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„Bad language: A study of German- English bilinguals’
perception of swear words in L1 and L2“

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List of abbreviations

BLW= bad language word/s (McEnery)

ENS= English native speaker(s)

F= female

Fuck G= fuck in a German context, dialogue

GNS= German native speaker(s)

L1= first language, native language

L2= second language, in this paper English

M= male

Shit E= shit in an English context, dialogue

Shit G = shit in a German context, dialogue

1 Introduction

“We swear by, we swear that [something is so], we swear to [do something], we swear at [somebody or something] and sometimes we swear simply out of exasperation.” (Hughes 1991: 4)

According to Hughes it appears that using swear words is simply a part of us and our language usage.

But what about people who want to understand and use bad language words (swear words, dirty words or bad language words will be referred to as BLW (McEnery 2006: 29)) in a second language? How do they use and perceive BLW in L2?

The main research question of this paper is about how bilinguals perceive L1 and L2 BLW and whether or not difference can be perceived.

Consequently, a theoretical basis of language and BLW will introduce the topic of BLW use and perception in L1 and L2. This will be done by a general introduction to BLW in order to learn the difference between the manifold categories of and views about BLW.

In addition, theories and hypothesis about psychology, emotions, bilingualism, neurolinguistics and theories about gender differences will be the basis for the following empirical study part of the paper.

The empirical study part will consist of two main sections. The first section describes the research question, which defends the importance of context and points out the choice of swear words. The second section of the empirical part deals with the results of the BLW referring to body parts, bodily effluvia and sexual behavior. All of the results will focus on the participants' characters influencing BLW perception, on the actual L1 and L2 difference in perception and on gender differences. Last but not least, there will also be a short section about buffer words that ensures participants did not get too used to BLW.

All in all, the goal of this paper is to find out about L1 and L2 differences when it comes to the perception of swear words.

1 Theoretical part

1.1 Research question

The title of this paper is: A study of German English bilinguals' Perception of Swears Words in L1 and L2. This means that the main research question is: How do German native speakers, who speak English perceive swear words in their mother tongue and in their second language English?

In order to develop the actual research question I will first present important theories of the perception of emotional words, in our case swear words. However, in the case of the following researchers the emotional words are words and phrases provoking emotions, in a first and a second language. Secondly, the main research question, which is difficult to answer without "sub-questions," will be discussed in the course of this chapter and paper. The "sub-questions" consider factors such as language level, personality and gender.

I want to find out how L2 BLW are perceived by German native speakers and whether personality traits and gender influence the perception of BLW. Do phonologically similar words to their L1 counterparts provoke less different reactions to L1 reactions and are women really expected to react stronger than men to bad language words? The research question of how German native speakers perceive BLW in a second language is based on theories and findings by Harris and Aycicegi (2003), Dewaele (2002;2004), Kiener (1983) and the general knowledge about swear word production in an L1 by Allan and Burridge (1991;2007), Pinker (2008), McEnery (2006) and Jay(1992;2000). While Harris and Aycicegi (2003) focus research rather on emotion provoking words, Kiener (1983) concentrated on aggression, Dewaele (2004) on personality traits influencing swear words and Jay(1992; 2000) on investigations *into* psychology and neurolinguistic *occurrences* when swearing takes place, I focus my research on a combination that will be further explained in the chapter entitled Theories. During our lives we learn that emotions and words are linked together (a process which is mostly rooted and started in childhood when the first language acquisition happens (see Pinker 2007)). Several researchers analyzed what words are linked to which kind of emotions in what language; be it the first language (L1) or another language learned (L1,L2,Lx...).

A pair of scientists who thoroughly investigated L1 and L2 perception differences are Harris and Aycicegi (2003), who tested L1 and L2 Turkish-English bilinguals on their reaction to emotion words. They found out that taboo words (e.g. body parts or scatological terms) and childhood reprimands (e.g. "Don't do that!") are more physiologically arousing in L1 than in

L2. According to them fear and anxiety in a childhood language learning context are of high importance for the emotional perception of words and are strongly linked to each other. Taboo words and childhood reprimands in L1 Turkish and L2 English showed high electrodermal response in a skin conductance response test¹ (SCR). Harris and Aycicegi achieved the strongest reactions when the study's persons were confronted with typical L1 childhood reprimands. They found out that fright and anxiety in a childhood learning context play a big role in the later emotional perception of words as an adult. Black and Beckwith (in Harris and Aycicegi 2003) say that this reaction is due to the fact that L1 is learned at the same time that the emotional regulatory system in the brain develops. Words achieved during this period are strongly linked to specific emotions and feelings, which will mostly be kept until and during adulthood.

Harris, Pinker, Dewaele and Jay reckon that native language vocabulary may contain more emotional connotations due to the proliferation of neural connections in early and middle childhood (Harris and Harris (2003), Pinker (2007), Dewaele (2004)). This is because the amygdala (see Figure 1) in the brain connects words and memories to emotions (Pinker 2008:332) and therefore an early age of acquisition can often be seen as a predictor for stronger reactions on emotion words in L1 than L2 (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002:271); especially for those words connotated to strong emotions such as joy, anger or sadness. These words may be phrases expressing the actual feelings *I am happy!* or rather indirect expressions of feelings that can be only understood in context i.e. *Shut the fuck up* or *Fuck!!!*.

Hence, not only the perception but especially the expression of emotions as an illocutionary act is more difficult in a second or third language than in the native language L1 if learned in the artificial environment of a classroom where there is little display of anger and other strong emotions (Rintell). Teachers may have little confidence in using emotional words and expressions due to socio-cultural restrictions of using impolite or aggressive vocabulary in the classroom with children and young adults. Lots of aggressive terms in every day language stem from the field of BLW and it would be impolite, inappropriate and maybe even shocking to teach pupils this kind of vocabulary. A consequence of the lack of teaching good and bad emotion words in the L2 classroom (in this case the focus is put on BLW) is that someone who learned L2 in the classroom may tend to express his or her emotions in L2 *less* (Rintell: 130). Rintell's statement would mean for this paper that the German English bilinguals of this study who learned L2 in the English classroom may tend to have less emotional connections

¹ In contrast in a papillary response experiment taboo words did not cause more psychological

to English BLW (the topography of this study's participants will be discussed in the chapter Participants). Although, it should be kept in mind that, even if L2 may not be the preferred language for expressing feelings (see Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002:125) those who have the necessary language level will express positive and negative feelings in L2 to make it clear to their environment what they feel as "[...], the sense of offense comes from speech recognition and a listener's connotation with it." (Pinker 2008: 369).

At this point it becomes important to note that most people have a preferred language. For the perception and production of swear words the preferred language tends to be L1 (Dewaele 2004:125). This means that instructed learners use L2, L3, Lx less to express anger and emotions than mixed and naturalistic learners as they simply lack the emotional connotations (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002:125,130). Additionally, Dewaele's research shows that swear and taboo words (the difference will be explained in detail in the chapter Categories) have more emotional force in L1 than in L2 because of their greater perceived strength; and as Harris and Aycicegi demonstrate due to the proliferation of neural connections in early childhood (Dewaele 2004: 212; Harris et al. 2003). However, not only people who learn L2 later in life experience differences in the usage of aggressive words but even when L2 is learned in middle childhood (in primary school) L1 remains the dominant language with regard to the expression of emotions (Jay 200:125).

Moreover, the perception and production of emotionally strong words does not only depend on language proficiency and age of acquisition but strongly and partly on personality traits such as religiosity, sexual anxiety, impulsivity and extrovertedness (Jay 2000:28). Therefore, Dewaele deduces that extroverted people dare to use more colloquial vocabulary, which includes swear words, prophanities etc. in L1 as well as in L2, as it is socially risky and they more daring.

In conclusion, Harris, Aycicegi, Dewaele and Pinker show that emotion words, childhood reprimands and taboo words, from the L1 provoke stronger reactions than their L1 equivalents.

Therefore the main question of this paper concerning the emotion words BLW is:

How do German native speakers perceive L2 BLW?

1. If a difference exists between the perception of swear words in L1 and L2, does it only depend on the language or on other factors such as a person's personality, gender, tone or maybe even the word itself ?
 - 1.1 Does personality overrule the factor language?
 - 1.2 Does gender overrule the factor language?
2. How will people react to aggressive dialogues once with and once without swear words?
 - 2.1 Will there be a difference in perception depending on the words or rather on the tone and message of the dialogues?
3. Will cognates and phonetically similar words in L1 and L2 provoke similar reactions?
4. Will German native speakers react in the same way to English swear words in a German context as to English swear words in an English context or will they treat the BLW the same way they would do with German swear words in a German context?

As can be seen one research question cannot simply be answered without considering several follow up questions. In the course of this paper I will try to find, with the help of an empirical study and a theoretical basis the answer or at least a way to answer at least some of these questions.

2.2 General Introduction to swear words

2.2.1 Categories

“Swear words”, “bad language words”, “dirty words” and “filthy words” are only a few names for the kind of terms which most of the time in most cultures and most periods were seen as taboo in certain contexts. Whether a bad language word (McEnery 2006:29) is taboo, shocking and insulting or not depends on a society’s societal norms and behavioral conventions. The BLW definitions of this paper will in general be a combination of Jay’s (1992; 2000), Hughes’(1991), McEnery’s (2006) and Allan’s and Burrridge’s (1991;2007) explanations of BLW; as it is unnecessary to exclude either the one or the other. McEnery (2006:32), for instance, gives a very exact and precise grammatical categorization of BLW, whereas Allan and Burrridge (2007:1-32) divide them into several non-grammatical categories according to what they denotatively mean.

The number, variations and ways of combining BLW may be as numerous and creative as their speakers themselves. This is why McEnery’s (2006), Allan & Burrridge’s (1991,2007), Jay’s (1992,2000) and Pinker’s (2008) approaches of explaining BLW will be depicted in detail in this chapter, in order to better understand later explanations regarding the use and perception of BLW.

2.2.2 Epithets by Goffman

The most important category of this paper, which is a major part of the questionnaire and research, is the category of epithets, or, according to Goffman (1981), response cries, which “...are brief but forceful bursts of emotional language.” (1981:7). Goffmann described response cries as some kind of emotional self talk that do not need a physically present listener in order to release an emotion. Yet, they fulfill a communicative effect: by uttering a response cry the speaker wants to inform his or her environment about his or her momentary emotional state; even if nobody is present at the moment of the outburst. Response cries can be words of exclamatory imprecation such as *Hell!* and *Shit!* but may in the same time be called ejaculatory expressions as they are born out of the moment and jump out of our mouth without any other thought about this appropriateness. Response cries mostly express loss of

control, startle, revulsion, strain, pain, sexual satisfaction and glee; and apparently happen on a reflexive automatic level. In contrast, controlled propositional cursing is used and employed in jokes, sarcasm, evaluations, storytelling and denotative descriptions (Goffman 1981:53).

Therefore it can be said that response cries, or expletives, are habitual and serve to reduce the anger level as for example when one always says the same word when hurting oneself. Expletives can be expression like *Aaaa!* as well as *Shit!*, depending on the level of pain or anger that needs to be released. Whether *Aaaa!* or *Shit!* is uttered depends on the social conventions which determine what kind of response cry is omitted. However, self-talk is still a taboo in our society (Pinker 2004: 81) as a person is expected to speak to a physically present hearer or receiver of the message. Therefore response cries, which frequently happen in a selftalk context, assign to a person's most inward state and direct the attention to what produced it (Pinker 2004: 90). However it appears that even expletive response cries adhere to a code. According to Goffman (1981) we take the time to choose the correct code, meaning that we take the time to choose an appropriate response cry; *Shoot!* if for example children are around or *Shit!* when one is alone; and the BLW gives more satisfaction. We decide for a code in the same way bilinguals take their time to select the correct code and language according to the situation and recipient (1981: 98).²

The above mentioned response cries may be typical of an English context, but as they not only depend on the situational context but also on the culture of the speaker francophone people would rather shout *Aye!* and *Putain!* whereas the German speakers' equivalent for *Aaa!* and *Aye!* would be *Au!*. These examples show that even in western cultures the response cry, in the form of a simple sound, are culture dependent and must be learned by an L2 learner in the same way he or she does with new vocabulary³. Generally it can be said that expletives are the least offensive way of using taboo words (Pinker 2004: 358) as they are not concretely directed at a listener, even if one should be present, but have a rather cathartic function. A response cry is usually an exclamatory interjection, which does not necessarily have to be a full-fledged.

² In general it can be said that "automatic" and "controlled" ways of speech exist. With regard to the thesis' topic, cursing belongs to the former and for example insulting someone on purpose to the latter (Jay 2000:34).

³ A fact I personally experienced. When I hit my toe against the shelf in the supermarket my French friend, who was behind the other shelves, did not understand why I cried *Au!* and first did not understand that I actually got hurt.

Summing up, Goffman's explanation for the production, use and perception of response cries or expletives states the fact that expletives help to release negative or very positive emotions and depend on the situational context.

2.2.3 Categorizations of BLW by Jay, McEnery, Pinker, Allan and Burridge

Timothy Jay (1992:5-15) offers a more detailed definition of the different kinds of BLW. Jay (1992:3-10), as will be shown in the following examples, prefers to define the swear word categories in a broader way which makes it easier to understand for the common reader:

It can be said that most BLW are also regarded as taboo words as there is a kind of unwritten but clearly defined social rule not to use them in certain contexts. Therefore it becomes necessary to define and explain what a taboo actually is. A taboo is, in general, "[...]a subject, word, activity etc [...] that people avoid because it is extremely offensive or embarrassing [...]" (Longman 2005:1687) but not necessarily a swear word. This means that taboos can likewise come from the field of profanity, blasphemy, bodily effluvia and organs. Furthermore it can be from the field of sexual behavior and many more. Taboo terms are primarily dysphemistic (see section Allan and Burridge), which implies that they call the most disagreeable aspects of the referent to the mind of a person. They evoke unnecessary details to the listener's mind and they convey an atmosphere of unpleasant informality. Taboos only function as such because they are mostly interpreted in a connotatively rather than denotatively manner, which strongly depends on the hearer's culture, family education and behavior with or treatment of taboo terms. As mentioned taboos do not necessarily come from the field of BLW and therefore I want to illustrate what taboos are with other examples. Our western culture for example has a wide range of taboos for death and dying (among many others) and tends to rather suggest euphemisms in such cases than name the actual event; society tries to exclude the unpleasant thoughts death and dying may call to a person's mind. In German expressions such as *Er schaut sich die Radischen von unten an!*, *Er ist von uns gegangen* exist. The French say that a person is extinguished now (*s'éteindre*), and nearly compare it to an extinct candle than to call the event as it is. In Romanian people may tell others that a person is gone (*S-a dus*) or that he or she hit the edge (*A dat colțul*). English expressions euphemize the death of a person by saying that he or she had passed away or that he or she is gone. The U.S. American culture and language mostly apply taboo terms stemming from body parts, body products, body processes, religion and animals (Jay

1992:169). These examples show that the understanding of taboo words and their euphemisms may even depend on the culture of a person, which means that the study participants' interpretation of L2 BLW may as well be influenced by their American/British culture knowledge.

Other example words counting as taboo come from the section of sexual taboos words. Parents tend to hang taboos on sex and especially body part words for their children in order to avoid dirty sexual connotations which would not fit the innocent image of a child i.e. *willy* instead of *cock* or even *penis* (also see example Harris & Aycicegi's (2003) study about childhood reprimands.). Jay (1992) observes the fact that vulgar and taboo terms are apparently more often used (even though adults try hard to hide them from children) than their clinical and accordingly non-taboo equivalents (1992:153).

Consequently, taboo words can never be understood as universal and generally valid for virtually everybody in this world as it is culture and speaker-listener dependent.

However the categorization of BLW does not stop at taboo words but continues with Jay's (1992) explanation of obscenities. Those largely concentrate on the listener and are generally intended to be disgusting to his or her senses and therefore focus, at least in the American culture and language, on sexual words; "[...] as Americans tend to be less concerned about physical violence" (1992: 5). Here the relationship to taboo words becomes very clear as it is evident that if obscenities had no taboo on them they would not call unpleasant thoughts and feelings to a listener's mind and hence would not be seen as obscene. In American English the words *titts*, instead of *breasts* or *pussy* instead of *vagina* are perceived as filthy and therefore often omitted or censored in movies, TV-shows and generally in the media. This shows that taboos determine what can be interpreted as a swear word, slur, insult and so on.

Generally, taboos and obscenity are not to be confounded with vulgarity. The latter is literally the speech of the common man and woman on the street who are "under-educated, unsocialized [and] unsophisticated" (1992: 6). It is neither bad nor good to speak vulgarly, but reflects a certain crudeness and lack of tactfulness due to the above mentioned factors.

Then there are profanity and blasphemy; the one not to be confounded with the other. Both will not be a part of the study but need to be mentioned in order to make all uses of BLW clear and to facilitate differentiation between BLW categories. A profanity does not necessarily denigrate God, religion or the holy, but makes an ignorant, not inherently but harmfully meant, use of religious or holy expressions. Its indifference and ignorance to these

matters makes the expression an insult, at least to religious persons, e.g. *Jesus Christ, I'm hungry!* (1992:3) In contrast, blasphemies undoubtedly and undoubtedly and intentionally affront the church, God, religion and the holy on purpose. For example: *Screw the pope!* or *Fuck Jesus Christ!*

Scatology is one of the last but one of the most important classes as it plays a major role in this paper. Many BLW belong to the category of **scatology**, which not only refers to feces but also urine (Kiener 1983: 147). Different cultures tend to deal with this very special field of taboo terms in different ways. In western cultures animal and human feces is regarded as something disgusting and infectious but in other cultures it is seen as a source of life and nothing disturbing can be found about it. People in the African and Asian deserts use the dung of their domestic animals to make fire or even to render the walls of their houses as wood is a rarity. In general it can be said that various cultures have various interpretations for certain taboo terms; especially for the scatological ones. Nonetheless, Americans, for example, have chosen theirs, as Jay (1992) states, from sexual (*You bitch!*, *Wanker!*, ...) and religious (*Hell yeah!*, *Jesus Christ!*, ...) expressions, whereas the French have more sexual taboo terms (*Putain!*, *Pédé!*, ...). However German cultures tend to employ more scatological BLW than others (*Scheiße!*, *Scheißdreck!*, ...) (1992:5-9); which is also an important point that will be compared to L1 and L2 and looked at in the empirical study of the paper. It can be observed that every culture has its preferences within the field of BLW and that a lot have scatological terms in use. The French have *Merde!*, the English speaking cultures have *Shit!* (and not only *shit* but a huge variety of it), German has *Scheiße!*, Italian *Merda!* and Romanian *Rahat!* or *Câcat!*. Scatological terms can be found in most languages (at least those mentioned above), their usage, frequency of use and intensity of offensiveness may differ however.

One category by Jay (1992) actually attacks the hearer on a personal level based on external markers of a person. This is the category of **insults** and **slurs** (1992:7-8). They are bad language terms which consist of verbally aggressive attacks on other people. They are essentially of racial, ethnic or a social nature (e.g. sexist jokes) and mean to damage the integrity of the hearer and attack him or her on a personal level. Surprisingly, most insults of sexual looseness (*cunt*, *slut*, *whore*) are directed mostly at women (1992: 177). However, racist insults and slurs were not considered in the study in order to stay with sexual and body BLW as will be later seen.

Jay ordered BLW according to what they actually describe and the most important categories are taboo, obscenity, vulgarity, profanity, blasphemy and scatology. The most important one for this study will be scatology.

However he was not the only one to find ways to describe BLW and therefore McEnery's classification of BLW (2006:32) will be in the focus of this section. According to him BLW can take several grammatical places and forms. They can be predicative negative adjectives (e.g. *the car is shit*), adverbial boosters (e.g. *It's fucking great!*), emphatic adverbs (e.g. *They fucking caught him.*) and premodifying intensifying negative adjectives (e.g. *the fucking bitch*). In addition, he organizes bad language into cursing expletives (e.g. *Fuck you!*) and general expletives (e.g. *Shit!*). The former insults (see definition in the section of Jay) the hearer and the latter has the function of releasing stress or anger and must not necessarily be directed at a recipient. The expletives *fuck* and *shit*, in both manners, namely cursing and general expletives, will be a part of the research as they are used in English, English in a German context and have German translations in German context. Therefore a further comparison of L1 and L2 perception difference will be made easier.

Furthermore, McEnery states that bad language words can have a destinal usage (e.g. *He fucked off.*) or can be an idiomatic set phrase (e.g. *Fuck all! Give a fuck!*). They denote the literal usage of a taboo referent (e.g. *we fucked*), which would not necessarily be a swear word but rather vulgar language (vulgarity will also be explained later in greater detail). A dirty word expression can as well be a figurative extension of the literal meaning of a word as in, *to fuck about*. In addition, there is imagery which is based on the literal meaning of the word as in *I'll kick the shit out of you!* and "[p]ronominal" forms with an undefined referent as in *I got shit to do!* find their counterpart in personal insults referring to a defined entity like in *You fuck!*.

Even though McEnery's categorization of BLW is very helpful in order to understand the grammatical function of BLW, it does not actually take account of the general group it comes from, even though he does give a small range of categories such as oaths and personal insults.

Therefore, a way of categorizing BLW which denotes what they actually mean and how they affect a recipient will be explained in this section. Allan and Burrige (2007) are not so much interested in the grammatical functions of BLW but try to find categories for them. They put much bigger emphasis on the type of swear words; and not on their grammatical position.

Their ways of categorizing are as follows:

1. Comparison of people with animals that are conventionally ascribed certain behavior
2. Epithets derived from tabooed bodily organs (*asshole*), bodily effluvia and sexual behavior (*fucker*)
3. Dysphemistic epithets that pick on real physical characteristics that are tabooed as though they are abnormalities
4. Imprecations and epithets invoking mental subnormality or derangement
5. -IST dysphemisms
6. Slurs on the target's character (1991: 79-85)

The linguists state that people can be compared to animals who are ascribed certain behaviors. For example, a *bitch* is a female dog but, with regard to BLW a nasty and promiscuous woman. Furthermore, Allan and Burridge's categorization extends to the human body and its functions meaning that epithets, for example, can be derived from bodily organs. This kind of BLW mostly refer to sexual organs and have the function of a pars pro toto (Kiener 1983: 152) i.e. *You cunt!* or in German *Du Fotze!*. They can be continued to bodily effluvia *You little shit!* and sexual behavior *You are such a wanker!*. Additionally, there are dysphemistic epithets that pick on real physical characteristics and mental subnormality or derangement, for example *Foureye!* or *You stupid moron!*. Last but not least general slurs on the target's character form an important part of the general BLW vocabulary (2007:79-85).

Moreover, Allan and Burridge (2007:1-39) do not stop at classifying BLW but find it important to assign BLW different degrees of insult in order to make their use and perception more palpable. Hence, they do not only divide them into types of swear words but also into how direct, indirect or insulting the terms are. They even invented the neologism "orthophemism" to describe straight talking, which is formal and more direct than a euphemism and keeps its literal meaning.

"As alternatives to offensive expressions, orthophemisms, like euphemisms, will typically be preferred as desirable or appropriate terms. Examples of all three kinds of language expressions would be *pass away* (typically a euphemism), *snuff it* (typically a dysphemism), and *die* (typically an orthophemism). However, these descriptions are problematic, since what determines them is a set of social attitudes or convention that may vary considerably between dialect groups and even between individual members of the same community."(Allan and Burridge 2007:1-39)

Furthermore, the linguists continue to describe –isms as they see it as an important part of BLW talk. For example, a euphemism is best described by sweet talking and can therefore be seen as colloquial, figurative but indirect expression trying to avoid the actual action, event or else. In contrast, a dysphemism is equal to speaking in an offensive manner and can therefore be portrayed as a rather colloquial, figurative and very direct expression. The scientists did not only invent a new definition but coined the former two idioms together to new expressions denoting ways of BLW use. The terms “euphemistic dysphemisms” refers to euphemistic substitutions of a BLW such as *Shoot!* when *Shit!* is meant. “Euphemistic dysphemisms” are mostly uttered when the situational context does not allow the usage of the dysphemism e.g. an adult is working and hits him- or herself but a child, who should not learn the BLW, is present. “Dysphemistic euphemisms” are words or phrases which would normally insult the hearer of the message but do not because of the specific relationship the speaker and the recipient have to each other. A normally insulting word expression as *You old bastard!* can even function as an endearment if coming from a good old friend or *You bitch, you look fantastic in that dress!* is not more insulting than *Gal, you look fantastic!*. The category of Dysphemistic euphemisms lies especially in the focus of the study and will hopefully help to answer the research question of finding out how people react to BLW in their native language and in the second language. However, what dysphemistic euphemisms and BLW will be used and looked upon will be mentioned in greater detail in the chapter Empirical Part. BLW can not only be assigned grammatical functions, a certain category or type but there even exist various ways of swearing according to Steven Pinker (McEnery 2006; Allan and Burridge 1991,2007; Jay 1992,2000, Pinker 2008).

Pinker (2008) actually depicts five different manners of doing so (see Table 1). Swear and curse words can be descriptively such as *Let's fuck!*, where the term is not actually a swear word but rude and maybe insulting in its descriptive competence. Then there is the idiomatical way of speaking profanely (profanity will be explained in a later paragraph), such as in *It's fucked up!* and the emphatical way which underlines an emotive statement, as for example *This is fucking good!*. Both manners do not mean to insult or hurt a direct hearer but are put to use for underlining a certain situation or feeling of the speaker. The idiomatic and emphatical ways of uttering dysphemisms can have as well a cathartical function helping to release negative feelings, for example, the expletive *Fuck!*, uttered when being very angry or unsatisfied with something. McEnery also calls the cathartical way of swearing general expletive (see section McEnery of this chapter). In contrast, the fifth and last point in Pinker's

list is the abusive way of swearing like *Fuck you, motherfucker!*, which actually intends to abuse, hurt and insult the receiver of the message (2008:350).

Table 1: Five ways of swearing (Pinker 2008:350)

Way of swearing	Example
Descriptively	Let's fuck!
Idiomatically	It's fucked up!
Emphatically	This is fucking good!
Cathartically	Fuck!
Abusively	Fuck you, motherfucker!

As can be seen in this chapter there are almost as many ways of categorizing as there are BLW. However not everything is of importance to this study and therefore I decided to focus on Allan and Burrdige's epithets that are derived from bodily organs, bodily effluvia and sexual behavior. Those can fall into McEnery's category of grammatical function or Jay's way of defining BLWs (see **Table 2**). Those are body parts, *asshole* and *cunt*, which are used as epithets, body parts, once used as an obscene vulgarity (*to piss*) and *shit* as an epithet. Then there is the category of sexual behavior, which is once employed as an dysphemistic euphemism and once as an insult (see *slut* dialogue in the appendix). But this remains to be talked about in detail in the empirical part of this paper.

All in all, there are different categories of BLW but a more important thing about them is how human beings perceive BLW. How are they perceived on a psychological level? What role do emotions play? And how does our brain cope with the production and perception of BLW.

2.3 Theories

2.3.1 Psychology

Jay (2000:79) defines five psychological aspects of cursing. Although, his explanation is actually valid for the BLW acquisition in L1 it can be, however, seen as a helpful device for how people learn and perceive L2 and L2 BLW (even though he focuses on L1 BLW).

The first psychological level mentioned by Jay is the language acquisition of swear and curse words in L1 and L2 (Jay 2000:79). If a difference exists in the perception of swear words in L1 and L2, does it only depend on the language or on other factors such as personality, gender, tone or maybe even the word itself? The acquisition of L2 BLW will mostly not happen in the language classroom, but in a private or familiar setting (such as watching original version movies or even talking to native speakers) and therefore an L2 speaker will tend to use less emotional expression in the L2 (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002: 130). This brings us to the research question: If according to Dewaele L2 speakers tend to use fewer emotional expressions, which can be BLW or an actual expression of an emotion by a sentence, do they then also tend to react less shocked or impressed to L2 BLW? (also see page 9 question 1).

The second psychological aspect of using BLW is the personal memory of cursing. It refers to the experience one has made with curse words, such as receiving rewards or punishment for operating with BLW (also see Harris et al.). The L2 punishments, as those received in childhood, will most probably not happen and deep feelings in connection to the BLW will not prevail. Hence the emotional connotation with the L2 BLW is missing. This fact is the basis for the research question namely if there is a difference in perception of L2 BLW (see question 1. on page 9).

The third important psychological aspect influencing the production and perception of BLW is the personality, which is formed by several aspects. Religiosity, a person's opinion about sex and sexuality, general anxiety, etc. play a big role in a person's judgment of swear words. Here the question arises whether personality will overrule L1 and L2 differences or whether L1 and L2 difference is the significant factor in perception (see question 1.1 on page 9).

The fourth aspect is the cursing habits acquired through classical (e.g. classroom) and operant (e.g. learning by doing or conditioning) learning. Conditioning happens by association between two stimuli: anger causes an angry reaction, which is released via a BLW.

The last and fifth psychological aspect of cursing happens by association between behavior and consequence: being rewarded or punished (see childhood reprimands experiment of Harris & Aycicegi). In the case of L2 BLW it is rather improbable to learn them in the classical way, such as in the classroom from a teacher. The last category designates the sexual lexicon a person has and whether he or she does use children's, medical or vulgar expressions. In the case of an L2 speaker it is again a matter of how he or she learned the language, in the sterile and artificial context of the classroom or in the socio-cultural context with native speakers (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002:262-273).

In the case of this paper, most of the participants, as will become clearer in the chapter Participants, have learned L2 in school and were most probably not confronted with BLW in the environment of the English classroom. Nonetheless, their English level is, according to self evaluations, high and this brings us back to the initial research question: how will the research's participants perceive L1 and L2 BLW.

Hence, the above-mentioned psychological aspects of cursing show that on a psychological level the functions of cursing are to show emotions and to help the environment understand a speakers' emotional productions and reactions. An aspect that also has to be learned too by L2 speakers is, to understand why a native speaker reacts and speaks the way he or she does. Learners and speakers of an L2 do not only have to know the vocabulary but also the socio-cultural conventions of their usage. This leads to the conclusion that cursing happens rarely without meaning or without any intended purpose. Cursing can be seen as a mirror of a person's emotions and physical feelings (Jay 2000: 81). The overall research question is how people perceive L1 and L2 BLW and which raises several sub-questions. Therefore it will be interesting to observe and find an answer to the second research question: how will people react to aggressive dialogues with and without swear words. Will there be a difference in perception depending on the words or rather on the tone and message of the dialogues?

As aggressive dialogues are part of this study, as aggression and BLW go hand-in-hand it is relevant to find out how important emotions are for the use and understanding of BLW.

2.3.2 Emotions

Rosaldo suggests that emotions are

“self-concerning, partly physical responses that are at the same time aspects of moral and ideological attitude; emotions are both feelings and cognitive constructions, linking person, action, and sociological milieu”(Rosaldo in Dewaele 2002: 266).

Lantermann (in Schmidt in (ed.) Koch 1989) assumes that emotions are stored in memory in terms of schemata which generalize emotional experiences. The nice, warm and calm feeling one gets when eating a chocolate cake is, here very simplified, stored in our emotional memory under “happy”, the “bad”, unpleasant feeling one gets when thinking of an exam is stored under bad in the schematic emotion store. Emotions confirm or disconfirm our view of reality by immediate affective acceptance or refusal of “objects” as in the example with the chocolate cake or the exam. “[...], [W]hat we experience as emotions is bound to our activities as internal observers.” (Schmidt in Koch 1989:49). The internal observer is sure about what he or she feels but this confidence can be influenced by our socialization and verbal components (Schmidt in Koch 1989: 49-50). It is meant that a BLW (or memory of a certain event, person or word) achieves its negative connotation by the negative reinforcement and impressions a learner of L1 BLW (or situation) attains. If a child is praised for saying *pooh!* instead of *shit!* and ranted and raved for the reverse, negative emotions will be permanently associated with the BLW and rather positive to its euphemism. Harris and Aycicegi, show illustrated emotional memory very well in their experiment about childhood reprimands and proved that those provoked stronger reactions than any other words. This implies for this paper that aggressive dialogues in L1 may provoke stronger reactions than aggressive dialogues in L2 as speakers of L2 may not have. However the second sub-question of this research of how people will react to aggressive dialogues with and without swear words and if there will be a difference in perception depending on the words or rather on the tone, message and language of the dialogues, remains to be answered by the help of the empirical study.

