ad was statistically non-significant ($F(1,132) < 1$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 25.

Table 26

Means and Standard Deviations for attitude towards the product (1 = low; 7 = high) in function of ad version (swear word, no swear word) and ad language (mixed English and German, German).

Version	Ad language	*M*	*SD*	N
Swear word	Mixed English and German	3.81	1.00	32
	German	3.98	1.02	34
	Total	3.89	1.01	66
No swear word	Mixed English and German	3.89	0.84	38
	German	4.03	0.98	32
	Total	3.96	.090	70
Total	Mixed English and German	3.85	0.91	70
	German	4.00	0.99	66
	Total	3.93	0.95	136

A two-way analysis of variance with version of the ad (swear or no swear) and language of the ad (mix of German and English) as factors showed a non-significant main effect of

version of the ad on the attitude towards the product of German native speakers ($F(1,132) < 1$). Further, there was no significant main effect of language of the ad on attitude towards the product ($F(1,132) < 1$). The interaction effect between version of the ad and language of the ad was statistically non-significant ($F(1,132) < 1$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 26.

Table 27

Means and Standard Deviations for emotional response (1 = low; 7 = high) in function of ad version (swear word, no swear word) and ad language (mixed English and German, German).

Version	Ad language	*M*	*SD*	N
Swear word	Mixed English and German	4.67	0.63	32
	German	4.71	0.61	34
	Total	4.69	0.61	66
No swear word	Mixed English and German	4.89	0.68	38
	German	4.85	0.74	32
	Total	4.87	0.70	70
Total	Mixed English and German	4.79	0.66	70
	German	4.78	0.67	66
	Total	4.78	0.66	136

A two-way analysis of variance with version of the ad (swear or no swear) and language of the ad (mix of German and English) as factors showed a non-significant main effect of version of the ad on the emotional response of German native speakers ($F(1,132) = 2.45$, $p = .120$). Further, there was no significant main effect of language of the ad on emotional response ($F(1,132) < 1$). The interaction effect between version of the ad and language of the ad was statistically non-significant ($F(1,132) < 1$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 27.

Table 28

Means and Standard Deviations for perceived source credibility (1 = low; 7 = high) in function of ad version (swear word, no swear word) and ad language (mixed English and

German, German).

Version	Ad language	*M*	*SD*	N
Swear word	Mixed English and German	4.09	0.64	32
	German	3.95	0.88	34
	Total	4.02	0.77	66
No swear word	Mixed English and German	3.91	0.78	38
	German	4.02	1.01	32
	Total	3.96	0.89	70
Total	Mixed English and German	3.99	0.72	70
	German	3.98	0.94	66
	Total	3.99	0.83	136

A two-way analysis of variance with version of the ad (swear or no swear) and language of the ad (mix of German and English) as factors showed a non-significant main effect of version of the ad on perceived source credibility ($F(1,132) < 1$). Further, there was no significant main effect of language of the ad on perceived source credibility ($F(1,132) < 1$). The interaction effect between version of the ad and language of the ad was statistically non-significant ($F(1,132) < 1$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 28.

Table 29

Means and Standard Deviations for perceived offensiveness (1 = low; 7 = high) in function of ad version (swear word, no swear word) and ad language (mixed English and German, German).

Version	Ad language	*M*	*SD*	N
Swear word	Mixed English and German	4.13	1.03	32
	German	4.29	1.29	34
	Total	4.21	1.16	66
No swear word	Mixed English and German	3.47	1.35	38
	German	3.36	1.54	32
	Total	3.42	1.43	70

Total	Mixed English and German	3.77	1.25	70
	German	3.84	1.48	66
	Total	3.81	1.36	136

A two-way analysis of variance with version of the ad (swear or no swear) and language of the ad (mix of German and English) as factors showed a significant main effect of version of the ad on perceived offensiveness ($F(1,132) = 12.22$, $p = .001$). This was a medium effect ($\eta^2 = .09$), based on Cohen (1988). The perceived offensiveness of ads was bigger for ads with swears ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.16$) than for ads without swears ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.43$). There was no significant main effect of language of the ad on emotional response ($F(1,132) < 1$). The interaction effect between version of the ad and language of the ad was statistically non-significant ($F(1,132) < 1$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 29.

Table 30

Multivariate Analyses of Variance in gender of participants and emotional response, attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the product, purchase intention, perceived source credibility, and perceived offensiveness.

