Son of a bitch or hijo de puta?
Receptor’s emotional force of swearing by LX and L1 users

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the receptors’ perception of emotional force of swearwords and taboo words and insults (S-T/I) in Spanish as a first and second language (L1 and LX respectively). Four L1 and four LX users of Spanish recorded sample speeches consisting of a set of Spanish S-T/I. The SS were later rated by 132 L1 users of Spanish in a web-questionnaire in terms of offensiveness to measure their emotional force individually. Comparisons between LX and L1 users were made to answer (1) whether there was a difference in terms of offensives between the sample speeches of the L1 and LX users; and (2) if a higher proficiency level would result in a higher offensives perception among LX users but still would be less than the ratings for L1 users. The results revealed that L1 users are perceived as significantly more offensive and that proficiency, combined with mixed learning context and frequent use of the LX, seem to significantly favour offensiveness perception, although yet not equating the emotional force of L1 users. This study revisits the emotional force of swearwords and taboo words (S-T words) in multilinguals offering a new perspective, the receptor’s one. The outcomes of this investigation pose questions about the utility of swearing in an LX.

Keywords: outsider’s perception of emotion, bi/multilinguals, emotionality, emotional force, swearwords and taboo words (S-T words), offensiveness perception, first language (LX), second language (LX), swearing, language of emotions, emotion words, emotion-laden words, emotional learning context learning theory, emotion-related language choice (ERLC), proficiency, age of onset (AO), learning context.

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Introduction

As children, our parents would probably tell us not to use swearwords and taboo words (S-T words), and often we would even get punished if doing so. However, swearing is natural to all human beings. After all, it is just a communicative act that enables speakers to communicate certain emotions in a direct manner (Jay, 2009; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). Despite its common practice among humans, swearing has historically been regarded as a taboo issue to research (Dewaele, 2016; Jay, 2009).

With the recognition of the relation between language and emotion as unique and culture and context-dependent, studies on the emotionality of language in monolinguals and bi/multilinguals began to flourish (Eilola, Havelka, & Sharma, 2007; Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006; Pavlenko, 2002, 2008). As a consequence of this, the study of S-T words ceased to be a taboo topic and started to become popular among scholars. Subsequently, research on self-perception of emotional force of S-T words in the different languages of bi/multilinguals began to be conducted. Literature until now suggests that the first language (L1) is generally emotionally stronger than the second language(s) (LX1). In other words, S-T words are self-perceived as stronger in the L1 of individuals (Colbeck & Bowers, 2012; Dewaele, 2004b; Eilola & Havelka, 2010; Eilola et al., 2007; Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006; Harris, Ayçiçeği, & Gleason, 2003; Sutton, Altarriba, Gianico, & Basnight-Brown, 2007).

Up to present, it seems that studies have only dealt with self-perception of the emotionality of S-T words comparing an individual’s L1 and LX, while no research, at least to the researcher’s knowledge, has been conducted to examine the receptor’s emotional perception of a swearing act. This gap in the literature of the emotionality of S-T words will be the focus of the current work. This research focused only on verbal language to determine the emotionality of the swearing acts. Due to ethical, and time limitations, paralinguistic features (e.g. body language, facial expressions, etc) had to be ignored. By using sample speeches of swearing acts of L1 and LX users of Spanish, this

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1 In the current study, the newly proposed dichotomy of LX and L1 users proposed by Dewaele (2017b) will be used instead of a more traditional native versus non-native distinction. This decision has been made to avoid racist or discriminatory judgements and to acknowledge the dynamic role of a multilingual speaker, who might speak several second languages and at the same time remains to be a native speaker of his/her own mother tongue (Dewaele, 2017b). Thus, LX user will replace the term “non-native” and LI user will be used instead of “native” speaker.

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research examined the receptors’ emotional perception of these different swearing acts and aimed to answer the two following research questions: (1) Do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish of the speech samples of L1 users and LX users of Spanish differ? And (2) Do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish to the speech samples of LX upper proficient users (LXU) and LX lower proficient users (LXL) differ? And if so, do the offensiveness ratings of LXU differ from the ones of the L1 users?

In order to provide an answer to these research questions this thesis was logically organised in the following sections: (1) Background and statement of purpose: this section is aimed at describing the relationship between language and emotion, examining the role of emotionality in bi/multilinguals, defining swearing and S-T words, providing an overview of studies dealing with emotionality in the L1 and LX, and finally connecting the literature discussed to the rationale of this study and presenting the research questions that were addressed. (2) Methodology: in which information was given about the participants, the materials, the design and procedures, and the data analyses employed for this research. (3) Results: this part presented the outcomes of the statistical tests performed to test the research questions of this dissertation. (4) Discussion: where the results presented on the previous section were discussed, analysed and interpreted according to the relevant literature, and where limitations, further research proposals and the relevance of the outcomes of this study were established. (5) Conclusion: in this final section, a recap of the main findings of this investigation was offered and the relevance of this research topic was restated.
1. Background

1.1. Language and emotion: together or apart?

In this section, a review of the relation between language and emotion from a historical perspective will be offered. Additionally, emotional language and the role of emotion-related words in the mental lexicon will be defined.

“Humans experience emotion” (Holtgraves, Fugate, & Feldman Barrett, 2014, p. 1) and one way of conceptualising and experiencing emotion either inter- or intra-personally is through language (Holtgraves et al., 2014). Cognitive sciences regarded language as a tool for communication. However, its connection with emotion, its subjectivity and its utility for more than just interpersonal communication were regarded as noise (Colombetti, 2009). In other words, language has been sometimes seen by scholars as a vehicle to enable communication between humans. But the role of language in inter and intra personal expression and recognition of emotions has been, historically, a less researched field. Nevertheless, cognitive sciences later broadened and recognised the essential role of emotion and subjectivity in human cognition (Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006).

Starting in the 1990s different cognitive and linguistic disciplines began to investigate the relation between language and emotion. Although this connection was firstly analysed on a monolingual level, it later became popular within studies of second language acquisition (SLA) and bi/multilingualism. From a historical view, two perspectives can be distinguished in the study of language and emotion in bi/multilinguals: (1) the separatist perspective and (2) the cognitivist and constructivist perspective (Eilola et al., 2007; Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006; Pavlenko, 2002, 2008).

The separatist perspective was positivist and viewed emotions as universals or at least as independent from language. Within this line of thought, emotions shape and influence the language learning process of either a first language (L1) or of any other subsequent second language (LX). Scholars studying the relation between emotion and language from this perspective analyse the links between emotions and language learning attitudes, suggesting that these connections pose a significant influence over the language
use and its learning process (Pavlenko, 2002). Thus, this approach supports that emotions prove to be key in the language use and preference of bi/multilinguals (Pavlenko, 2002; Wierzbicka, 1999). However, it presents a limited view of the relationship between language an emotion, as emotion is regarded as influencing language use and learning but it is not regarded as encompassed within language (Pavlenko, 2002).

On the other hand, the cognitivist and constructivist perspective advocates for a more inclusive approach, in which emotions are not only regarded as shaping and influencing language use and learning, but they are also seen as a discursively constructed phenomena within a language. This view regards not only the relation between language and emotions as two connected entities but also the existence of the language of emotions. Therefore, it raises interesting questions about how bi/multilinguals behave emotionally in their different languages as a result of the unique structure and organisation of the dimension of emotion within each language (Pavlenko, 2002). However, the acknowledgement of the languages of emotions does not imply that language and emotion are considered the same thing. They are different constituents although they are no longer seen as independent, but rather as embedded within each other. Thus, a certain word will be a linguistic feature (language component) but at the same time will represent a certain emotion (emotion component). This perspective acknowledges a certain type of words as belonging to this emotion category used for the expression and recognition of emotions. Similarly, other linguistic features, such as intonation, or paralinguistic ones, such as body language, will contribute, together with the emotional lexicon, to the emotional behaviour of a bi/multilingual in his different languages.