The way a person employs swear words portrays his or her deep emotional investment in a personal identity and situation. Children for example learn from very early on that cursing happens through the pairing of words with emotional events (Jay 2000:82). Therefore, emotions and BLW are closely linked to each other. Franz Kiener (1983) remarks that verbal aggression is commonly learned through observation and as swearing and cursing are very

affect loaded, they are possibly learned more rapidly because emotions are strongly involved (1983:3-4). Emotive cursing forms (see example *You fucking bastard!*) mostly exists attention getting device in emergencies. It is extremely informative, to a listener, as it transports emotional semantics and additionally soothes the speaker him- or herself, even though, in the meantime, it does not even require a listener (Jay 2000:50).

Aggression is “fundamental emotion“ (Zivin in Koch 1989:13) one of the emotions that will especially be in the focus of this paper is the. A swear word itself is already aggressive; through the unpleasant thoughts it forces on a listener’s mind, but can achieve even more aggression and potential to hurt if it is used in a hostile way. This would be by trying to destroy the recipients face. Hence verbal aggression enforces verbal aggressions and gives rise to the insulting content of a word, which tries to impress. For example, *fucking* in *You fucking bastard!* is a verbal aggression which underlines the degrading connotative meaning in the word *bastard* already has and therefore gives rise to its insulting content.

In the field of angry cursing however, Monatgu draws a distinction between automatic and reflexive swears. The former are conditioned utterances to an action and mostly happen on an unconscious level e.g. hammer hits the finger. The latter happen as a conscious reaction to somebody or something (for more details see chapter Epithets). A third section in the field of angry cursing is described as strategic verbal aggression (see slurs and insults), which is controlled and calculated (Monatgu in Jay 2000: 57). Strategic verbal aggression is not only hostile and means to harm a person’s self-esteem but is also instrumental with the purpose of obtaining some kind of rewards for the speaker. The speaker, if assaulting a hearer, will want to see a shocked or negative reaction. For that purpose it is necessary that the recipient of the message understands the BLW, otherwise the whole act of releasing verbal aggression would not have the intended soothing effect for the speaker. Concretely, participants of the study group need to be able to perfectly understand the L2 dialogues denotatively and connotatively.

„Wenn man jemanden beschimpft ist es wichtig, dass der Beschimpfte das [BLW] versteht da es sonst an Kraft verliert.“ (Kiener 1983:141)

But before it comes to the actual act of using a BLW there are five levels a person must go through. Timothy Jay (1992) put up five-stage model of anger that depicts the well-known principle of physics in which an action demands a reaction.

The following five stages show how much an L2 listener must be able to process in order to really understand the connotative meaning of the aggressive dialogues of this study.

Stage 1: The Offending Event is due to an offender of a certain age, sex, status, ethnic group and physical appearance. It depends, furthermore, on the socio-physical setting (e.g. boss-employee or child-parent etc.) and can also be a non-human wrongdoer (a dog for example). A certain event, behavior, language, intentionality and damage might also be the wrongdoer. Damage and intention must specifically be considered at this stage.

Stage 2, depicts the degree of anger caused by stage 1, which is “[...] basically a response to an obstacle in the setting.”(1992: 101).

Stage 3 consists of attempts to control the upcoming anger. Those attempts function when the wrongdoer is either very young or very old, of high status or of a special social role (e.g. mother). Hence, only age, status, relation, physical size and reasoning ability are factors which help us or which determine our degree of anger control.

Stage 4 results when stage 3 could not be managed. It is called loss of control. In this case a sudden burst of expletives, obscenities or taboo words without time to think about or to control it, happen. Although, they are mostly appropriately chosen to fit the situational context as Goffman (Goffman in Jay 2000:81; Goffman 1981:98) stipulates. Furthermore, the degree of offensiveness is proportionate to the degree of anger experienced.

Last but not least, stage 5: the reprisal where one tries to match the degree of offense experienced with the type and level of words one chooses to retaliate. The purpose of this retribution process, for example among friends, is to correct a certain behavior (Jay 1992:107-108).

Montagu, Lantermann and Jay showed how important emotions and especially negative emotions such as aggression are for the production of BLW in L1. Therefore the questions arise, as this study focuses on the perception of L2 BLW, how important the correct cultural interpretation of emotions is to bilingual minds.

2.3.3 Bilingualism and Emotions

The learning of a native language always happens the most natural way; learning by doing. This assures a strong connection between memories, emotions and words. Harris and Aycicegi clearly showed in their experiment about childhood reprimands and emotional memory that those provoked stronger reactions than any other words learned in childhood or in adulthood. Children, for example, learn from very early on that cursing happens through the pairing of words with emotional events (Jay 2000:82). The implications for this paper are that aggressive dialogues in L1 may provoke stronger reactions than aggressive dialogues in L2 as speakers of L2 may not have enough emotional bonding to L2 BLW.

According to Fiehler emotions are a public phenomenon in social situations of interpersonal interaction where rules of emotionality govern (Fiehler in Fussell 2002: 81-82). An example of an emotional rule is the emotions shown at a funeral. In Eastern countries such as Romania and the Balkans the family can hire special women who come to cry in a very tragic and dramatic way (in rural areas this tradition still exists). In contrast, the tradition of Western countries mostly demands that people remain strong and do not show their regret or loss. Funerals in Western societies happen in very reverent manners in contrast to Eastern and Oriental customs. Another example of interpersonal interaction where rules of emotionality dictate the code of behavior are several socio-physical situations. One situation could be a boss-employee talk where the employee does not like the conversation and its topic at all but, according to emotional rules, has to hide his or her feelings behind diplomatic talking. Therefore, with regard to emotion rules, people of the same cultural background or same socio-cultural level might have expectations of how others should react to a given situation. As our Western society dictates that BLW are to be omitted for reasons of politeness it is shocking if people do not behave accordingly. These rules of emotions' usage can mean that a person who does hit him- or herself with a hammer on the finger and keeps smiling instead of screaming *Au!* may even comport against standard rules for emotions. On the other hand, a person who aggressively starts calling a waiter names only because he or she brought a Coke instead of a diet Coke also comports against Western emotion rules. In the former case it might even be more appropriate to ejaculate an expletive than its dysphemistic euphemism (Allan & Burridge 2007:33), as the original BLW is able to transport more emotions and can function as a pain releasing valve. In the latter example, an aggressive euphemism might be

more appropriate instead of aggressively insulting the waiter. Hence, emotion rules do not only depend on the culture but also on the situational context within this culture.

Further on, Dewaele states that the use of emotion words in an L2 is not only linked to the social situation but also to proficiency level, type of linguistic material, extraversion and perhaps gender (Dewaele 2002: 263). Focusing on Dewaele's statement about the influence of a person's proficiency level in L2 Stankiewicz deduces that emotive language devices, such as BLW, can pertain to every level of language i.e., phonology, derivation, inflection, vocabulary and syntax (Stankiewicz in Koch 1989:75). Therefore, the research question is partly based on these accounts and asks if a difference in the perception of swear words in L1 and L2 exists, does it only depend on the language (level) or on other factors such as personality, gender, tone or maybe even the word itself? Does personality overrule the factor language or does gender take precedence over it?

Naturally, L1 and L2 differ in their emotional impact if L2 is learned post puberty or after early childhood⁴. This may be due to the fact that emotion words in L1, as Altarriba found out, benefit from multiple traces in a person's memory (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002: 119). Consequently, L1 can then be seen as the language of personal involvement and L2 as the language of distance and personal detachment (Amati-Mehler; Argentieri, & Canestri, 1993 in Dewaele 2002:264). For instance, greater anxiety is produced at the presentation of emotional materials in L1 by bilingual speakers who learned L2 after early childhood (Dewaele 2002: 273).

Nonetheless, proven factors exist that may influence the use of L2 emotion words: the socio-cultural competence, language proficiency, extraversion and the topic itself (2002: 265). This brings us to the next sub-research question of how the study's participants will react to aggressive dialogues once with and once without swear words? Will there be a difference in perception depending on the words or rather on the tone and message of the dialogues?

What can be observed is factors determining the influence of emotion words in L2 are very similar to those influencing the use of BLW in L1. Here the parallels between classic emotion words and BLW, which transport strong emotions, can clearly draw parallels. Rintell examined in 1984 perception and expression of emotion as an illocutionary act and found out that neither age nor gender had an effect. Rintell's opinion, however, contradicts Dewaele's

⁴ Early childhood is not clearly defined by Dewaele

(2000) and McEnery's (2006) and therefore is a source of inspiration for the research sub-question: Does gender overrule the factor language in the perception of BLW in an L2?

The comprehension of verbal characteristics that signal emotions is not only linked to typological similarity⁵ to the target language (or proficiency) but also to cultural similarity in particular with regard to emotion scripts. Hence the socio-cultural competence, which also refers to the correct perception of a linguistic (and cultural) context, appears to be of high importance when it comes to comprehension of emotion words and those that convey emotions such as BLW. Some contexts of a linguistic exchange may be more emotional than others; which may be due to socio-cultural and individual differences. (*Pavlenko 2002:267*).

With regard to individual differences, Dewaele (in Pavlenko 2002) and Dewaele & Furnham (2000) found that the degree of extraversion was negatively correlated with general lexical richness in an experiment on French interlanguage. Extroverts were found to opt for more implicit, informal speech styles, as they generally do not keep their feelings under tight control. Extraversion and proficiency level in non natives are significant predictors for emotional perception (2000: 278) In contrast introverts are more anxious, cautious and guarded (Dewaele 2002: 277). Based on Dewaele's findings the sub-research question arises whether personality traits may dominantly influence the perception of BLW in L2 or if only the L2 level plays a role in the perception of the BLW dialogues of this study.

Summarizing this chapter on bilingualism and emotions it can be said that the use and perception of emotion words, which can also be BLW, depend on socio-cultural and individual traits that can be acquired via education or can be innate. Typological and cultural similarities of the L1 and L2 may make the understanding of emotion words easier, but their production and perception strongly depends on a person's personality traits such as extrovertedness or religiosity.

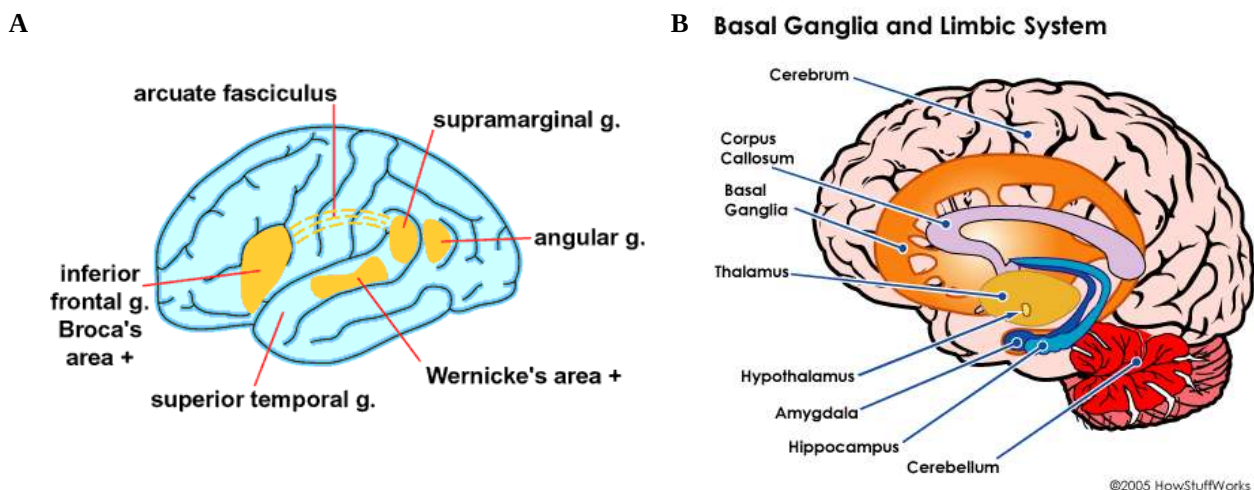
⁵ Typological similarity also plays a role for the research question: Will cognates and phonetically similar words in L1 and L2 provoke similar reactions ?

2.3.4 Neurolinguistics

“Eine Gemeinschaft von Bienen mag sich zu einem Bienenvolk organisieren können, eine Gemeinschaft von Nervenzellen aber kann eine Person erschaffen, die in der Lage ist, Gedichte zu schreiben, über ethische Probleme nachzudenken oder eine neurologische Operation durchzuführen.“(Calvin et al. 2000:51)

The brain is a mysterious organ, which does not look like it could do a lot, but controls most of our emotions, actions, utterances and is the center of our nervous system. This organ, which makes up a human being's personality, as Calvin states (2000:51), consists of two parts called the right and the left hemisphere. For proper performance both hemispheres have to work together perfectly and therefore are linked by the corpus callosum (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: A Cerebral areas involved in language production and perception. B Basal Ganglia and Amygdala: areas responsible for the inhibition of impulsive reactions



In a very simplified way it can be said that the right hemisphere is the creative and emotional part of the brain whereas the left part of our brain is responsible for logic, language (in the most logical and mechanical way) and practical things. Language is a very creative but also an automatic communication device, as could also be seen in the former chapters about epithets and the different categories of BLW.

Even though both hemispheres are involved in language production and perception most language production and processing happens in the left hemisphere. The processes involved are distributed throughout the left hemisphere and responsible for different operations. Those areas are connected to each other in order to guarantee a complete perception and production of speech.

The right hemisphere has earlier been described as the “creative and emotional” part of the brain. This does not only include emotions and creativity in the sense of artistic creativity but also making, in our case, creative use of words of any kind. It is responsible for storing from idiosyncratic counterparts to rule governed forms, conversation fillers as *uhm* and *well, yes* and is furthermore involved in storing (negative) emotions (Pinker 2008:330).

Swear words and words in general are linked to emotions, as can be seen above, which are generally controlled by subcortical areas such as the limbic system and its amygdala. The amygdala receives input from the cortex and subsequently is able to mediate aggression, anger and fear to other cortical areas, such as those responsible for speech. One thing most of the cursing situations have in common is some kind of aggression, pain or anger. The expression of anger is a neurological response that is mostly learned in a familial and cultural context. As most civilized cultures prefer to solve conflicts in a non physical way cursing may have resulted as a replacement for physical reaction caused by involuntary feelings of aggression. Jay’s Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis states that brain circuits⁶ causing aggressive behavior when “needed” still prevail in the human brain but are controlled and inhibited by the candate nucleus and the basal ganglia. Our brain has even developed a special area responsible for the inhibition of motor movement called candate nucleus (Jay 2000: 73-75). The cross wiring theory explains that the wiring of the mammalian rage circuit with human concepts such as vocal routines may result for example in relieving swearing (Pinker 2008: 365). The articulated utterance can be a comment on the nice weather or also a curse word about an unpleasant person or event. BLW are closely linked to emotions (happening in the right hemisphere) and therefore the right and left hemisphere have to work together in order to perceive and produce them. Jay (2000) notes that speech is generally processed by the function called lateralization where a labor division between the left and right hemisphere happens.

In general it can be said that there are “automatic” and “controlled” ways of speech. Automatic cursing belongs to the former and propositional cursing to the latter (2000:34). The left hemisphere is responsible for propositional cursing, when you intendedly insult a person e.g. calling promiscuous woman a *slut*, and the right hemisphere for automatic cursing such as expletives or the so called response cry e.g. *Fuck!* occurring when one hits one’s self with a hammer on the finger. Hence, it appears that automatic non propositional cursing strategy is a function caused by the right hemisphere. In order to avoid conflicts because of inappropriate

⁶ in this case the limbic circuit which can be seen as the circuit responsible for rage, anger and aggression

words slipping out of one's mouth mother nature invented the left frontal lobe which inhibits the potentially inappropriate act of cursing. As expletives can be swear words uttered in the heat of the moment they are, at the same time, also conditioned. This means with their repeated use expletives or response cries become modified in meaning, even lose their original connotation, and reflexive in use (2000: 48). Typical response cries are *ouch*, *damn*, *fuck*, *hell*, *shit* (Goffman 1981:98; McEnery 2006:34-36)etc. and are closely linked to emotions and physical feelings (e.g. see the above mentioned hammer on the finger) (Goffman in Jay 2000:51).

Neurologically more precisely, emotions have their roots in the basal ganglia, which can be found in the front half of the right hemisphere (also see Figure 1). The basal ganglia packs sequences of movements or reasoning steps into chunks for further combinations and inhibits the execution of the action packed in these chunks. This means the basal ganglia inhibit an uncontrolled burst of emotions, in our case, speech. For a better understanding: Tourette Syndrome is an illness where people are afflicted with uncontrolled ticks (snapping fingers, jumping, biting etc.) and sometimes they scream vulgarities such as *cunt*, *shit*, *you son of bitch*, *whore*, etc. This is caused by the malfunction of the basal ganglia, which ceases to inhibit certain vocabulary or movements (Pinker 2008: 334). Pinker notes furthermore that the amygdala (at the front of the temporal lobe) connects words and memories to emotions and the earlier this connection happens the deeper it is rooted (Pinker 2008: 332). Therefore L1 and L2 most often differ in their emotional impact if L2 is learned post-puberty or after early childhood, which is not clearly defined by Dewaele (Amati-Mehler; Argentiari, & Canestri in Dewaele 2002:264). The difference of emotional impact of L1 and L2 is of high importance for this study as the main question is concerned with the perception of L2 BLW of German native speakers.

In conclusion, everyday speech as well as BLW are mostly produced and comprehended in the left hemisphere of the brain but cannot fully function without the right hemisphere. Several parts of the brain are also concerned with the inhibition of aggression and may also be responsible for the inhibition of aggressive utterances as they happen when swearing. Other areas connect words and memories to feelings and the earlier those connections are made, the stronger they are, which forms the basis for the lack of emotions that learners of an Lx may experience.

2.3.5 Gender differences

Most theorists such as McEnery (2006), Pinker (2008), Jay (1992;2000) and Kiener (1983) are of the opinion that men and women perceive and use BLW, taboo words and vulgarities in different ways, on different occasion

Women are expected to use fewer BLW and therefore to react stronger and be more shocked by on BLW than men, which was proved by Kiener's studies in the 1980s.

„Felduntersuchungen belegen, dass Frauen verbal aggressiver sind aber dies nicht unbedingt leichter akzeptieren oder leichter darauf zu konditionieren sind. Frauen beurteilen Schimpfwörter generell schlimmer als Männer.“ (Kiener 1983:196)

McEnery (2006) put up a table chart with the frequency of (over) use of taboo and BLW by men and women. He found out that *fucking, fuck, Jesus, cunt* and *fucker* are typical for men and *God, bloody, pig, hell, bugger, bitch, pissed* and *shit* are typical for women. Moreover, general expletives are typical for women e.g. *Fuck!* as well as pre-modifying intensifying negative adjectives (2006:34-36) e.g. *The fucking idiot!*. Alternatively, emphatic adverbs and adverbial boosters are typical for males e.g. *He fucking did it*. There are not only manifold ways of what words are used but also to whom they are specifically addressed and by whom. BLW directed by women at women are *cow, bitch, bloody, fucking, slag, tart, tit, tits* and *whore* (2006:34). It can be observed that these are mostly words of female gender or concentrating on female body parts and sexual behavior. BLW directed by females at males are *god, bastard, gay, Christ, git, cunt*. Interestingly, those are words that show up a regular bias when used by women and directed at male (2006: 34-38). This may be one reason why McEnery also assumes that both sexes use less strong BLW when addressing women (2006: 41).

In public, as Jay (1992) observed, male speakers have been observed to produce more BLW. Additionally men were noticed to have a wider BLW vocabulary than females. However, both sexes are far more likely to swear in same sex company than in the company of the opposite sex. Furthermore, men and women alike, use the same BLW as being part of their repertoire but they tend to give them different denotations. For example, women use *ass* in the sense of a social deviant and as a body part whereas men operate with it only in the sense of a body part (1992:139). This means that women give BLW more connotative meanings than men, which could be one explanation for the hypothesis and findings by McEnery (2006:34-44) and others that women react stronger to BLW.

With regard to connotative meaning of BLW, Allan and Burrridge (1991) have noticed that most men feel insulted when being addressed a feminine BLW or word. In contrast, women do not feel affronted when being bothered with masculine BLW (1991:63). A girl who *has balls* is a strong girl who is brave. If a girl's or woman's performance is compared to that of a man remarks on her action are meant as compliments, but if a boy runs like a girl it is meant that he did not do it well. Hence, being compared to a woman is an insult to a man. Nevertheless, a woman being compared to a man has to see it as a compliment. This is due to a patriarchal social structure in most parts of the world and may be one reason for why women are not expected to use BLW but react shocked.

“The downgrading of a man by ascribing to him the characteristics of a woman, in contrast with the converse a woman is not generally downgrade to a comparable degree when described the characteristics of a man.”(Allan and Burrridge 1991: 63)

Therefore, at the end of every BLW chapter there will be an L1 and L2 evaluation chapter and also a male-female perception differences section in order to verify whether differences in the perception BLW exist.

3 Empirical part

3.1 Research design and question

3.1.1 Research design

I want to find out how German native speakers perceive English swear words in comparison to their German equivalents and if there is a major difference between the perception of these emotionally laden words in the mother tongue and the L2.

But in order to do so there are several factors to be considered: personality traits of the participants, their language level, and gender.

Even if these factors influence the perception of swear words, the question of how to measure their perception remains.

For this purpose I decided to design a questionnaire, based on audio examples focusing on one specific field of swear word which is divided into two parts. A personal questionnaire investigating the participants' language level, opinion of BLW, etc and a questionnaire asking them indirect questions about the swear words of the audio examples. Therefore, I see it as necessary to discuss the factor context in order to properly understand why certain questions are included the questionnaire.

3.1.2 Context

George Carlin, an American comedian, made his audience laugh with tears when he read out loud the following list as if he read out his to do or shopping list. The audience did not react shocked but laughed, as the context of the words (read as nonchalantly as a shopping list) was an unexpected and paradoxical one in connection with BLW.

GeorgeCarlin.

Shit, Piss, Fuck, Cunt, Cocksucker, Motherfucker, Tits, Fart, Turd, Twat, Crap, Balls, Prick, Asshole, Jackoff, Jerkoff, Scumbag, Douchebag, Hardon, Rod-on, Boner, Stiff, Pisshard, Blueballs, Nookie, Koose, Gash, Slash, Hole, Slit, Snatch, Box, Beaver, Pussy, Bearded Clam, Jism, Cum, Cream, Juice, Pecker, Peckerhead, Peckertracks, Dick, Dork, Dong, Donacker, Wang, Shlong, Schwantz, Pork, Crabs,

Ass, Butt, Hiney, Tuchas, Bum, Buns, Cheeks, Screw, Lay, Diddle, Plow, Hump, Bang, Poke, Batter, Wham, Knock-up, Bugger, Brown, Juggs, Bazooms, Knockers, Knobs, Lungs, Balloons, Dildo, Joystick, Hairpie, Muff, Cornhole, Rimjob, Blowjob, Sugarbowl-pie, Suck-off, Give-head, Sit-on-my-face, Buttfuck, Fingerfuck, Clap, Kleek, 69, 71 which is 69 with 2 fingers up your ass, daisy chain, circle jerk, cockteaser, wet-dream, cunt-struck, pussywhipped, short-arm, tuna-taco, group-grope, milking-the-chicken, bulldagger, gangbang, ballbreaker, ballbuster, merkin, bananas and cream, up the old dirt road, around the world, beat-your-meat, whack-off, flogging your dong, pounding your pud, beating the bishop, poontang, dingleberry, sit on it, fudgepacker, milking the lizard, fart face, old fart, farting around fart sniffer, ream, snake, raincoat, quickie, queer, queen, putz, put-out, push, beef-injection, dog-style, pop your cookies, bust-your-nuts, one-eyed-monster, knob, pocket pool, tail, piddle, paddle the pickle, one-man-band, snapper, notch, rod, shaft, stick, piece of ass, god damn it, pimp, fucker, punk, faggot, dyke, lezzie, box-lunch, sea-food, hand-job, hammer, hatch, head-job, hot-nuts, hum-job, prong,[...].
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WeAgC-cXIY> 11.11.2010

The above list of swear words perfectly shows that the context of an utterance is capable of determining its connotation. Within the context of a stage Carlin's words appear to be a farce or a joke and make people laugh. But it is not always the situational context that counts for the correct interpretation of BLW.

The context of an utterance can also consist of factors such as personality traits, education, rewards for using or not using BLW, religiosity and temperament of a person. In this case context determines the situational condition of the utterance itself and not of the recipients, in the form of the study's participants. But what is the situational condition, also called context, of an utterance exactly?

The situational condition or context is determined by several factors, such as the physical location of the speaker and hearer (e.g. being at work, at home or in a church), the social event (e.g. family meeting or a meeting with the boss), the relationship of the speaker-listener (e.g. boss and employee or brother and sister) and, of course, the intention of the speaker (is the utterance intended to shock, insult or to be an endearment). For example, in some contexts a BLW-phrase such as *You son of a bitch!* does not necessarily have to have the function of an insult or slur but can even be interpreted as a term of endearment among old school friends. As well as *son of a bitch* and *bastard* are often used, especially between (male) friends (Jay 1992:177) as terms of endearment or in-group markers. On the other hand the very same expression said to an unknown person who just hit one's car can function as a strong insult to the hearer and a release of anger to the speaker. The situational context changes the mode of interpretation and therefore the perception of the message transported by the BLW.

Consequently there are contexts that enforce and others which inhibit the use of BLW. For example church, television, a stage, being at the dining table with the boss or the parents, even though some comedians as George Carlin do not really mind. On the other hand there are physical contexts dulling the use of dirty words such as a bar, the locker room, the athletic field and being with friends. These are contexts encouraging the usage of BLW (Hughes 1991: 13).

However, contexts that encourage the use of BLW can entail an overuse of BLW that brings a semantic satiation making the BLW lose its insulting force. As one tends to use BLW more often in fortifying situations, such as mentioned in the above paragraph, a semantic satiation is possible. If this satiation is reached at one point, the boarder for the general use of BLW may be less restricted and the bar for BLW use lowered. The result is that the use of BLW becomes normal in everyday vocabulary. That is to say that the repetition of a word blunts the offense it may have caused. As one is not supposed to say BLW out loud, by socio-cultural convention (in church, television etc.) their weight is far greater in these physical contexts as in one with friends where semantic satiation has already taken away an enormous amount of their offensiveness. Consequently, it appears to be accepted to curse in certain places and with certain people, which leads to the conclusion that, at least in the American and German/Austrian culture, people learn a certain etiquette of BLW (Jay 1992:87).

Even though the questionnaire will be looked upon in detail at a later point in this paper it is necessary to discuss it now to make the relevance of the context chapter clear for this study. The majority of the questions regarding the dialogues are asking the participants what they think about the speakers, which shows indirectly what they think about the BLW. It shows, if they perceive the situational contexts correctly, what they think about the use of certain BLW. In the case of context the first three questions generally ask what relationships the speakers have to each other. This is important for the study as the context, namely the relationship of speakers, strongly determines how a third party interprets the appropriateness of the utterance, in our case the BLW. Indications for the correct perception of L1 and L2 BLW are if participants interpret the relationships etc. as they were intended to be. More specifically, participants will have to rate the level of appropriateness of the speakers (see chapter Questionnaire).

However there is no sensible questionnaire and perception possible without the analysis of swear words. Therefore a choice had to be made.

3.1.3 Choice of swear words

In the chapter Categories several ways of analyzing, interpreting and dividing swear words into classes were presented. Allan & Burridge's (1991) division of swear words appeared to be the most appropriate as it makes further comparisons easier. It divides BLW into non-grammatical categories according to their function:

1. Comparison of people with animals that are conventionally ascribed a certain behavior
2. Epithets derived from tabooed bodily organs (*asshole*), bodily effluvia and sexual behavior (*fucker*)
3. Dysphemistic epithets that pick on real physical characteristics that are tabooed as though they are abnormalities
4. Imprecations and epithets invoking mental sub-normality or derangement
5. -IST dysphemisms
6. Slurs on the target's character (1991: 79-85)

To make the later comparison of BLWs clear, only words from the second category (epithets derived from tabooed bodily organs, effluvia and sexual behavior) were chosen to be part of the study (see Table 2). Special attention was paid to not superimpose adverbials boosters (*You fucking idiot!*) or pre-modifying intensifying negative adjectives on the BLW. Table 2 shows which words of which subclass were adopted in the dialogues, in German and English. It furthermore shows if the BLW (dialogues) are meant to sound aggressive, neutral or are simply expletives/response cries; which does not have to exclude aggression or anger.

The majority of these BLW were chosen because of their phonetical similarities. It has been tried to find phonetically similar BLW or at least an L2 translation to L1 BLW. Therefore, closer L1 and L2 results are expected from both groups, L1 participants listening to L1 dialogues and L1 speakers listening to L2 dialogues. *Ficken* and to *fuck*, *Scheiße* and *shit*, *pissen* and to *piss*, *Arschloch* and *asshole*, *Wixer* and *wanker* are the L1 and L2 which are phonetically similar and share same denotative meanings. If words have no phonetical similarity they at least have a denotative translation as in *Fotze* and *cunt* and *Schlampe* and *slut*, which will make further comparison of the results easier. The last category of BLW is "English in a German context" and contains the BLW *fuck*, *bullshit* and *shit*.

Table 2: BLW of the German and English dialogues. A=aggressive; Ex.= Expletive; N= Neutral

German			English	
Body Parts				
Arschloch A	Fotze A	↔	Asshole A	Cunt A
Bodily Effluvia				
Pissen N	Scheiße N	↔	Shit Ex	
Sexual Behavior				
Schlampe N	Wixer A	↔	Slut A-N	Wanker N
	Ficken			Fuck Ex.
Buffer				
Wahnsinn A	Blödsinn N	↔	Incredible N	To be fed up A
English in a German Context				
Fuck Ex	Bullshit N	Shit Ex-		

These words were chosen from personal experience of use by the author and from a short oral field study (which is to be verified by the questionnaires results) conveyed among university and high school students concerning their use of English swear words in Austrian German. *Fuck* and *shit* also occurred in their L1 context. *Blödsinn*, from the buffer words, would find its connotative equivalent in *bullshit* but the former is not actually a BLW, as it rather fulfills a pejorative function, and the latter is, therefore *bullshit* has been excluded in the L2 dialogues in order to avoid confusion. Therefore another partner, for the sake of buffer words' comparison, had to be found. *Blödsinn* and *fed up* have nothing to do with each other, neither denotatively nor connotatively, and function only as buffers without any possible denotative or phonetic comparison. *Wahnsinn*'s counterpart is *incredible*, as they are employed, at least in the paper's dialogues, in the same connotative manner they will be easier to compare. However, buffer dialogues were chosen because not every anger-loaded situation has to involve swear words and not every swear word-demanding situation has to be based (Jay 1992:96-101).