Factor	Dependent Variable	*F*	*p*	η^2
Version	Emotional Response	3.74	.055	.028
	Attitude towards the ad	0.04	.849	.000
	Attitude towards the product	0.82	.366	.006
	Purchase Intention	1.06	.306	.008
	Perceived Offensiveness	15.07	.000	.104
	Perceived Source Credibility	0.25	.615	.002
Gender	Emotional Response	4.81	.003	.100
	Attitude towards the ad	4.08	.008	.086
	Attitude towards the product	3.91	.010	.083
	Purchase Intention	2.35	.075	.051
	Perceived Offensiveness	3.03	.032	.065
	Perceived Source Credibility	9.44	.000	.179
Interaction between version and gender	Emotional Response	0.46	.499	.004
	Attitude towards the ad	1.74	.189	.013
	Attitude towards the product	1.22	.272	.009
	Purchase Intention	2.56	.112	.019

Perceived Offensiveness	0.39	.532	.003
Perceived Source Credibility	2.92	.090	.022

Table 30. shows the results of a multivariate analysis of variance with version of the ad and gender as factors. The analysis found a significant main effect for gender on emotional response ($F(3,130) = 4.81$, $p = .003$), attitude towards the ad ($F(3,130) = 4.08$, $p = .008$), attitude towards the product ($F(3,130) = 3.91$, $p = .010$), perceived offensiveness ($F(3,130) = 3.03$, $p = .032$) and perceived source credibility ($F(3,130) = 9.44$, $p < .001$). The effect size for emotional response was medium ($\eta^2 = 0.10$), medium for attitude towards the ad ($\eta^2 = 0.09$), medium for attitude towards the product ($\eta^2 = 0.08$), medium for perceived offensiveness ($\eta^2 = 0.07$) and big for perceived source credibility ($\eta^2 = 0.18$). To analyse the differences between the groups, an independent *t*-test was conducted (see Table 32). It was decided to compare male and female participants to facilitate the analysis.

There was no significant main effect of gender on purchase intention ($F(3,130) = 2.35$, $p = .075$).

The interaction effect between ad version and gender was statistically non-significant for emotional response ($F(1,130) < 1$), attitude towards the ad ($F(1,130) = 1.74$, $p = .189$), attitude towards the product ($F(1,130) = 1.22$, $p = .272$), purchase intention ($F(1,130) = 2.56$, $p = .112$), perceived offensiveness ($F(1,130) < 1$) and perceived source credibility ($F(1,130) = 2.92$, $p = .090$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 31 of Appendix B.

Table 32

Means and Standard Deviations for emotional response, attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the product, perceived offensiveness, and perceived source credibility (1 = low; 7 = high) in function of ad version (swear word) and gender of participants (male, female).

	M (SD)		*t*	*p*
	Male	Female		
Emotional response	4.78 (0.58)	4.63 (0.64)	1.01	.315
Attitude towards the ad	3.15 (0.75)	3.30 (0.91)	-0.70	.487
Attitude towards the product	3.92 (1.02)	3.88 (1.01)	0.18	.858
Perceived offensiveness	4.07 (1.19)	4.04 (1.15)	-0.80	.427

Perceived source credibility	3.90 (0.79)	4.10 (0.76)	-1.05	.297

An independent samples t-test showed a non-significant difference between male and female participants regarding their emotional response to ads with swear words (t (64) = 1.01, p = . 315). Further, an independent samples t-test showed a non-significant difference between male and female participants with regard to their attitude towards the ad (t (64) < 1), their attitude towards the products (t (64) < 1), perceived offensiveness (t (64) < 1) and perceived source credibility (t (64) = 1.05, p = .297).

Conclusion and Discussion

Aim

The aim of this study was to add information about how swear words in an L1 and L2 influence the perception of those ads, and the attitude of consumers.

Findings

This study found that ads with swears are perceived as more offensive than ads without swear words. As mentioned before, for example, by Dahl et al. (2003), swearing is considered a norm breach. It is still something which society perceives as inappropriate. Swear words should be carefully used, especially in the marketing sector where one ad is potentially seen by many different people within one target group, and even outside the target group.

In addition, the results of this study show that the use of swear words does not influence the attitude of consumers towards the ad and the product. This might be caused by the consumers already being used to shock advertising, as stated by Urwin and Venter (2014).

This study did not find any impact of swear words on the emotional response of the participants. Also, it did not matter whether the swears were in the participant's mother tongue or in English. Dewaele (2004) first found that a person's mother tongue has a more emotional effect than an L2, but in 2016, another study by Dewaele found that foreign words were rated as more emotional than L1 words. Since 2004, the world has become increasingly connected, thanks to the global spread of the Internet and other factors caused by the globalisation. In 2004, for example, 63% of American adults had access to the Internet, and in 2014, 84% of American adults used the Internet (Perrin & Duggan, 2015). Consequently, the increase of being exposed to a multitude of languages online, especially English, might have had an impact on the perception of L1 and L2 words of people around the world.

There was no statistically significant influence of ads with a swear word on the purchase intention of the participants. Again, it could be that consumers are no longer shocked by unexpected stimuli in ads (Urwin & Venter, 2014) and, therefore, do not react differently towards ads with and without swear words.

The study also did not find a significant difference between ads with swear words and ads without swears regarding the perceived source credibility. Even though Rassin and Van der Heijden (2005) have linked swearing and cursing to an increased perception of credibility, source credibility might be dependent on different characteristics than those investigated by their study.