Within the cognitivist and constructivist perspective, emotion is no longer considered as impervious to language. Contrarily, they both shape each other and emotion is embedded into a language. In this view, there is no room for universals when observing the link between language and emotion. This relationship is maximally culturally dependent, meaning that the relation between emotion and language has to be seen from an individual and cross-cultural perspective (Holtgraves et al., 2014; Pavlenko, 2002; Wierzbicka, 1999). A good example of the individual/language-specific relation between language and emotion is the contrast between high context cultures (like Chinese) and low context cultures (e.g. American) (Caldwell-harris, Kronrod, & Yang, 2013). In a high context culture there is a low relationship mobility, meaning that most acquaintances of people are either family or long-time associates. This results in a high degree of contextual

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information shared between the individuals in a relationship and less emotional expressions (words to express either a positive emotion, such as love, or negative one, like anger) are needed. In these cultures, people are more reticent to use emotional language. On the other side, in a low context culture there is a high degree of relationship mobility. That is, new friendships are common, resulting in a lower contextual information shared. Thus, emotion expressions are more needed to identify and share individual’s emotions (Caldwell-harris et al., 2013).

Although both theories have been historically discussed, nowadays, the literature suggests that the second view, the cognitivist and constructivist one, seems to be more accurate (Holtgraves et al., 2014). This is a result of different findings. Firstly, the relation between language and emotion is unique to each language and culture (Caldwell-harris et al., 2013), as some languages might have a word for a certain emotion that does not exist in other languages or emotional expression might be regarded differently cross-culturally (Caldwell-harris et al., 2013; Holtgraves et al., 2014; Wierzbicka, 1999). Secondly, behavioural tasks (i.e. functional imaging and neural activity) suggest that the networks used in detecting and interpreting emotion are also important for language. Thus, both rely on the same cognitivist mechanisms (Holtgraves et al., 2014). This might justify the embedment of emotion within a language. Thirdly, studies about conceptual judgements (when words are required to complete a task) and perceptual judgements (when words are not required but could be used) have recognised that language affects experience and perception of emotion at various levels of processing (Holtgraves et al., 2014).

Holtgraves et al. (2004) state that language is used to experience and to perceive emotion. “Emotion experience”, refers to identifying what emotion you are feeling. On the other hand, “emotion perception” is determining what emotion another person is experiencing. (Holtgraves et al., 2014). For both processes, emotion categories within language are used. Studies on emotion perception provide evidence that language, and specifically emotion words (linguistic labels to categorize the different emotion types), seem to be an essential part especially in emotion perception (Holtgraves et al., 2014). Language, together with other paralinguistic features (gestures, facial expression, etc.) enables individuals to identify and express emotions, to access other people’s thoughts and their emotional universe, and to go beyond the word meaning to the speaker meaning (the intentions or feelings behind a speaker’s words) (Wierzbicka, 1999). On the other hand, language is not necessary to experience emotion, as an individual can have

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emotions without labelling them with words. In other words, emotion experience is still possible without language whereas for emotion perception language, together with other paralinguistic features, plays a more crucial role (Holtgraves et al., 2014; Wierzbicka, 1999).

With the recognition of emotion as a dimension encompassed within language (Pavlenko, 2002) the interest towards the storage and processing of words related to emotions aroused. Research on the mental lexicon suggests that words related to emotion need to be considered as a different word class differentiated from concrete and abstract words. Instead, the language of emotion is considered as an independent category within the human lexicon (Altarriba, 2003; Altarriba et al., 2016; Altarriba, Bauer, & Benvenuto, 1999; Pavlenko, 2008). Within the emotion lexicon there is a distinction between emotion words and emotion-laden words (Pavlenko, 2008). Emotion words are “words that directly refer to particular affective states ("happy", "angry") or processes ("to worry", "to rage"), and function to either describe ("she is sad") or express them ("I feel sad") (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 148). On the other hand, emotion-laden words are those which “do not refer to emotions directly but instead express ("jerk", "loser") or elicit emotions from the interlocutors ("cancer", "malignancy") (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 148). In other words, emotion words describe a particular emotion category. They constrain the emotion categories in which appraisals are made, whereas emotion-laden words are used to express those emotion categories (Holtgraves et al., 2014; Pavlenko, 2008). Emotion can take many different shapes depending on speaker and culture. Emotions are dynamic, and culturally and context-dependent (Wierzbicka, 1999). Therefore, different emotion-laden words will be used to represent different emotion categories in each language. Pavlenko (2008) lists several subcategories within emotion-laden words: a) swearwords and taboo words or expletives ("piss", "shit"); b) insults ("idiot", "creep"); c) childhood reprimands ("behave", "stop"); d) endearments ("darling", "honey"); e) aversive words ("spider", "death"); and f) interjections ("yuk", "ouch") (Pavlenko, 2008). In the current study, the research focus will be on swearwords and taboo words and insults.

Although words in these categories are separated, the boundaries between them are fuzzy (Pavlenko, 2008). A word in a language might overlap two categories or its connotation might shift from positive to negative depending on the context (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008; Pavlenko, 2008). One example of the overlap between categories is the word mierda ("shit") in Spanish. Mierda can be considered as a swearword or taboo

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(S-T) word or as an insult. For example, in a sentence like *vaya mierda de vida* ("what a shit life"), *mierda* would be considered as a S-T word. However, in a sentence like *eres un mierda* ("you are shit"), here *mierda* is used as an insult against someone. Similarly, the word *cabrón* ("bastard") can have a positive or negative connotation depending on the context it is used in and the intonation it is given. Thus, it can either be used to praise or to verbally harm someone. Sapir (1949) explained these fuzzy boundaries between emotion categories with the fact that emotion is expressed with more than simply words. That is, there are other aspects that play a role in conveying emotions (intonation, facial expressions, gestures, etc.). All these paralinguistic aspects in combination with the emotion-laden and emotion words of each language provoke a unique shaping of emotion in every culture (Sapir: 1949[1929]). As the emotion or intention conveyed with emotion-laden words are context and culturally dependent, it is not possible to regard a specific word of the mental lexicon, like *mierda*, as belonging only to one single subcategory of emotion-laden words. Instead, the fuzzy boundaries between all these subcategories of emotion-laden words need to be recognised.

1.2. Emotionality in bi/multilinguals

In this section, the role of emotionality from a bi/multilingual perspective will be examined with regards to the preference over the first language (L1) or the second language(s) (LX) to express emotion. Moreover, the *emotional learning context learning theory* will be used to explain emotional language preference.

Acknowledging the existence and independent nature of emotional language (emotion words and emotion-laden words) in the mental lexicon led to the recognition of *emotionality* as part of it (Pavlenko, 2008).

The relation between language and emotionality was firstly studied on monolingual speakers and afterwards on bi/multilingual ones (Eilola et al., 2007; Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006; Pavlenko, 2002, 2008). Currently, and as a result of the cognitivist and constructivist approach, emotionality is regarded as embedded and unique to each language and culture (Caldwell-harris et al., 2013; Pavlenko, 2002; Wierzbicka, 1999). Therefore, it can be expected that in studies that look into emotionality in bilingual or multilingual minds different effects might being found for the different languages.

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Even within the different subcategories of emotion-laden words within one language, the levels of emotionality vary. For instance, swearwords and taboo words seem to be the strongest category in terms of emotionality (Pavlenko, 2008). Taking into account the highly language-dependent nature of emotions, analysing the different behaviour of emotions on bi/multilinguals depending on their languages seems to be an interesting topic of research for cognitivist and linguistic sciences.