The words *fuck*, *shit* and *bullshit* in the German context are part of a code-switching pattern influenced by the media and ever present English songs and movies. Scheu (2000) defines code-switching as the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentences, or constituent and its rule-governed behavior. Within the current study the L2 BLW *fuck*, *shit*

and *bullshit* occur as intrasentential switches. This is a rather complex process as the codeswitched element has to conform to the underlying syntactic rules of two languages that overpass constituents and link them together grammatically. Those can be of an emblematic type also called tag switches or single noun switches. Furthermore there are two types of code-switching: situational and conversational. The L2 BLW in L1 context are a mixture of both. The former depends on social factors and linguistic behavior where the word choice or switch depends on the setting, the speakers and the topic. The latter happens for the reason of underlining an additional meaning. In the case of the L2 BLW, conversational code-switching used to happen to cut off the degree of insult. For example, non-BLW were changed in the 18th century to French based neologisms in order to avoid strong reaction (Scheu 2000: 138).

Scheu observed in her study of Spanish students in a German high school that lots of them spoke German even during the breaks but employed certain words in Spanish, mostly those requiring more emotional force, such as BLW. Here a code-switching from the L2 in the L1 happened e.g. “Gib mir sofort das Heft zurück, *cabrón!*”(Scheu 2000: 146). In the current study exactly the reverse case will be examined carefully. Do L2 BLW lose their emotional force in the L1 context? Are they really employed for the sake of lessening the insulting force or are people already so used to Anglicisms, as an effect of the media, that they will be graded equally to L1 BLW? This is one of the goals of the study. This means for the goal of the diploma thesis that it will be interesting to see how people react to angry conversation with and without BLW. Plus, it will be interesting to observe how participants react to neutral conversations with and without BLW. However, anger in combination with BLW are the prominent triggers tickling the reaction out of the participants.

3.1.4 Questionnaire and dialogues

As swearing and hypocrisy go hand in hand (Pinker 2008: 330) indirect questions are necessary. This means for the experiment that study persons may not want to admit whether they find a swear word acceptable or not because they try to avoid being regarded as impolite or rude persons if they find some swear words or dialogues amusing or impolite. This leads to the fact that indirect questions about the dialogue and the speakers themselves will be asked in order to avoid insincerity of the study persons even though this is never completely excludable.

3.1.4.1 Dialogues

In *Bilingual Minds* edited by Aneta Pavlenko (2002) several studies had been conducted on the basis of auditory samples. People showed stronger reactions to auditory L1 samples than to visual L1's, which is one reason and inspiration of doing the same (2002: 262). A very practical reason for why auditory and not video samples have been produced is that it is simpler to produce an auditory than a visual sample. A second reason is the fact that the participants are able to concentrate only on what they hear and are not tempted to take facial expressions, body language, the surrounding or clothes into account. All are factors that could influence their opinion of the speakers of the BLW. However, opposed to the result that L1 audio samples were more functional than visual samples Harris et al. (in Pavlenko 2002: 263) could not prove the same to be valid for L2. This is a point which might be verified later in this paper.

Five of the English conversations have been designed to sound aggressive and one of them consists of a buffer dialogue with the words *fed up*. The other three discourses are categorized as neutral and one is also a buffer including the word *incredible*. The majority of the conversations are spoken by two speakers; two English dialogues are recorded by only one person. Four dialogues are read by male-male speakers, one by female-female, one by a female, one by a male and one by a male and female speaker.

Alternatively, there are twelve German dialogues including two buffer conversations (*Blödsinn* and *Wahnsinn*) and three English swear words in a German context. Six discussions are meant to be aggressive, whereas the other six are neutral. However, the neutral ones consist of at least two expletives (*shit* and *fuck*). Eight dialogues are spoken by two people and the rest by only one. Three dialogues are read by male-male speakers, three by female-female, three by only female, two by only male and one is mixed. In both languages, the self-talk dialogues may also have an influence on the perception of the swear words, as a potential receiver of the message can be imagined by the participants or not. They will have to decide whether the speaker is talking to somebody who just does not respond or whether he or she is talking to her/himself.

As the purpose of this study is to compare the perception of L1 BLW in the L1, L2 BLW in the L2 and L2 BLW in an L1 context, dialogues in both English and German were composed. The English dialogues add up to eight and the German dialogues are a total of twelve, each between 10 and 30 seconds. They were designed to be short for several reasons. First,

listening to the entire questionnaire should not take longer than 15 – 20 minutes because in a trial many participants became annoyed when the process took longer than 10 minutes. Second, as a person in anger tends to be as quick and efficient as possible in order to properly convey the message of being angry and aggressive, the dialogues are very short.

„... Affekt, vor allem Zorn, wirkt sich auf die Wortwahl und den Satzbau aus. Im Zorn neigt man dazu das Wichtigste auszustoßen und möglichst schnell und effektiv zu vermitteln was in einem vorgeht. Das Wichtigste wird in einer „rücksichtslosen Wortfolge“ ausgedrückt das der Affekt, Zorn, Ärger und Ähnliches die psychischen Voraussetzungen dafür bilden.“ (Kiener 1983:178)

Every chapter of the Empirical part will include the dialogues in written form. Also, see the Dialogues in the appendix.

3.1.4.2 Questionnaire

Not only are the L1 and L2 dialogues proper translations of each other but also the L1 and L2 questionnaire for the different groups of participants. For the sake of easier comparison the questionnaires in English are an exact translation of the German questionnaires. One questionnaire per dialogue, consisting of 5 multiple choice questions is meant to be answered. The multiple choice questions have four possible answers. The first three questions have several options. The last two questions have answers demanding a grading from one to four. One means “definitely the case”, two “it is the case”, three “it is not the case” and four “it is absolutely not the case”.

The first question has the scope of finding out which of the dialogue’s speakers the study person would like to meet. The purpose is to find out whether the speaker who employs or who does not employ a BLW would be preferred. The answer could show if the use of BLW influences a hearer’s perception of the person employing it, therefore show how the hearer may think about BLW.

1. *Welche Person des Dialogs würden Sie gerne treffen/ persönlich sprechen?*

Sprecher/in 1 o

Sprecher/in 2 o

The second question is concerned with the relationship of the speakers and fulfills the goal of finding out if people perceive BLW words as appropriate, depending on the speakers’ relationships. The speakers’ socio cultural state (Jay 2000:28) in the relationship will most probably influence further perceptions and opinions of the BLW speakers, as only certain words and manners of speaking are acceptable in certain social contexts. Jay (2000) thinks

that the socio cultural state as well as the psychological state deals with the social and physical setting of the speaker-listener relationship, the topic of discussion, the mode of communication, gender identity and cultural affiliation (2000:28).

2. *In welcher Beziehung stehen die Sprecher zu einander?*

<i>Geschwister o</i>	<i>Freunde o</i>	<i>Chef- Arbeitnehmer o</i>	<i>Eltern- Kind o</i>
<i>Fremde o</i>	<i>Bekannte o</i>	<i>Sonstiges o</i>	

The third question asks how suitable the way of talking of the speakers is. It focuses on how appropriate the way of talking, with regard to speaker-recipient socio-cultural state is (Jay 2000:28). Depending on the answers of the participants of the study it will be possible, in an indirect manner as participants do not give their opinion on the BLW use but on the speakers, to find out how people react and perceive others who use swear words or buffer words.

Hence, the context of the discussion and the cultural background of the speakers in the dialogues (and our participants) matter to the study. The kind of questions concerning these roles can give information about what participants think about the appropriateness of the usage of swear words. If they tend to answer that the speakers talk in a appropriate or inappropriate manner to each other it would be interesting to see the relationship status participants gave the speakers and to find out what they honestly think about the use of BLWs.

3. *Ist ihre Art miteinander zu sprechen ihrer Beziehung zueinander angemessen?*

<i>Sprecher/in 1: 1 o</i>	<i>2 o</i>	<i>3 o</i>	<i>4 o</i>
<i>Sprecher/in 2: 1 o</i>	<i>2 o</i>	<i>3 o</i>	<i>4 o</i>

The last two questions ask the participants to decide, based on the above mentioned scale from one to four, if the speakers are intelligent, aggressive, polite and educated, calm, self-confident, direct and honest. This is the type of indirect question (about the speaker him- or herself and not about the words heard) which helps to find out how people react to spoken BLW words.

4. Der erste Sprecher/Die erste Sprecherin ist :

<i>Intelligent</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Gelassen</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>
<i>Aggressiv</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Selbstsicher</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>
<i>Höflich</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Direkt</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>
<i>Gebildet</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Ehrlich</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>

5. Der zweite Sprecher/Die zweite Sprecherin ist:

<i>Selbstsicher</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Ehrlich</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>
<i>Direkt</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Gebildet</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>
<i>Intelligent</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Höflich</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>
<i>Aggressiv</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>	<i>Gelassen</i>	<i>1o</i>	<i>2o</i>	<i>3o</i>	<i>4o</i>

3.1.5.1 Control Group- German Native Speakers who listened to the German BLW dialogues

... and what the personal questionnaire tells about them

Persönliches

- Welche Wörter benutzen Sie:

Not only were they asked about their level but also about any time they had spent in an English speaking country. The socio cultural state deals with the social and physical setting of the speaker-listener relationship, the topic of discussion, the mode of communication, gender identity and cultural affiliation (Jay 2000:28). This is important in order to find out whether a socio-cultural experience (2000:28), even be it a short one, influences their language proficiency level and capacity to interpret BLW correctly. It should be kept in mind that the

self-evaluation of the language level strongly depends on the self-perception and personality of the participant and therefore may actually vary from reality.

The average time spent in an L2 country (Anglophone country) is 28 weeks. Only six people, out of 26, spent between 12 and 312 (approximately five years) weeks. The majority, namely 19 participants spent between one and eight weeks in an L2 country. Therefore, it may be assumed that most people assign themselves a good knowledge of the English language, even if they probably learnt English in the artificial environment of a classroom where BLW were most possibly omitted (Dewaele 2002:130).

With regard to personality, the personal questionnaire also inquired about what adjectives would best describe the participant. It serves the purpose of finding out and verifying whether or not personality traits influence BLW perception. Jay (2000) is of the opinion that the personality, with regard to religiosity, sex, anxiety etc., of a person plays a major role in the perception and production of swear words. Extroverted and open people see BLW as less disturbing than very religious and polite people (2000:19-28). The study's participants had to choose between religious, extroverted, polite, impulsive and liberal. One or all adjectives could be ticked off. However, the majority (of 26 people) admit to be polite (German *höflich*), 10 people consider themselves as liberal (the German version is *offen*), 12 see themselves as impulsive (*impulsiv*) and less than half of the participants, seven people, describe themselves as extroverted (*extrovertiert*), and only three as religious (*religiös*). Unfortunately the GNS with German dialogues sometimes had problems with the difference between *offen* and *extrovertiert* and had difficulty deciding which word was more appropriate (to them). Some participants admitted to believe that the two words were quite the same for them. Others verified by asking me whether *offen* meant to be open-minded and if *extrovertiert* meant to be a person who is not afraid of new social contacts. Apparently the difference was not very clear to everybody, which did not come up in the testing phase of the questionnaire.

The seventh question of the personal questionnaire brings in a lot of information about the participants BLW vocabulary. It is about whether the participants swear in their L1, how often they do and what swear words they would employ if they do. The reason of this question is to find out if people who swear a lot perceive BLW in L2 as less aggressive and offensive than in comparison to the more introverted participants who do not swear a lot. That is because overuse of a words leads to its semantic satiation and takes away a lot of its offensive and offending force (Jay 1992: 13).

This argument addresses the fourth research sub-question: Will German native speakers react in the same way to English swear words in a German context as to English swear words in an English context or will they treat English BLW the same way they would do with German swear words in a German context? This question focuses on overuse of BLW and gives functional information which will influence further interpretation of the actual empirical part of the stud. It remains to be seen if users of BLW in fact react less strong to BLW in either language, which still does not take into account language proficiency (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002: 263). However, none of the GNS said to never make use of BLW, which was very surprising. Not even the very religious persons (in total three) ticked off the *never* option. 16 people admitted to draw sometimes on swear words, six acknowledged frequent use and five affirmed to practically always employ BLW⁷.

With regard to L2 swear word use 21 people indicated the using of BLW and only six denied it. The three individuals who said they were religious were not among those who avoid using the use of BLW in the L2 English. This, even if not anecdotal, could hint at the fact that religiosity does not necessarily have anything to do with the use or perception of swear words, at least nowadays⁸. However, this point needs to be compared with the GNS who listened to the English dialogues in order to give more significant support to this argument. The people who denied the use of BLW in English are mostly those who consider themselves as polite. Only two participants claimed being impulsive, four liberal (*offen*) and none religious or extroverted. Two of them see their L2 knowledge as medium, the rest as good and all of them swear in their L1.

Up to now, the theories about the link between certain personality traits and the production of BLW (Dewaele 2002, 2004; Jay 2000) do not correspond to the personal questionnaires' results. Unexpectedly, religious people indicated to use BLW as well. This may play a role and change expectations about religious persons' perception. However, another point that needs to be compared to the study group of the research and to the answers given on the dialogue questionnaires.

The next question is concerned with the actual use of BLW words in L1 and maybe L2. The participants listed the BLW they normally make use of in their mother tongue and those who said to use BLW in English also listed those BLW. A total of 24 different BLW, variations

⁷ out of which none was religious, only one extroverted but three impulsive

⁸ even though perception and production may be different for religious persons, with regard to the achieved results of the personal questionnaire

not included, were given. Even though not all participants gave a list of their most used swear words, the most frequent German BLW is, as expected, *Scheiße*, which was listed 22 times, the second one is *verdammt* with 6 and the third one is *Arschloch* (variations such as *Arsch*, *Oarschloch* etc. included) with 5. The L2 BLW were not so numerous, only 13 in all, but with two clear winners, namely, *fuck*, appearing 15 times and *shit* seven times. For better illustrations see Figure 2 and Figure 3.

All in all, the control group, of 17 females and 9 males, spent an average of 28 weeks per person in an L2 country. All of them consider themselves as polite, 10 as liberal, 12 as impulsive, 7 as extroverted and 3 as religious. 16 persons use BLW only sometimes, 6 frequently and 5 practically always. 21 people said they would also use L2 BLW.

3.1.5.2 Study Group -German Native Speakers who listened to the English BLW dialogues ... and what the personal questionnaire tells about them

Personal questionnaire for the study group

Personal

1. Age:.....
 2. Male ☐ female ☐
 3. Native language:/ Second Language:
 4. How well do you speak the second language?
Native like ☐ good ☐ medium ☐ absolute beginner ☐
 5. Have you ever been to the second language's country and for how long?
Yes ☐ No ☐ time spent in the country:.....
 6. Tick off the adjectives that fit your personality
Religious ☐ extroverted ☐ polite ☐ impulsive ☐
liberal ☐
 7. Do you swear in your native language?
Never ☐ sometimes ☐ frequently ☐ practically always ☐
 - 7.1. What swear words do you
use:.....
 8. Do you use swear words when you speak in the second language?
Yes ☐ No ☐
- ↓
Which words do you personally
use:.....

The actual study group consist of German native speakers who listened to English swear word dialogues. They are students of English at the University of Vienna at an average age of 21.

The oldest participant is 42 and the youngest 18. The study group consists of a total of 89 students⁹ out of which 12 are male and 77 are female students. All of them have German as their mother tongue and English as their L2. 14 people indicated to have native speaker competences in English, 68 peoples' self-evaluation assigned them a good knowledge, seven said to be a medium and none were beginners.

One question on the personal questionnaire focused on the amount spent in an L2 country which is on average 28 weeks; 27 participants have spent between 1 to 12 weeks in an L2 country, 11 people 24 weeks and the rest between 16 weeks (four month) and 312 weeks (6 years). This means that the majority has spent more than one month in an L2 country. Therefore, the possibility of being acquainted with certain BLW vocabulary and socio-cultural peculiarities may be higher.

Regarding personality traits, the students also had to tick off the adjectives that described their personality best. Out of 89 participants, eight admitted to being religious, 32 extroverted, 69 polite, 40 impulsive and 44 liberal. When asked if they swore in their L1 three people answered with never¹⁰. A majority of 47 participants ticked off sometimes, 31 frequently and only 6 practically always¹¹. Even if these results cannot be seen as quantitatively significant (as no test of quantitative significance has been made) they appear to be a marker for the fact that religiousness may no longer have a strong impact on how people speak or perceive bad language expressions. Nonetheless, this assumption remains to be looked at in the course of the paper. Due to American influence through films, movies and television, at least the BLW could probably be perceived similarly to L1 BLW, as they are not very often synchronized into German but kept in English. However with regard to swearing in L2 64 students answered positively and 23 denied it. Six out of eight religious students affirmed to use BLW in L2. This again might be a hint at the fact that religion does not influence our language any more. However, it remains to be verified in the course of the study.

The study group was asked to list the BLW of their L1 and of L2. What can be directly observed is the evidence that they also employ lots of English BLW in L1 and added them to the list of swear words they apply in L1(see Figure 4). Even if not all participants listed BLW,

⁹ Earlier 120 students who participated were mentioned but as not all of them fulfilled the criteria (German native speaker, English the second language) they had to be reduced to 89.

¹⁰ out of which two people affirmed to be religious.

¹¹ out of which 2 are religious, 4 extroverted, 5 polite, 4 impulsive and three liberal. Remark: participants were allowed to choose more than one personality trait

the figures of general use of BLW are still very high and appear to be noteworthy for this group.

Scheiße occupies the first place with 48 references within the category of BLW in L1. Surprisingly, not a German word is on the second place in BLW in L1 but an English one: *fuck* shares the second place with *verdammt* at 14 references. They are followed by another uneven pair: *shit* and *Arsch* (and other abbreviations such as *Arschloch* etc.) were listed 10 times. The whole list of BLW can be seen in Figure 4 and Figure 5. With regard to the BLW in L2 two words had a neck-and-neck race for the first place but *fuck* won at 37 and *shit* got the second place at 35 references. None of the other swear words achieved such popularity as those two, even though *damn* (and variations such as *damn it*) was mentioned 12 times, *bitch* and *asshole* at five each and *cunt* and *crap* three times. The sense of asking the participants for these BLW enumerations is first, to have an empirical support for the justification of the use of which BLWs (in either language and context) were employed in the study's dialogues and second to see whether my initial assumption that people employ L2 BLW in L1 could be verified and proved right.

In a nutshell, the study group consists of 89 students at an average age of 21 years. 14 people indicated to be at the level of a native speaker, 68 a good level and 7 medium. 8 people are religious, 32 extroverted, 69 polite, 40 impulsive and 44 participants see themselves as liberal. 47 persons swear sometimes in L1, 31 frequently and 6 practically always. Also, 64 students admitted to swear in L2 but 23 denied it. The most common BLW among the study group is *Scheiße* in L1 and *fuck* in L2. Also see Figure 2 to Figure 5.

Figure 2: L1 BLW by the control group

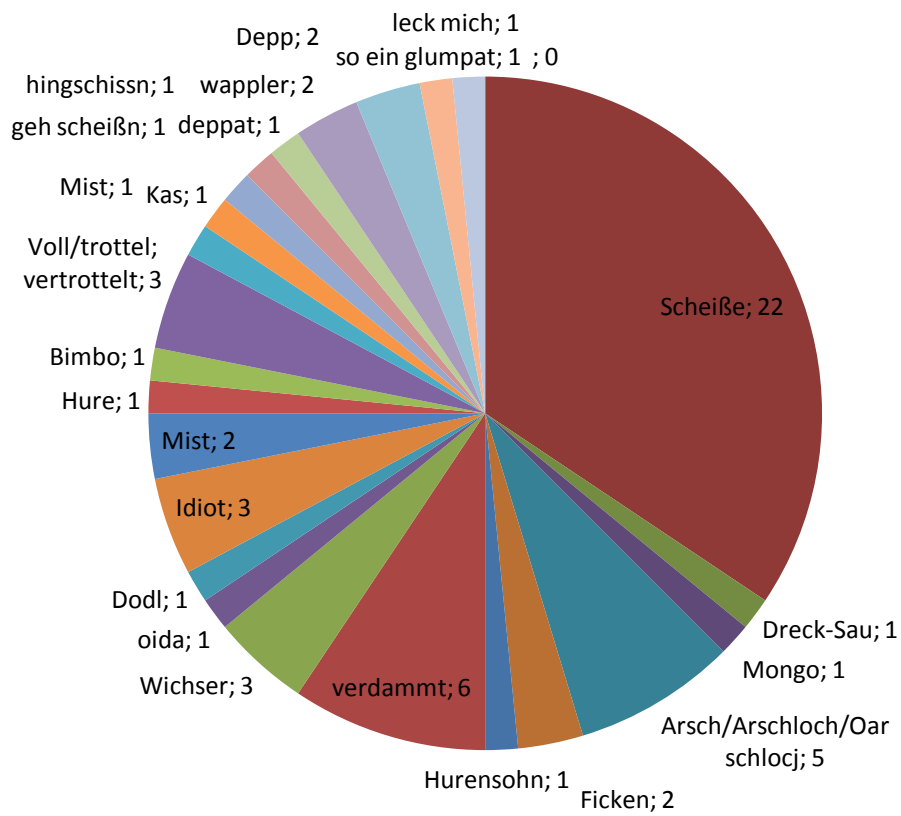


Figure 3: L2 BLW by the control group.

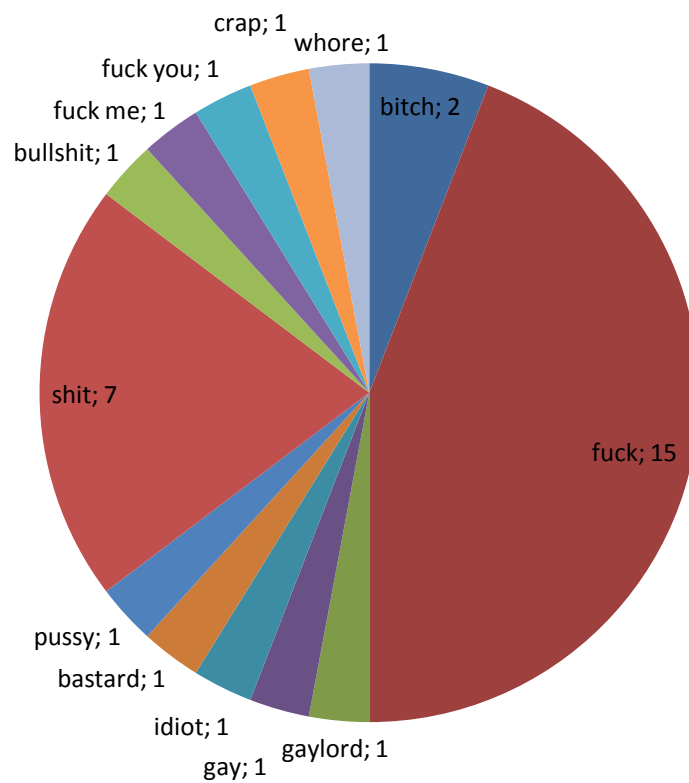


Figure 4: L1 BLW by the study group. L2 BLW are mentioned in the L1 context.

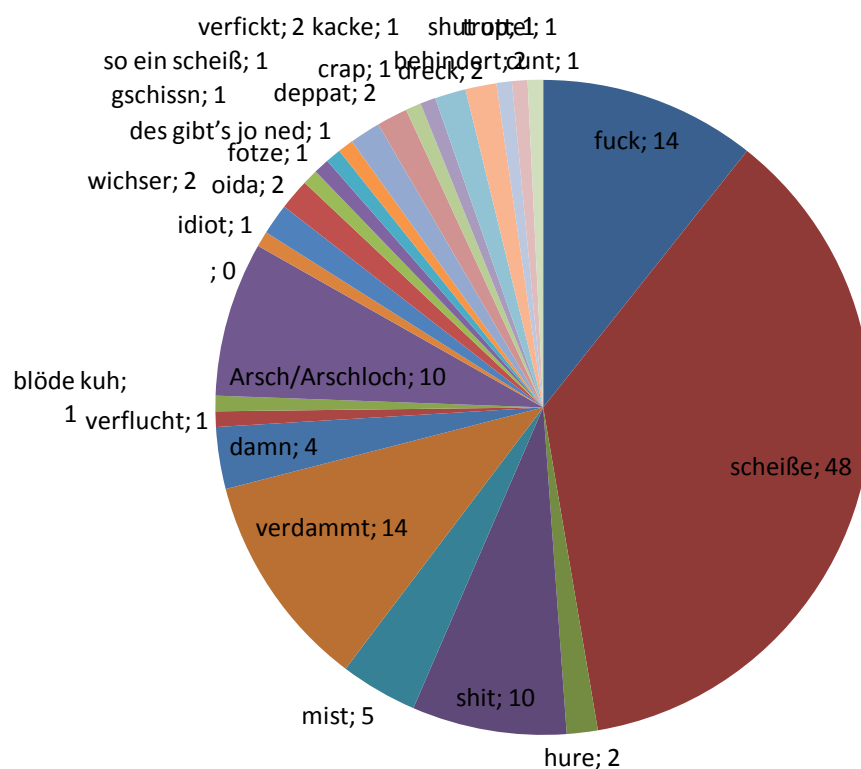
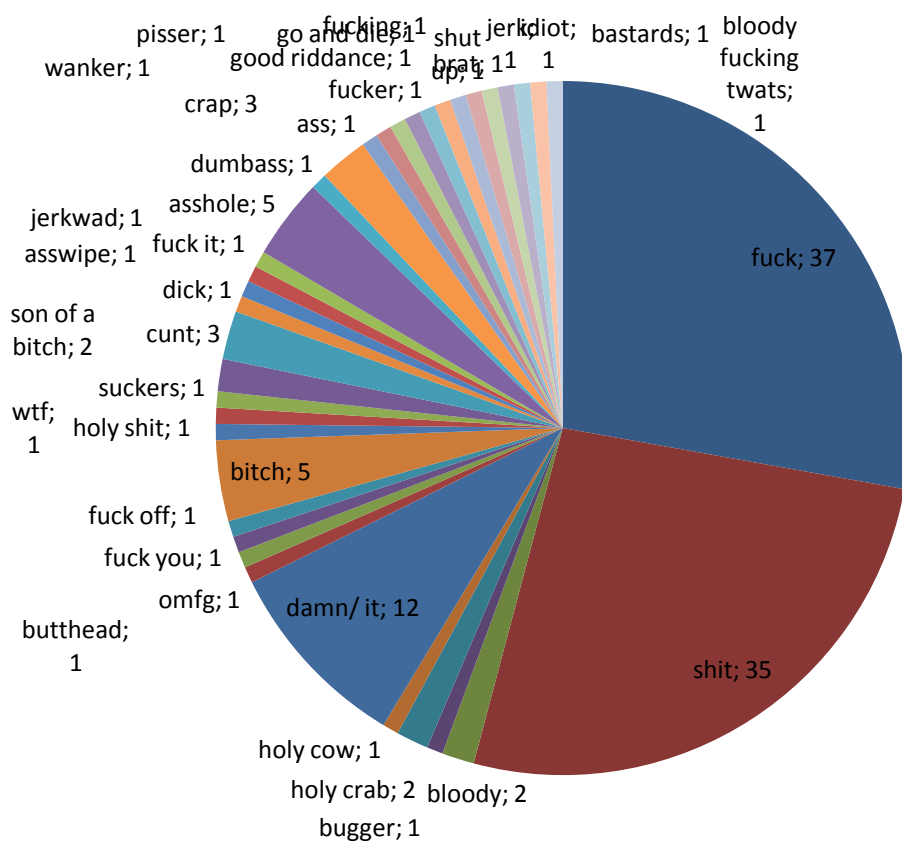


Figure 5: L2 BLW (English) by study group.



3.1.6 Problems during the empirical study

One of the first steps to start the empirical study was to send the dialogues and the questionnaire via e-mail to people who would fit the study's participants criteria: ENS who would listen to the English dialogues, ENS who do the German dialogues (by condition of speaking a minimum of German), GNS who would listen to the German dialogues, GNS who would listen through the English dialogues (by condition of speaking a minimum of English). The first problem occurred when after approximately two weeks or so of waiting and reminding and waiting only two people from the group GNS and German dialogues sent back the filled out questionnaires back. In order to find more potential participants and especially bilingual ENS who were able to listen to (and understand) German dialogues I went out to find them on an Irish, Australian, Scottish and whatever Pub tour in Vienna. However, despite having put great effort into finding ENS who could also speak and understand German only three out of seven ENS who were willing to participate fit the criteria. Nonetheless, a total of seven ENS could be found (after one month of waiting and searching) and involved in the project, but it still was too little for an empirical study and therefore the ENS group had to be dropped out of the study. Hence, the initial four groups that I wanted to compare to each other were quickly reduced to GNS listening to German dialogues (the control group) and GNS listening to English dialogues (perception of L2 BLW in L2). The GNS group was kept and a comparison between GNS listening to German dialogues—27 people who were found in pubs, cafés and restaurants—and GNS listening to English dialogues—86 people who volunteered from the history of English course at the University of Vienna—are the basis of the study. Those were the major problems during the practical part of the empirical study.

But as the field of the study of swear words is a very emotional and therefore special one to those who only make practical use of them in daily and not in a linguist life the following paragraph is dedicated to special moments and reactions that occurred while people were listening to the swear word dialogues. Those moments occurred very often during the search for participants and happened mostly while people were listening to the dialogues. Even if beforehand it was explained that sometimes there is only one speaker and that they would have to tick off only questions concerning the one and only speaker, lots of people were perplexed when they heard only one person talking. I had to learn that people do not listen to instructions, whether written or oral. Others had difficulties with the 4th and 5th questions' adjectives. They did not see the difference between educated and intelligent which led to strange discussions about the sexist, racist and judgmental questionnaire were started (even

though I did not often fully understand why the questionnaire was seen as sexist or racist. Furthermore people were meant to be judgmental, as the scope of the questionnaire is to find out about their reactions to the listening comprehension). Other people could not see the particularity in extroverted (*extrovertiert*) and liberal (*offen*), which only happened with the German questionnaire and again discussion about the sensibility of asking them to rate *extrovertiert* and *offen* were started.

In contrast, the 120 students from the history of English course definitely showed stronger reactions to what they were confronted with: the audio examples. The first two dialogues they listened to were the English dialogues about *asshole* and *shit*. Both were not meant to sound highly aggressive and therefore the crowd of students did not show any particular reactions. Conversely, when the third the speakers of the *fuck* dialogue echoed through the lecture hall (which is spoken in a very aggressive manner repeating *fuck* and *fuck you* several times) a sudden murmur went around the formerly silent crowd and discussions with neighbors were started. They were shocked.

So, finding proper participants for this study was not as easy as initially expected.

3.2 Results of the empirical study

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the study's questionnaires consist of five questions, covering several points, such as: Which person of the dialogue is preferred? Is their relationship and way of talking to each other acceptable or not? And so on. The personal questionnaire gives needed information about the participants, which influences the interpretation of the results.

Dewaele (1993b) and Dewaele and Furnham (2000a) found that the degree of extraversion was negatively correlated with general lexical richness in French IL¹² (Dewaele 2002: 278). They were also found to opt for more implicit, informal speech styles. Therefore, extroverted participants of this study are expected to rate the dialogues' speakers as familiar and close to each other. Therefore they are also expected to see the usage of BLW as less aggressive or impolite than religious participants (for example). Extraversion and proficiency level (both points covered in the personal questionnaire) in non-natives are significant predictors for

¹² IL = interlanguage

emotional perception (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002: 273). Hence, it can be assumed that the more extroverted and more proficient a person is in the study the closer L2 results will be to the L1. Therefore, the results of the control group will be compared to those of the study group.

The following chapters about the results of the empirical study will concentrate on the perception of BLW in L1 and L2 with special focus on personality traits, religiosity, impulsivity, politeness, extroversion and liberalism. Second, a comparison of male and female results will follow.

For the sake of simpler comparison of results, the first comparison will be about body parts, bodily effluvia and sexual behavior with special focus on personality traits and L1-L2 difference. In a later chapter, I will look at male-female and L1-L2 differences with regard to the BLW sections mentioned above. The last chapter of the empirical part will then summarize whether the initial research questions have been answered or not.