Finally, this study did not find a significant difference between the perception of male and female participants when ads included a swear word which is different from what the literature suggests. It might be that the words which were chosen for this study are not used differently by the participants of this study. The results of this analysis might have been different if there had been a wider range of swear words. Jay (2000) found that while men swear more often, they also use more different kinds of swears which are also perceived as more offensive.

Limitations

The data analysis used for this thesis did not look at each ad separately. Conducting a separate analysis for each ad separately and comparing the results could have offered useful information. This study did not check for the impact of the three swears used in the ad. For example, it could have shown whether “asshole” is perceived as more offensive than “damn” or “idiot”. Westerholm (2017) found in his study that “asshole” is perceived as more offensive than “damn”.

Further, it is essential to remember that even “[c]ontroversial advertisements wear out with repetition, even if it is for a different product or brand” (Urwin & Venter, 2014, p. 206). The reason for this might be that the consumer sees the ad and thinks that the shock or discomfort caused by seeing it once is enough (Urwin & Venter, 2014). As mentioned by Urwin and Venter (2014), the long-term effects of shock advertising are still unknown. It is evident that more broadly oriented research needs to be done to ensure a positive outcome of shock advertising with swear words. This study only focused on the short-term effects of swears in ads and did not investigate possible changes in the participant's attitudes over time; thus, it does not provide information for this topic.

Future research should also investigate the strength of the shocking impact of ads with swear

words. Companies depend on this knowledge when deciding on marketing campaigns; they have to be able to anticipate the outcome and possible downsides.

Contribution to theory

This study underlines that swear words are perceived as more offensive than expressions without any swears. Mortimer (2007) mentions that ads often use offensive language to catch the consumer's attention effectively. The results of this study support Mortimer's point as they show that participants perceive ads with swears as more offensive than ads without them. As McGuire's information-processing model of advertising effectiveness (1978) shows, this perceived difference might lead to different processing of the ad in the consumer's mind.

In contrast to earlier findings, this study shows that male and female participants did not differ significantly in their perception of ads with swear words.

Practical implications

Advertisers have to remember that swear words are perceived as more offensive. If they decide to use them in an ad, it is essential to have tested their target group's attitude towards swearing and how appropriate they consider it to be.

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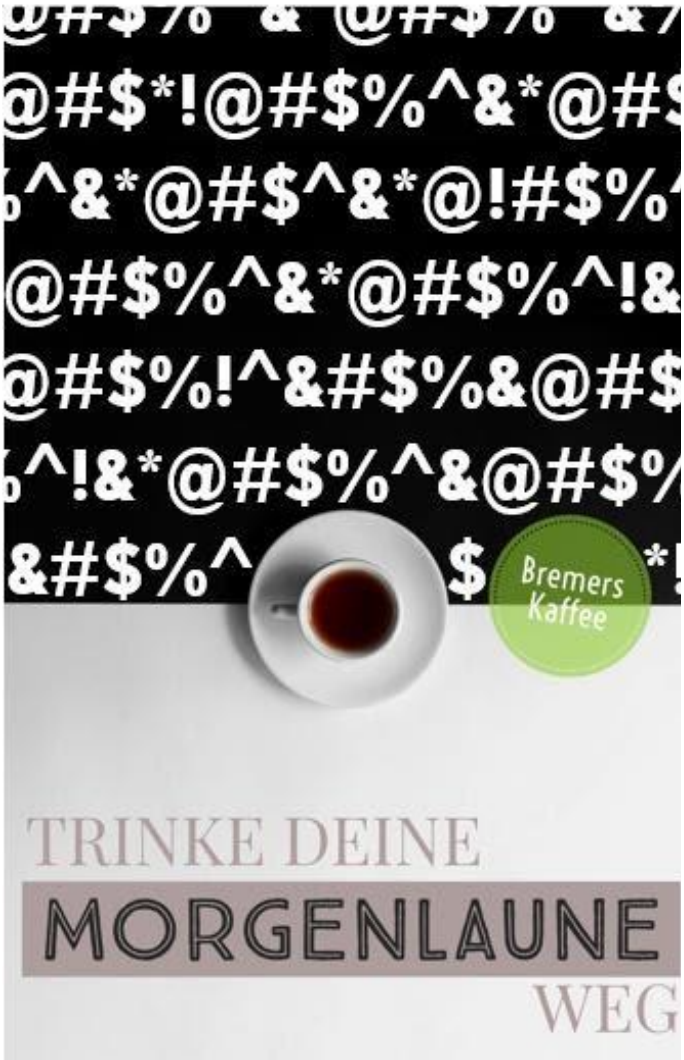
Appendix A. Ads

Ads with German swears


Bremers Kaffee
TRINKE
DEINE VERDAMMTE
MORGENLAUNE
WEG


SEI KEIN IDIOT DER MIT LEEREN HÄNDEN ERSCHEINT!
BOTTLED
"EIN BIER DAS JEDEM FREUDE BEREITET"
Unter 16, kein Alkohol!