So far, the literature suggests that the L1 is a language of involvement for bi/multilinguals, whereas the LX is felt as a language of distance or detachment, thus resulting in a lesser emotional impact (Pavlenko, 2002). However, this only seems to be the case when the second language(s) have been learned at an early age\(^2\) and the L1 is still the dominant one (Dewaele, 2004b; Harris, Gleason & Ayçiçeği, 2006; Harris, Ayçiçeği, & Gleason, 2003; Pavlenko, 2002). Thus, relying entirely on the distinction between L1 and LX when studying emotionality in multilinguals seems to be inaccurate and insufficient.

As a result of this, Harris et al. (2006) formulated the *emotional learning context learning theory*. The core idea of this theory is that “language is experienced as emotion when it is acquired and used in an emotional context” (Harris, Gleason & Ayçiçeği, 2006, p. 185). In other words, emotions are experienced and shared in contexts in which emotions are allowed. For example, a job interview or a university lecture would not be the appropriate settings to discuss emotions. Additionally, by sharing and experiencing emotions in a particular language setting, this language will progressively become emotionally stronger and therefore preferred by an individual when the time to talk about emotions comes. This theory consists of three main principles which explain the dominance of emotion in an L1 or LX:

(1) *the L1 is usually more emotional than the LX.* This dominance of the L1 over the LX regarding emotion is due to the fact that an L1 is almost always learned in a family environment, in which emotion is always present. In other words, the L1 is generally experienced in an emotional context. Emotionality is usually ensured in a parental, filial or sibling relation. Opposed to this, an LX might not be acquired in a similar environment, but rather in a classroom setting or in another social community in which emotion is.

\(^2\) In this investigation there will be a distinction between “early bilinguals” (users who learn a language before the age of 7) and “late bilinguals” (users who learn a language after the age of 7). This distinction is made upon Harris et al. (2006) age criteria.

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usually controlled (Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006). If LX users do not have the opportunity to experience emotion in an LX, then it seems logical to believe that the L1 is going to be emotionally stronger. If an individual has been his whole life experiencing and sharing emotion (mostly or entirely) in a determined language, then the emotional part of language (emotion-laden words and emotion words) has only been accessed mostly or totally in one language. This higher use of the lexicon of emotions in a particular language clearly will influence an individual’s preference for a language to deal with emotions. AN LX can, on the other hand, be stronger for other purposes. For example, it might be the preferred language of an individual for work or for academic purposes. Nevertheless, when the time of expressing emotions comes, the L1 seems to be the preferred language, due to the fact that this is the language individuals have mostly used to express and experience their emotions throughout their whole life. However, it would be interesting to consider individuals who have an affective relation with a person in a language different from their L1. In this case, emotions would be shared in an LX and then perhaps the emotion-laden words of the individual might become emotionally stronger in the LX than in the individual’s L1. Consequently, this claim contradicts this first statement of Harris et al’s (2006) theory. From the perspective of the current multicultural society, in which cross-cultural relations are not unusual, claiming that the L1 is generally the emotionally stronger language of an individual might be an out-dated idea. Intercultural relations allow nowadays speakers to experience and express emotions in more than their L1. Subsequently, the inherent characteristic of the L1 as being connected to an emotional context might have also been transposed to the LX sphere.

(2) Age of acquisition or age of onset (AO) for learning a language. Languages learned during the first years of life tend to occupy a more emotional place in human cognition. The L1 is generally learned during the first years of life, but in the case of an LX this might not be the case. Similarly, when comparing different second languages in multilingual speakers, the languages that have been learned earlier are usually more emotional (Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006). Although this statement might seem clear and straightforward, there is no consensus about this it for several reasons. Firstly, there are some studies which found that once the barrier of the L2 is passed (e.g. L3, L4, etc.) AO does not seem to influence the degree of emotionality within the different LX(s) of a multilingual (Dewaele, 2004b). Secondly, age is a tricky issue when dealing with
language learning. Age seems to be a recurrent explanation for proficiency achievement and for emotionality dominance. However, it is worth remembering that even theories discussing age as a main factor in language learning, such as the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), have received strong criticism. Most scholars agree that learning a language at an early or at a late age are different learning experiences. Nevertheless, there is no clear-cut age at which an individual is considered to be too old for learning a language at a native-like level. Even more, some scholars even believe that late bilinguals are still able to acquire a language at native-like proficiency level. Thirdly, although some studies point towards the fact that learning a language earlier results in a greater emotionality, others found that emotional force between L1 and LX can be very similar or equal in cases of late bilinguals (e.g. Eliola et al., 2007). This finding thus contradicts the early learning emotional benefit claim. Consequently, considering AO as a key factor for determining emotionality among a bi/multilingual’s languages might not be a clear source to rely on, as there is still a high degree of controversy upon this matter.

(3) The higher the proficiency the more emotional the language is. In other words, proficiency level also influences emotionality in a language. Thus, high proficient users will probably experience a greater emotionality in the LX than low proficient users (Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006). This last premise is also connected to the idea of language dominance. Sometimes, due to usage or life circumstances, an LX can become the dominant language of an individual. The fact that the L1 is learned earlier in life does not mean that this will be the language an individual is going to feel more comfortable with for the rest of his life. Eventually, an LX can become the dominant language in certain life aspects or even in the whole life of a person. Therefore, this statement seems to be sufficiently reliable. As proficiency increases in an LX, individuals might start to use the LX for a greater variety of tasks than before and one of them could be expressing and experiencing emotionality.

This theory proposes three strong, although sometimes questionable, arguments which might be a reliable source to explain the preference of a bi/multilingual over his languages to express emotion. Notwithstanding, it is important to note that none of these three principles are more salient than the others when explaining emotionality dominance in the L1 or LX. That is, none of them alone can entirely account for a language being emotionally stronger than another. But it is rather the interaction between them that gives sense to this theory (Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi, 2006).

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Bilinguals or multilinguals are constantly consciously or unconsciously choosing what language to use in every situation when they consider it to be necessary or helpful. This ability to switch from one language to another upon their own will can be considered as an advantage. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that it is mostly in relation to emotional topics that bi/multilinguals choose to switch languages (Gawinkowska, Paradowski, & Bilewicz, 2013). Kim and Starks (2008) subsequently proposed the emotion-related language choice (ERLC), which supports that the language choice made by a bi/multilingual speaker depends on conscious or subconscious decisions. Moreover, this choice is not conditioned by environmental or contextual factors (e.g. home/school/work…), but instead by individual subjective choices that are unique to each speaker, such as level of confidence with the L1 or L2, level of emotion that wants to be conveyed with the utterance, etc. (Gawinkowska et al., 2013; Starks, 2008). One of the aspects in which bi/multilinguals seem to make more ERLC is swearing. Swearing and cursing are highly culturally, contextually and sociologically dependent. Thus, it is not surprising that bi/multilinguals think twice before uttering a swearword in a specific language and context (Gawinkowska et al., 2013; Jay, 2000). From this ERLC idea, it can be concluded that bi/multilinguals will choose a language for fulfilling a communicative need. However, there might be cases in which they are not allowed to choose among their languages. For example, when one language is not spoken by their interlocutor. Taking a situation in which a bi/multilingual is forced to swear in a language which is not his first choice for this, this speaker might feel uncomfortable or might perceive this swearing as insufficient or artificial. In other words, the swearing act might fulfil a different illocutionary effect than desired, hence, resulting in pragmatic failure (Dewaele, 2016; Thomas, 1983).

1.3. What is swearing?

In this section, swearing or cursing will be defined and the emotional function of S-T words will be discussed. Furthermore, a brief overview of the controversy of research on S-T words in the fields of linguistics and psychology will be provided.