3.3 Body parts

The dialogues with body part BLW consist of *Arschloch*, *Fotze* and their English translations *asshole* and *cunt*.

„Körperteile stehen oft als pars pro toto und werden oft als Geschlechtsteile [um als Schimpfwort zu fungieren] verwendet z. B.: Fotze, Arsch,... [deshalb eignet sich] Fekal- und Analsprache [...] gut um die Realität abzuwerten und zu verleugnen.“ (Kiener 1983:147-154)

With the help of Kiener's statement about body parts BLW I designed four dialogues that should trigger strong reactions from the participants and ease comparison of results easier. As BLW can be used as real insults but also as a kind of endearments, the body parts section mostly consists of aggressive dialogues.

Therefore the main question concerning this chapter will be based on the research sub-question number 2 and 2.1.

How will people react to aggressive dialogues with and without swear words? Will there be a difference in perception depending on the words or rather on the tone and message of the dialogues?

3.3.1.1 Arschloch and asshole

Dialogues in English and German

<u>Arschloch</u>
M: Hey du Arschloch, pass auf wo du hingehst!
M1: Hab dich ja nicht absichtlich angerempelt, Arschloch!
M: Selber Arschloch!
<u>Asshole- MALE</u>
M: Hey asshole! Get movin'! Drive your car out of my way!
M1: I beg your pardon! What did you just say to me?
M: Yeah, you heard me, asshole! Move your car out of my way!

Arschloch is a BLW that is theoretically multidirectional, due to its article (*das Arschloch*). Nonetheless, in an anger loaded situation, it can also be applied to women as well as *Fotze* can be applied to denigrate men. Ascribing men female characteristics appears to insult them even more. A phenomenon which has already been described by Allan and Burridge (1991: 63) and which will be applied in this study (see *cunt* dialogue above).

In this section, the results of (nearly) every question of the questionnaire and both languages will be explained and compared to each other.

The first three questions were designed to find out whether the participants find the speakers' way of communicating appropriate or not. They have to define their relationship and grade the appropriateness of talking. The questions indirectly investigate how the participants actually think about people who employ BLW and partially about BLW themselves. They make the participants define the socio-cultural setting, which may have the force to change a BLW into an insult or into a form of endearment that again takes or gives insulting force to the BLW.¹³

First three questions concerning the dialogues:

1. Welche Person des Dialogs würden Sie gerne treffen/ persönlich sprechen?

Sprecher/in 1 o

Sprecher/in 2 o

2. In welcher Beziehung stehen die Sprecher zu einander?

Geschwister o Freunde o

Chef- Arbeitnehmer o

Eltern- Kind o

Fremde o Bekannte o

Sonstiges o

¹³ “ All expletives tend to be similarly dephlohisticated by over-use” (Mencken in Hughes 1991: 168)

3. Ist ihre Art miteinander zu sprechen ihrer Beziehung zueinander angemessen?

Sprecher/in 1: 1 o 2 o 3 o 4 o

Sprecher/in 2: 1 o 2 o 3 o 4 o

Surprisingly, even though both speakers of the first dialogue with *Arschloch* employ the BLW, most people (59 %) answered that they would rather like to meet speaker two. The majority thinks that they are strangers to each other which means that 48.1% admit that the aggressor's way of speaking is absolutely inappropriate. In contrast, participants could not at all find a common answer for speaker two. This means that 29.9% voted that the manner of talking is appropriate, nearly a third that it is not appropriate and a third that it is absolutely inappropriate.

With regard to the English counterpart, *asshole*, 88.6% acknowledged to prefer speaker two over speaker one. Considering that nearly 80 % of the participants believe them to be unacquainted to each other, 51.1% see the action of speaker one as definitely inappropriate and the same amount of participants sees the behavior of speaker two as appropriate.

The last two questions focused on assigning each speaker characteristics such as intelligent, aggressive, polite, educated, calm, self-confident, direct and honest on a scale from one to four; where one means "definitely the case" and four "absolutely not the case. By asking the participants to rate characteristics of the speakers we obtain an indirect scale of grading of BLW.

Scale for grading speaker 1 and speaker 2:

<i>Intelligent</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o	<i>Gelassen</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o
<i>Aggressiv</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o	<i>Selbstsicher</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o
<i>Höflich</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o	<i>Direkt</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o
<i>Gebildet</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o	<i>Ehrlich</i>	1o	2o	3o	4o

On the average (see Figure 6) speaker one of the German dialogue is generally seen to be definitely direct (1.4) and aggressive (1.7). Religious participants reacted stronger to speaker one than the rest of the group. They see her as absolutely aggressive (1), in contrast to extroverts who assign her only a two, meaning aggressive. Additionally, religious people

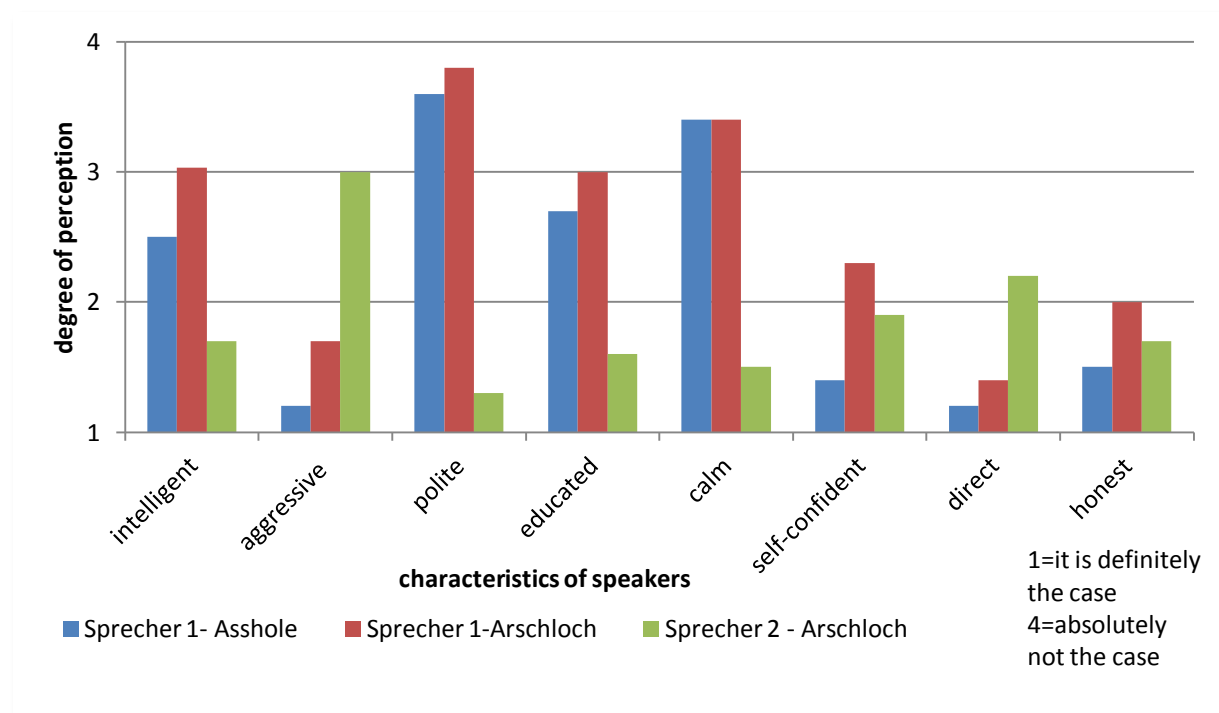
perceive the speaker as definitely not polite (4), but the rest of the participants does. However, religious people appear to appreciate the fact that speaker one is honest, more than the average participant (2 average vs. 1.6 religious) does but not in the case of speaker two (1.9 average vs. 2.3 religious) who is additionally seen as more self-confident and also more direct than speaker one. Impulsive participants think of speaker two to be less intelligent, less educated and less calm but more aggressive than the average figures show. One would think that impulsive people would have a better understanding for a rushed answer in a defense situation, but apparently not. In contrast liberal participants gave speaker one the best grade on calmness (1.9) but surprisingly graded her, by one complete mark (3.3) as less self-confident than the average did.

With regard to the English BLW dialogue including *asshole* only religious participants show major deviations from the average. The general participant thinks that speaker one, employer of the BLW, is very aggressive, very self-confident and very direct. He is seen as honest but as not polite, not calm, rather not intelligent and not educated. Religious participants describe speaker one as more intelligent and more honest but less calm and polite.

Comparing both languages to each other -- the control group and the study group results -- it can be observed that speaker 1 of L1 receives generally better marks than speaker 1 of L2. Speaker 1 of L1 is more intelligent, more polite, more, educated, more self-confident, more honest but unfortunately more aggressive than speaker one of L2. Hence, it can be assumed that L1 provokes profound reactions in comparison to L2 with regard to the BLW *Arschloch* and *asshole*.

It can be seen that in both cases, either German or English, the attacker is always perceived as more inappropriate than the defender, even if the defender uses a BLW too. The fact that even the German defender, employing the BLW, is perceived as less inappropriate may not only be explained by the act of defense but also by the fact that she is a woman, who is usually not expected to employ or speak BLW in an offensive manner (McEnery 2006:43-44,144). But this point remains to be talked about in detail in a later chapter.

Figure 6: Comparison of average perception of speakers of *Arschloch* and *asshole*.



3.3.1.2 Fotze and cunt

Body parts dialogues in English and German

Fotze
F: Das gibt's ja nicht! Du Fotze, hast mein Auto angekratzt!
Cunt- Male ...Fotze
M: What's wrong with you, you cunt! M1: You call me a cunt? M: Yes, you cunt! I'm talking to you! And now gimme that!

A definition of *cunt* was found in the Longman dictionary of contemporary English indicates and says that *cunt* is a taboo and also informal. In medieval times the word *cunt* was as ordinary as saying you and me. However to the modern reader and speaker of English it appears as very unusual. However, the words' general use continued, which is one reason why it and its German counterpart are a part of this study.

The BLW *Fotze* and *cunt* are words denoting the female sex organ but in our empirical study used to denigrate men by ascribing them names of the female sex. Allan and Burridge (1991) describe that men feel more insulted by BLW that usually describe women, such as *cow*, *bitch*, *cunt* etc. In contrast women do not feel as insulted male insults such as *asshole* or *wanker* (1991:63). This shows the existing divergences and inequalities between men and women that even prevail on the level of everyday language. Men are still the yardstick by which everyone is measured to, even, every day language. If a boy runs like a girl, he is a bad sportsman but if a girl has got balls, she is really brave.

“[...] the downgrading of a man by ascribing to him the characteristics of a woman, in contrast with the converse a woman is not generally downgraded to a comparable degree when described the characteristics of a man.”(1991: 63).

The study's participants were also offered the opportunity, at the first question about the relationship status of the speakers, to say that they did not want to meet with any of the dialogue's speakers. In the case of the *Fotze* dialogue approximately 63% made use of this option. The *cunt* dialogue has two speakers but still 44.2% of the participants would like to meet with or talk to speaker two rather than speaker one. With regard to their relationship most participants, in the *Fotze* and *cunt* dialogue as well, think of the speakers as strangers even though the former dialogue contains only one speaker. It indicates that the participants apparently expect at least a mute hearer to be present, even though no second speaker occurs actively. This can be explained by accepting the phenomenon that self-talk is still some kind

of taboo (Goffman 1981: 81) in the sense that an utterance demands at least an imagined recipient of the message. The uttering of BLW could mean an unnecessary loss of emotional and physical energy which means that one could think the BLW instead of wasting energy on speaking it out loud. Therefore the majority does not indicate that speaker one is alone but probably speaking to a stranger even though the opportunity was given to tick off “else”, in the case of relationship status.

However, even if the speaker of *Fotze* would be talking alone or to a stranger speaker one’s way of talking is definitely not appropriate and acceptable to the control group. The same thing is valid for speaker one of the *cunt* dialogue but with regard to speaker two, even though he is using the BLW *cunt*, each of the marks, two to four, received a fourth of all votes. This shows that only a quarter believes that speaker two is absolutely inappropriate, whereas a fourth believes him to be appropriate with his response. Once again, the fact that a person employs a swear word in a situation of defense seems to be more acceptable than in a situation of anger or attack.

The *Fotze* speaker one is generally seen as a very aggressive (1.6) and direct (1.4) person, who is also honest and self-confident (1.9), also see **Figure 7**. Furthermore, this person is not apprehended to be very calm nor polite (3.6 and 3.7). With regard to education or intelligence the average the opinion is that those traits do absolutely not describe the speaker. Religious and extroverted people perceive the speaker as slightly more aggressive (1.3) than the average. They perceive the talker as definitely direct and absolutely not calm. The general opinion of speaker 1 is rather negative.

With regard to *cunt*, the first speaker, employing the BLW, is seen as aggressive (1.7), self-confident (1.6), very direct (1.4) and honest (1.7). Apparently, aggressiveness and honesty do not necessarily exclude each other. This does not change the perception of politeness, calmness, education and intelligence of the speaker; those characteristics are seen in a rather negative light. Else, the speaker is not attributed a lot of cognitive capacity and tranquility. The only real statistical abbreviations (from the average) come again from the religious people, who see speaker one as less calm, less educated, less polite and more aggressive than everybody else. Impulsive persons apprehend the speaker to be more intelligent, than the average does. Speaker two is only seen by religious participants as more aggressive and less educated, than the average but still less than speaker one.

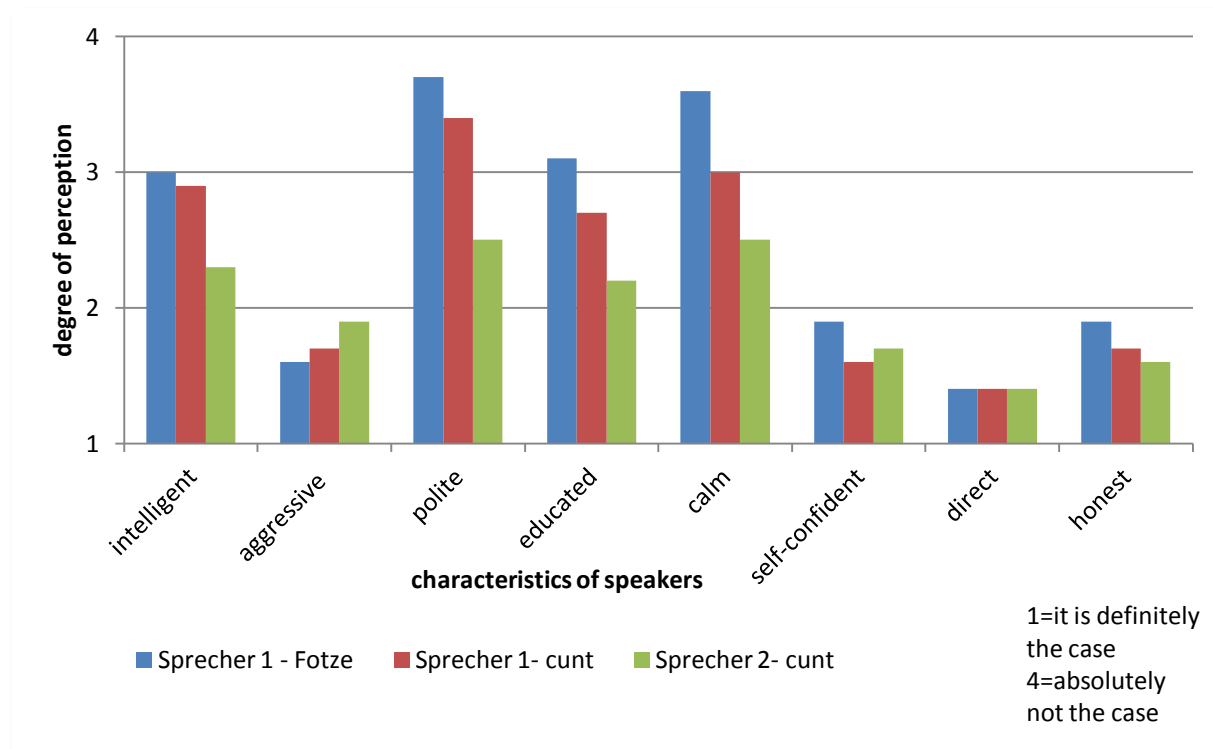
Comparing both languages to each other no actual difference in the perception of aggressiveness, politeness or directness can be observed. It only seems that speaker one of the *cunt* dialogue appears to the participants a little more polite (speaker one of *Fotze*: 3.7, speaker one of *cunt*: 3.4) than speaker one of *Fotze*, but in general both are seen as not polite. Both speakers of both languages received similar marks except for the L2 speaker on average 0.3 points more polite and more self-confident but by 0.6 less calm. Speaker two of L2 is seen as nearly as aggressive as the other speakers but more polite, calm, self-confident, intelligent and educated, which enforces the belief that using BLW for the sake of defense is an acceptable phenomenon and lessens the impact of the insult.

The participants did not show huge divergences in their perception of the native and the second language. With regard to aggression they rated L1 and L2 speakers, who uttered the BLW, pretty much the same. Calmness, politeness and education showed the biggest discrepancies, although with a similar tendency towards a more negative evaluation within L1 and L2. Furthermore, the students did not make a difference between the self talk in the *Fotze* monologue and the *cunt* dialogue. This can be explained by the fact that most participants admitted that the *Fotze* speaker was actually addressing a person who just did not respond but was present and heard the assault (see Figure 7). This can be explained by Jay's (2000) theory that emotive cursing does exist for emergency uses as it transports emotional semantics and additionally soothes the speaker even though in the meantime it does not even require a listener (2000:50-51). The functions of cursing on a psychological level to produce emotional output, showing that one is angry and unsatisfied with the momentary situation as in the dialogue and to understand other speakers' emotional reactions. This leads to the conclusion that cursing happens rarely without meaning or without purpose. Even self talks as in *Fotze* happen for the reason of emotional or physical relief. Cursing can be seen as a reflection of a person's emotions and feelings, as the way a person uses BLW depicts her deep emotional investment in an individual identity (Jay 2000:82). It is this personal identity, formed partly by BLW that the participants are asked to describe and perceive via the questionnaire.

Even though *Fotze* is in the German language a typical BLW directed at women and *cunt* a typical BLW directed from men towards men (McEnery 2006:38), even though a female body part, the results did not show representative differences according to male-female distinctness as Allan and Burridge (1991:63) state. It does not appear as if male and female participants react in a special or different way to these BLW, either in German or English.

In conclusion, differences in perception of L1 and L2 speakers occur, but not with regard to aggressiveness or because (female) speakers use BLW. It appears to be only due to the different languages transporting contrasting images of politeness and calmness. L1 and L2 provoke different reactions.

Figure 7: Comparison of average perception of speakers of *Fotze* and *cunt*.



3.3.2 Body parts' L1-L2 difference

After having evaluated the various results concerning *Arschloch*, *asshole*, *Fotze* and *cunt* one of the main sub-research question can be partly answered (also see Figure 6 and Figure 7).

Does the native language overrule the second language in the appropriate perception of BLW dialogues?

Comparing the perception of *asshole*, *Arschloch*, *Fotze* and *cunt* to each other a clear preference of language can be observed. Here preference means a BLW dialogue which earned strongest reactions; was the most aggressive, the most impolite, the least calm is seen as the one which loomed.

The most aggressive BLW is not as expected a German one but an English one: *asshole*. It is followed by the German BLW *Arschloch*, *Fotze* and lastly by *cunt*. The two last were rated as equally aggressive. The most impolite are *Arschloch* and *Fotze*, followed by *asshole* and *cunt*. The most self-confident is *asshole*, followed by *cunt*, *Fotze* and then *Arschloch*. The most direct is also *asshole*, which is not seen as a good characteristic as being too direct is not always a welcome feature. One of the rather positive sides of the BLW dialogues is shown by honesty and again *asshole* it is, the least honest is *Fotze*. Generally, *cunt* lies in the middle of the ranking and *Fotze* mostly at the end, being perceived as least intelligent, least direct, least impolite speaker.

Long story (of facts and figures) short, *asshole* had the strongest impact on the participants' perception which could be explained in several ways. First, the persons of the study group are students of English and have a very high proficiency level and a deeper socio-cultural understanding which might have influenced their results. Second, the control group's third most frequent L1 BLW is *Arschloch*, or an abbreviation of it, and semantic satiation may have lessened the force of the insult of the L1 word. Third, the German dialogues are spoken by women and the English by men, factors which may make a BLW sound less aggressive. But this remains to be the focus of further studies which cannot be considered at this point.

Taking a deeper look at L1, L2 and the body parts bad language words participants anticipate L2 BLW in the majority of the cases, concerning speakers' characteristics, as stronger than L1 BLW. Also see Figure 7.

3.3.3 Body parts-male-female differences

Arschloch, *asshole*, *Fotze* and *cunt*

The first part of the empirical study concentrates on how different characteristics of human beings influence their perception of BLW in the L1 and L2. This part focuses on possible gender differences and researches in detail whether theories about crude word choice and reaction to BLW by women are true or not (see Kiener 1986, McEnery 2006).

The results of this section start with results by men and women of the German body part BLW *Arschloch*.¹⁴ With regard to aggression and politeness, men's and women's results are close to average figures (of this paper) but women do have a much more positive impression of speaker one than men. Average figures say that the first speaker is not perceived as calm and only self-confident. Alternatively, women believe that the speaker is calm (women 2.2 vs. average 3.4) and very self-confident yet they do think of her to be a less educated and less direct person. In contrast, men see her as less and women as more confident; a difference of one point lies between them (2.6 ♂ vs. 1.3 ♀ and 2.3 average), to men she also appears to be less honest. Surprisingly, men and women do not differ at all in their opinions about speaker two, neither to the average nor to each other. The only anomaly can be found in aggressiveness. Speaker two appears to men a little less aggressive (2.6♂ vs. 2.1♀ and 2.3 average) than to women. This shows that as already mentioned in the chapter 3.3 Body parts (with regard to participants' characteristics) the attacker is perceived as worse than the defender; even though both employ BLW.

Concerning the perception of *asshole* (also see Figure 8), the female rankings are very close to average figures and only male participants show deviations. They see speaker one as calmer, more honest but less intelligent. They also perceive speaker two, who does not employ the BLW at all, as more aggressive (2.6♂ vs. 3 average) than the average participants and women do. This may be due to the aggressive undertone of speaker two.

The other body part BLW, *Fotze* (see Figure 9), is part of a monologue spoken by a woman. Men and women quite agree with average figures. The exception is honesty. Women apprehend the speaker to be more honest (1.6 ♀ vs. 1.9 average) and men as less honest (2.2 ♂ vs. 1.9 average). Even though the male participants think of her as less honest they do perceive her as less aggressive too (1.9♂ vs. 1.6 average). With regard to the English dialogue containing *cunt* once again only the male participants deviate from average figures and show another opinion of the first speaker's (male) self-confidence: they apprehend him as less self-confident (1.9 ♂ vs. 1.6 average). Otherwise, male as well as female participants share their results with the average. Speaker two is seen as less self-confident, less direct and also as less aggressive but as more educated, polite and calm, by males. Female participants' results are close to average figures and do not show any radical reaction neither into a very shocked nor an indifferent direction.

¹⁴ All results by men and women are always seen in relation to average figures, hence a remark as "men see speaker one as less honest" means less honest than average figures show.

In general, female participants do not show significant differences in their reactions to either BLW. They mostly stick to average figures, which shows that they do not necessarily react more shocked to BLW than men or the average participant. The only body part BLW which itched out a deviation was *Arschloch's* speaker one, who apparently received more positive results than the average participant gave him. Male participants rated an L1 and an L2 speaker as more aggressive, which possibly indicates that not the language but the context of the dialogue makes a male hearer perceive aggressiveness. Three out of four dialogue speakers were rated with 1.6 or 1.7 on the characteristic aggressive, only one got a 3 and did not employ a BLW.

A ranking of the “worst” perceived BLW, caused by L1 and L2 difference, can be observed. *Asshole* was perceived as the most aggressive followed by *Arschloch's* speaker one and then *Arschloch's* speaker two. The former two got the same points and only the last BLW got lower marks from female participants than from males. *Fotze* and *cunt* have the following ranking: the most aggressive is *Fotze* (perceived by women), followed by *cunt* (perceived by men), *cunt* (seen by women) and *Fotze* (perceived by men). Focusing on politeness, Figure 9 shows that the most polite speaker is *Arschloch's* second followed by *asshole* and then by *Arschloch's* first. *Cunt* is seen as more polite than the *Fotze* dialogue, with women always rating the speakers as less educated (as well as the anus dialogues).

In the end the most provocative BLW is *Arschloch* (only the speakers who use the BLW were compared). Females perceive the speaker to be more aggressive than men. Otherwise, men see him as less calm, less self-confident, less honest (speaker two is seen as less honest by men) and too direct.

With regard to L2 BLW *asshole*, women react more sensitively and apprehend him as less calm and honest. For example *Fotze* is seen as less intelligent and more aggressive by women. Instead, men admit that the L1 and L2 BLW speakers are less self-confidence than their female participants do.

Therefore, it can be said that a difference exists between men and women in the perception of BLW dialogues. Men reacted, at least with regard to body part words, more relaxed than the study's average participant but females however did not answer in a more sensitive manner, as predicted by Kiener (1983) for example.

„Felduntersuchungen belegen, dass Frauen verbal aggressiver sind aber dies nicht unbedingt leichter akzeptieren oder leichter darauf zu konditionieren sind. Frauen beurteilen Schimpfwörter generell schlimmer als Männer.“ (Kiener 1983:196)

In a nutshell, concerning body part BLW men react more sensitively to the L1 BLW and women to the L2 BLW.

Figure 8: Comparison of perception of speakers of *Arschloch* and *asshole*. Male-female perception differences

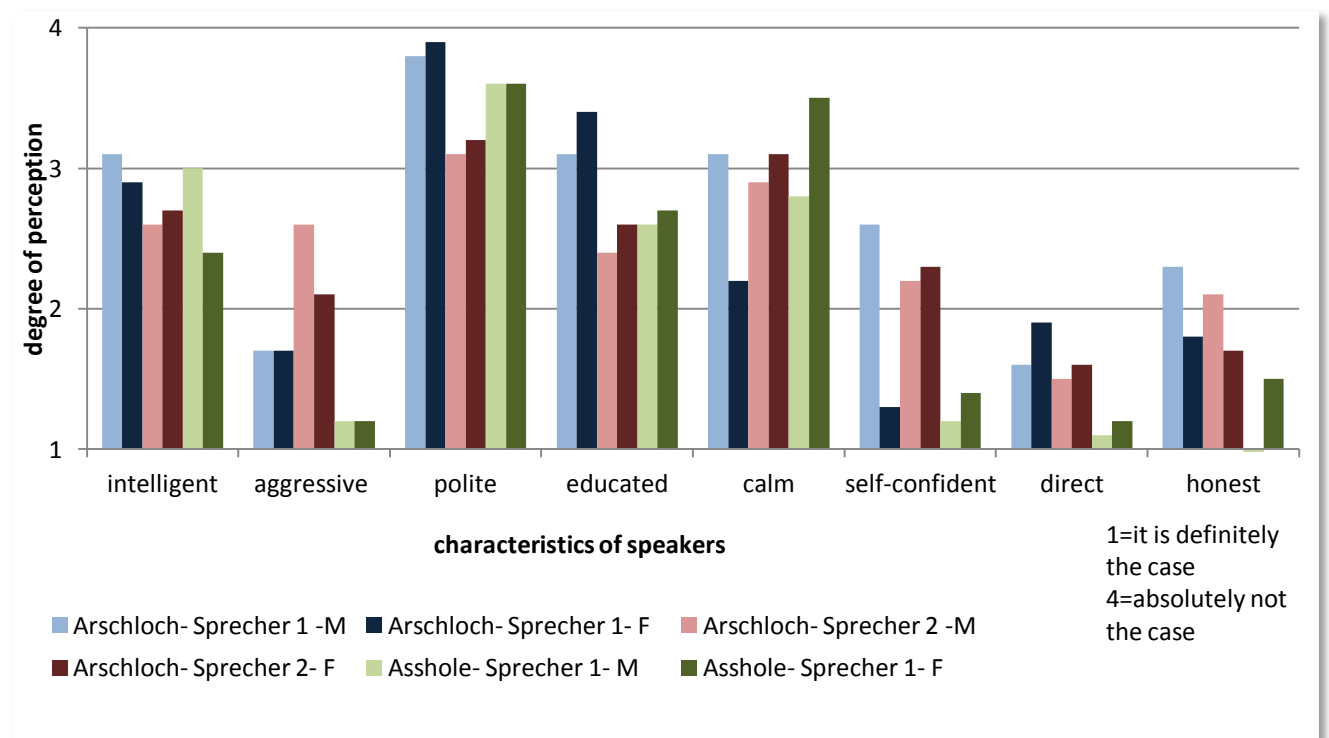
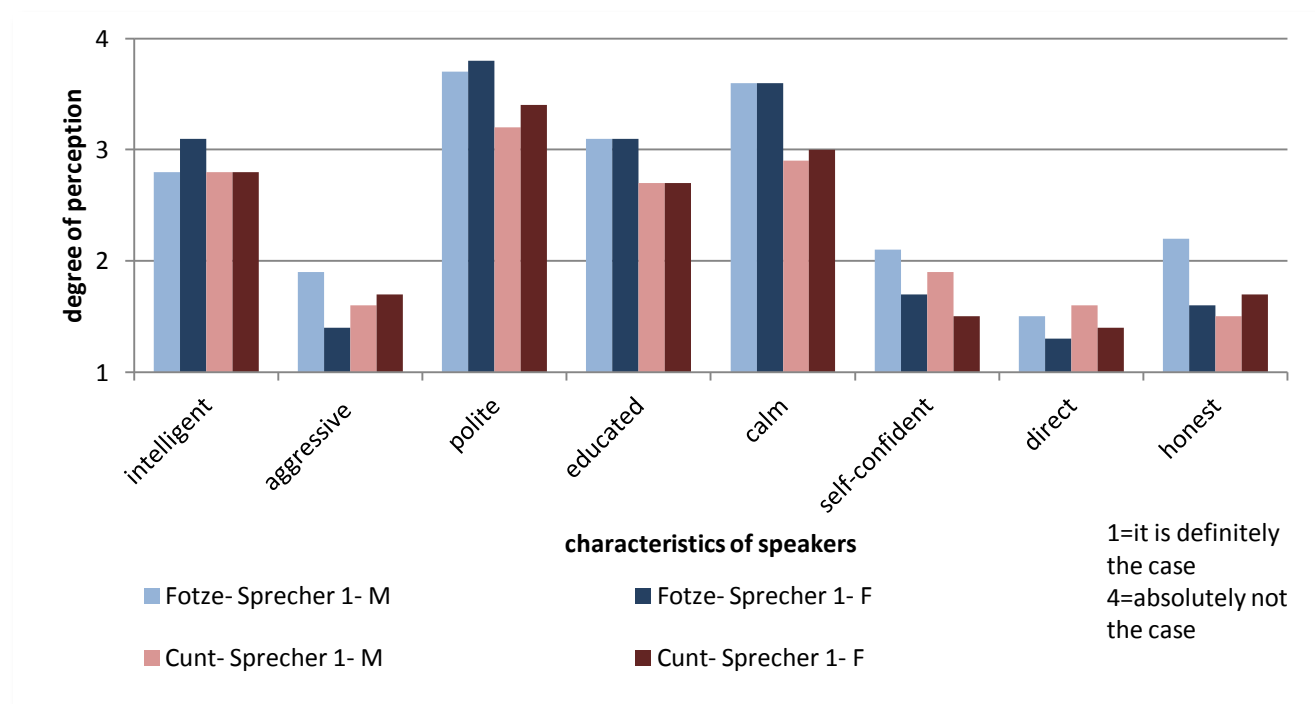


Figure 9: Comparison of perception of speakers of *Cunt* and *Fotze*. Male-female differences.