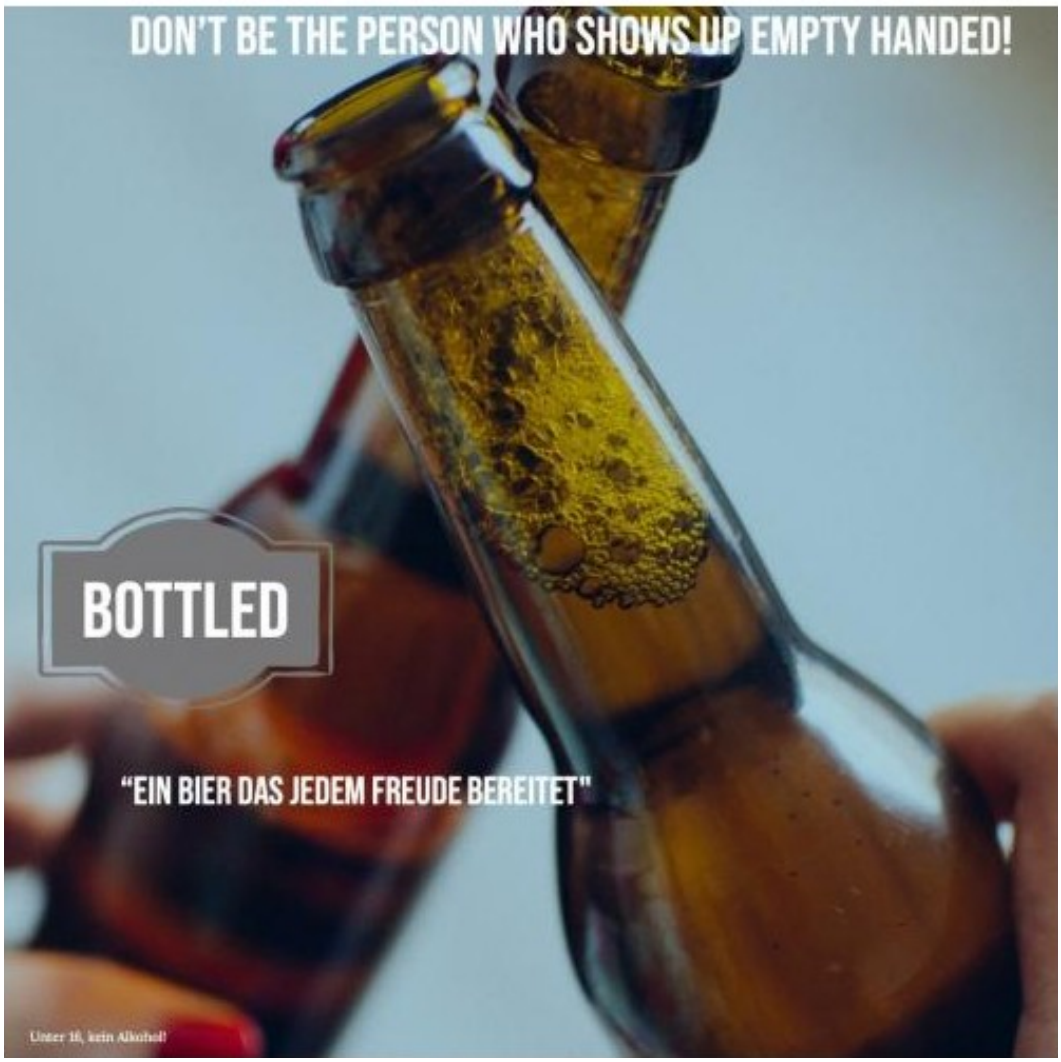
German ads without swears




SEI NICHT DIE PERSON DIE MIT LEEREN HÄNDEN ERSCHEINT!
BOTTLED
"EIN BIER DAS JEDEM FREUDE BEREITET"
Unter 16, kein Alkohol!

Mixed English and German ads without swears


@#$*!@#$%^&*@#$
%^&*@#$^&*@!#$%^
@#$%^&*@#$%^!&
@#$%!^&#$%&@#$
%^!&*@#$%^&@#$%
&#$%^
$
Bremers Kaffee
DRINK YOUR
MORNING MOOD
AWAY


DON'T BE THE PERSON WHO SHOWS UP EMPTY HANDED!
BOTTLED
"EIN BIER DAS JEDEM FREUDE BEREITET"
Unter 16, kein Alkohol!

Appendix B. Tables

Table 2

Distribution of version of the ad and language of ad (in numbers).

		Ad Language		
		Mixed English and German	German	Total
Version	Swear word	32	34	66
	No swear word	38	32	70
	Total	70	66	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .499$

Table 3

Distribution of gender of participants for version of ad and language of ad for all participants.

		Gender				Total
		Male	Female	Other	Don't want to say	
Version	Swear word	27	39	0	0	66
	No swear word	28	40	1	1	70
	Total	55	79	1	1	136*
Ad language	Mixed English and German	29	40	0	1	70
	German	26	39	1	0	66
	Total	55	79	1	1	136**

*homogeneous distribution $p = .590$

**homogeneous distribution $p = .560$

Table 4

Distribution of age of participants for version of ad and ad language for all participants.