Cursing or swearing is uttering emotionally powerful, offensive words or emotionally harmful expressions that are understood sometimes as insults, and which purpose is to express the speaker’s emotional state and communicate these feelings to the
Swearing is a product of neurological, psychological and sociocultural processes. It is neurological because emotional language occupies a place in the mental lexicon. It is psychological because it follows a maturational time course and depends on one’s own life experiences. Finally, it is sociocultural and pragmatic because swearing is culturally and contextually dependent (Jay, 2000, 2009; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008) and it varies both diaphasically and diatopically (Dewaele, 2004b). Swearing is regarded as a normal act, as it obeys the general semantic and syntactic rules of any language. But simultaneously, it is considered as unique, due to the emotional intensity that swearwords impregnate to one’s speech (Jay, 2000).

One way to express emotions is through swearing, which in fact proves to communicate information in certain cases in a more readily manner than other types of words (Jay, 2009; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). Nevertheless, when swearing in an LX this might be different, as swearing might result in a less accurate communicative act (Dewaele, 2016). That is to say that there is a “pragmatic failure”, meaning that the \textit{sentence meaning} is properly conveyed (that is, the denotative meaning of words), but the \textit{speaker meaning} is not (that is, the connotative meaning, the intention or message behind the speaker’s words) (Thomas, 1983). To phrase it differently, the words uttered by the speaker are understood, but the intention behind the words is not properly transmitted the hearer or receptor.

Even though the importance of swearing in communication and in the expression of emotions is now recognised, the investigation of S-T words was initially rejected by scholars in the fields of linguistics and psychology. Research on the role of S-T words in emotional language was generally avoided as if the topic was too taboo for academicians (Dewaele, 2016). This rejection might have been a consequence of the delicate and controversial nature that S-T words seem to have in all languages. Firstly, S-T words are highly context-dependent words and their use is always connected to sociocultural norms shared by the speakers of the same language community. Secondly, even inside one linguistic community, these norms might vary depending on specific situations, speakers, subcultures, etc. Therefore, the appropriateness of swearing seems to be culturally and contextually dependent (Gawinkowska et al., 2013). Hence, it is not a simple task to use

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S-T words even in one’s own language. Considering this, it might be understandable why research in this field was avoided. On the one hand, swearing is a complex topic which seems to be influenced by many individual and contextual factors. Consequently, carrying research on this topic poses several difficulties. On the other hand, cursing is still considered a taboo topic in some cultures and contexts, which probably does not positively influence research on it.

Nevertheless, with the appearance of studies dealing with the connection between language and emotion and the recognition of emotion word categories, the interest in the study of different emotion-laden words, including S-T words, raised. Furthermore, the increase of the bi/multilingual population led to a flourishment of research upon emotionality among bi/multilinguals. Subsequently, the emotional force of S-T words began to be examined in bi/multilinguals.

1.4. Emotionality and swearing in bi/multilinguals: where are we now?

This part will offer a review of studies looking into emotionality processing and emotional force of S-T in monolingual and bi/multilingual populations. The outcomes of this study will be compared, contrasted and examined according to the previously discussed literature in order to offer an overview of the current state of emotionality of S-T in the L1 and LX dichotomy.

Efforts to gain insight into the behaviour of swearing began only in the 1990s (Dewaele, 2016; Jay, 2000). This was firstly done from a monolingual perspective (e.g. Beers-Fägersten, 2007; McEnery & Xiao, 2004; Rayson, Leech, & Hodges, 1997; Timm, 1976) and only afterwards the scope broadened to multilinguals’ swearing (e.g. Dewaele, 2004a, 2004b, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; Eilola et al., 2007; Sutton, Altarriba, Gianico, & Basnight-Brown, 2007). The general conclusion of these studies is that the use and perception of S-T words in the L1 stands out psycholinguistically and that its use is typically related to individual differences, such as gender and generation (Dewaele, 2016). Nowadays, research on S-T words can no longer be considered as absent. Due to the increase of the bilingual population, an interest into multilingual knowledge of swearing has developed with many studies exploring this field (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008).
In this section, a compilation of the main findings and conclusions of some studies dealing with emotionality in the L1 and LX regarding S-T words and other types of emotion and emotion-laden words will be presented.

Dewaele (2004b) was the first one to investigate the use of S-T words in multilinguals. He carried out a study to determine whether the self-perception of emotional force of S-T words was similar in multilinguals’ several languages. Additionally, the effects of gender, type of instruction, AO, self-rated proficiency in speaking, and frequency of use of the different languages of multilinguals were analysed. The analyses revealed that S-T words had much more emotional force in the L1 than in the subsequent LXs of speakers. Participants acknowledged using S-T words in their LXs but reported that they relied on their L1 to express the strongest emotions. When looking at language dominance, it was found that participants who did not have their L1 as their dominant language felt S-T words as less strong in this language than participants who still preserved the L1 as the dominant language (Dewaele, 2004b). In general, the findings of this investigation are in line with the emotional learning context learning theory. Regarding the claim that the L1 is usually emotionally stronger than the LX, this study found a significant effect for this. Furthermore, it also revealed that the emotionality gradually lowers in languages learned subsequently. Concerning the learning settings, it was appreciated that participants who had learned an LX in a naturalistic or mixed setting had significantly higher levels of emotionality in their LXs than participants who had learned the languages in a classroom setting. This connects again with the idea that a language becomes emotional by being used in an emotional context, which does not usually happen in classroom settings. Differently, AO was found to be significant only for the first LX learned by the participants. Thus, learning an LX at an early age resulted in a higher emotionality in this language. In subsequent languages, AO did not have an effect on the emotionality perceived in the different languages. This means that when regarding posteriorly learned LXs (L3, L4, etc.), AO did not influence a different degree of emotionality among these languages. In other words, there was no significant difference in emotionality levels between an L3 learned at the age of 15 and an L4 learned at the age of 20. Finally, proficiency and rate of use also showed significant results. Participants who had a higher proficiency and used the language more often experienced a greater degree of emotionality in the LX.

Late Finish-English bilinguals’ emotional activation regarding neutral, positive
and negative and S-T words was analysed by Eliola et al. (2007). In their study, they measured response times in a Stroop task. In this task, participants are presented with words and are asked to ignore the words and only report the ink colour in which they are written. Hence, for words which provoke a higher emotional activation the response times are usually slower. In other words, a word that provokes a high emotional reaction in an individual will probably make him focus his attention on the word itself and will, consequently, slow his reaction time to identify the ink colour of the word. Their experiment revealed two things. Firstly, it was found that S-T words and negative words seemed to have a higher emotional activation in participants. In other words, participants spent more time to report the ink colour of these words. Secondly, S-T words and negative words were found to have similar levels of activation in the L1 and LX. This latter finding turned out to be surprising for several reasons. Participants of this study were highly proficient in English, although they considered Finnish as their dominant language. Additionally, participants were late bilinguals and they had learned their LX in a classroom setting. Considering all these factors, it was expected to find a different processing effect between the L1 and the LX. To explain their results the authors argued that proficiency seemed to be a key factor when looking at selective attention in bilinguals. And that perhaps word level causes a lesser degree of activation than more complex structures, consequently, hindering to find processing differences between bi/multilinguals’ languages. To phrase it differently, perhaps showing sentences instead of words would have resulted in a different activation level between the L1 and LX (Eilola et al., 2007).