3.4 Bodily Effluvia

3.4.1 Scheiße, shit, bullshit

Bodily effluvia dialogues in German and English

<u>Scheiße</u>
F: Mhhmm, probier den Kuchen! F1: Okay, lass mal probieren! F: Scheiße , ist der gut!
<u>Shit</u>
F: Shit! Shit! Shit! Shit! M: What? What's up? F: Shit! I forgot my passport at home! Shit!

The German *Scheiße*, the French *merde*, the Italian *merda* and the Romanian *rahat/câcat* are examples from different (cultures and) languages proving the use of the scatological term shit that exists in several languages and not only in English. All those languages, maybe others not mentioned here as well, use the scatological term in the sense of a BLW, as an expletive. Geoffrey Hughes (1991 and 1988) admits that in some cases it is not possible to establish the meaning from the term itself, as connotational nuances always depend on the context of the utterance. Denotation and connotation may have various interpretations: thus the simple exclamation *Shit!* can possibly express annoyance, surprise, pleasure, contempt, boredom and a range of other feelings (Hughes 2006: 170).

However, the section about bodily effluvia not only includes variations of *shit* but also the words *pissen*, *Scheiße*, *shit*, *bullshit* and to *piss*. The words *pissen*, *Scheiße*, *shit* and *bullshit* belong to the BLW category of scatology, the study of excrements, and are typical for the American and German language cultures as far as Jay (1992:9) is concerned. The word *pissen* is a BLW belonging to vulgarities as it is neither bad nor good but reflects a certain crudeness and lack of education (Jay 1992: 6). *Scheiße*, *shit* and *bullshit* are employed as epithets, within the context of this paper, (Allan and Burridge 2007:80), or according to Goffman as response cries, “[...] that are brief but forceful bursts of emotional language.” (Goffman in Jay 1991:7).

Generally, expletives are the least offensive way of using taboo words as they are not concretely directed at a listener but have a cathartic function (Pinker 2008:358). Therefore the dialogues containing expletives might be rated as less aggressive and more polite than the previous (However, this remains to be verified in the course of this paper.). In the following examples they occur only in the form of non-aggressive response cries to an unpleasant

situation and are, typical for epithets, not directed at an active hearer. Additionally, the English word *shit* appears once in a German and once in an English context, which brings us to the fourth sub-research question.

Will German native speakers react in the same way to English swear words in a German context as to English swear words in an English context or will they treat them the same way they would do with German swear words in a German context?

Due to the frequent use of the English vocabulary in German (see Figure 4) it might be possible that *shit*, in a German and English context, receives similar results as *Scheiße* in its more normal one.

Unfortunately even in the year 2011 technical problems still occur and during the empirical field study, the dialogue with *to piss*, the counterpart of *pissen*, was accidentally deleted. However, there are no results available on *to piss* and therefore a comparison with the German counterpart is impossible¹⁵. Nonetheless, there still exist four bodily effluvia terms to compare and to interpret.

Concentrating on the terms left, *shit* and *Scheiße* in different contexts of language (L1 and L2), Kiener observed that these BLW are mostly used in contexts of anger in order to signal aggressiveness or if something does not please the speaker. They are terms conveying strong emotions and feelings and are most often employed to underline or fortify aggressiveness and rage.

„Scheiße ist bei fast jeder Äußerung von Zorn und Ärger beteiligt. Das Wort „Scheiße“ wird zum Ausdruck von Zorn und Unmutsäußerungen verwendet und ist ein Fekalausdruck zur Steigerung und Verstärkung.“(Kiener 1983: 144- 146)

On the basis of Kiener's findings the section of bodily effluvia will put special emphasis on the second research question:

How will people react to aggressive dialogues once with and once without swear words? Will there be a difference in perception depending on the words or rather on the tone and message of the dialogues?

The evaluation of the control group and the German epithet *Scheiße* shows that nearly half the participants (48.1 %) would like to meet the first speaker, the one employing the epithet. A

¹⁵ due to lack of time it was not possible to recuperate reactions on this specific dialogue in English and as the purpose of this study is to compare L1 and L2 results this example must be omitted

quarter would prefer the second speaker and 15 % would even like to meet both. Two thirds thought that the speakers are friends (66.7 %) and one third thought that they were sisters (29.6%). As they are believed to have a close relationship to each other more than three quarters (85.2%) of the participating people in the control group think that both speakers' ways of talking to each other are absolutely appropriate (see dialogues).

On average the control group felt that speaker one, the one speaking first and last, does not talk at all in an aggressive manner even though she appears to be direct and honest. The participants reacted as expected, the word *Scheiße* was meant to function as an amplifier of the feeling of satisfaction. All the other characteristics settle at two meaning: it is the case. This signifies a, in general, positive reaction to the BLW *Scheiße*.

In contrast, only religious and impulsive students fly off the handle and perceive speaker one, user of *Scheiße*, as less intelligent and less educated (average 1.9/2 vs. religious 2.3/2.3 and impulsive 2.4/2.5). Also, religious people think of speaker one not as polite and calm. Speaker one's reaction to a delicious piece of cake (see 6.8.3 German dialogues) seems to be a little over the top for religious participants. However it is remarkable to observe that impulsive persons, who were expected to easily accept this kind of reaction so a good cake believe this sort of verbal reaction to be mindless and naive.

Speaker two, who does not employ any epithet, BLW or vulgarity was not rated much differently than speaker one. Again religious people are the exception to the rule and perceive the speaker as less aggressive, less honest but also as more educated than the average. The little more education and less aggression this speaker is granted can be explained by the absent BLW. BLW make a sentence sound more vulgar and therefore may change a person's view on the employer of the BLW (Jay 1992: 6). Certainly, the big surprise are extroverted and impulsive participants who believe speaker two, who only says "*Okay, lass mal probieren.*" to be less intelligent, educated, direct and most notably less polite. An explanation which seems to be a little far-fetched within the discussion of BLW but may be valid: speaker one does not make a proposition to speaker two to taste the cake but only tells her how good it is. In reaction, speaker two does not follow any code or rule of politeness and reacts with what would be more appropriate as an answer to the polite question of whether or not she wanted a bite but made the sentence sound like an order. Liberal people on the other hand, think of speaker two as more polite than average figures of the other participants of the control group show.

Reactions to the BLW user and the speaker not using it are quite divergent and therefore interesting to compare *Scheiße* in a German context to *shit* in an English context and their results.

Speaker one of *shit* in an English context appears to the study group to be an aggressive but intelligent and educated person. She received 2.4 point on politeness, however does not give the impression of being self-confident (2.6) and calm.

Again, religious people have the impression of speaker one being less aggressive, less calm and less polite but think of her being more intelligent and more self-confident than the rest of participants. Speaker two is also seen in a different light by religious persons even though she does not utter any BLW. The second speaker receives on most characteristics average marks between 1.3 and 1.7. These are polite, intelligent, aggressive, educated, calm, self-confident, direct and honest. However the study group thinks that speaker 1, employer of the BLW, is not aggressive (3). Only religious persons rate her worse and position her between 1.6 and 2.1. Again, the only characteristic rated exceptionally is aggressiveness and given a 3.5; meaning that the speaker is seen as not hostile. In this case a 3.5 is positive as it means that religious and impulsive persons (3.3 points) rate the speaker as less aggressive than the average does.

Attention was paid to create dialogues that only employ the BLW *Scheiße* and *shit* in the sense of an epithet and not in its literal meaning. It should be mentioned that the German dialogue is one of contempt where *Scheiße* is rather used to express glee and *shit* is employed to express stress as the person forgot her passport. The *shit* dialogue was meant to be spoken more aggressively in order to provoke stronger reactions to see if L2 BLW can really be interpreted correctly or even provoke stronger reactions if spoken violently.

Hence one could imagine that participants may rate the speaker of *shit* as more aggressive and less calm, but according to Harris and Aycicegi's ((2003:564); in Pavlenko 2002:262)) skin conductance test L2 should provoke less suitable reactions to aggression and politeness. One reason why the dialogue in English was designed to sound more aggressive than the German one is to tickle out more emotional reactions and therefore only the BLW users were compared to each other.

The German speaker one, *Scheiße*, is perceived as less aggressive (3.9 German average vs. 2.2 English average) and calmer (1.7 vs. 3.6) than the English speaker of *shit* (see dialogues at the beginning of the chapter). The revelation, however, is that there is a difference of nearly two

points between L1 and L2 reactions to aggression. According to Harris' and Aycicegi's (2003:571) results where L1 was always the more emotional language, there should have been less. With regard to intelligence and education the English speaker appears to be slightly less educated (German 2 vs. English 2.3). She is also perceived as more direct and more honest than the German speaker (1.3 vs. 1.6) but not in the same proportion as aggressiveness in L1 and L2. The English speaker appears to the control groups to be less confident (German 1.5 vs. English 1.9).

The dialogues happen in different situational contexts, with different intonations and provoke different reactions. The most prominent contrast occurs with aggression but there are more with regard to calmness and self-confidence, intelligence and education. The discrepancies observed are small and are opposite to expectation with regard to Harris' hypothesis but went as I had expected. The participants interpreted L1 and L2 dialogues correctly and do not seem to have been influenced by various language problems. L1 is not perceived as more emotional than L2 and vice versa, as L2 even received worse or correct marks on characteristics such as aggression and education.

Up to now BLW have only been analyzed in their natural language contexts. *Scheiße* in German and shit in an English context.

Dialogues of English bodily effluvia BLW in a German context

<u>Bullshit</u>
M: Bullshit!
M1: Was bullshit?
M: Na einfach nur bullshit!
<u>Shit</u>
F: Shit! Ich hätte doch nicht so viel Kuchen essen sollen! Haaaa, shit! Die ganze Diät war umsonst!Shit!Shit!Shit!

As known and also proved by the study's participants (see Figure 4) some English BLW made their way into the German language. *Shit* and *bullshit* are some of them. Therefore it has been put into a German context, as an epithet, and shown to the control group.

When asked whether they would like to talk to this person nearly half of the participants of the control group answered no and the other half said yes. When asked about the relationship of the speakers, keeping in mind that only one speaker is audible, 26% reckoned them to be friends and only 18% acknowledged that the speaker is talking to herself. It is interesting to observe that, even though a self-talk situation can often occur, most people, of this study,

somehow still expect a present hearer when somebody talks (also see self-talk situations in previous chapters). All the same 30% think that the speaker's way of talking is definitely appropriate and 33% see it as only appropriate, either with an imagined hearer or not. On the average the self-talker of the *shit* dialogue appears to the participants as not aggressive but also as not calm. Furthermore, she received between 2 and 2.6 points for the characteristics intelligent, polite, educated and self-confident. Moreover, she appears to be very direct and very honest. Again, the religious participants think of her to be more aggressive and less calm than the standard participant. Religious persons see her as not polite (3) and not self-confident (3). The participants who step out of line are the impulsive ones and believe the speaker to be a little calmer than the average but think that she is less confident. Additionally, extroverted people see her as definitely more intelligent (see Figure 10).

The third English epithet in a German context is *bullshit*. The dialogue has two speakers and was originally intended to sound only slightly aggressive. When asked which of the speakers they would like to meet, half of the participants ticked off none and the other half of them voted for speaker two, who does not employ any BLW. The easiness with which they speak made people believe that they are friends. Nonetheless, 48% think that the first speaker's manner of talking is inappropriate. In contrast one third sees speaker two's behavior as very appropriate and one third as appropriate.

With regard to the fourth and fifth question of the empirical questionnaire concerning the characteristics of the dialogue's speakers' differences within the perception of the speakers can be observed. More important, speaker one is apprehended as not polite (3.3), as rather not aggressive (2.6) but also as rather not calm. This shows that he is perceived as a nervous person but is not aggressive even though using a BLW. The results for intelligence, education, self-confidence and calmness lie between 2 and 2.9, with most results being closer to 2.9. Consequently, the speaker is between aggressive (2) and not aggressive (3) and the rest of the results project a rather negative image onto him. As already seen in the other chapters, religious people do not share the average's opinion. They see his behavior as more intelligent and educated than the rest of the participants. Nonetheless they do perceive him also to be more aggressive. Extroverts and religious persons share the same opinion with regard to education and politeness. They think better of him than the average does (average polite: 3.3 vs. 3 and average educated 2.9 vs. 2.3/2.4). Impulsive persons perceive him as not intelligent (3.1), not aggressive (2.9) but as calmer than the average. To liberal people he appears as more self-confident (1.7). Although speaker two employs the BLW too but in a question, he is

not at all perceived as aggressive and receives marks between 2 and 2.3 on the rest of the characteristics. The results concerning aggressiveness can be explained by the fact that the second speaker is in a pseudo-defense situation and therefore the use of BLW is not automatically apprehended as an act of anger release. Religious persons ascribe him less confidence, aggressiveness and honesty but accord him more politeness. Impulsive participants do not see speaker two as a lot more polite (2.4) nor as intelligent (2.6).

After the analysis of *Scheiße* and *shit* in their natural language context and *shit G* (short for *shit in a German context*) a comparison of all three can be made¹⁶. The main differences occur between the characteristic aggressive, polite, calm and self-confident. The dialogues *Scheiße* and *shit G* have approximately the same subject matter but they show significant discrepancies between their results (see Figure 10).

Shit G is perceived as not aggressive and *Scheiße* as absolutely not aggressive. At first sight these results seem to be very similar but nearly one point lies between them. The most polite speaker is *Scheiße*, then *shit G* and at last the *shit* speaker. This can be explained in so far as the *Scheiße* speaker talks rather contemptuously, the *shit G* speaker talks more nervously and the third is devastated about the situation he is in. Hence, a feeling of aggressiveness is transmitted. Another reason may be the fact that the *Scheiße* speaker, without knowing, makes an indirect offer, which could be the reason for the fact that she is also perceived as slightly but not notably more educated than the others. As expected there appear significant differences with regard to calmness but as explained above those are because of contrasts in tone and context of the dialogues and therefore will not be talked about in detail. What is remarkably uncommon is that *shit G*, even though having a similar topic as *Scheiße*, is rated by 1.4 points less calm and by 1.1 points less self-confident, even less self-confident than the *shit* speaker. An explanation could be the topic treated in the dialogue: a girl reflecting about how much she ate. In a nutshell, *Scheiße* and *shit G* appear to provoke similar results in contrast to *shit* which is generally rated more negative than the previous first BLW.

Within the interpretations and comparisons of *Scheiße*, *shit*, *shit G* and *bullshit* a difference of 1 point is interpreted as a major and significant difference in the perception of the talker. Nonetheless, mentionable abbreviations could only be found with regard to aggressiveness and calmness. The swear word with the most positive marks is however *Scheiße*, even if *shit G* is rated similarly.

¹⁶ A comparison of all scatological BLW will be made a little later as *Scheiße*, *shit* and *shit G* are actual translations of each other and therefore need a comparison of and to each other of their own.

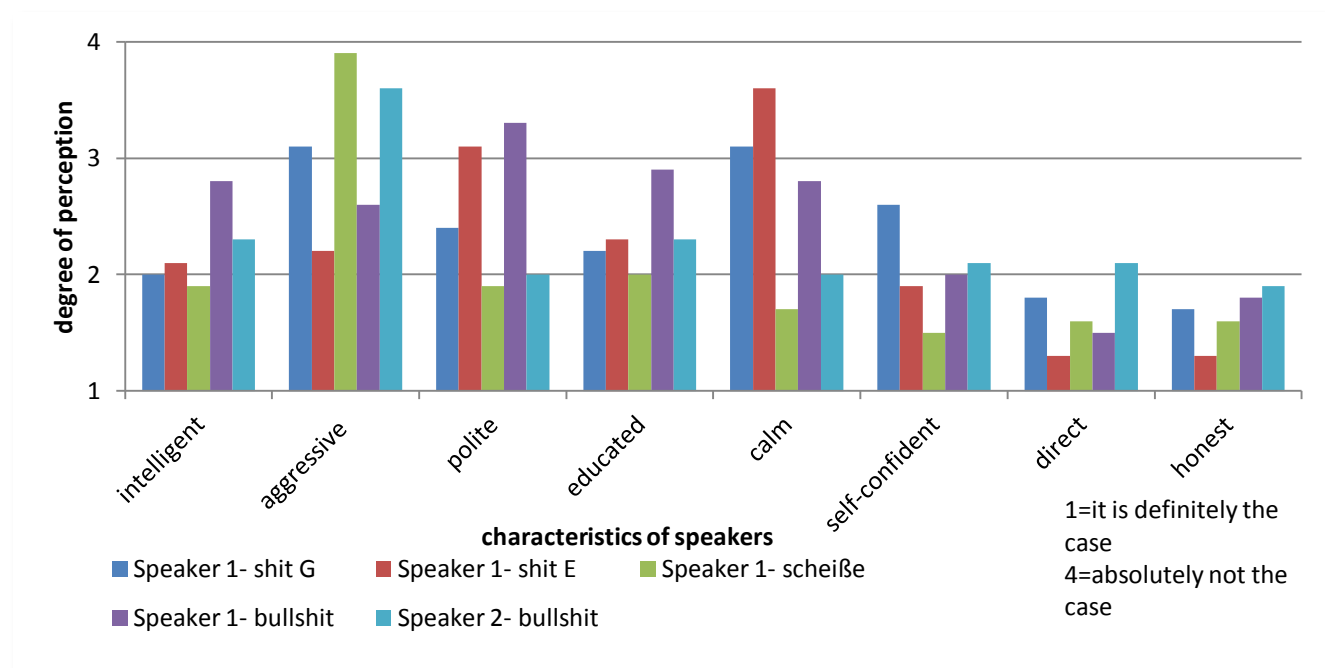
In general, it can be said that all BLW were similarly graded. They are graded worse than the average by religious participants. Impulsive people also graded speakers differently but focusing on specific characteristics such as self-confidence and intelligence.

Comparing *shit G*, *bullshit* in a German context and *shit E* context to each other both differences and similarities can be observed. *Shit* and *bullshit* are closer in aggressiveness, politeness and self-confidence¹⁷ to each other than to *shit G*. *Shit* and *shit G* are closer to each other in intelligence (2.1 vs. 2) and education (2.3 vs. 2.2). These results where at least one of the English BLW in a German context is closer to the English BLW than to the German BLW shows that the distance to L2 BLW still persists, as major differences to the L1 BLW *Scheiße* are noticed.

This shows that L2 BLW results are not at all close to the L1 BLW and this enforces the theory that BLW in a second language are employed, in an L1 context, to lessen their offending power. Allan and Burrige state that many languages make use of borrowings (such as *shit* and *bullshit* in this paper) to function as euphemisms (Allan & Burrige 1991: 103). In our examples they are no complete euphemisms as their meaning is generally very well known but they still fulfill the scope of keeping their hearers face, at least to a certain degree. This happens because “[...] foreign words acquire their ‘expressive features,’ emotive coloring only in specific social and situational contexts” (Trabetszkoy in Stankiewicz in Koch 1989:74) which does not always happen. The loans *shit* and *bullshit* have not acquired a sufficient emotive coloring yet.

¹⁷ aggressive: shit 2.2, bullshit 2.6 / polite : shit 3.1, bullshit 3.3/ self-confidence: shit 1.9, bullshit 2

Figure 10: Comparison of average perception of speakers of *shit G*, *shit E*, *Scheiße*, *bullshit*.



3.4.2 Bodily effluvia L1-L2 difference

Bodily effluvia are human waste products that smell bad and if the BLW are spoken out loud they eventually provoke unpleasant thoughts to the hearer's mind (Pinker 2008:369). According to the empirical results of this study the most popular effluvia BLW in German is *Scheiße* and in English *shit* (see Figure 2). This is why *shit* has been chosen to be part of the German context and *bullshit* to be one of the three L2 BLW in an L1 context. They are in so far important to the study as their results' comparison helps to find a probable answer to the research's sub-question:

Will cognates and phonetically similar words in L1 and L2 provoke similar reactions ?

Comparing the BLW according to how aggressive their speakers appear to the participants clear preferences can be observed. The most aggressive bodily effluvia BLW is *shit E*. It is pursued by *bullshit* and *shit G* second speaker of *bullshit* and at last the *Scheiße* speaker. The ranking of the most impolite to the least impolite word is as follows: *bullshit*, *shit E*, *shit G*. The second speaker of *bullshit* and *Scheiße* share the last place. The negative reactions belong to the English versions of the excrement and the more positive ones to *Scheiße*. The latter's speaker is seen as more intelligent and self-confident than the rest. The most direct (which is not interpreted as a favorable characteristic) and in the same time most honest speaker was *shit E*'s. Furthermore, *bullshit* (speaker one) and *shit G* are second and third in the ranking for aggressiveness. *Bullshit*'s first speaker is even the most impolite, followed by *shit E* and *shit G*. *Bullshit*'s both speakers are the least intelligent and least honest. In fact, English BLW in a German context attract a more complex system of opinions-

BLW words from an L2 used to be adopted in order to lessen the offense effect on the hearer (Hughes 1988; Allan & Burridge 1991, 2007). The above paragraph depicts that L2 BLW in L1 contexts may have lost their initial function of softening the insult. The third and fourth sub-questions:

Will cognates and phonetically similar words in L1 and L2 provoke similar reactions?

Will German native speakers react in the same way to English swear words in a German context as to English swear words in an English context or will they treat them the same way they would do with German swear words in a German context?

With regard to these questions it can be said that English scatological BLW provoke results similar to the German ones. This can be explained by the reverse effect of an overuse of

BLW. In L1 an overuse of swear words desensitizes the hearer and makes the words sound less aggressive, impolite etc. but with regard to L2 BLW in the L1 context the overuse does not have a semantic satiation. Therefore one could imagine that an overuse of L2 BLW in an L1 context might cause, let us call it, semantic sensitivity. This means that participants rank L2 BLW in an L1 context closely to L1 BLW, treat them as if they were L1 BLW in an L1 context (see Figure 4 and Figure 10).

The third and the fourth sub questions of this study answers are therefore to be seen as answered. Scatological L2 BLW in an L1 context are rated similar to scatological L1 BLW in an L1 context within this study (see Figure 10).

3.7.1 Bodily Effluvia male female difference

3.7.1.1 *Scheiße, shit and bullshit*

One of the most prominent bodily effluvia bad language words is *shit* and its German counterpart *Scheiße* (see Figures 2-5). As mentioned in the former chapter 3.4 Bodily Effluvia, they are mostly employed in the sense of epithets or response cries (Goffman 1981:98-100) within this study.

As formerly mentioned in the title, this chapter will deal with the perception differences of men and women. In general, *Shit* in the English context is even perceived as more aggressive (2.2) than *shit* and *Scheiße* in the German context (3.1 and 3.9). Male and female results are similar. Taking a closer look at the German (context) BLW no important deviation from average figures occurs between men and women. The exception to this statement arises with regard to self-confidence receiving a 2.3 by male participants and a 2.6 by the average. Men see the speaker of *shit* G as a little more confident but else they share the same opinion as female participants, which is average, about all speakers of the German dialogues.. Once again speaker one appears to male participants to be more self-confident. She also seems to be more polite, calmer, more intelligent and even more honest to male participants than to the average or the female participants of this study.

The other English BLW in a German context is *bullshit*, which does not provoke any different reaction by males or females except for speaker two who appears to males to be more aggressive (see Figure 10).

All in all, the most aggressive speaker is *shit E*. The others are seen as not aggressive in a descending order: *shit G* and then *Scheiße*. Most of the females see the speakers as less hostile, but differences do not appear as significant because they are below 0.3 points. The only exception is *shit E*, where women see the speaker as more aggressive than the average or males.

However, politeness splits opinions. Female participants do not think that the speaker of *shit E* is polite but men do. *Shit G* is perceived as slightly less polite by males than by females.

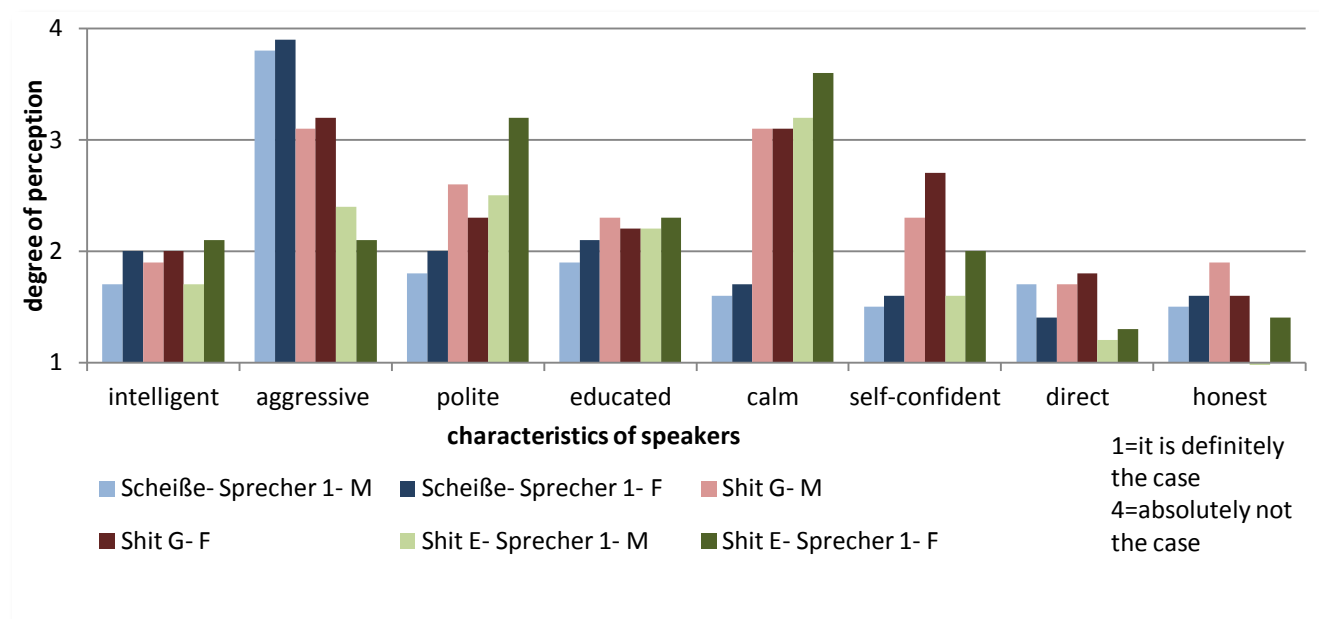
Starting with *shit G* it is the male participants who apprehend the speaker as less honest, and less polite, whereas the women grant her less self-confidence. *Shit E* is seen by female participants as less polite, less calm and less self-confident.

On the whole, the German BLW, or those in a German context, are perceived by men and women in the same way the average participant does. *Shit E* acquires better marks by males but not with regard to aggression, where they stick to intermediate figures.

Differences in perception of bodily effluvia BLW could be found in five of the speakers' descriptive adjectives: intelligent, polite, calm, self-confident and honest.

Also within the section of bodily effluvia men react stronger to L2 BLW and women to L1 BLW. Check figure 11 for visualized details.

Figure 11: Comparison of perception of speakers of *shit E*, *shit G* and *Scheiße*. Male –female differences.



3.5 Sexual Behavior

3.5.1 Fuck, Fuck G, Fick dich

Dialogues in German and English

<u>Fuck</u>
M: Fuck! Ich hab meine Autoschlüssel im Auto vergessen! Fuck!
<u>Ficken</u>
M: Hey, was ist? Was ist los? M1: Ach, fick dich doch!
<u>Fuck</u>
M: Fuck you! M1: No fuck you and the whole lot of you! Fuck you!

BLW belonging to the category of sexual behavior do not only adhere to words describing an action of sexuality but can also be nouns and adjectives. This section concentrates especially on two nouns, each describing the sexual behavior of a woman (*slut* and *Schlampe*) and a man (*wanker* or *Wichser*) (see

Figure 13 and Figure 14). Literature does not concentrate much on sexual behavior nouns but it can be observed that most nouns focusing on women focus on the negative aspects of female promiscuity (e.g. *bitch*, *slut*, *whore*) whereas those regarding men are more concerned with their personal sexuality in the sense of masturbation and having sex in general (e.g. *fucker*, *wanker*) (Hughes 1991:207). In order to continue with sexual behavior BLW in this paper, one of the most famous and used BLW-verbs in the English language *fuck* (see Figure 4) will be analyzed in its English and German context and of course also in its German translation *ficken* (see Figure 3 and Figure 5).

Interestingly, *fuck* is derived from the German word *ficken* and one of the most often used BLW in the English language (as this study and Allan and Burrridge prove). The English vocabulary has only more synonyms for *whore* than for genitalia and copulation. All in all, there do exist 1,200 terms for *vagina*, 1,000 for *penis*, 800 for copulation and 2,000 terms for *whore* (Allan and Burrridge 1991: 95-103). Even though *fuck* is frequently used it is still

considered a taboo, which is a sign that frequency does not overrule the offensiveness and offending quality of a BLW. Jay states that certain words lose their initially taboo if used in an amicable tone with a friend (1992:13).

Transitive verbs for sex such as *fuck*, *screw* and many others are regarded as swear words, because they describe an agent that deliberately carries out an action that affects an entity. They require a subject and one or more indirect objects. This means that the partner is downgraded to a prepositional object that has no influence on the action happening. Therefore *to fuck* or *to screw* somebody sounds very vulgar as the *fucked* person is not asked whether or not he or she wants to be *fucked*. He or she has no influence over what happens, which is why those verbs sound offensive (Pinker 2008:352).

In contrast, intransitive verbs, which do not require a direct object for sex (*make love*, *sleep together*,...) are more euphemistic as the partner is a part of a plural subject (Pinker 2008: 354) such as in *We make love* or *We slept together*.

The word *fuck* can be found in this empirical study once in a German and once in its natural English context. Its counterpart is the German *ficken*. Attention has been paid to find equivalent phrases in both languages *fuck you* and *fick dich* were chosen. The *fuck* G dialogue occurs in the form of an expletive to a particular situation and has been inspired by the past years of the U.S. American Bush-administration (see 6.8 Dialogues). The first speaker in the *fick dich* dialogue just greets speaker two and uses no BLW but the second speaker responds in a very violent manner by shouting *Fick dich!*. When the control group's participants were asked whom they would prefer to encounter in real life, half of the participants said none and the other half answered to prefer speaker one, who, in their opinion, speaks in an appropriate manner in contrast to speaker two who is absolutely not appropriate. However, the response of speaker two grants him a straight average 2 for aggressiveness and marks between 2.7 and 3.4 for education, intelligence, calmness and politeness. Having in mind that one means "it is absolutely the case" and four "it is absolutely not the case," speaker two does not convey the most positive image of himself. Still, he is seen as very honest, direct and self-confident. This being a sign that aggressiveness, honesty and directness must not exclude each other.

Liberals perceive the user of the BLW *fick dich* as very self-confident (1.3). Extroverts and impulsive people think of him to be more intelligent and they also see him as more polite than the average. Religious participants perceive speaker two as very aggressive (1.5). He gets a better mark by one point for aggressive from extroverts. It is still remarkable that extroverts

and impulsive people from the control group appear to have other benchmarks concerning politeness than the average. Even liberal persons, who were those expected to have different results on politeness and aggressiveness are stricter now. With regard to the *fick dich* dialogue it can be said that extroverted and impulsive participants tend to rate speaker two better than average figures show and religious people do the opposite, as anticipated and already observed in the previous chapters.