Version	Ad language

		Swear word	No swear word	Total	Mixed English and German	German	Total
Age	18	3	1	4	3	1	4
	19	1	1	2	1	1	2
	20	3	0	3	1	2	3
	21	3	2	5	4	1	5
	22	17	7	24	10	14	24
	23	8	7	15	7	8	15
	24	15	26	41	19	22	41
	25	4	7	11	6	5	11
	26	1	3	4	3	1	4
	27	0	3	3	3	0	3
	28	1	0	1	1	0	1
	30	1	0	1	0	1	1
	32	0	2	2	1	1	2
	45	0	1	1	1	0	1
	47	1	0	1	0	1	1
	48	0	1	1	0	1	1
	49	1	0	1	1	0	1
	52	0	1	1	1	0	1
	53	1	1	2	1	1	2
	54	0	1	1	1	0	1
	57	2	1	3	2	1	3
	58	0	2	2	1	1	2
	59	2	1	3	2	1	3
	60	1	0	1	0	1	1
	61	0	2	2	0	2	2
	66	1	0	1	1	0	1
Total		66	70	136*	70	66	136**

*homogeneous distribution $p = .137$

**homogeneous distribution $p = .707$

Table 5

Distribution of level of education for version of ad and ad language for all participants.

	Version	Ad language

		Swear word	No swear word	Total	Mixed English and German	German	Total
Level of education	Secondary education	16	13	29	18	11	29
	Vocational training	9	15	24	11	13	24
	Bachelor's Degree	30	24	54	27	27	54
	Master's Degree	10	17	27	12	15	27
	Doctoral Degree	1	1	2	2	0	2
Total		66	70	136*	70	66	136**

*homogeneous distribution p = .382

**homogeneous distribution p = .369

Table 6

Distribution of context L2 acquisition for all participants.

Context	Frequency	Percent
Naturalistic	5	3.7
Instructed	44	3.4
Mixed	87	6.0
Total	136	100*

* homogeneous distribution for version p = .692 and ad language p = .603

Table 7

Distribution of age of L2 acquisition for all participants.

Age	Frequency	Percent
0-12	80	58.8
12-18	50	36.8
18+	6	4.4
Total	136	100*

* homogeneous distribution for version p = .631 and ad language p = .355

Table 8

Distribution of self-assessed L2 skills for all participants.

Self-assessed skills in English	N	*M*	*SD*
Speaking	136	5.1	1,0
Writing	136	5.2	1.2
Reading	136	5.6	1.1
Listening comprehension	136	5.3	1.1

Table 9

Distribution of frequency of swearing for all participants.

Frequency of swearing	Frequency	Percent
Never	1	0.7
Rarely	21	15.4
Occasionally	24	17.6
Sometimes	41	30.1
Frequently	34	25.0
Usually	7	5.1
Very frequently	8	5.9
Total	136	100

Table 10

Distribution of frequency of swearing for version of ad.

		Version		
		Swear word	No swear word	Total
Frequency of swearing	Never	0	1	1
	Rarely	10	11	21
	Occasionally	12	12	24
	Sometimes	24	17	41
	Frequently	13	21	34
	Usually	5	2	7
	Very frequently	2	6	8
Total		66	70	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .294$

Table 11

Distribution of frequency of swearing for ad language.

		Ad language		
		Mixed English and German	German	Total
Frequency of swearing	Never	1	0	1
	Rarely	8	13	21
	Occasionally	14	10	24
	Sometimes	23	18	41
	Frequently	17	17	34
	Usually	3	4	7
	Very frequently	4	4	8
Total		70	66	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .745$

Table 13

Distribution of perceived appropriateness of swearing of participants.

Rating of appropriateness	Frequency	Percent
Absolutely Inappropriate	2	1.5
Inappropriate	18	13.2
Slightly Inappropriate	42	30.9
Neither Inappropriate nor Appropriate	42	30.9
Slightly Appropriate	23	16.9
Appropriate	8	5.9
Absolutely Appropriate	1	0.7
Total	136	100

Table 14

Distribution for perceived appropriateness of swearing for version of ad.

	Version		
	Swear word	No swear word	Total

Appropriateness of swearing	Absolutely Inappropriate	0	2	2
	Inappropriate	11	7	18
	Slightly Inappropriate	20	22	42
	Neither Inappropriate nor Appropriate	23	19	42
	Slightly Appropriate	8	15	23
	Appropriate	4	4	8
	Absolutely Appropriate	0	1	1
	Total	66	70	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .382$

Table 15

Distribution for perceived appropriateness of swearing for ad language.

		Ad language		
		Mixed English and German	German	Total
Appropriateness of swearing	Absolutely Inappropriate	1	1	2
	Inappropriate	10	8	18
	Slightly Inappropriate	18	24	42
	Neither Inappropriate nor Appropriate	25	17	42
	Slightly Appropriate	11	12	23
	Appropriate	5	3	8
	Absolutely Appropriate	0	1	1
Total		70	66	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .672$

Table 16

Distribution of frequency of product use (chewing gum) for version of ad.