Another study that reported similar processing of emotional information in the L1 and LX was the one conducted by Sutton et al. (2007). Contrasting with the study of Eliola et al. (2007), the participant’s profile of this investigation anticipated the results later obtained. In this study, highly proficient Spanish-English early bilinguals were examined and the focus was on selective attention to the emotional content of words in the bilinguals’ lexicon (Sutton et al., 2007). The LX provoked a greater emotional response than the L1. Nevertheless, this difference was not significant, concluding that there was the same level of emotional processing between both languages. Proficiency, AO and learning setting were all good predictors of this study’s outcomes. The participants from this investigation’s sample were highly proficient in both languages. Actually, they self-rated English as their dominant language, showing that their LX had
overcome their L1. They also reported using English more often on a daily basis than Spanish. They were all early bilinguals who had learned both languages in a naturalistic (family setting) environment. Therefore, all the criteria from Harris et al.’s (2006) were met. Subsequently, a similar effect in both languages was expected. The only principle from the emotional learning context learning theory which seemed to be contradicted was the one that claims that the L1 is generally more emotional than the LX. Notwithstanding, as participants rated themselves as more proficient in English, and recognised using their LX more often, this case could be an appropriate example of why this theory states that the L1 is generally and not always more emotional than the LX.

Contrasting these two studies, Colbeck and Bowers (2012) did find different processing of emotional words in the L1 and LX. They compared English monolingual and Chinese-English bilingual speakers. The Chinese were late bilinguals who reported to be highly proficient in English and who were studying a degree in an English university at the time of the study. The outcome of this study revealed that S-T words were not processed in the same way for both groups. In fact, they happened to be more emotional for L1 speakers. To explain these different results the authors suggested that perhaps their Chinese speakers were less proficient in English than the Finnish and Spanish ones investigated by Eliola et al. (2007) and Suton et al. (2007). They also argued that other factors apart from proficiency, such as AO, the context in which the LX was acquired, and the use of words in the LX might have fostered this difference in the processing of S-T words between the English and Chinese participants. Thus, these authors stressed that contrarily to what had been stated in Eliola et al. (2007), AO and learning setting were as important predictors of emotionality in a language as language proficiency (Colbeck & Bowers, 2012). Another possible explanation for the results of this study could be the dichotomy between high and low context cultures as explained by Caldwell-harris, Kronrod, & Yang (2013). Expression of emotions is lower in a culture like Chinese (high context culture) than in culture like English (low context culture). Thus, this lesser degree of using language to express emotion among the Chinese participants might be a reason for their lower emotional reaction when exposed to emotional words. When an individual is not used to use language to express emotion this part of his lexicon is less frequently used. Resulting in a lesser emotional activation of it.

Harris et al. (2003) and Eliola and Havelka (2010) conducted studies revealing a higher level of arousal, as measured by skin conductance levels (SCL), for negative words

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in the L1 than in the LX. In other words, negative words seemed to be emotionally stronger in the L1 of the participants than in the LX. In the study of Eliola and Havelka (2010) English L1 speakers and Greek-English bilinguals were examined. The Greek participants were considered as late bilinguals that had learned the LX in a classroom setting. At the moment of the study, they were in immersion, as they were studying in an English university. They were highly proficient in English, although they still considered Greek as their dominant language and acknowledged to have a preference towards Greek for expressing emotions. The late AO and higher proficiency in Greek than in English, combined with their first learning experiences were the reasons used to justify the greater emotionality observed in the English speakers than in the Greek ones towards English taboo words. In the case of Harris et al. (2003), the participants were a sample of Turkish-English late bilinguals who had learned English as an LX firstly in a classroom setting and only had had a naturalistic learning experience (immersion) at a late age. They all considered Turkish as their dominant language. Both studies revealed that for negative words the level of arousal was higher in the L1 than in the LX. Authors explained that the reasons for the L1 to have a greater emotional force towards taboo words than in the LX were a lower proficiency level in the LX, a late AO, and a predominantly classroom learning experience. An interesting point of Harris et al.’s (2003) study is that not only did the taboo words in Turkish caused a greater effect in the Turkish-English bilinguals than the English taboo words, but also these participants even reported feeling “nothing” when the taboo words were presented to them in English. Of course, this “nothing” was a self-perception report, as these words did stand out from neutral and positive ones in both languages in terms of skin arousal levels (Harris et al., 2003). Perhaps the self-reported feeling of “nothing” by the Turkish participants could be a result of the lingua franca nature of English across cross-cultural relations and also on media. Swearwords in English are common nowadays, either in real life conversations, media or social networking. Hence, frequent exposure to English swearwords in contexts in which they are not linked to strong emotions could maybe justify this “nothing” feeling among the Turkish participants. Eliola and Havelka (2010) concluded from the result of their study and previous studies such as Harris et al. (2003) that LX users seem to access the denotative meanings of the emotional words in their LX. But they do not respond to their connotative meanings to the same extent as in their L1. In other words, they can access the meaning of the S-T words in their LX, but the emotional arousal that these words provoked in their LX is lesser than in their L1 (Eilola & Havelka, 2010). This was a
logical claim since connotative meanings might not be available for LX learners in a classroom setting, where emotions are usually controlled.

Overall, studies looking into the processing of emotional language and emotional force of language in L1 and LX suggest that the L1 is generally stronger and that in some cases the LX might equal the L1 in terms of emotional strength. However, the LX does not seem to overcome the emotionality of the L1. These studies examined monolingual and bilingual populations from different backgrounds, although English was the target language for measuring emotionality in an LX or L1, as it is a common LX across many cultures. All these studies concluded that greater emotionality in the L1 is mainly determined by proficiency level in the LX, amount of exposure to emotional words in the LX, AO for stating to learn the LX, and the learning context (either naturalistic, mixed or classroom setting) in which the LX was first acquired.

1.5. Statement of purpose

Emotion-laden words seem to be a popular research topic among scholars nowadays. With the increase of the bi/multilingual population of the world, more academics have begun to posit questions about how emotions and emotion-related words are processed in multilingual minds. A common subfield of research of this area is the study of the emotional force of S-T words in bi/multilinguals. However, S-T words still remain to be a challenging topic with several difficulties. Firstly, S-T words are highly culturally and contextually dependent (Dewaele, 2004b; Jay, 2000, 2009; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008; Wierzbicka, 1999). Secondly, the boundaries that separate S-T words from other emotion-laden word categories are fuzzy and overlap between them is common and dependent on contextual factors (Pavlenko, 2008).

Research until now has dealt with the emotional force of S-T words in multilinguals’ minds. In other words, it has been investigated in which of the multilingual’s languages S-T words provoke a higher emotional response. Most research points to the direction that the L1 is generally emotionally stronger and that in some cases the LX emotionality might equate the level of emotionality in the LX. However, no instances of the LX as being emotionally stronger have been reported. Therefore, when presented with S-T words in the LX a lesser degree or equal degree of emotionality than
in the L1 will be experienced in multilinguals. However, studies until now have focused on emotionality perception in the L1 and LX from the multilinguals’ perspective, and, to my knowledge, no research has investigated if this lower or equal degree of emotionality of S-T words in an LX is transmitted to a receptor. That is to say, if an L1 user hears an LX and an L1 user swearing in the target language (TL), does the L1 user perceive both swearing acts as emotionally different? Does one of them provoke a higher emotional response than the other? Dewaele (2016) suggested that searing in an LX might result in a less accurate communicative act, which might imply a different emotional response from an L1 user receptor. Nevertheless, this question has not been answered yet.