The English equivalent to *fick dich* would be *fuck you*. Hence, *fuck you* in an English context could possibly show similar differences within the characteristics of the participants but is expected to be less controversial than *fick dich* in German believing Harris et al.'s results on L2 emotion vocabulary perception (2003:564). The first speaker of the *fuck you* dialogue starts the fight. He is seen as very aggressive and direct, by the average participant. He is not calm, nor polite according to the opinion of the study group participants and apparently not educated and intelligent either (this means a rounded up mark of three; also see Figure 12). Moving on from average figures to specific figures religious participants grant him more intelligence and education, however, than the average does. Extroverts experience him as very direct and impulsive persons as more confident. Mostly, the participants' opinion on him sticks to average figures. Figures concerning the second speaker show that even though he reacts in a very aggressive way he is generally perceived as less combative. Speaker one receives 1.2 and the second speaker 1.8 points on the characteristic adjective aggressive. The defender also achieves better marks on the rest of the characteristics and gives therefore the impression to be more intelligent, educated, self-confident, direct, honest and calm even though he also employs a BLW. The only characteristic where most of the participants gave worse marks than on all the other descriptions of the speakers is politeness. This can be explained by the fact that the aggressive use of BLW may only be accepted for the sake of defense but is still not accepted as the usual practice of answering and therefore remains a rather impolite way of response.

One goal of this paper is to find out whether L2 BLW in an L1 context provoke results that are closer to L1 or L2 BLW.

Will cognates and phonetically similar words in L1 and L2 provoke similar reactions?

Therefore *fuck* has been put into a German dialogue in order to find a possible answer to the above question.

The average study participant sees the speaker as intelligent and educated. He is not perceived as calm but in contrast as self-confident, direct and honest. Even though the speaker is alone he receives a 2.3 on aggressive. Lower results were expected as the monologue was not at all intended to be in the slightest manner aggressive. Bearing in mind the 1 to 4 scale of degree of perception the speaker is at 2.3 points still not aggressive even though lower point were expected to occur. This may be explained by the use of BLW, which raises the results a little. However, these figures still mean that the speaker is perceived as not aggressive. Not only religious but also extroverted participants show different attitudes than the average. The former rate speaker one as less polite, educated and calm. Additionally, religious persons see the speaker as self-confident and as a lot more direct than standard figures expose. Extroverts notice the speaker as more intelligent, direct and self-confident. Impulsive participants surprise by rating him as less polite. On the average, the fact that the speaker is talking alone does not minimize the fact that he is perceived as less polite when using BLW. Even aggressive is not rated lower although the monologue was not meant to sound aggressive. This may be due to the presence of the BLW.

The answer to the beneath research question can be found in the comparison of the results of sexual behavior BLW.

Will German native speakers react in the same way to English swear words in a German context as to English swear words in an English context or will they treat them the same way they would do with German swear words in a German context?

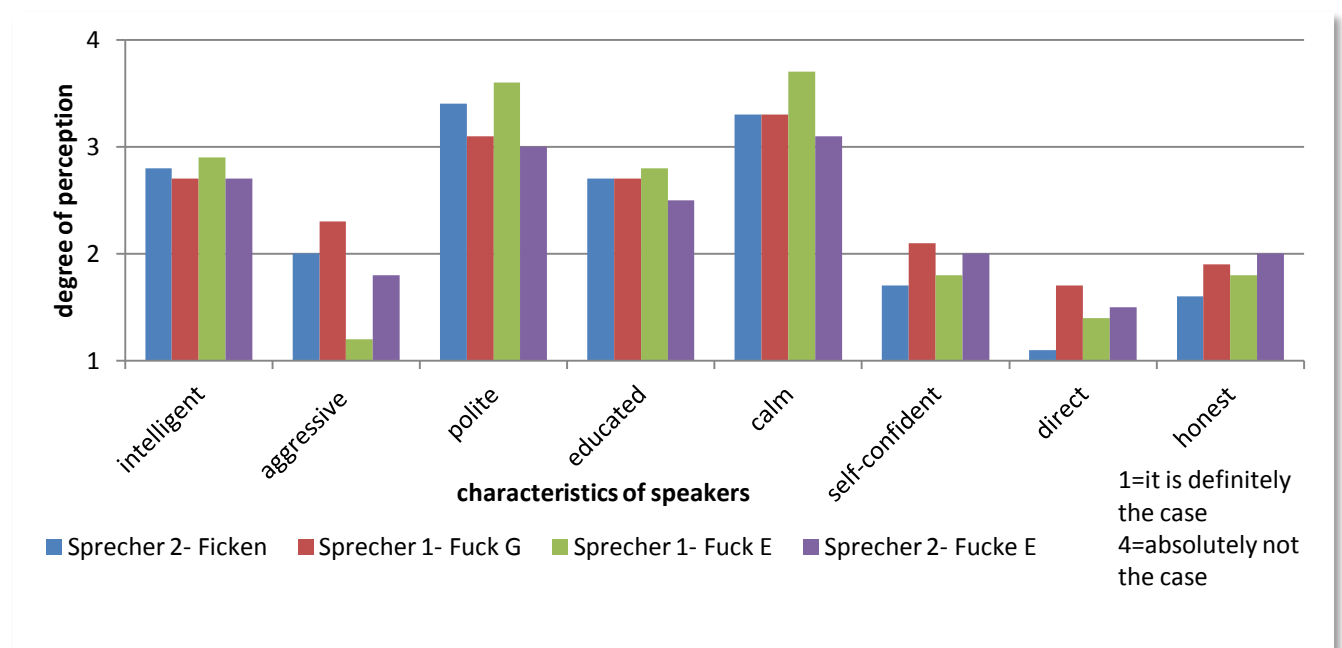
Kroll and Stewart state that words in L1 are linked to conceptual representation but L2 words are learned via translations and therefore are missing the deeper emotional context of learning (in Pavlenko 2002: 272). Their statement would mean for the study's main question that the majority of participants will rate aggression, politeness etc. in L1 less bad than L2 BLW. This theory can also be enforced by historical proof. For example, approximately 150 years ago English expressions such as *belly* or *big with child* started to become unacceptable phrases and therefore French neologisms like *stomach* and *pregnant* were introduced to lessen indecent connotations (McEnery 2006:114).

This historical proof shows that L2 BLW in an L1 context could be rated less strong than L1 BLW in an L1 context within this study. Every f-word, *fuck E*, *fuck G* and *ficken* in its L1 environment provoked results that need a deeper and detailed evaluation (see Figure 12). Comparing all of these BLW, their average figures in both languages it can be observed that

no big differences are made with regard to intelligence or education. The speaker who was perceived as least polite, calm and intelligent is not a German speaking one but speaker one of the English *fuck* dialogue. With regard to the adjective aggressive a ranking from the most to the least aggressive speaker can be set up as follows: Speaker one of *fuck E* (the aggressor so to say), speaker two of *fuck E*, the BLW user of *ficken* and at last *fuck G*. The most direct, most honest and most self-confident speaker was the *ficken* elocutionist. According to the empirical results of Harris et al. (Pavlenko 2002, Harris 2003) the participants should perceive L2 dialogues, at least, as less aggressive (aggression being a strong emotion causing strong reactions (Jay 2000:57,59,73). Yet, both speakers of *fuck* in an English context have been rated as more aggressive than the *ficken* speaker and the *fuck* speaker of the German dialogue. Only *fuck G* is less aggressive than the rest, which may be due to two reasons. First, the fact that it is an expletive could give an impression of being less aggressive. Second, people tend to employ BLW in another language to soften its impact on the hearer as could be observed in the historical example of *belly* and *big with child*.

Against all odds, the comparison of the sexual behavior verb *fuck* and *ficken* is in opposition to Kroll's and Stewart's (in Pavlenko 2002: 272), Harris' (2003) and Dewaele's (2004) findings. The scientists generally state that L2 emotion or bad language words provoke less strong emotional reaction than L1 BLW. In contrast to this generalized statement stands the analysis of the word *fuck* and *ficken* where the English version seems to tickle out more reactions.

Figure 12: Comparison of average perception of speakers of *fick dich*, *fuck G*, *fuck E*.



3.5.2 Schlampe, slut

Dialogues in English and German

Schlampe
F: Samantha aus Sex and the City ist ja so eine Schlampe!
F: Auf jeden Fall ist sie eine Schlampe! Genau wie all die anderen aus der ganzen Serie ja auch!
Slut
F: "I don't want to talk to her! I hate that slut!" (http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=slut 17.11.2010)

The term *slut* appears around 1400 simultaneously with the decline of religious oaths. “It implies slovenly or crude behavior and is a vituperative term for women at that time“ (Hughes 2006:392). Even nowadays, the Longman dictionary indicates its readers that it is a taboo, and proposes them “Do not use this word”.

Timothy Jay (1992) observed in his discourse analysis of college students that *whore* was used more by males and *slut* typically employed by female students (1992:143). Most BLW directed at women focus on sexual looseness (1992:178). With regard to promiscuity it can be witnessed that negative connotations mostly adhere to words describing easy women¹⁸. Even Hughes (2006:363) can only find examples for women, with negatively connoted sexuality, among which the BLW *slut* can be found.

In order to definitely confirm of the results from the *fuck* and *ficken* chapter further comparisons of another sexual behavior BLW needs to be made. In particular, it is *Schlampe* and *slut* which remain in their languages’ context within the empirical study. The *Schlampe* dialogue has two speakers whereas the *slut* dialogue has only one.

Starting with the German BLW both speakers of the dialogue *Schlampe* do not appear to have made a good impression on the participants as the majority (48%) states not to want to meet either speaker. 88.9% of the control group see the speakers as friends and therefore acknowledge their way of speaking to be absolutely appropriate. However, they would not like to meet one of the persons. The study shows that speaker one of the *Schlampe* dialogue is perceived as very direct. She gives the impression of being educated and intelligent, calm and self-confident. In contrast, she is not seen as polite nor aggressive. Speaker one she is perceived as rather neutral although she uses the BLW *Schlampe*.

¹⁸ comment: whereas men’s promiscuity is mostly positively connotated such as in womanizer, lady killer (vs. men eater for women), player (AE) etc. or if BLW addressing men have something to do with sexual looseness it focuses mostly on their mother’s: son of a bitch, *Hurensohn* in German (Jay 1992:177);

Once more, only religious people expose a different opinion but this time a more positive one than the average participant does. They see speaker one of the *Schlampe* dialogue as more intelligent and educated. In addition, they and impulsive persons (1.8) apprehend the speaker as self-confident and honest but also as less polite. The fact that she is perceived by religious people, as less polite than by the average participant may be due to the BLW use.

Speaker two, who also applies the same BLW in a non-aggressive but rather jealous manner, is identified as rather not aggressive (3.6). Participants perceive the speaker as not educated but neither intelligent; if rounding up the points 2.8. It is a surprise to discover that not only religious citizens think of speaker two to be a little more aggressive (3.3) but also extroverted (2.9) and impulsive (3) people. Furthermore, the extroverts believe speaker two to be calmer than the rest does. Here once again the tone and not the choice of words makes the difference in perception even with religious participants. Religious and impulsive participants rate the speakers mostly as more aggressive and less polite. However, they seem to appreciate honesty and self-confidence a lot more than the average, which means that they give the speaker better marks on it.

The English counterpart of *Schlampe* is *slut* and in contrast to the German version nearly 44% of all participants admit to wanting to meet the monologue's speaker. More than the half (54.6%) prefers to avoid a meeting or a discussion with her. As a monologue involves self-talk, most of the participants were puzzled and could not decide if a mute hearer was present in the talk or not. Therefore a majority still found that for such an utterance a hearer should be present and decided that the relationship of the speakers is one of good friends (23%). Hence, they anticipate a non-talking receiver of the message. The second most often answer, with regard to relationship status, was that of a person talking alone or to herself (11.5%). Therefore her way of speaking, alone or to a friend, is apprehended by a majority of 17.4% to be only appropriate whereas 13.9% see it as absolutely inappropriate to talk this way about another person. Gossiping about other persons does not seem to be accepted easily by the study group. Even though the word choice comprises strong words such as *hate*, *don't want to* and the BLW *slut* the speaker receives relatively high figures for directness, honesty and self-confidence. This gives rise to the assumption that directness, honesty and self-confidence can even occur in situations of aggression, which does not necessarily give them a more positive coloring. Furthermore, the elocutionist is seen as in between being not intelligent and not educated (2.6), rounding figures up one could tend to give a more negative interpretation. For example, religious persons acknowledge that she appears to be not educated whereas

extroverted persons see her as educated, in comparison to the rest of participants. The speaker is perceived as rather impolite (3.6) and not calm (3.1) while the average participants see her as aggressive (1.6). Religious people change their usual habit of rating speakers as more aggressive than the average and give her the mark two; meaning “not the case”.

Even though the monologue comprises no audible hearer and there is only one heard speaker, most participants still imagine a hearer and therefore the speaker received rather bad marks, as she is seen as aggressive, impolite and not educated. This makes the utterance worse as it is not only meant to function as an emotional release but also as an utterance to be heard and negatively interpreted by a recipient. Generally, a speaker will try to keep a hearer’s face (to be polite) except when intending to affront the hearer (Allan and Burridge 2007: 33) which apparently, as average figures show, is the intention of this speaker. She is angry and wants to let off steam with the subsequent effect of possibly hurting the person she speaks about. In order to make the impact of the BLW work it is highly important that the hearer perfectly understands the BLW, either in the L1 or L2, as it would lose its offensive power (Kiener 1983: 141). The study group, however, perfectly understands the situational L2 context of the dialogue and correctly interprets the circumstances.

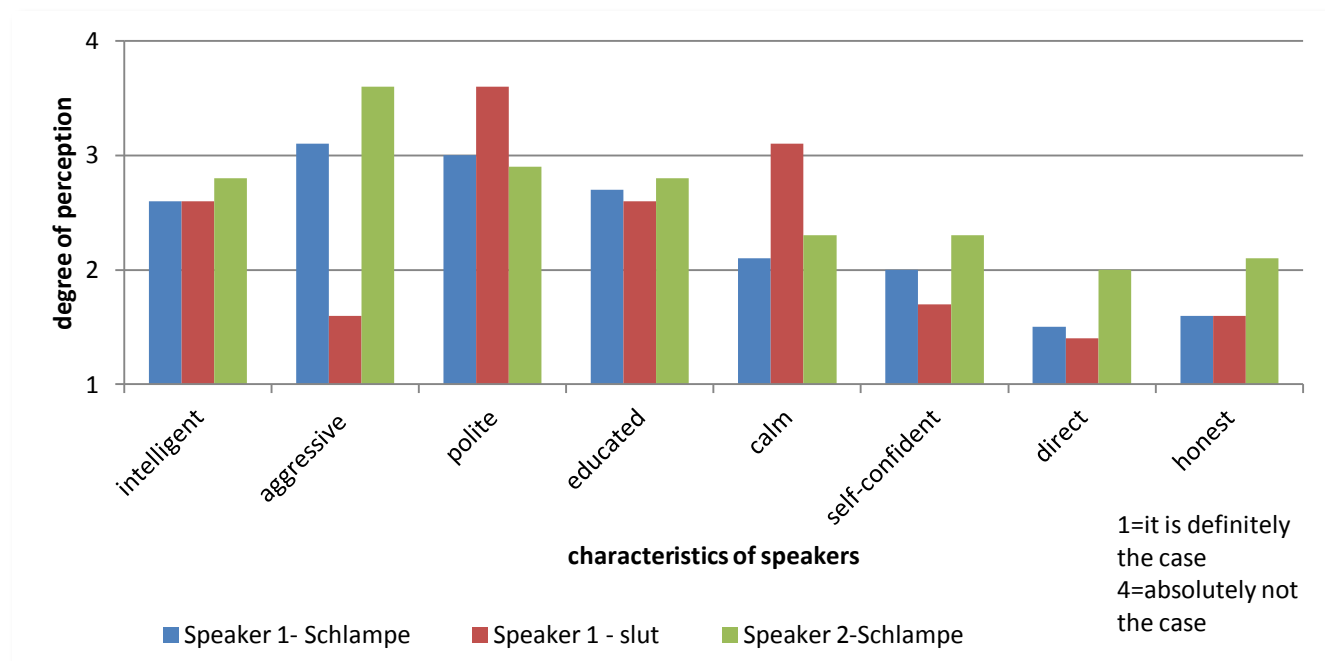
Comparing speaker one of the *Schlampe* dialogue to the speaker of *slut* big differences occur. All speakers are perceived as approximately similarly intelligent and educated. The German speaker two, also employing the BLW, appears to the study group as the least polite and direct speaker. Also, she is seen as the least aggressive. Those results occur because she is not the initiator of the gossip but only the yes-(wo)man who seems to repeat the opinion of speaker one; an aspect producing a negative impression on listeners.

The big difference within perception arises at the characteristic aggression. The German speaker is seen as less aggressive than the English speaker. The *slut* speaker is the most aggressive, speaker one of *Schlampe* occupies the second and speaker two of *Schlampe* the last place. The *slut* speaker is additionally perceived as the most impolite but in the same time as the most self-confident in contrast to the German ones. The study group interpreted the dialogues in the manner they were designed and expected to. They apprehended the more aggressive one as more aggressive and the more impolite one as more impolite. Even though participants may experience a lack of anger repertoire in their L2, L3 and Lx such as for example perlocutionary acts like an apology and the expression of strong emotions which are preferred in the L1 (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002), participants interpreted the dialogues correctly, which does not enforce the results of Harris et al. (2003) that L1 is perceived and

understood in a more emotional way than L2. Usually this is because emotion words in L1, as Altarriba has been cited by Dewaele, benefit from multiple traces in a person's memory (Dewaele in Pavlenko 2002:119). The participants listening to the L2 dialogues, however, have a high proficiency level and as students of English another emotional and personal link to the culture and speech. Their socio-cultural competence may be higher as well as their personal investment in learning the language, culture, literature and history. It is more profound than the interest and investment the control group may have for their L2 (English). A high proficiency level and motivation for the improvement of the proficiency may influence the emotionality link to words, which is expressed and reflected in the results where L2 receives worse or better marks than L1 (see Figure 13).

“[...] the expression ‘makes’ the emotion, not from nowhere, but not without the language system and the knowledge of linguistic processes and their effects either.” (Schmidt in Koch 1989: 37)

Figure 13: Comparison of average perception of speakers of *Schlampe* and *slut*.



3.5.2 Wanker, Wichser

Dialogues in German and English

Wixer
F: Du bist ja so ein Wixer! Lass mich bloß in Ruhe!
M: Es tut mir leid!
F: Verzieh dich! Einfach nur ein Wixer!
Wanker
M: Why are you such a wanker?.
M: You should know best! Because it's fun!

The last words testing whether emotional and strong reactions depend more on L1 or L2 focus on male sexual behavior. This time the BLW strongly depends on a connotative interpretation that means that participants have to depend on their proficiency level in contrast to the example of *slut* and *Schlampe*. As can be seen in the above dialogues, the employment of *wanker* and *Wichser* fulfills the function of a release valve (as the majority of BLW does) in the context of this study but is additionally intended, in the German dialogue, to hurt or insult the hearer in an aggressive manner. The English version is making use of the BLW but not aggressively, which may influence the participants to give the English version better grades. On first sight a comparison of very different dialogues does not appear to be very logical but the actual comparison happens on the basis of whether participants interpret the situational context, the relationship and the appropriateness of the speakers correctly.

Starting with *Wichser*, the opinions about meeting or not meeting the speakers are fifty-to-fifty: nearly half of the control group would like to meet speaker two and approximately one half would not like to be confronted with either of them. As the second speaker does not employ any BLW, moreover apologizes in a rather innocent, nearly dumb manner (see *dialogues Wichser*), it is logical that he is the less aggressive person, hence the easier one to talk to. The way the speakers talk to each other makes 48% of the control group believe that the two are friends and nearly 20% think that they must at least be acquaintances. This indicates that this kind of BLW is appropriate for their kind of relationship but not for a participant to meet them. This also outlines the fact that the way they talk to each other would not be at all possible if they were strangers. The first speaker's way of talking appears to the majority of participants as absolutely inappropriate and the second's as a proper way. Despite the speakers being friends, participants still do not approve of the first speaker's talking which

shows that even between friends some words do not fall into the category of semantic satiation (Jay 1992:13, 87). Another explanation could be that it is a woman using the BLW *Wichser*, which is not a typical word for females. McEnery acknowledges typical female swearing to be *God, bloody, pig, hell, bugger, bitch, pissed, shit*. (McEnery2006: 34).

„Felduntersuchungen belegen, dass Frauen verbal aggressiver sind aber dies nicht unbedingt leichter akzeptieren oder leichter darauf zu konditionieren sind. Frauen beurteilen Schimpfwörter generell schlimmer als Männer.“ (Kiener 1983: 196)

Speaker one is apprehended to be a very impolite (3.9) fellow, who is neither intelligent (3.4), nor educated (3) and not at all calm (3.7). Speaker one is seen very direct (1.4) and gives an aggressive (1.5) impression of herself although a confident (2) one. To the religious and extroverted participants she gives a less honest impression (average 2.3 vs. 2.7/2.6). To the former she is even definitely not calm but more educated. The BLW user is generally seen as an unpleasant fellow.

Speaker two, however, does not give at all a confident and neither an aggressive impression to the participants. He is not direct and lets the idea of not being too intelligent (2.6) and educated (2.6) come up. Nonetheless, he is perceived as polite. The second speaker splits the participants' opinions: religious persons have a more positive reaction to him. They see speaker two as more intelligent, more educated, more direct and more honest and less aggressive, although less calm. Extroverts and introverts show differences with regard to specific characteristics such as direct, calm and intelligent. Both see speaker two as less intelligent than the average. Extroverts even see him as equally intelligent to speaker one.

With regard to the *wanker* dialogue the first speaker makes use of the BLW but the second one also calls the first speaker one names without explicitly using other BLW. However, this time two males are talking to each other in a cheerful manner. Here the BLW functions more as a term of endearment. The study group's participants anticipate the speakers' relationship correctly and think of it as a friendly one. The speakers are good old mates (77% of the participants believe so). On these grounds, most participants (53%) even think that their way of talking to each other is, for both speakers, appropriate. Both are given a 2.6 and a 2.7 on aggressiveness, rounded up, this would mean that they are rather not hostile to each other. They are nearly equally direct (speaker one 1.5 and speaker two 1.4). In general their results are very close to each other: speaker one and speaker two received a 1.7 and 1.6 on honesty, 2.1 and 2 on calmness, 2.3 and 2.2 on education and also 2.1 and 2.3 on intelligence. The only actual difference occurs with regard to self-confidence, where speaker one who has the guts to

call his friend names is by 0.5 points more self-confident than speaker two who does not. In some (social) contexts a BLW-expression such as *You son of a bitch!*, or as in the paper's example *Why are you such a wanker?* can be interpreted as a term of endearment among old friends (Jay 1992:87) which is one reason why the study group does not perceive major differences between the speakers although only one employs the BLW and the other not.

The comparison of L1 and L2 speakers comprises only speaker one of L1 and L2 and speaker two of L2; speaker two of L1 does not employ offensive words and is therefore left out. The results of the comparison could not be more diverse. Speaker one of the *Wichser* dialogue is perceived as more aggressive than the first speaker in *wanker* (*Wichser* 1.5 versus *wanker* 2.6). This is a reaction due to the fact that the German speaker means to be aggressive. In contrast the *wanker* speaker appears to pose a friendly but sharp question. However, both are perceived as aggressive but the *wanker* speaker as slightly less aggressive when rounding up the figures. The first German BLW elocutionist receives generally the worst marks. Speaker two of the L2 BLW also receives better marks than the German counterpart. She is the least polite (by nearly one point), the least calm (by nearly 1.5 points), the least intelligent (also by approximately one point) and the least educated¹⁹. Additionally she is the most aggressive but not the most self-confident person.²⁰

The results regarding *Wichser's* speaker one can have two possible explanations. On the one hand the theory of a less bad perception of L2 taboo words is very plausible. However, there does not only exist an L1 and L2 difference but other factors such as the tone of the utterance and the sex of the speakers may actually influence the perception of BLW (Harris et al.2003, Dewaele 2004, Pavlenko 2002), which is why one of the sub-research questions is focused on personality and especially gender.

Research question:

1. If a difference exists between the perception of swear words in L1 and L2, does it only depend on the language or on other factors such as a person's personality, gender, tone or maybe even the word itself ?
 - 1.1 Does personality overrule the factor language?
 - 1.2 Does gender overrule the factor language?

¹⁹ although less than one point difference lies between the L1 and the L2 speakers

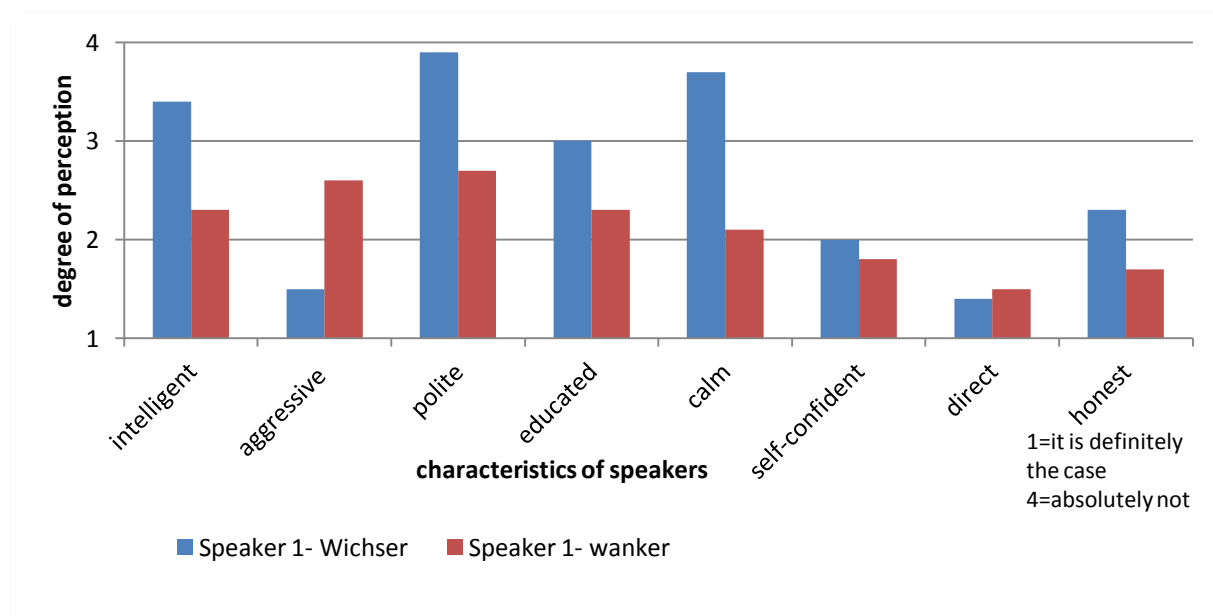
²⁰ The most self-confident and intelligent speaker is speaker two of *wanker*. His witty and quick answer without using the BLW awarded him these attributes.

On the other hand the gender of the speakers appears to majorly count to the participants. The fact that the German speaker is female and the English speakers are male seems to matter for the study and the control group. Females are generally expected to make less use of (certain) BLW and even if they do they are imagined to make these utterances, of course, in a less aggressive way than this particular one does (Goffman 1981; Jay 1992; Jay 2000). Nevertheless, Franz Kiener, as one of the only few, states that women are verbally more aggressive than men but they cannot accept this fact or are easier to condition regarding BLW.

“Felduntersuchungen belegen, dass Frauen verbal aggressiver sind aber dies nicht unbedingt leichter akzeptieren oder leichter darauf zu konditionieren sind. Frauen beurteilen Schimpfwörter generell schlimmer als Männer.“ (Kiener 1983: 196)

However, McEnery(2006: 34-36) found out that both gender have preferences for the use of BLW but if Kiener’s assumption from the 1980’s may however be valid.

Figure 14: Comparison of average perception of speakers of *Wichser* and *wanker*.



2.1.1 Sexual Behavior L1-L2 difference

Even in the 21st century the sexual behavior of women plays a big role as several BLW such as *whore*, *slut*, *bitch* etc still prevail in active usage in German and English. Many BLW of sexual behavior used against men mostly denote them an “abnormal” sexual behavior such as *homo* etc. and therefore the word *wanker*, being a BLW which implies a “normal” sexual activity is not expected to create a big stir, in contrast to *slut* and *Schlampe* (which rather rely on promiscuity).

One BLW was aimed at women, *slut* and *Schlampe*, one at men, *wanker* and *Wichser* and the last was more gender neutral, *ficken* and *fuck* by comparison. The BLW with the highest resonance is the “neutral” *fuck*. It is perceived to be the most aggressive BLW, followed by *Wichser* and *slut*. The least asserting BLW of this category is *Schlampe*, spoken by the second speaker of the respective dialogue. The words that give a sentence or dialogue the most impolite coloring are *fuck* and *slut* followed by *Wichser*. The most confident speaker is not one employing the BLW *wanker* but giving a witty answer. Therefore the most self-confident speaker using a swear word is the *slut* as well as the *ficken* speaker. They are trailed by speaker one of *wanker*, *fuck E* and *Schlampe*. The most direct are *ficken*, *slut*, *Wichser* and *wanker* (speaker two). Honest are *slut* and *Schlampe*, then *wanker* and *ficken*.

It is a neck-to-neck race between *slut*, *fuck E* and *ficken* for the most shocking BLW but with regard to aggression and impoliteness *fuck E* wins the race. Looking at self-confidence and honesty *slut* wins and the most direct BLW is *ficken*.

The perception difference between L1 and L2 does not seem to be clear concerning sexual behavior words, but L2 BLW create the most negative image in contrast to L1 BLW.

There a clear pattern of difference between L1 and L2 cannot be remarked and the conclusion has to be made that most of the time it is not the language but the word that makes the difference as all participants had relatively good L2 levels.

For a visualized comparison of the results check Figure 12, Figure 13 and Figure 14.

3.7.2 Sexual Behavior: male female difference

3.7.2.1 *Slut, Schlampe, Wichser, wanker, fuck and ficken*

Steven Pinker (2008) states that men swear more in sexual taboo terms than women (2008: 348) which leads to the expectation that the male members of the study group will rate speakers' characteristics more positively. They could see characteristics such as aggression, politeness and self-confidence as less offensive than women. The *Fuck* dialogue employs the BLW relatively neutrally, in the sense of an epithet. The BLW *slut* is used to explicitly address a woman and *wanker* to address a male recipient. Therefore, reactions by the different sexes to this gender specific BLW will be interesting to observe.

The first gender specific results focus on the BLW *Schlampe* and its English equivalent *slut*. Surprisingly, women give the first speaker of the *Schlampe* dialogue better marks than men and the average. They apprehend speaker one to be more self-confident and even more honest, whereas male participants see her as less confident and honest. Women give her better marks on all characteristics but on aggressive. The second speaker, as well using the BLW, also receives a better grading by females than by males. The former see her as more self-confident, more intelligent, more honest and more educated than the average and men do (see Figure 17).

In contrast men perceive her as less confident, less intelligent, less honest and less calm. The only speaker's characteristic where both sexes are of the same opinion is aggression. Here males and females think of her to be more assertive than average figures show. In comparison, *slut* is perceived by women as very close to average figures and only men change their opinion of the speaker. They apprehend her to be more self-confident, calmer, politer and more intelligent than the average.

The most aggressively perceived speaker is the L2 BLW speaker of *slut*. The results of both *Schlampe* speakers and *slut* speakers are close to each other and both genders think that they are not aggressive, even though males find L1 speaker one a little more hostile. With regard to politeness, general figures of all speakers are around the points three. But the most impolite is the L2 BLW speaker. The biggest differences between male and female perception could be found in the characteristics for *Schlampe* speaker two: intelligent, educated, calm, self-confident, direct and honest. Here males gave worse marks in comparison to women and in comparison to the other BLW words. Men accorded the L2 BLW speaker better marks than

the L1 BLW speakers. Even though both dialogues are critiques of somebody and treat the same topic in more or less the same tone. Women do not necessarily give better marks, as in the L1 example but stick to average figures (see Figure 17). Those reactions may be due to the lower emotional bonding participants may have to the L2 (Amati-Mehler; Argentieri & Canestri in Pavlenko 2002:264).