		Version		
		Swear word	No swear word	Total
Frequency of product use (chewing gum)	Never	6	6	12
	Rarely	13	10	23
	Occasionally	15	15	30
	Sometimes	9	8	17
	Frequently	14	19	33
	Usually	2	5	7
	Very often	7	7	14
Total		66	70	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .882$

Table 17

Distribution of frequency of product use (chewing gum) for ad language.

		Ad language		
		Mixed English and German	German	Total
Frequency of product use (chewing gum)	Never	9	3	12
	Rarely	11	12	23
	Occasionally	15	15	30
	Sometimes	8	9	17
	Frequently	17	16	33
	Usually	4	3	7
	Very often	6	8	14
Total		70	66	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .751$

Table 18

Distribution of frequency of product use (coffee) for version of ad.

		Version		
		Swear word	No swear word	Total
Frequency of product use (coffee)	Never	14	9	23
	Rarely	7	7	14

	Occasionally	3	3	6
	Sometimes	7	3	10
	Frequently	9	16	25
	Usually	8	16	24
	Very often	18	16	34
Total		66	70	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .292$

Table 19

Distribution of frequency of product use (coffee) for ad language.

		Ad language		
		Mixed English and German	German	Total
Frequency of product use (coffee)	Never	15	8	23
	Rarely	8	6	14
	Occasionally	2	4	6
	Sometimes	3	7	10
	Frequently	11	14	25
	Usually	10	14	24
	Very often	21	13	34
Total		70	66	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .292$

Table 20

Distribution of frequency of product use (beer) for version of ad.

		Version		
		Swear word	No swear word	Total
Frequency of product use (beer)	Never	6	8	14
	Rarely	11	14	25
	Occasionally	9	10	19
	Sometimes	15	21	36
	Frequently	12	9	21
	Usually	7	4	11
	Very often	6	4	10
Total		66	70	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .779$

Table 21

Distribution of frequency of product use (beer) for ad language.

		Ad language		
		Mixed English and German	German	Total
Frequency of product use (beer)	Never	7	7	14
	Rarely	9	16	25
	Occasionally	8	11	19
	Sometimes	22	14	36
	Frequently	15	6	21
	Usually	5	6	11
	Very often	4	6	10
Total		70	66	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .207$

Table 22

Frequency of product use (chewing gum, coffee, beer) for all participants.

	Chewing gum		Coffee		Beer	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Never	12	8.8	23	16.9	14	10.3
Rarely	23	16.9	14	10.3	25	18.4
Occasionally	30	22.1	6	4.4	19	14.0
Sometimes	17	12.5	10	7.4	36	26.5
Frequently	33	24.3	25	18.4	21	15.4
Usually	7	5.1	24	17.6	11	8.1
Very often	14	10.3	34	25.0	10	7.4
Total	136	100	136	100	136	100

Table 23

Distribution of the sum of self-assessed English skills for version of ad on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = low; 7 = high).

	Version	Total

		Swear word	No swear word	
Self-assessed English skills	2.00	1	0	1
	2.50	2	1	3
	3.00	0	2	2
	3.50	1	2	3
	3.75	1	2	3
	4.00	2	4	6
	4.25	2	2	4
	4.50	3	3	6
	4.75	7	2	9
	5.00	3	8	11
	5.25	8	1	9
	5.50	6	10	16
	5.75	5	8	13
	6.00	11	11	22
	6.25	4	5	9
	6.50	3	5	8
	6.75	2	1	3
	7.00	5	3	8
Total		66	70	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .377$

Table 24

Distribution of the sum of self-assessed English skills for ad language on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = low; 7 = high).

		Ad language		Total
		Mixed English and German	German	
Self-assessed English skills	2.00	1	0	1
	2.50	1	2	3
	3.00	1	1	2
	3.50	1	2	3
	3.75	0	3	3
	4.00	4	2	6
	4.25	1	3	4
	4.50	2	4	6

4.75	5	4	9
5.00	9	2	11
5.25	5	4	9
5.50	9	7	16
5.75	5	8	13
6.00	11	11	22
6.25	7	2	9
6.50	2	6	8
6.75	3	0	3
7.00	3	5	8
Total	70	66	136*

*homogeneous distribution $p = .235$

Table 33

Means and Standard Deviations for attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the product, purchase intention, emotional response, perceived source credibility and perceived offensiveness (1 = low; 7 = high) for gender in function of ad version (swear word, no swear word).