Subsequently, the current study will investigate the perceived emotional force of swearwords and insults by L1 users of Spanish. To investigate this, L1 Spanish users will be exposed speech samples of L1 and LX users of Spanish swearing. As swearing has been defined as uttering emotionally powerful, offensive words (Jay, 2000, 2009; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008), this dissertation will focus on the degree of offensiveness to determine the emotional strength of the S-T words. Nevertheless, not only S-T words will be examined in this investigation. As a consequence of the fuzzy boundaries between emotion-laden words (Pavlenco, 2008) and of the fact that some S-T words might be considered as insults depending on the context, (Jay, 2000, 2009; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008) this thesis will consider both S-T words and insults (S-T/I) of Spanish as one single category of investigation for this study. Additionally, as the use of S-T/I varies both diaphasically and diatopically, (Dewaele, 2004b) it has been decided that this dissertation will focus on the study of S-T/I from Spain, and will disregard any other variants of Spanish from any other parts of the world which have Spanish as an L1 as well.

Thus, this study will aim at answering two questions based on the findings of previous studies:

1) Do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish of the speech samples of L1 users and LX users of Spanish differ?

For this question (Q1), it is expected that L1 users’ swearing will be rated as more offensive. This claim is made upon the fact that several studies have claimed that the L1 is emotionally stronger. Thus, L1 users could be at an advantage when conveying emotional force of S-T/I since their self-perception of these words is stronger.

Moreover, as argued in Harris et al.’s (2006) emotional learning context learning...
theory, proficiency is one of the factors that influences emotionality in bi/multilinguals. Actually, there have been some studies that have observed that with high proficient bi/multilinguals S-T words are processed similarly in the L1 and in the LX. The question is if this higher self-rated emotional perception of advanced bilinguals will also be transmitted to the receptors. Hence, this study will answer the following question:

(2) Do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish to the speech samples of LX upper proficient users (LXU) and LX lower proficient users (LXL) differ? And if so, do the offensiveness ratings of LXU differ from the ones of the L1 users?

For this question (Q2), it is expected that LXU users will be rated as more offensive than the LXL users. And also, that LXU users will be rated as less offensive than L1 users.
2. Methodology

2.1. Materials

Four different instruments were used in this study. The first of them was an online open access web-questionnaire that consisted of 35 swearwords/insults (S-T/I) in Spanish. This questionnaire was created using Google Forms and will be referred to in this study as “Questionnaire A” (see Appendix 1 for a list of the S-T/I included in this questionnaire). This questionnaire consisted of a list of 35 common S-T/I in Spanish. Respondents were asked to assess the offensiveness of each of these items individually on a scale of 1 to 3, being 1- not very offensive (nada ofensivo); 2- moderately offensive (ofensivo); and 3- very offensive (muy ofensivo).

From the outcome of Questionnaire A, three lists of words depending on their degree of offensiveness were created (see Appendix 2). Thus, obtaining a set of low offensive words, a set of medium offensive words and a set of high offensive words. For this part of the study, the list containing the most offensive words (9 items) was selected. This was the second instrument used in this research and will be referred in this study as “list of S-T/I”. There were four reasons that motivated the choice of this list as the main instrument for the experiment aiming at testing Q1 and Q2: (1) the percentages obtained for the medium offensive words were more mixed, meaning that although the percentage of medium offensiveness was higher for them it was in most cases closely followed by either low or high offensive and sometimes by both. Thus, respondents seemed to have a lower degree of consensus upon the offensiveness of these words. (2) The fact that some S-T/I can be classified as low offensive might imply that L1 users do not consider them as offensive anymore. As this investigation aimed at obtaining offensiveness ratings upon certain S-T/I, it was decided to disregard this set of words categorized as low-offensive words, in order to avoid very low offensiveness ratings. (3) The list of high offensive words consisted of 9 items, which was a good number taking into account that this research was aiming at producing speech samples which were not longer than 15-30 seconds. (4) This group of words was offensive to all respondents. Hence, it was considered to be an interesting idea to see if an independent variable such as the type of speaker would alter the offensiveness’ perception of these words.

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The third instrument of this study was a set of six speech samples. They were all 15-30 seconds long and the material used to produce all of them was the list of S-T/I. Each speech sample was recorded by a different participant. Four of them had Spanish as their L1 (L1 users) and four of them were learners of Spanish as a foreign language (LX users). These recordings were used in the main web-questionnaire of this study (Questionnaire C).

To control for different voice characteristics that could influence the listeners’ ratings of the speech samples, an online questionnaire to gather information about the voices was done. This was an online Questionnaire (Questionnaire B) designed with Qualtrics in which participants were asked to give ratings concerning pleasantness, agreeableness, and intelligibility for each of the speech samples. Each of the speech samples was shortened into a 3 second version, as the goal here was to focus the attention on the participants’ voices and not on the words used in the speech samples. A definition for each of the variables was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire in order to make it accessible for participants without a linguistic background. This way, **pleasantness** was described as “giving a sense of happy satisfaction of enjoyment”. **Agreeableness** was defined as “quite enjoyable and pleasurable; acceptable”. And finally, **intelligibility** was presented as “able to be understood; comprehensible”. All definitions were taken from the Oxford online English dictionary (2018). Participants rated each of the variables for each speech sample on a five-point scale (1-not all; 2-not much; 3-neutral; 4-a little; 5-very much).

The fourth tool of this study was Questionnaire C, which consisted of an online open access web-questionnaire created with Qualtrics. This was the main instrument of this investigation and it aimed at gathering offensiveness ratings for the different speech samples recorded with the eight participants. Respondents were given a five-point scale to rate these speech samples according to their level of offensiveness. This way, 1 was labeled as not offensive at all (nada ofensivo); 2 as a slightly offensive (un poco ofensivo); 3 as offensive (ofensivo); 4 as very offensive (muy ofensivo); and 5 as extremely offensive (extremadamente ofensivo). Qualtrics was chosen instead of other software for creating web questionnaires because the speech samples were not downloadable for respondents through this tool. Due to the terms stated in the participants’ ethical consents, these materials could only be available to the main researcher of this investigation and the team surrounding this study. The speech samples contained sensitive information. Therefore,
downloading the speech samples by respondents had to be avoided. The speech samples were firstly uploaded as a private playlist (not-downloadable) to Soundcloud and posteriorly incorporated to Questionnaire C. This same procedure was followed for the creation of Questionnaire B. In the case of Questionnaire C, due to the size of the recordings, the questionnaire could only be answered with a PC, a laptop or an Apple device. Consequently, many responses recorded with Android devices were not fully completed and had to be excluded from the analyses, leaving a part of the population out of the results of this investigation.

In accordance with respondents’ language backgrounds, Questionnaire A and Questionnaire C were designed in Spanish. Whereas Questionnaire B was written in English. The reason behind this was that Questionnaire A and C aimed at gathering a type of information that could only be provided by L1 users of Spanish. Contrarily, Questionnaire B was focused on the voices of the participants and not on the language. Thus, being an L1 user of Spanish was not a requisite for taking part in this questionnaire.

### 2.2. Participants

There were four different groups of participants in this investigation: Group 1 (GR1) (n=94) participants of Questionnaire A; (2) Group 2 (GR2) (n=8) participants of the speech samples; (3) Group 3 (GR3) (n=11) participants of Questionnaire B; and (4) Group 4 (GR4) (n=132) participants of Questionnaire C.

GR1 consisted of 94 L1 Spanish users from Spain, with an age range of 20-35. This sample was obtained through social media by snowball effect. An age range was set for participants of GR1 and GR4. This decision was made upon the fact that age could be a determining social factor when rating the offensiveness of a particular swearword. Additionally, as sampling was going to be performed through social media, this age range group was considered to be active enough in social media as for being easily reachable through this sampling procedure.