“[...] the expression ‘makes’ the emotion, not from nowhere, but not without the language system and the knowledge of linguistic processes and their effects either.”(Schmidt in Koch 1989:37)

Now it is interesting to compare male results concerning a male BLW to the female BLW and also see if the women of the study group also reacted differently on this typical male BLW than on the female BLW dialogues formerly evaluated (see Figure 15).

The male sexual behavior BLW is *wanker*, in German *Wichser*. The latter is, in general, perceived similarly by male and female participants except for the characteristic honesty. Men accredit speaker one and speaker two less honesty than the average and females do. Otherwise, males’ and females’ figures stick to the average. Speaker one of the *wanker* dialogue uses the BLW but he is not rated worse than speaker two who does not employ *wanker*. Concerning speaker one, again only men think differently and rate him, this time, worse. He appears to be more aggressive. The speaker is seen as less polite, less educated, less intelligent, less calm, less confident, less honest and less direct. The female participants stick to average figures and give neither better nor worse marks. They seem to think very neutrally in relation to average figures, whereas male participants always find a speaker either better or worse in a way. The English sexual behavior dialogues generally provoke a more negative opinion by males.

The last BLW in the category of sexual behavior is *fuck E*, *fuck G* and the German *fick dich* (see Figure 15). Starting with *fick dich*, neither men nor women perceive neither speaker one nor speaker two differently than averagely anticipated. The English version in the L2 context (*fuck G*), however, provokes a little more fluctuations. Speaker one, using the BLW, is seen as more intelligent, more polite and educated and as even more honest by men. Females again share the medial opinion. Speaker two, who uses the BLW in a more aggressive manner than the first speaker, is not at all perceived as more aggressive than speaker one. Nonetheless, males apprehend him to be calmer than the average and more intelligent. *Fuck G* does not provoke any strong reactions. Only with regard to calmness men think of the speaker to be calmer.

Sexual behavior BLW appear to have a stronger impact on male participants but do not influence the females' perception at all, in comparison to the average. Generally, men have different inconsistent attitudes towards the L2 BLW speakers.

Steven Pinker states that men usually tend to use BLW from the area of sexual terms (2008:348) and therefore the men of this study were expected to react in a more relaxed way to the BLW. Nonetheless they did not. The most provocative BLW within the field of sexual behavior BLW was *Schlampe* (both speakers) and with regard to the male sexual BLW they reacted very strong to *wanker*. Women reacted stronger (gave worse marks) when confronted with L2 BLW and men most often with L1 BLW.

Summing up, men tended to have stronger reactions than women and additionally more often than them. As the study is a quantitative empirical study a statistical significance test would have been interesting to conduct but due to lack of time could not be managed. However it would be interesting to pursue the male participants' tendency and see if the emancipation of both genders has really and actually changed their perception and usage of BLW.

For visualized details and comparison of results check Figure 15, Figure 16 and Figure 17.

Figure 15: Comparison of perception speakers of *fuck G*, *fuck E* and *ficken*. Male-female differences.

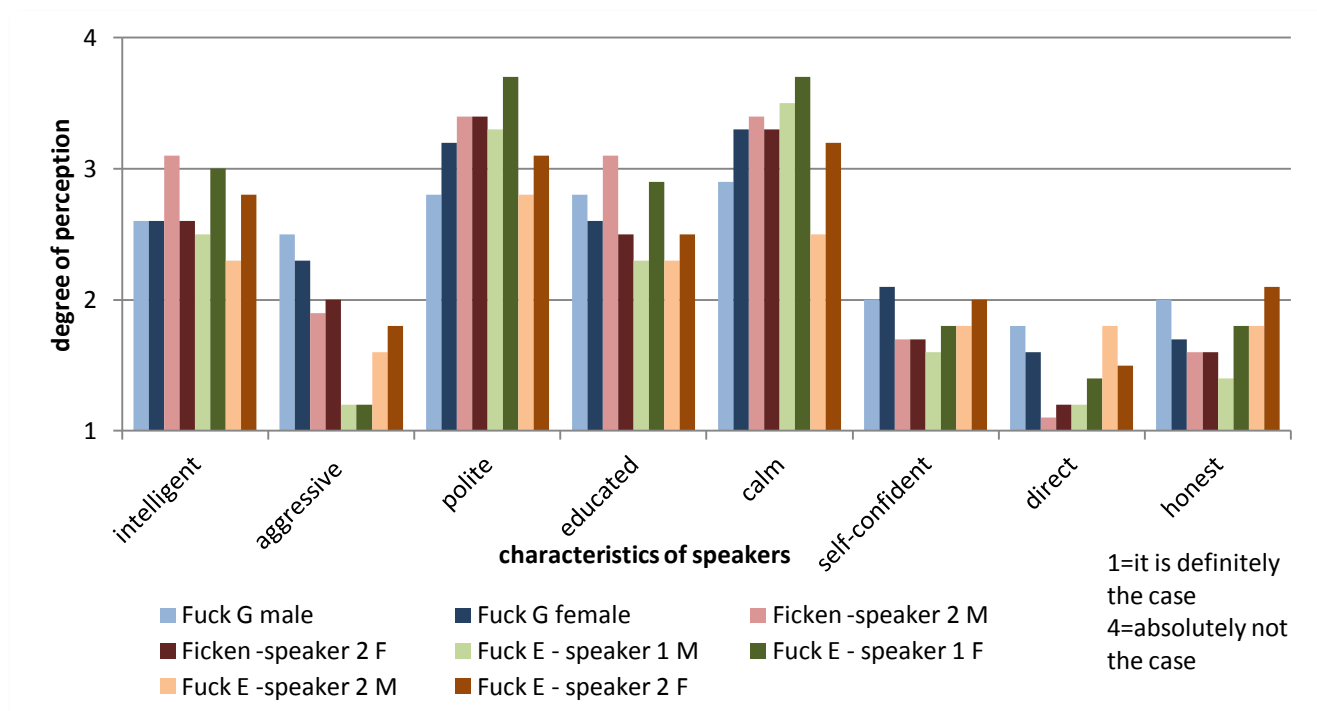


Figure 16: Comparison of perception of speakers of Wichser and wanker. Male-female differences.

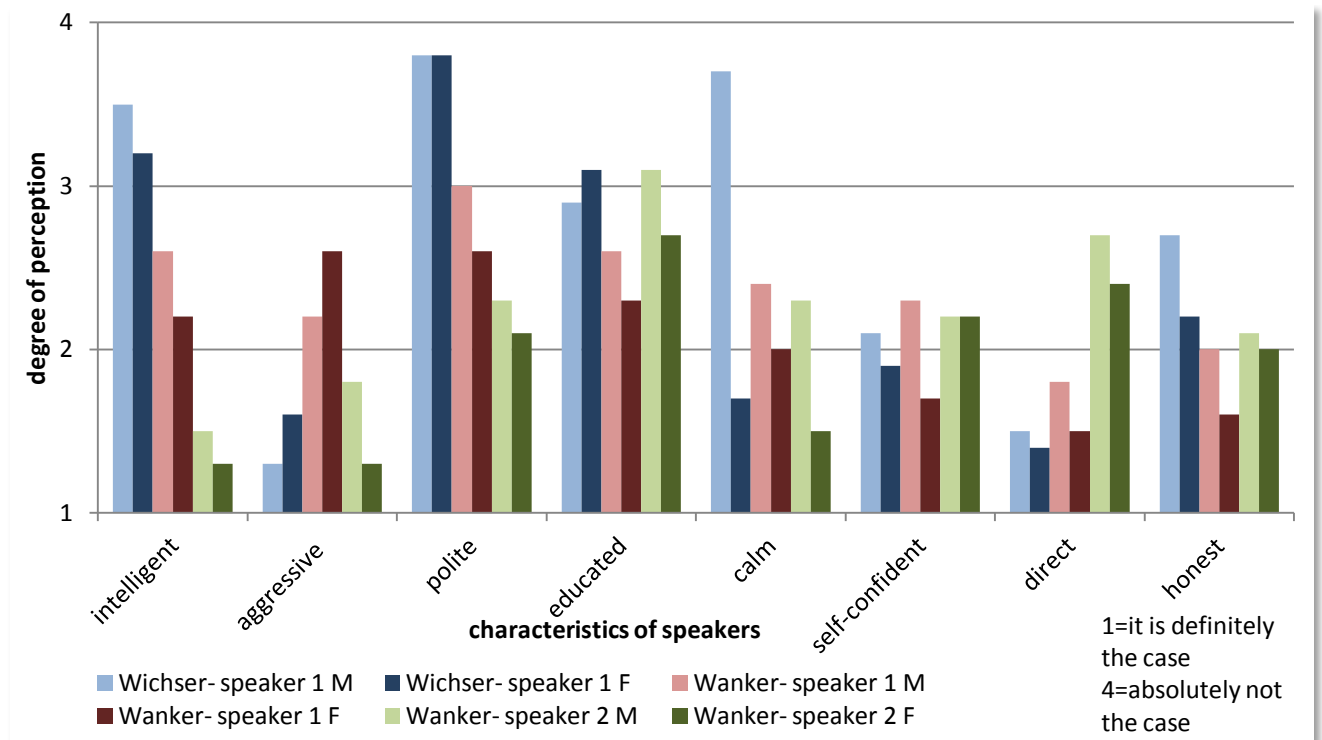
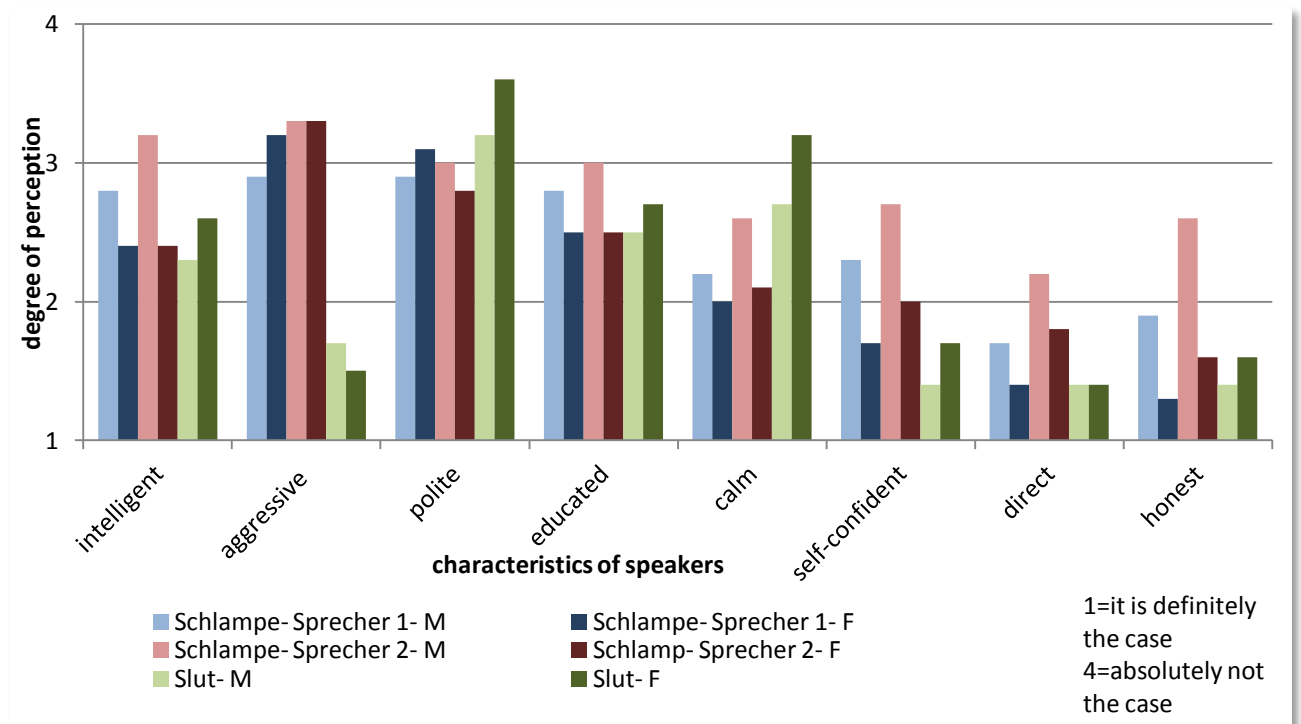


Figure 17: Comparison of perception of speakers of Schlampe and slut. Male-female differences.



3.6 Buffer words

3.6.1.1.1 Blödsinn, Wahnsinn, Incredible and fed up

German buffer dialogues

Wahnsinn
F: ein Wahnsinn! Passen sie doch auf wie sie fahren! Sie hätten ja fast mein Auto gerammt. Waaaaahnsinn, manche Leute haben einfach keine Ahnung wie man fahren muss!
Blödsinn
F: Dass das Projekt wegen mir einen Fehler hat ist aber auch so ein Blödsinn! M: Mir ist egal wer dafür verantwortlich ist. Es muss wieder repariert werden! F: Es ist trotzdem ein Blödsinn was Sie behaupten!

Generally speaking, it can be observed that most occurrences of dirty word usage happen in emotional states of anger and that “[...]speech acts involved with anger are based on rules of communicating that emotion.” (Jay 1992:96). By comparison not every anger-loaded situation has to involve BLW and not every BLW-demanding situation must be based on angry emotions (Jay 1992:96), which is a reason why buffer dialogues occur in this study. In the former section some BLW dialogues were based on anger, some were based on the expression of joy and others were motivated by completely individual feelings (e.g. jealousy). Therefore, dysphemisms are not only BLW or insulting words, but can also be common words, in our case the buffer words, used in a dysphemistic way (Allan & Burrige 1991: 28).

“Dysphemisms, then, are used in talking about one’s opponents, things one wishes to show disapproval of, and things one wishes to be seen to downgrade. They are therefore characteristics of political groups and cliques talking about their opponents; of feminists speaking about men; and also of larrikins and machos types speaking of women and effete behaviors.” (Allan & Burrige 1991: 27)

As not only BLW are able to help persons express their feelings and emotions, dialogues containing common words were designed. Those common words used in a dysphemistic way are *Blödsinn* and *Wahnsinn* in German and *incredible* and *fed up* in English (see Figure 18). These dialogues were compound to function as a kind of buffer between the actual BLW dialogues in order to avoid automatic answers by participants. Initially, participants were told that they were answering a questionnaire about impulsive interaction in order to prevent preformed opinions about BLW.

They are no typical BLW but still show disapproval of a certain situation or person and strongly depend on the manner, tone and situation they are spoken in (also see 3.1.2 Context).

The first analyzed buffer word is *Wahnsinn*. The German buffer words' results show that half of the participants would prefer not to meet the speaker of the *Wahnsinn* monologue but on the other hand the other half would like to meet. Even though only one speaker is audible, 81% think that he is speaking to a stranger; which gives rise to the assumption that they imagined a present hearer. 48% believe that his way of talking is appropriate to the situation (being angry about an incompetent driver). On the average the speaker is perceived as impolite, educated and intelligent (2.3-2.4). Surprisingly, the talker received 2.9 points on aggression which says that he is perceived as not hostile. He got 2.6 points on calmness, which shows that he does not react quiescently. He does not use a taboo word per se but as already said a BLW does not necessarily have to be a swear word in order to transmit the speaker's emotional state (Jay 1992: 96-101). Most of the time throughout the empirical study only religious people think differently of the speaker. This time, astonishingly, they rate the speaker more positively than the average participant does. They apprehend him as less aggressive, more educated, more polite, calmer and less direct. The fact that he does not use a BLW such as *Scheiße*, *Arschloch* or anything else makes religious people think better of him.

The *Blödsinn* buffer dialogue (see German buffer dialogues p.96) is spoken by a woman criticizing herself for something that did not go so well or did not work out for her. 59.3% would like to meet her but 37 % would not mind missing a date. On the average, she is seen as honest, direct, intelligent and educated but as rather not self-confident and calm. Extroverts see her as calmer and religious person as less calm than the average. The latter also apprehend her reaction as less self-confident (as well as impulsive persons do), less direct and less honest which seems to be a normal apprehension of the situation as the speaker is blaming herself for something and denigrates herself.

English buffer dialogues

Incredible(spoken in a rather aggressive way)
F: It's incredible how you drive! You really should pay a little more attention to other drivers!
Fed up
F: We have Pizza for dinner? Again?
F: You know what? I'm s fed up with your dinner wishes! Go and cook yourself !

As the study focuses mostly on the perception of L2 BLW buffer words in English were the most logical next step. These buffer dialogues include the words *incredible* and *fed up*.

Incredible comes in the form of a disappointed critique of politicians and the latter a husband/boyfriend or roommate (as most participants thought) who has enough of his partner or roommate's dinner wishes. 68.6 % of the study group could imagine meeting the speaker whereas only a third would be against such an encounter. Marks are situated between 1.5 and 2.2; except for aggressive (2.9). In general, this is a very positive result as it states that the speaker is rather intelligent, educated, polite, calm, self-confident, direct and honest but not aggressive. Hence, it can be assumed that the speaker is viewed as a neutral person.

The first speaker of the *fed up* dialogue does not employ the buffer and asks in an annoyed way why they are having pizza for dinner again. The second speaker gives a rather aggressive answer using the buffer word. That may be the reason why the majority would prefer to talk to speaker one than speaker two and why the first speaker's way of talking is appropriate but only a third think so of the second one. Average figures for the first speaker lie between 1.5 and 2.8. The second speaker is seen as aggressive, impolite very direct and conveys a more negative image. However, religious people react stronger to her than to speaker two who does use *fed up* in a rather annoyed or aggressive way. Nonetheless, the former is perceived by all participants as more aggressive (1.7 vs. 2.8) and impolite (3.3 vs. 2.7) than the latter despite not using the buffer word or speaking very imperiously. The adjectives intelligent and educated do not show salient results and will therefore not be discussed in detail at this point. The second speaker provokes similar grading by all participants in comparison to speaker one.

Balancing the participants' reactions of the English and the German dialogues it can be observed that the most aggressive and most impolite speaker is the English *fed up* speaker. *Incredible* and *Wahnsinn* are equally aggressive and *Blödsinn* occupies the last position in this ranking. With regard to politeness all the others are approximately similar to each other. The most direct and most self-confident person is again the *fed up* speaker.

In a nutshell, most participants thought that all speakers' ways of talking were completely appropriate. The L2 *fed up* dialogue was rated the most aggressive and impolite and it appears as if L2 poses no barrier to stronger reactions by participants even within the field of buffer words. The more aggressive speaker was rated more aggressive, the calmer one calmer etc. independent of L1 or L2 (see Figure 18). Participants did not react as formerly expected. They did not react stronger to L1 but less strong to L2 BLW. The reverse happened even with buffer words.

3.7.3 Buffer words male female difference

The buffer dialogues were designed to distract the participants attention from the BLW and to make them believe the study would be about impulsive interaction and not about swear and taboo words.

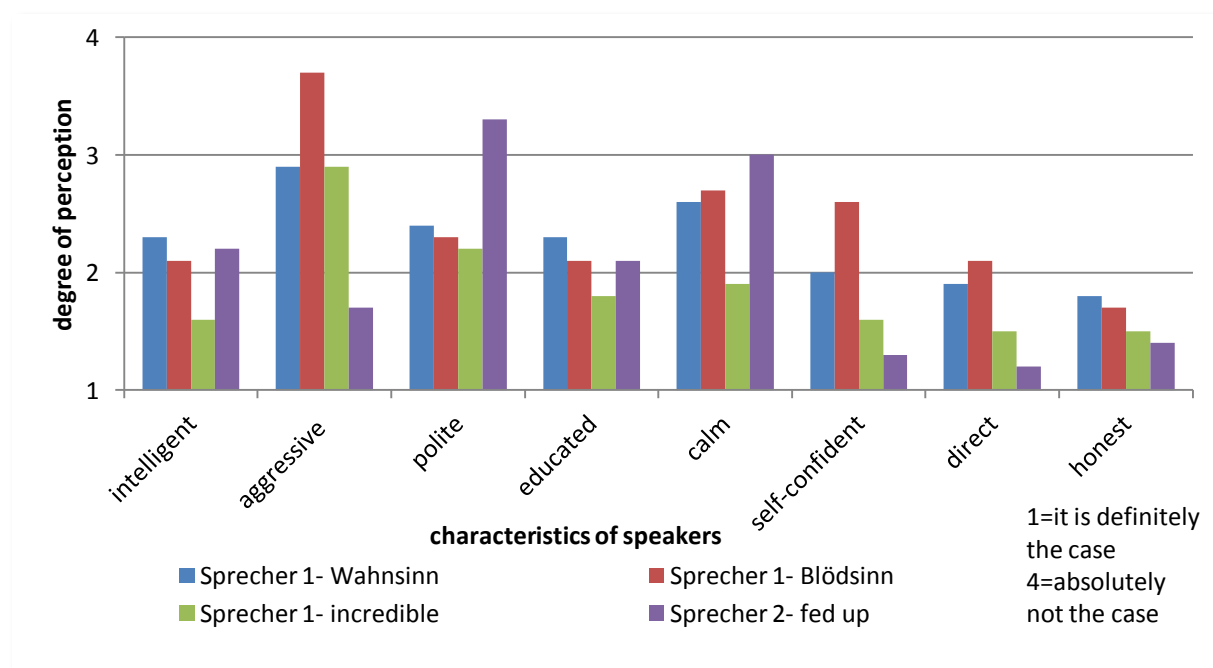
The *Wahnsinn* dialogue splits male and female reactions only at the speaker's characteristic intelligence and education, as men see him as less and women as more intelligent than the average. Female participants perceive him as more educated.

The *Blödsinn* buffer dialogue does not provoke any other special reaction on neither the part of male nor female participants. They share the same opinion of the self-talking speaker.

The English buffer words *incredible* and *fed up* do not make any of the genders respond in a way not conforming to average figures or different from each other. Only men perceive speaker two of the *fed up* dialogue, who also employs the buffer word in rather aggressive manner, as calmer than women and the average.

Generally, it can be said that no mentionable differences in the perception of either L1 or L2 buffer dialogues occurred with regard to men and women.

Figure 18: Comparison of average perception of speakers of buffer words in English and German.



3.8 The personality's influence on BLW perception

Dewaele (2002: 277-278) stipulates that the correct interpretation of BLW in a second language strongly depends on the personality traits of a person. He mentions religiosity and extrovertedness as two of several factors affecting the attitude towards BLW.

Religious persons especially do not approve of the use of BLW (Dewaele 2002: 277-278), which means that in this study they are the major group expected to react stronger to BLW.

The control group and study group's participants were divided into religious, extroverted, polite, impulsive and liberal personalities. Of course, some people may be religious and impulsive as well, but for the sake of a simplified comparison those traits have been looked upon as separate characteristics.

Most of the participants admitted to be polite. Surprisingly the polite persons were so attentive that they did not dare to rate the dialogues' speakers either stronger or weaker than the average participant did. Therefore, no results coming from these persons will be mentioned in detail.

In addition, it can be said that religious persons have a different opinion of the dialogues throughout the whole empirical study. They always show distinct attitudes towards the speakers, independent of BLW usage or not.

Starting with religious participants, it can be observed that most of the time they do not only have another view on one but on more speakers' characteristics. Most of the time, they perceive elocutionists of BLW as generally more aggressive. The biggest surprise is that they sometimes even graded speakers who use BLW as less aggressive. For example, speaker one of *shit E* and the speaker of *slut*. However, they are exceptions to the rule and those who do not utter the BLW generally receive better marks on aggression. The top ten of BLW rated badly by religious persons are:

1. speaker two of *asshole*, who actually does not use a BLW
2. the *Fotze* speaker, speaker one of *Scheiße*
3. the speaker of *shit G*
4. speaker two of *shit* in an English context (even though no BLW use occurs)
5. speaker one of *Wichser*
6. speaker one of *wanker*

7. speaker of *fuck* in a German context
8. speaker one of *ficken* (even though no BLW use occurs)
9. speaker two of *fuck* in an English context (even though no BLW use occurs)
10. the buffer words *Blödsinn* and *fed up*.

It nearly seems as if religious person see everybody who has any connection to BLW words as worse than the average, no matter if they utter them or not. This bad rating happens due to the negative ranking of characteristics such as polite, calm, self-confident and so on. Therefore it can be assumed that religious persons do not like BLW use in general.

Extroverted participants frequently deviate from average opinions but are a little more discerning than religious persons. Sometimes they rate certain speakers more positively and sometimes more negatively depending on the BLW, the tone etc. For example, the *Fotze* speaker is more aggressive and too direct to them. The second speaker of the *Scheiße* dialogue who does not employ the BLW is less intelligent, less educated and less polite. But the *shit G* speaker receives better points as well as the *shit E* speaker. The second speaker in the *Schlampe* dialogue is perceived as more aggressive in contrast to the *slut* speaker who is seen as more educated. The *Wichser* speakers, both of them, earn worse ratings as well than the first speaker in *wanker*. In contrast *fuck G* gets plus points for self-confidence. Surprisingly, the *fick dich* speaker who does not employ the BLW or any assertive vocabulary at all is rated very badly and the second speaker who makes use of the BLW in the most aggressive way actually is seen as less aggressive, more self-confident, etc. With regard to *fuck* in its original English context the second speaker is also rated more negatively.

What can be observed is that those BLW speakers who stand in a better light from the point of view of extroverted persons are those expressing themselves in L2 and the reverse is valid for L1. The theory that L2 emotion words are perceived as less strong (Harris et al. 2003) seems to be verified when considering only extroverted persons.

Not only religious and extroverted persons' opinions deviated from the general opinion but also impulsive participants, who were expected to lower the bar for the insulting scale of BLW. If the impulsive participant's views deviated from average opinions it is in most cases in an opposite direction. Education, calmness, intelligence and politeness seem to be most important to them. Except for the body part BLW words *Fotze* and *cunt* they bring in other views, in comparison to the other participants, for all BLW and buffers. Nine out of 11 times they have more negative and four times more positive opinions about the above-mentioned

characteristics. The negative BLW to them are *Arschloch*'s speaker two, both speakers of the *Scheiße* dialogue, speaker two of *Wichser* who does not employ the BLW, *fuck* in a German context, *ficken*'s speaker one and both German buffer dialogues. The positively rated dialogues are *shit* in a German context, *Schlampe*'s speaker two (except for aggressive where the speaker is seen as more aggressive), speaker two of *ficken* and lastly the speaker of *fuck* in its natural English context.

Generally it can be assumed that impulsive people are relatively tolerant towards aggressive behavior, as most of their critique concentrated on education, intelligence, calmness and politeness. That is why they do not seem to prefer or refuse any BLW category in particular. It does not matter to them what is said but how it is said.

The last participants' category was the one of liberal people. The words and their speakers they liked best were speaker two of *ficken*, the second speaker of English *fuck* and *Fotze*. Therefore they rated calmness, self-confidence, honesty, intelligence and politeness better. *Arschloch*'s second speaker and speaker two of the *Wichser* dialogue (who does not employ a BLW but apologizes) received a worse ranking because of self-confidence and directness (too direct).

To liberal persons self-confidence and keeping a situation or dialogue calm appear to be most important.

The most important finding this study could make is the fact that personality traits, such as religiosity, extrovertedness, etc. strongly influence the perception of BLW.

4 Conclusion

This study's goal was to verify whether language preferences within bilinguals still exist. The initial research question focused on the L1 and L2 difference of perception of BLW words. Inspired by this one question several sub-questions occurred: Does personality overrule the factor language? Does gender overrule the factor language? Will phonetically similar words in L1 and L2 provoke similar reactions? Will German native speakers react in the same way to English swear words in a German context as to English swear words in an English context or will they treat them the same way they would do with German swear words in a German context?

With regard to L1 and L2 difference it could be observed that the different fields of BLW caused different reactions. The study revealed that that body part BLW apparently shocked the participants more in L2 than in L1. The perception difference between L1 and L2 does not seem to be clear concerning sexual behavior words as the differences are only minor. However, L2 BLW create the most negative image in contrast to L1 BLW. Concerning bodily effluvia, where a lot of L2 BLW were put in an L1 context, the most negative perception occurred with L2 words. This shows that the linguistic borrowing, which initially should have caused weaker reactions, caused semantic satiation. Theories (Dewaele 2002; Harris et al. 2003) about L1 and L2 strong differences could not be verified. Therefore, a statistical significance test would be of great use as this study is only qualitative.

The theory (Dewaele 2002, 2004) about personality traits influencing the perception of BLW in either language could definitely be proved. Religious participants always had another, mostly negative, opinion about the BLW speakers, regardless of category or tone. Extroverts, did not have many deviations with regard to L1 BLW but concerning L2 BLW they gave better marks than the average. Impulsive persons did not show particular reactions to aggression but concentrated more on education, intelligence, calmness and politeness. They also did not show any preference of BLW and therefore it may be assumed that the tone matters more to them than the content. To liberal persons self-confidence and keeping a situation or dialogue calm appear to be most important

The third point of investigation was to see whether men and women actually have opposite or different reactions to BLW words. Here the results can be summarized in one sentence. Men react more sensitively to L1 BLW and women to L2 BLW.

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Table 3: Control group's perception of speaker one and speaker two: arschloch.

Speaker 1 Arschloch	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average mark	3.03	1.7	3.8	3	3.4	2.3	1.4	2
Religious people	3.3	1	4	3	3.6	2.3	1.3	1.6
Extroverted people	3	2	3.9	3	2.9	2.1	1.6	2
Impulsive people	3.1	1.6	3.9	3	3.5	2.5	1.6	2.1
Liberal people	2.9	1.9	3.9	2.9	1.9	3.3	1.5	1.9
Male	3.1	1.7	3.8	3.1	3.1	2.6	1.6	2.3
Female	2.9	1.7	3.9	3.4	2.2	1.3	1.9	
Speaker 2 Arschloch	Self- Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average mark	2.4	1.6	2.7	2.3	1.9	2.6	3.2	3.03
Religious people	1.6	1	3	2	2.3	2.7	3.3	3.3
Extroverted people	2.4	1.7	2.7	2.1	1.9	2.7	3.4	2.9
Impulsive people	2.3	1.5	3.2	1.7	1.7	3	3.5	3.5
Liberal people	2.3	1.8	2.8	2.3	1.6	2.5	3.1	3
Male	2.2	1.5	2.6	2.6	2.1	2.4	3.1	2.9
Female	2.3	1.6	2.7	2.1	1.7	2.6	3.2	3.1

Table4: Study group's perception of speaker one and two: asshole.

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average mark	2.5	1.2	3.6	2.7	3.4	1.4	1.2	1.5
Religious people	1.9	1	4	2.4	4	1.4	1	1.1
Extroverted people	2.3	1.2	3.7	2.6	3.5	1.4	1.2	1.5
Impulsive people	2.7	1.1	3.7	2.8	3.5	1.4	1.1	1.6
Liberal people	2.7	1.1	3.7	2.8	3.5	1.4	1.1	1.6
Male	3	1.2	3.6	2.6	2.8	1.2	1.1	0.8
female	2.4	1.2	3.6	2.7	3.5	1.4	1.2	1.5
Speaker 2	Self- Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average mark	1.9	2.2	1.7	3	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.5
Religious people	2.8	2.9	2.1	3.8	2.4	2.1	1.5	1.9
Extroverted people	2.1	2.3	1.6	2.9	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.7
Impulsive people	2	2.4	1.7	2.9	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.7
Liberal people	1.9	2.2	1.7	3.2	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.4
Male	1.9	2.1	2	2.6	1.9	2	1.4	1.5
Female	2	2.2	1.6	3.1	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.5

Table 5: Comparison asshole and arschloch.