Variable	Version	Gender	*M*	*SD*	N
Attitude towards the ad	Swear word	Male	3.15	0.75	27
		Female	3.30	0.91	39
		Total	3.24	0.85	66
	No swear word	Male	3.37	0.84	28
		Female	3.14	0.71	40
		Other	1.38	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	1.08	0.0	1
		Total	3.18	0.83	70
	Total	Male	3.26	0.80	55
		Female	3.22	0.82	79
		Other	1.38	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	1.08	0.0	1
		Total	3.21	0.84	136
Attitude towards the product	Swear word	Male	3.92	1.02	27
		Female	3.88	1.0	39
		Total	3.89	1.01	66
	No swear word	Male	4.25	.062	28
		Female	3.84	0.94	40
		Other	1.33	0.0	1

Variable	Version	Gender	*M*	*SD*	N
		Don't want to say	2.87	.00	1
		Total	3.96	0.90	70
	Total	Male	4.09	0.85	55
		Female	3.86	0.97	79
		Other	1.33	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	2.87	0.0	1
		Total	3.93	0.95	136
Purchase intention	Swear word	Male	2.83	1.15	27
		Female	3.03	1.16	39
		Total	2.95	1.15	66
	No swear word	Male	3.32	0.81	28
		Female	2.93	1.01	40
		Other	1.33	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	1.00	0.0	1
		Total	3.03	0.98	70
	Total	Male	3.08	1.01	55
		Female	3.00	1.08	79
		Other	1.33	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	1.00	0.0	1
		Total	2.99	1.06	136
Emotional Response	Swear word	Male	4.78	0.58	27
		Female	4.63	0.64	39
		Total	4.69	0.61	66
	No swear word	Male	5.07	0.55	28
		Female	4.77	0.72	40
		Other	2.90	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	5.29	0.0	1
		Total	4.87	0.70	70
	Total	Male	4.93	0.58	55
		Female	4.70	0.68	79
		Other	2.90	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	5.29	0.0	1
		Total	4.78	0.66	136
Perceived Source Credibility	Swear word	Male	3.90	0.79	27
		Female	4.10	0.76	39
		Total	4.02	0.77	66
	No swear	Male	4.19	0.62	28

Variable	Version	Gender	*M*	*SD*	N
	word	Female	3.94	0.83	40
		Other	1.33	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	1.00	0.0	1
		Total	3.96	0.89	70
	Total	Male	4.05	0.72	55
		Female	4.02	0.79	79
		Other	1.33	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	1.00	0.0	1
		Total	3.99	0.83	136
Perceived offensiveness	Swear word	Male	4.07	1.19	27
		Female	4.31	1.15	39
		Total	4.21	1.16	66
	No swear word	Male	3.06	1.37	28
		Female	3.58	1.39	40
		Other	6.33	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	4.67	0.0	1
		Total	3.42	1.43	70
	Total	Male	3.56	1.37	55
		Female	3.94	1.32	79
		Other	6.33	0.0	1
		Don't want to say	4.67	0.0	1
		Total	3.81	1.36	136

Appendix C. Questionnaire

Q1.1

Liebe Teilnehmer.

Wir würden uns freuen, wenn Sie an unserer Umfrage zum Thema Werbung teilnehmen würden. Die Bearbeitung unseres Online-Fragebogens dauert ca. **10 Minuten**. Ihre Teilnahme bleibt selbstverständlich **anonym** und die Ergebnisse der Umfrage werden ausschließlich zu Forschungszwecken im Fachbereich Informations- und Kommunikationswissenschaften an der Radboud Universität in Nijmegen (Niederlande) genutzt. Ihre Teilnahme an der Studie ist freiwillig und Sie können die Teilnahme jederzeit beenden.

Die Umfrage besteht aus **zwei Teilen**: Als Erstes werden Sie drei verschiedene Werbeanzeigen zu sehen bekommen, zu denen Sie dann im Anschluss Fragen beantworten werden. Am Ende der Umfrage werden Ihnen Fragen zu Ihrer Person gestellt.

Klicken Sie auf **'Ich stimme zu'**, wenn Sie:

- die obigen Informationen gelesen und zur Kenntnis genommen haben
- sich dazu bereit erklären, freiwillig an der Umfrage teilzunehmen
- mindestens 18 Jahre alt sind

Falls Sie nicht an der Umfrage teilnehmen möchten, verlassen Sie bitte diese Website.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Mithilfe!

Sollten Sie weitere Informationen zu dieser Studie wünschen, kontaktieren Sie bitte m.holten@student.ru.nl

Q1.2 Ich habe die obigen Informationen zur Kenntnis genommen und stimme den Bedingungen zu.

Q2.2 In den folgenden acht Fragen werden Sie gebeten, Ihre Meinung zu einer Kaugummi Werbeanzeige anzugeben, die im nächsten Monat in Deutschland veröffentlicht werden soll.