GR2 (n=8) was formed by four participants who had Spanish as their L1 (L1 users) and four participants who were learning Spanish as an LX (LX users). All participants in GR2 were male and the mean age of the group was 24.5. Participants were highly educated having or coursing a Bachelor’s degree (n=5) or a Master’s degree (n=3). All
LX users were studying or had studied Spanish at the proficiency courses at the University of Groningen. Within the LX group, two participants were upper proficient (B2.2/C1.1) in Spanish (LXU users) and the other two were lower proficient (A2.2/B1.1) (LXL users). The decision to incorporate different levels of proficiency was made to be able to posteriorly analyze the effect of proficiency level on the offensiveness ratings. All LX were late bilinguals. The LXU users had learned the language through a combination of naturalistic and classroom setting (mixed learning context) and frequently used the LX with L1 users on a daily or weekly basis. The LXL had only received classroom instruction and did not have frequent contact with L1 users outside their lessons. All GR2 participants volunteered for this study and were offered a reward of 15 euros each. The reduced size of this group was influenced by timing constraints of this research. Participants needed to have a certain level of education (at least a Bachelor’s degree), and in the case of the LX users they needed to be following or have followed a Spanish proficiency course that would vouch for their proficiency level in Spanish. Additionally, to control for gender differences all participants had to be males, as previous studies had demonstrated that in some cultures swearing by women is regarded differently (Dewaele, 2016). Moreover, the LX participants were obtained from the proficiency courses at the University of Groningen. The majority of the students attending these courses were female, which clearly difficulted finding suitable LX participants for recording the speech samples.

GR3 was composed of 11 participants with different language backgrounds. Contrary to the other groups, there were no conditions for becoming a participant of this group. No personal information was gathered from any of the participants.

GR4 consisted of 132 participants (ages: 20-35). The only requisites for becoming a participant of this group were being between the ages 20 and 35 and being an L1 user of Spanish from Spain. Previous literature on S-T words has shown that S-T are highly dependent diaphasically and diatopically (Dewaele, 2004b). Therefore, as the set of S-T/I used for this research belonged to the Spanish variety from Spain, only participants from this country were allowed to participate in the survey. These participants were offered to enter a raffle of 50 euros as a reward for their participation. Participants were not asked for any personal details apart from age and gender.

Participants of GR1, GR3, and GR4 were reached through social media and by snowball sampling, whereas participants of GR2 were reached through the acquaintance
circle of the researcher (in the case of the L1 users) and through the Spanish proficiency teachers at the University of Groningen (in the case of the LX users).

2.3. Design and procedure

Firstly, Questionnaire A was conducted. This was a necessary pre-step to develop a list of S-T/I to be used during the speech sample recording sessions. Not all S-T/I carry the same emotional force for L1 users (Pavlenko, 2008; Dewaele, 2004b). Subsequently, to control for the use of S-T/I belonging to different thresholds of offensiveness and therefore biasing results in Questionnaire C, Questionnaire A was carried out to obtain a list of S-T/I in which degree of offensiveness of the S-T/I had been controlled for. Questionnaire A was online with open access for three days and obtained 94 responses from Spanish L1 users from Spain. These participants (GR1) judged the offensiveness of 35 S-T/I individually on a scale from 1 to 3. From the outcome of this survey, three lists of S-T/I classified by their offensiveness were obtained. From these three lists, the one with the most offensive items (list of S-T/I) was chosen as the primary material for the speech samples of this study.

Concerning the speech samples, GR2 participants recorded individually in private meetings with the researcher. Instead of revealing the real research goal, they were told that the aim of this investigation was to study the use of S-T/I in an L1 or LX. Written ethical consent for recording the speech samples and posteriorly distributing them on a web-questionnaire and using them for research purposes was obtained. It was agreed that participants identity would remain anonymous throughout the study and they were offered the possibility to receive recognition in the acknowledgement section of this thesis either anonymously, by a pseudonym, or by their first name. All participants were given the same set of S-T/I (list of S-T/I) (see Appendix 3). The list of S-T/I was presented with the items in the same order on each occasion. LX users were given an explanation of the S-T/I of the list that were unknown to them. All participants were asked to read these words at a normal pace, making sure they were vocalizing properly and pausing one second between each word. They were also asked to imagine that they were cursing at someone while reading the words. The speech samples were made using a professional audio recording device provided to this investigation by the audiovisual department of
the University of Groningen. All recording sessions were performed in private rooms at the University of Groningen.

To control for individual differences in the voices of the participants of GR2, an online questionnaire (Questionnaire B) looking into pleasantness, agreeableness, and intelligibleness was done. In this questionnaire, participants of GR3 rated each speech sample according to each of these variables on a five-point scale. Participants were explicitly asked to focus their attention on the voices heard in each speech sample and disregard the words uttered in them. They were informed that although the speech samples contained words in Spanish, knowledge of Spanish was not necessary to answer the survey. Despite definitions of the three terms (pleasantness, agreeableness, and intelligibleness) were provided, some participants reported to be confused when rating the samples in terms of agreeableness and intelligibleness. Therefore, and because pleasantness was the most important of the three variables within this investigation frame (as an unpleasant voice might sound more offensive), only the results of the pleasantness scale were later analyzed and taken into consideration. This was done to prevent obtaining results from this questionnaire that were a consequence of random answers to the scales of agreeableness and intelligibleness. Results of the pleasantness scale were later examined to determine if any of the GR2 participants’ voices significantly differed from the others, and could subsequently influence offensiveness ratings in Questionnaire C.

Before launching Questionnaire C online, a pilot questionnaire including a pilot analysis was done upon fake data. The aim of this pilot questionnaire was to test if answers were properly recorded and data was well structured for posterior statistical analyses. Finally, Questionnaire C was made available online with open-access for a month. In this questionnaire, GR4 participants listened to the eight speech samples individually and rated each of them in terms of offensiveness on a scale from 1 to 5. The speech samples were presented in random order to each GR4 participant. Instead of revealing the real research’s goal, GR4 participants were told that this survey aimed at analyzing the use of S-T/I in Spanish. At no moment were they told that some of the speech samples had been recorded by L1 users and others by LX users. This measure was taken to avoid possible prejudices that L1 users might have about LX users swearing in Spanish.
2.4. Data analyses

To control for significant pleasantness differences between GR2 participants’ voices, a Chronbach’s alpha was done with the results from Questionnaire B. This test’s outcome revealed that one of the LXL participants was low correlated to the others, although the mean score ($m$) and the standard deviation ($sd$) of this participant were within normal values (see Table 4 in Appendix 4). It was then assumed that this participant’s low correlation could have been a product of GR3 participants not properly understanding the pleasantness scale. Consequently, and in spite of its low correlation coefficient, it was decided to continue with this participant’s speech sample and check later from the results obtained in Questionnaire C whether this participant was still lowly correlated with the rest. A second low correlation of this participant could have been a good indicator of this participant’s voice being more unpleasant than the rest, and therefore influencing its offensiveness ratings. After doing a second Cronbach’s alpha upon results from Questionnaire C, results revealed that all participants met the minimum correlation requirements. Therefore, no participants from GR2 were excluded. The analyses were performed between all participants (L1 and LX users) (see Table 5 in Appendix 5) as well as in two separate groups. That is, one analysis compared the correlation coefficients of LX users (see Table 6 in Appendix 5) and the other one of the L1 users (see Table 7 in Appendix 5). This measure was taken to additionally control that no participant from either of the groups stood out from the rest of the participants of the same set (see Tables 5, 6 and 7 in Appendix 5 for results).