Speaker 1 asshole	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average mark	2.5	1.2	3.6	2.7	3.4	1.4	1.2	1.5
Arschloch	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average mark	3.03	1.7	3.8	3	3.4	2.3	1.4	2
Speaker 2 asshole	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average mark	1.9	2.2	1.7	3	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.5
Arschloch	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average mark	2.4	1.6	2.7	2.3	1.9	2.6	3.2	3.03

Table 6: Control group's perception of the speaker: Fotze.

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	3	1.6	3.7	3.1	3.6	1.9	1.4	1.9
Religious people	3	1.3	4	3.3	4	2	1	1.7
Extroverted people	2.9	1.3	3.7	3	3.6	2	1.1	1.6
Impulsive people	3.2	1.5	3.7	3.3	3.5	2	1.6	1.9
Liberal people	2.9	1.6	3.8	3.1	3.6	1.6	1.3	1.6
Male	2.8	1.9	3.7	3.1	3.6	2.1	1.5	2.2
Female	3.1	1.4	3.8	3.1	3.6	1.7	1.3	1.6

Table 7: Study group's perception of the speaker: Cunt.

Speaker 1 cunt	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.9	1.7	3.4	2.7	3	1.6	1.4	1.7
Religious people	3	1.4	3	3	2.3	1.6	1.4	1.4
Extroverted people	2.9	1.8	3.4	2.7	3.1	1.5	1.3	1.9
Polite people	2.9	1.6	3.4	2.7	3.1	1.5	1.4	1.7
Impulsive people	2.6	1.6	3.4	2.6	3	1.5	1.3	1.5
Liberal people	2.8	1.6	3.2	2.7	2.9	1.5	1.4	1.7
Male	2.8	1.6	3.2	2.7	2.9	1.9	1.6	1.5
female	2.8	1.7	3.4	2.7	3	1.5	1.4	1.7
Speaker 2 cunt	Self- Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.7	1.4	2.3	1.9	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.5
Religious people	1.9	1.6	2.3	1.6	1.6	2.6	2.6	2.7
Extroverted people	1.7	1.4	2.5	1.9	1.7	2.4	2.6	2.8
Polite people	1.7	1.4	2.2	1.8	1.6	2.1	2.5	2.4
Impulsive people	1.7	1.4	2.2	1.8	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.5
Liberal people	1.6	1.3	2.3	1.8	1.6	2.1	2.5	2.4
Male	2.3	1.7	2.5	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.8	2
female	1.6	1.4	2.2	1.9	1.5	2.2	2.6	2.6

Table 8: Comparison cunt and Fotze

Speaker 1 Fotze	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	3	1.6	3.7	3.1	3.6	1.9	1.4	1.9
Speaker 1 cunt	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.9	1.7	3.4	2.7	3	1.6	1.4	1.7
Speaker 2 asshole	Self- Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.7	1.4	2.3	1.9	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.5

Table 9: Control group's perception of speaker one and speaker two: Scheiße

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	1.9	3.9	1.9	2	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.6
Religious people	2.3	3.7	2.7	2.3	2.7	2	1.7	1.7
Extroverted People	2	3.7	2.1	2.1	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.6
Impulsive people	2.4	3.8	2.2	2.5	2	1.7	1.6	1.8
Liberal people	1.9	3.9	1.8	2.1	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.5
Male	1.7	3.8	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.5
female	2	3.9	2	2.1	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.6
Speaker 2	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.8	1.7	2	3.6	1.5	2	2.1	1.7
Religious people	2	2	2	4	2	1.7	2	1.7
Extroverted People	2	2.1	2.3	3.4	1.6	2.3	2.4	1.9
Impulsive people	1.9	2	2.5	3.6	1.6	2.3	2.4	2
Liberal	1.9	1.7	1.9	3.6	1.4	1.9	1.8	1.8
Male	1.7	1.6	1.9	3.5	1.5	1.9	2	1.7
female	1.8	1.7	1.9	3.7	1.4	1.8	2	1.7

Table 10: Control group's perception of the speaker: shit in German context

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2	3.1	2.4	2.2	3.1	2.6	1.8	1.7
Religious people	2.3	2.7	3	2.3	3.7	3	2	2
Extroverted People	1.6	2.9	2.1	2	3	2.4	1.9	2
Impulsive people	2	3.3	2.5	2.2	2.8	2.9	2.1	1.6
Liberal people	2.1	3.1	2.4	2.1	3.1	2.3	1.7	1.6
Male	1.9	3.1	2.6	2.3	3.1	2.3	1.7	1.9
female	2	3.2	2.3	2.2	3.1	2.7	1.8	1.6

Table 11 Study group's perception of speaker one and speaker two: shit in English context

Speaker 1 shit	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.1	2.2	3.1	2.3	3.6	1.9	1.3	1.3
Religious people	1.8	2.8	3.5	2.1	3.9	1.5	1.1	1
Extroverted People	2.2	2.4	3.2	2.5	3.8	2	1.4	1.4
Polite people	2.2	2.2	3.2	2.3	3.6	2	1.3	1.3
Impulsive people	2.1	2.2	3.2	2.1	3.7	1.9	1.2	1.2
Liberal people	2.2	2.2	3.2	2.4	3.5	2	1.3	1.3
Male	1.7	2.4	2.5	2.2	3.2	1.6	1.2	0.8
Female	2.1	2.1	3.2	2.3	3.6	2	1.3	1.4
Speaker 2 shit	Self- Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.7	1.5	1.6	3	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.3
Religious people	2.1	1.6	2	3.5	1.8	2	1.6	1.6
Extroverted People	1.9	1.8	1.7	3.3	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.4
Polite people	1.6	1.6	1.6	3.1	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4
Impulsive people	1.8	1.6	1.5	2.8	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.3
Liberal people	1.7	1.7	1.7	3.1	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.4
Male	1.8	1.5	1.6	2.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.2
female	1.7	1.5	1.5	3	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4

Table 12: Comparison of Scheiße and shit in English context

Speaker 1 scheiße	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	1.9	3.9	1.9	2	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.6
Speaker 1 shit	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.1	2.2	3.1	2.3	3.6	1.9	1.3	1.3
Speaker 2 scheiße	Self- Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.8	1.7	2	3.6	1.5	2	2.1	1.7
Speaker 2 shit	Self- Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.7	1.5	1.6	3	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.3

Table 13: Control group's perception of speaker one and speaker two: Schlampe

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.6	3.1	3	2.7	2.1	2	1.5	1.6
Religious people	2.3	3	3.3	2.3	2.3	2	1.3	1.3
Extroverted People	2.6	2.9	3	2.6	2	2.1	1.6	1.9
Impulsive people	2.5	3.1	3.1	2.5	2.1	2	1.6	1.5
Liberal people	2.6	3.1	3.1	2.7	2	1.9	1.5	1.6
Male	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.2	2.3	1.7	1.9
female	2.4	3.2	3.1	2.5	2	1.7	1.4	1.3
Speaker 2	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	2.3	2	2.8	3.6	2.1	2.8	2.9	2.3
Religious people	1.7	1	2.3	3.3	1.3	2.3	3	2
Extroverted People	2.3	1.9	2.6	2.9	2.1	2.7	2.9	1.7
Impulsive people	1.8	1.8	2.6	3	1.6	2.7	2.9	2.2
Liberal people	2.2	1.9	2.8	3.4	2.1	2.7	3	2.3
Male	2.7	2.2	3.2	3.3	2.6	3	3	2.6
female	2	1.8	2.4	3.3	1.6	2.5	2.8	2.1

Table 14: Study group's perception of the speaker: slut

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.6	1.6	3.6	2.6	3.1	1.7	1.4	1.6
Religious people	2.7	2	3.8	3.1	2.9	1.7	1.4	1.7
Extroverted people	2.4	1.8	3.5	2.3	3	1.5	1.4	1.8
Polite people	2.6	1.5	3.5	2.5	3.2	1.6	1.4	1.6
Impulsive people	2.5	1.6	3.7	2.5	3.2	1.5	1.3	1.5
Liberal people	2.6	1.5	3.4	2.7	2.9	1.6	1.5	1.6
Male	2.3	1.7	3.2	2.5	2.7	1.4	1.4	1.4
female	2.6	1.5	3.6	2.7	3.2	1.7	1.4	1.6

Table 15: Comparison of Schlampe and slut

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.6	3.1	3	2.7	2.1	2	1.5	1.6
Speaker 1 slut	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	1.6	2.9	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.5
Speaker 2	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	2.3	2	2.8	3.6	2.1	2.8	2.9	2.3

Table 16: Control group‘ perception of speaker one and speaker two: Wichser

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	3.4	1.5	3.9	3	3.7	2	1.4	2.3
Religious people	3.3	1.3	4	2.7	4	2	1.3	2.7
Extroverted people	3.3	1.4	3.9	3.1	3.7	2	1.3	2.6
Impulsive people	3.4	1.5	3.7	2.9	3.6	2.2	1.5	2.3
Liberal people	3.2	1.7	3.9	2.8	3.7	1.9	1.5	2.1
Male	3.5	1.3	3.8	2.9	3.7	2.1	1.5	2.7
Female	3.2	1.6	3.8	3.1	3.7	1.9	1.4	2.2
Speaker 2	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	3.3	2.9	2.6	3.6	2.5	2.6	2	1.9
Religious people	3	2.5	2	4	1.5	2	2	2.5
Extroverted people	3.2	2.2	3.2	3.4	2.8	2.6	2	1.4
Impulsive people	3.4	2.6	2.9	3.5	2.6	2.6	1.9	1.7
Liberal people	3.3	2.5	2.7	3.6	2.5	2.6	1.8	1.9
Male	3.2	2.9	2.6	3.5	2.8	2.8	2	2.1
Female	3.3	2.8	2.5	3.6	2.4	2.4	1.8	1.7

Table 17: Study group’s perception of speaker one and speaker two: wanker

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.7
Religious people	2.6	2.6	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.2	1.2	1.6
Extroverted people	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.5	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.7
Polite people	2.3	2.7	2.7	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.7
Impulsive people	2.2	2.4	2.8	2.4	2.3	1.7	1.6	1.6
Liberal people	2.1	2.5	2.6	2.1	2	1.7	1.6	1.8
Male	2.6	2.2	3	2.6	2.4	2.3	1.8	2
female	2.2	2.6	2.6	2.3	2	1.7	1.5	1.6
Speaker 2	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.7	1.6	2.2	2.5	2
Religious people	1.3	1.8	2.6	3.4	1.6	2.3	2.4	2.2
Extroverted people	1.3	1.4	2.3	2.7	1.5	2.5	2.7	2.2
Polite people	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.8	1.5	2.1	2.5	2
Impulsive people	1.3	1.3	2.2	2.6	1.5	2.2	2.4	2
Liberal people	1.2	1.3	2	2.7	1.5	2	2.4	1.9
Male	1.5	1.8	2.3	3.1	2.3	2.2	2.7	2.1
female	1.3	1.3	2.1	2.7	1.5	2.2	2.4	2

Table 18: Control group's perception of the speaker: fuck in German context

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.7	2.3	3.1	2.7	3.3	2.1	1.7	1.9
Religious people	2.7	2.3	3.7	3	3.7	2.7	1.3	2
Extroverted people	2.3	2.1	3.3	2.6	3.1	1.7	1.1	1.9
Impulsive people	2.7	2.1	3.4	2.8	3.2	2.3	1.7	1.8
Liberal people	2.6	2.3	3.2	2.8	3.3	2.1	1.8	1.8
Male	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.9	2	1.8	2
female	2.6	2.3	3.2	2.6	3.3	2.1	1.6	1.7

Table 19: Control group's perception of speaker one and speaker two: ficken

Speaker 1 ficken	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.2	3.1	2.6	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.6
Religious people	2.3	3.3	2.7	2	1.7	1.7	2	2
Extroverted people	2.4	3	2.7	2.3	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
Impulsive people	2.4	2.9	2.8	2.5	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.6
Liberal people	2.2	3.1	2.7	2	1.8	1.2	1.4	1.4
Male	2.2	3.1	2.6	2	1.9	1.3	1.6	1.9
female	2.1	3	2.5	1.9	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3
Speaker 2 ficken	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.7	1.1	2.8	2	1.6	2.7	3.4	3.3
Religious people	1.5	1	3	1.5	1.5	2.5	4	4
Extroverted people	1.4	1	1.6	2.4	1.6	2.6	3.8	3.4
Impulsive people	1.7	1.3	2.3	2.1	1.4	2.3	3.1	2.9
Liberal people	1.3	1	2.5	2.1	1.4	2.6	3.4	3.2
Male	1.7	1.1	3-1	1-9	1.6	3.1	3.4	3.4
Female	1.7	1.2	2.6	2	1.6	2.5	3.4	3.3

Table 20: Study group's perception of speaker one and speaker two: fuck in English contex

Speaker 1 Fuck E	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.9	1.2	3.6	2.8	3.7	1.8	1.4	1.8
Religious people	2	1.1	3.6	2.1	3.9	1.9	1.2	1.6
Extroverted people	2.8	1.2	3.8	2.7	3.8	1.7	1.1	1.6
Polite people	2.8	1.2	3.6	2.7	3.6	1.9	1.4	1.9
Impulsive people	2.7	1	3.8	2.5	3.8	1.5	1.2	1.5
Liberal people	3	1.3	3.5	2.9	3.6	1.7	1.3	1.6
Male	2.5	1.2	3.3	2.3	3.5	1.6	1.2	1.4
female	3	1.2	3.7	2.9	3.7	1.8	1.4	1.8
Speaker 2 Fuck E	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	2	1.5	2.7	1.8	2	2.5	3	3.1
Religious people	1.9	1.6	3.1	1.9	2	3.3	3.6	3.3
Extroverted people	2.1	1.5	2.8	1.8	1.9	2.6	3.4	3.5
Polite people	2	1.6	2.7	1.7	2	2.4	3	3.1
Impulsive people	1.8	1.5	2.5	1.6	1.8	2.4	3.3	3.2
Liberal people	2	1.3	2.5	1.6	1.9	2.3	2.7	2.7
Male	1.8	1.8	2.3	1.6	1.8	2.3	2.8	2.5
female	2	1.5	2.8	1.8	2.1	2.5	3.1	3.2

Table 21: Wahnsinn

Speaker 1 wahnsinn	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.3	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.6	2	1.9	1.8
Religious people	2.3	3.3	2	1.6	2	2	2.3	2
Extroverted people	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.2	2.6	2.4	2	1.9
Impulsive people	2.5	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2	1.9
Liberal people	2.3	2.8	2.4	2.2	2.7	1.9	1.8	1.7
Male	2.7	3	2.3	2.5	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.9
female	2	3	2.3	1.9	2.5	1.9	1.8	1.7

Table 22: Blödsinn

Speaker 1 blödsinn	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2.1	3.7	2.3	2.1	2.7	2.6	2.1	1.7
Religious people	2	3.7	2.7	2	3	3.3	2.7	2
Extroverted people	2	3.6	2.3	2	2.4	2.4	2.4	1.9
Impulsive people	2.4	3.7	2	2.4	2.9	3.1	2.5	1.8
Liberal people	2.1	3.6	2.3	2	2.8	2.6	1.9	1.6
Male	2.2	3.7	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.1	1.9
Female	1.9	3.7	2.2	1.9	2.8	2.4	2.1	1.6

Table 23: Incredible

Speaker 1 incredible	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self- confident	Direct	Honest
Average	1.6	2.9	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.5
Religious people	1.3	3	2	1.7	2.1	2	2.1	1.7
Extroverted people	1.6	3.2	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.6
Polite people	1.6	2.9	2.2	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4
Impulsive people	1.5	2.8	2.2	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4
Liberal people	1.8	2.8	2.1	2	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.4
Male	1.5	2.7	2.3	1.9	2.1	1.6	1.7	1.7
female	1.6	2.9	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.4

Table 24: Fed u

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
Average	2	2.8	2.7	2	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.5
Religious people	2.7	3	3	2.4	2	2.1	1.8	1.
Extroverted people	2.1	2.9	2.6	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.6
Polite people	2	2.9	2.7	2	2	1.7	1.5	1.4
Impulsive people	2	2.8	2.8	2.1	2	1.7	1.5	1.4
Liberal people	2	2.7	2.7	2	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.5
Male	2.1	2.5	2.5	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.9
female	2	2.8	2.8	2	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.4
Speaker 2	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Average	1.3	1.2	2.2	1.7	1.4	2.1	3.3	3
Religious people	1.3	1.3	2.4	2	1.6	2.3	3.1	2.9
Extroverted people	1.4	1.3	2.4	1.9	1.6	2.4	3.5	3
Polite people	1.3	1.2	2.1	1.7	1.3	2.1	3.4	3
Impulsive people	1.3	1.2	2.2	1.6	1.3	2.2	3.4	3
Liberal people	1.3	1.1	2.3	1.5	1.2	2.2	3.4	3
Male	1.2	1.4	2.2	1.7	1.5	2.2	3.3	2.7
female	1.3	1.1	2.1	1.7	1.3	2.1	3.3	3

Table 25: Bullshit

Speaker 1	Intelligent	aggressive	Polite	Educated	Calm	Self-confident	Direct	Honest
incredible								
Average	2.8	2.6	3.3	2.9	2.8	2	1.5	1.8
Religious people	2.3	2.3	3	2.3	3	2	1.7	2
Extroverted people	2.9	2.4	3	2.4	3	2.1	1.4	1.9
Impulsive people	3.1	2.9	3.4	2.7	2.5	2.2	1.5	1.8
Liberal people	2.9	2.6	3.1	2.7	2.8	1.7	1.4	1.7
Male	2.7	2.4	3.3	3	2.9	2.2	1.5	1.9
female	2.8	2.6	3.2	2.6	2.7	1.8	1.5	1.8
Speaker 2	Self-Confident	Direct	Intelligent	Aggressive	Honest	Educated	Polite	Calm
Fuck E								
Average	2.1	2.1	2.3	3.6	1.9	2.3	2	2
Religious people	2.7	2.7	2.3	4	2.3	2.3	1.7	1.7
Extroverted people	2	2.3	2.3	3.6	1.7	2.1	2.1	1.7
Impulsive people	2.3	2.3	2.6	3.7	2	2.5	2.4	1.8
Liberal people	2.1	2.1	2.2	3.6	1.8	2.3	2	2.1
Male	2	2.1	2.3	3.3	1.9	2.4	2	2.1
Female	2.2	2.1	2.2	3.7	1.8	2.1	2.1	1.9

6.8 Dialogues

6.8.3 German dialogues

Red= aggressive

green= Pufferdialog

black= neutral BLW-Dialogue

<u>Arschloch</u>
M: Hey du Arschloch, pass auf wo du hingehst!
M1: Hab dich ja nicht absichtlich angerempelt, Arschloch!
M: Selber Arschloch!
<u>Wahnsinn</u>
F: ein Wahnsinn! Passen sie doch auf wie sie fahren! Sie hätten ja fast mein Auto gerammt. Waaaaahnsinn, manche Leute haben einfach keine Ahnung wie man fahren muss!
<u>Schlampe</u>
F: Samantha aus Sex and the City ist ja so eine Schlampe!
F: Auf jeden Fall ist sie eine Schlampe! Genau wie all die anderen aus der ganzen Serie ja auch!
<u>Fuck</u>
M: Fuck! Ich hab meine Autoschlüssel im Auto vergessen! Fuck!
<u>Fotze</u>
F: Das gibt's ja nicht! Du Fotze, hast mein Auto angekratzt!
<u>Wixer</u>
F: Du bist so ein Wixer! Lass mich bloß in Ruhe!
M: Es tut ma leid!
F: Verzieh dich Einfach nur ein Wixer!
<u>Blödsinn</u>
F: so ein Blöödsinn! Ich fass' es nicht was für einen Blödsinn ich heute geredet hab'. So ein Blödsinn.
<u>Pissen</u>
M:Boaaa...ich muss ja so dringend pissen!
F: Kannst du's nicht noch ein bisschen aushalten!
M: Nein, ich MUSS jetzt pissen!
<u>Ficken</u>
M: Hallloooo, Mister Bush!
M1: Fick dich doch!
<u>Scheiße</u>
F: Mhhhhh, probier mal den Kuchen!
F1: Okay, lass mal probieren!
F: Scheiße, ist der gut!
<u>Bullshit</u>
M: Bullshit!
M1: Was bullshit!
M:Na, einfach bullshit!
<u>Shit</u>
F: Shit! Ich hätte doch nicht so viel Kuchen essen sollen! Haaaa, shit! Die ganze Diät war umsonst!Shit!Shit!Shit!

6.8.4 English dialogues

<u>Asshole- MALE</u>
M: Hey asshole! Get movin'! Drive your car out of my way!
M1: I beg your pardon! What did you say to me?
M: Yeah, you heard me, asshole! Move your car out of my way!

<u>Shit</u>
F: Shit! Shit! Shit! Shit!
M: What? What's up?
F: Shit! I forgot my passport at home! Shit!
<u>Fuck</u>
M: Fuck you!
M1: No fuck you and the fucking all of you and fuck you!
<u>Incredible(spoken in a rather aggressive way)</u>
F: It's incredible what these politicians are up to again. It's just incredible.
<u>Slut</u>
F: "I don't wanna talk to her! I hate that slut!"
(http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=slut 17.11.2010)
<u>Fed up</u>
F: We have Pizza for dinner, again?
F: You know what? I'm s fed up with your dinner wishes! Go and cook yourself !
<u>Cunt- Male ...Fotze</u>
M: Hey you cunt!
M1: Are you talking to me?
M: Yeah, you cunt!
M1: I'll show you who's the cunt, you cunt!
<u>Wanker</u>
M: Why are you such a wanker?
M1: Well, you should know best! Because it's fun!

6.9 Questionnaire s

6.9.3 Questionnaire for the control group

Hören Sie sich den Dialog an und beantworten Sie bitte die Fragen dazu.

Bitte wählen Sie zwischen

1(trifft sehr zu), 2 (trifft zu), 3 (trifft wenig zu), 4(trifft überhaupt nicht zu)

Dialog: rec.....

4. Welche Person des Dialogs würden Sie gerne treffen/ persönlich sprechen?

Sprecher/in 1 o Sprecher/in 2 o

5. In welcher Beziehung stehen die Sprecher zu einander?

Geschwister o Freunde o Chef- Arbeitnehmer o Eltern- Kind o

Fremde o Bekannte o Sonstiges o

6. Ist ihre Art miteinander zu sprechen ihrer Beziehung zueinander angemessen?

Sprecher/in 1: 1 o 2 o 3 o 4 o

Sprecher/in 2: 1 o 2 o 3 o 4 o

7. Der erste Sprecher/Die erste Sprecherin ist :

Intelligent	1o	2o	3o	4o	Gelassen	1o	2o	3o	4o
Aggressiv	1o	2o	3o	4o	Selbstsicher	1o	2o	3o	4o
Höflich	1o	2o	3o	4o	Direkt	1o	2o	3o	4o
Gebildet	1o	2o	3o	4o	Ehrlich	1o	2o	3o	4o

8. Der zweite Sprecher/Die zweite Sprecherin ist:

Selbstsicher	1o	2o	3o	4o	Ehrlich	1o	2o	3o	4o
Direkt	1o	2o	3o	4o	Gebildet	1o	2o	3o	4o
Intelligent	1o	2o	3o	4o	Höflich	1o	2o	3o	4o
Aggressiv	1o	2o	3o	4o	Gelassen	1o	2o	3o	4o

6.9.4 Questionnaire for the study group

Listen to the dialogue and answer the questions!

Tick off either 1 (definitely the case), 2 (it is the case), 3 (not the case) or 4 (absolutely not the case) when necessary.

Dialogue: rec

1. Which person of the dialogue would you like to meet/ talk to?

Speaker 1 ☐ Speaker 2 ☐

2. What is the relationship of the speakers?

Brother/Sister ☐ Friends ☐ boss-employee ☐ parent-child ☐
Strangers ☐ Acquaintances ☐ else ☐

3. Is their way of speaking appropriate to their relationship?

Speaker 1: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

Speaker 2: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

4. The first speaker is :

Intelligent	1o	2o	3o	4o	Calm	1o	2o	3o	4o
Aggressive	1o	2o	3o	4o	Self-confident	1o	2o	3o	4o
Polite	1o	2o	3o	4o	Direct	1o	2o	3o	4o
Educated	1o	2o	3o	4o	Honest	1o	2o	3o	4o

5. The second speaker is:

Self-confident	1o	2o	3o	4o	Honest	1o	2o	3o	4o
Direct	1o	2o	3o	4o	Educated	1o	2o	3o	4o
Intelligent	1o	2o	3o	4o	Polite	1o	2o	3o	4o
Aggressive	1o	2o	3o	4o	Calm	1o	2o	3o	4o

6.10 Personal questionnaire

6.10.3 Personal questionnaire for the control group

Persönliches

9. Alter:.....

10. Männlich o Weiblich o

11. Muttersprache:/ Zweitsprache:

12. Wie gut sprechen Sie die Zweitsprache?

Nahe Muttersprache o Gut o Durchschnittlich gut o Absolute/r
Anfänger/in o

13. Waren Sie jemals in einem Land der Zweitsprache und für wie lange?

Ja o Nein o verbrachte Zeit:.....

14. Kreuzen Sie die Adjektive an die auf Sie zutreffen.

Religiös o extrovertiert o höflich o impulsiv o offen
o

15. Fluchen Sie in Ihrer Muttersprache?

Nie o manchmal o oft o praktisch immer o

15.1. Welche Wörter benutzen Sie:

.....

16. Verwenden Sie manchmal auch Schimpfwörter in der Zweitsprache?

Ja o Nein o
↓

Welche Wörter benutzen

Sie:.....

6.10.4 Personal questionnaire for the study group

Questionnaire : Personal

17. Age:.....

18. Male ☐ female ☐

19. Native language:/ Second Language:

.....

20. How well do you speak the second language?

Native like ☐ good ☐ medium ☐ absolute beginner ☐

21. Have you ever been to the second language's country and for how long?

Yes ☐ No ☐ time spent in the country:.....

22. Tick off the adjectives that fit your personality

Religious ☐ extroverted ☐ polite ☐ impulsive ☐

liberal ☐

23. Do you swear in your native language?

Never ☐ sometimes ☐ frequently ☐ practically always ☐

23.1. What swear words do you

use:.....

24. Do you use swear words when you speak in the second language?

Yes ☐ No ☐



Which words do you personally

use:.....

6.11 Abstract in German

Das Ziel dieser empirischen Studie war es zu untersuchen ob Schimpfwörter in der Muttersprache Deutsch schlimmer empfunden und interpretiert werden als Schimpfwörter in der Zweitsprache Englisch.

Dazu wurden Fragebögen und Schimpfwortdialoge auf Deutsch und auf Englisch konzipiert und einer Kontroll- und einer Forschungsgruppe zum Anhören und beantworten gegeben. Die Kontrollgruppe, deutsche Muttersprachler die sich deutsche Dialoge mit Schimpfwörtern anhörten, und die Forschungsgruppe, deutsche Muttersprachler die sich englische Dialoge anhörten. Die erste Gruppe bestand aus 27 und die zweite Gruppe aus 86 TeilnehmerInnen. Die Kontrollgruppe hatte allerdings nicht nur deutsche sondern auch Englische Schimpfwörter, im deutschen Kontext, wobei die Forschungsgruppe nur englische Schimpfwörter zu beurteilen hatte.

Das besondere Augenmerk der empirischen Studie lag auf Perzeptionsunterschieden in den verschiedenen Sprachen, den Einfluss der Persönlichkeit und den Einfluss des Gender bzw.-unterschieds auf das Empfinden von Schimpfwörtern.

Es konnte festgestellt werden, dass die Unterhaltungen mit Schimpfwörtern in der Muttersprache Deutsch nicht unbedingt als schlimmer eingestuft wurden als die in der Zweitsprache. Die Teilnehmer beurteilten aggressive Zwiegespräche in der Zweitsprache als aggressiver, wenn dem so war, und muttersprachliche Dialoge als weniger anstößig. Die Teilnehmer reagierten passend zum intendierten Ton, Aussage und Kontext und deshalb kann, laut dieser empirischen Studie, nicht die Theorie das zweitsprachige Schimpfwörter weniger Reaktion hervorrufen bestätigt werden.

Bezüglich der Genderdifferenzen konnte nur festgestellt werden, dass Männer Schimpfwörter meistens anders beurteilen als Frauen; manchmal negativer, meistens positiver. Frauen hingegen weichen nicht von den durchschnittlichen Beurteilungen ab und deshalb kann auch hier antizipiert werden, dass Frauen nicht überdurchschnittlich geschockt auf Schimpfwörter reagieren, egal in welcher Sprache.

Was die verschiedenen Reaktionen der verschiedenen Persönlichkeitsmerkmale betrifft wurde ein klare Unterschiede beobachtet. Religiösen Menschen reagierten generell negativer als der Durchschnittsteilnehmer. Auch impulsive Personen beurteilten die Schimpfwortsprecher

manchmal schlimmer ganz im Gegensatz zu extrovertierten Partizipanten. Es konnte eine klare Tendenz der verschiedenen Charakterzüge von Menschen festgestellt werden. Religiosität beeinflusst immer noch stark die Moralvorstellungen vom spezifischen Gebrauch von Schimpfwörtern, genauso wie Extravertiertheit für eine lockerere Auffassungsgabe sorgt.

Schließlich wurde auch die anfängliche Vermutung, dass englische Schimpförter wie *shit*, *fuck* und *bullshit* auch im Deutschen verwendet werden bewiesen. Weiters konnte ausgekundschaftet werden, dass diese Wörter tatsächlich näher zu den deutschen Äquivalenten als zu den englischen im englischen Kontext beurteilt wurden.

Insgesamt brachte diese empirische Studie über das Empfinden von Schimpfwörtern sehr kontroverse Ergebnisse hervor und daher ist es höchstwahrscheinlich von Nöten einen statische Signifikanz-Test zu machen beziehungsweise diese Studie auf einen größeren Teilnehmerkreis zu erweitern und die englische Kontrollgruppe wie anfänglich und ursprünglich beabsichtigt auch einzuführen um statistisch stärkere Ergebnisse zu erhalten.

6.12 Curriculum Vitae

Contact Information

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Education

School	1992-1996 Elementary School in Ebreichsdorf 1996-2004 Diploma with honors from the secondary school with focus on natural sciences and mathematics (Don Bosco Gymnasium in Unterwaltersdorf, Realaufbaugymnasium)
University	2004/2005 Architecture at Technical University Vienna 2005 – 2011 Lectureship studies of English and French at the department of English and the department of Romance studies at the University of Vienna ERASMUS (summer term 2008) at the Université Libre de Bruxelles

Additional Qualifications

Languages	Native language: Romanian German : C2 written and oral competences Good oral and written competences in English and French
Internships	• Internship in English at the secondary school of the Dominicans in Vienna(Gymnasium der Dominikanerinnen, Wien) • Internship in French at the Bundesrealgymnasium in Eisenstadt ,summer semester 2010
Professional	• French course for adults at the level A2 and English for elementary school children at the Volkshochschule Pottendorf , winter semester 2010/11 • English course for elementary school children at the Volkshochschule Pottendorf, summer semester 2011 • English course for children in kindergarten (winter semester 2010/11 and summer semester 2011) and French course for adults at the Volkshochschule in Ebreichsdorf; summer semester 2011 • English teacher at the HAK Baden and the NMS Teesdorf from winter semester 2011/12 on

International Experience	Erasmus summer semester 2008 at Université Libre de Bruxelles Private Journeys : U.S.A., Canada, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Barcelona, Stockholm, Italy, Thessaloniki, Balkans, Japan, etc.
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Other activities	History of Arts and making art (drawing aquarelles, photography, etc.) Motorcycling, snowboarding, skiing, Zumba Tutoring lessons in English and French Voluntary Internship (handicraft lessons) at the retirement home in Waterloo in July 2006
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Wampersdorf, 11/2011
Adriana RUSU