Q2.4 Bitte lesen Sie die folgenden Aussagen sorgfältig durch und geben Sie Ihre Meinung an.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Ich mag diese Anzeige (1)							
Die Anzeige ist unterhaltsam (2)							
Die Anzeige ist nützlich (3)							
Die Anzeige ist wichtig (4)							
Die Anzeige ist interessant (5)							
Die Anzeige ist informativ (6)							
Ich würde diese Anzeige nochmal sehen wollen (7)							
Die Anzeige ist gut (8)							

Q2.6 Bitte lesen Sie die folgenden Aussagen sorgfältig durch und geben Sie Ihre Meinung an.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Ich mag dieses Produkt (1)							
Das Produkt ist nützlich (2)							
Das Produkt ist interessant (3)							
Das Produkt ist gut (4)							
Ich würde das Produkt gerne benutzen (5)							

Q2.8 Bitte lesen Sie die folgenden Aussagen sorgfältig durch und geben Sie Ihre Meinung an.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Meine Bereitschaft, dieses Produkt zu kaufen, ist hoch (1)							
Ich werde dieses Produkt wahrscheinlich kaufen (2)							
Ich würde beabsichtigen, dieses Produkt zu kaufen (3)							
Meine Absicht, das Produkt zu kaufen, ist hoch (4)							

Q2.10 Bitte vervollständigen Sie die unten stehende Aussage.

	Überhaupt nicht beleidigend (1)	Nicht beleidigend (2)	Eher nicht beleidigend (4)	Neutral (5)	Eher beleidigend (6)	Beleidigend (7)	Extrem beleidigend (8)
Ich erachte diese Werbeanzeige als ... (1)							

Q2.12 Bitte lesen Sie die folgenden Aussagen sorgfältig durch und geben Sie Ihre Meinung an.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Werbeanzeige macht mich glücklich (1)							
Die Werbeanzeige begeistert mich (2)							
Die Werbeanzeige macht mich wütend (3)							
Die Werbeanzeige irritiert mich (4)							
Die Werbeanzeige macht, dass ich mich schuldig fühle (5)							
Die Werbeanzeige macht, dass ich mich schäme (6)							
Die Werbeanzeige							

macht mich traurig (7)							

Q2.14 Bitte vervollständigen Sie die unten stehende Aussage.

	Schwer zu verstehen (1)	Ziemlich schwer zu verstehen (2)	Eher schwer zu verstehen (3)	Neutral (4)	Eher einfach zu verstehen (5)	Ziemlich einfach zu verstehen (6)	Einfach zu verstehen (7)
Diese Werbeanzeige ist... (1)							

Q2.16 Bitte lesen Sie die folgenden Aussagen sorgfältig durch und geben Sie Ihre Meinung an.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Der Inserent hat Erfahrung mit dem beworbenen Produkt (1)							
Der Inserent ist vertrauenswürdig (2)							

Q2.18 Bitte lesen Sie die unten stehende Aussage sorgfältig durch und geben Sie Ihre Meinung an.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Neutral (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Diese Werbeanzeige ist ehrlich (1)							

Q6.2 Bitte geben Sie Ihre Muttersprache an.
Deutsch (1) Niederländisch (2) Andere (3)

Q6.3 Bitte geben Sie Ihr Alter an. _____

Q6.4 Bitte geben Sie das Geschlecht an, mit dem Sie sich am ehesten assoziieren.
Mann (1) Frau (2) Andere (3) Das möchte ich nicht sagen (4)

Q6.5 Was ist die höchste Ausbildungsstufe, die Sie abgeschlossen haben oder derzeit besuchen?
Grundschule (1) Sekundarschulausbildung (Hauptschule, Gesamtschule, Gymnasium) (2) Berufsausbildung (3) Bachelor Abschluss (4) Master Abschluss (5) Doktorgrad (6) Keine abgeschlossene Ausbildung (7)

Q6.6 In welcher Art von Kontext haben Sie Ihre englischen Sprachkenntnisse erworben?
Ich habe sie im Alltagsleben gelernt (1) Ich wurde unterrichtet (2) Eine Mischung aus beidem (3)

Q6.7 Wie alt waren Sie, als Sie English gelernt haben?
0-12 (1) 12-18 (2) 18+ (3)

Q6.9 Bitte beurteilen Sie Ihre Englischkenntnisse, indem Sie Ihre Fähigkeiten in den folgenden Bereichen bewerten.

	Sehr schlecht (1)	Schlecht (2)	Unterdurchschnittlich (3)	Durchschnittlich (4)	Gut (5)	Sehr gut (6)	Ausgezeichnet (7)
Sprechen (1)							
Schreiben (2)							
Lesen (3)							
Hörverstehen (4)							

Q6.10 Wie oft fluchen Sie?

	Nie (1)	Kaum (2)	Gelegentlich (3)	Manchmal (4)	Häufig (5)	Gewöhnlich (6)	Sehr oft (7)
Ich fluche... (1)							

Q6.11 Bitte geben Sie Ihre Meinung zu der folgenden Aussage an.

	Völlig unangebracht (1)	Unangebracht (2)	Eher unangebracht (3)	Neutral (4)	Eher angebracht (5)	Angebracht (6)	Völlig angebracht (7)
Im Allgemeinen finde ich den Gebrauch von Schimpfwörtern... (1)							

Q6.14 Wie häufig konsumieren/nutzen Sie die folgenden Produkte?

	Nie (1)	Kaum (2)	Gelegentlich (3)	Manchmal (4)	Häufig (5)	Gewöhnlich (6)	Sehr häufig (7)
Kaugummi (2)							
Kaffee (5)							
Bier (1)							