After having controlled for the voices of the GR2 participants, the data of Questionnaire C was inspected and analysed in order to test the two research questions of this thesis (Q1: Do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish of the speech samples of L1 users and LX users of Spanish differ? And Q2: Do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish to the speech samples of LX upper proficient users (LXU) and LX lower proficient users (LXL) differ? And if so, do the offensiveness ratings of LXU differ from the ones of the L1 users?). The dependent variable (DV) for both Q1 and Q2 was the offensiveness ratings that had been provided by GR4 participants in Questionnaire C. This was an interval-like variable, operationalized in a Likert scale from 1 to 5, in which 1 meant not offensive at all and 5 extremely offensive. The independent variable (IV) for both research questions (Q1 and Q2) was the speaker. Namely, each of the eight
participants from GR2. This was a nominal variable. In the case of Q1, the IV was divided into two nominal levels: L1 users (L1) (n=4) and LX users (LX) (n=4). Concerning Q2, the IV was divided into three nominal levels: L1 users (L1) (n=4), upper intermediate LX users (LXU) (n=2), and lower intermediate users (LXL) (n=2).

Descriptive statistics were checked for both research questions (see Tables 8 and 9 in Appendix 6). A Shapiro-Wilk test revealed that the data was not normally distributed for any of the research questions (see Tables 10 and 11 in Appendix 7). Consequently, non-parametric statistics were performed. In the case of Q1, a paired version of the Wilcoxon rank sum test was performed. The effect size was later calculated upon z-scores. Regarding Q2, as within-subject factors were examined, a Friedman test was done. Posteriorly, a post hoc test to compare all groups in pairs was carried out. This post hoc test was a pairwise paired version of the Wilcoxon test with Bonferroni correction. Lastly, an exact Wilcoxon-Pratt Signed-Rank test based on z-scores was used to calculate the effect size. All statistical analyses were performed using the software R 3.5.0 (R Core Team, 2013). The alpha level was set at .05. Both research questions (Q1 and Q2) were two-tailed tested, as there was no specific reason to predict the results direction.
3. Results

Concerning Q1, descriptive statistics suggest that offensiveness ratings for L1 users (Mdn = 16) were higher than the ones for LX users (Mdn = 11). The boxplot below (Figure 1) visualises the different offensiveness ratings given to the L1 users and the LX users:

![Boxplot for the offensiveness perception in both users’ groups.](image)

A paired version of the Wilcoxon rank sum test (see Table 1) revealed that this difference was significant, $v = 6287.5$, $p < 0.001$. This was a large effect ($r=0.54$).

Table 1. Results of the paired Wilcoxon rank sum test testing Q1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L1 users</th>
<th>LX users</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offensiveness ratings</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6287.5***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Results obtained when testing Q2 suggest that there is a difference between the LXU and the LXL users. Descriptive statistics revealed that the LXU users’ offensiveness ratings ($Mdn = 6$) were higher than the ones for LXL users ($Mdn = 5$). Additionally, L1 users’ offensiveness ratings ($Mdn = 16$) were still higher than the ones given to LXL and LXU users. The boxplot below (Figure 2) provides a visual of the different offensiveness ratings given to each of the three user groups.

A Friedman rank sum test (Table 2) revealed that there was a significant difference between the three user groups (L1, LXL and LXU), $\chi^2 (1) = 396, p < 0.001$. This was a large effect ($r=0.85$).

Table 2. Results of the Friedman rank sum test testing Q2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offensiveness ratings</th>
<th>L1 users</th>
<th>LXU users</th>
<th>LXL users</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mdn</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>396***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *$p<0.05$; **$p<0.01$; ***$p<0.001$
To check whether there was a significant difference between the three groups (L1 users, LXU users, and LXL users) a post-hoc test was done. This post-hoc test was a Wilcoxon rank sum test with Bonferroni correction (see Table 3 for results).

Table 3. Matrix table showing the results of the pairwise comparison between L1 users, LXU users and LXL users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>LXL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LXL</td>
<td>&lt;2e-16***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU</td>
<td>&lt;2e-16***</td>
<td>2.4e-10***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

According to this matrix table (Table 3), there is a significant difference between all three groups. The L1 users obtained a higher offensiveness rating (Mdn=16) than the LXL users (Mdn=5), and that the LXU users (Mdn=6). In addition to this, the LXU users’ ratings (Mdn=6) were higher than the ones of the LXL users (Mdn=5). A pairwise comparison using a Wilcoxon rank sum test with Bonferroni correction revealed that all differences were significant. In other words, L1 users were significantly more offensive than LXU users (p < 2e-16) and that LXL users (p < 2e-16), and the ratings for the LXU users were significantly higher than the ones for LXL users (p=2.4e-10).

In this section, the results of the statistics performed to test Q1 and Q2 have been presented. Regarding Q1, it has been demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the offensiveness ratings given to the L1 users and the LX users, being the ones of the L1 users considerably higher. Concerning Q2, there was a significant difference between L1 users, LXU users, and LXL users. L1 users had the highest ratings, followed by LXU users and lastly LXL users. All groups differed significantly. In the following section, possible reasons behind these significant differences will be discussed.
4. Discussion

The results presented in the previous section show that expectations for both research questions (Q1 and Q2) of this thesis have been met. Therefore, both hypotheses can be accepted.

Regarding Q1 (do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish of the speech samples of L1 users and LX users of Spanish differ?), it has been observed that there is a difference in the offensiveness ratings given to the L1 and the LX users. This difference is in accordance with this dissertation’s expectations. In other words, the speech samples of L1 users were rated as more offensive than the ones of the LX users. The findings relating to this research question seem to be in line with previous investigations, which claimed that the L1 is more emotional than the LX. This line of argumentation could now be translated to this new dimension in the study of S-T/I. That is, in the same way as the L1 is perceived as emotionally stronger than the LX when LX users try to convey a message to L1 speakers of the target language, the emotionality conveyed is also smaller. That is to say, not only do the LX users perceive these S-T/I as less emotionally strong, but this lesser emotionality is also perceived by the L1 speaker receptors. This examination on emotionality conveyance in the use of S-T/I by LX users and L1 users constitutes a new angle in the study of the emotionality of S-T/I. Until now, and to the researcher’s knowledge, only perception of emotionality of S-T/I from the speaker’s perspective had been studied. However, the results to this research question (Q1) do not only logically follow the results obtained in studies looking into self-perception and perception of emotionality from the speaker’s angle, but they also suggest that the effect on the emotionality conveyance side (the receptor’s perception) takes the same direction.

Besides the higher ratings given to the L1 users, it is also interesting to observe that there is more consensus in the ratings given to the L1 users than in the ones given to the LX users (see Figure 1 in the results section and Table 8 in Appendix 6). What this means is that L1 users were generally perceived as offensive, whereas LX users could have been perceived as more or less offensive depending on the listener. This way, the same speech sample from an LX user could have sounded as extremely offensive to one L1 listener and as not offensive at all to the next one. A possible explanation to this lesser degree of consensus for the ratings of LX users will be later discussed in this section.
Concerning Q2 (do the offensiveness ratings given by L1 users of Spanish to the speech samples of LX upper proficient users (LXU) and LX lower proficient users (LXL) differ? And if so, do the offensiveness ratings of LXU differ from the ones of the L1 users?), the predictions for this research question have also been met. It was predicted that LXU users would obtain higher ratings than the LXL users, but that these ratings would still be lower than the ones given to the L1 users. The data from this study shows that LXU users have obtained significantly higher rates than the LXL users, but that at the same time these ratings are still significantly lower than the ones given to the L1 users. In other words, as proficiency increases, the higher the emotional force conveyed with the S-T/I, although it does not equate to L1 users. This outcome is still in line with previous investigations’ claim that the L1 is emotionally stronger than the LX. At the same time, it supports this study’s expectation that L1 speakers’ emotional perception is influenced by the proficiency of the speakers. Thus, L1 speakers of a language are more offended when the S-T/I are used by L1 users because their proficiency level is native like, thus the highest achievable level. Following this, as proficiency level increases in LX users, these will also be perceived as more offensive by the L1 speakers of the target language.

Some studies have proven that proficiency level, in combination with other factors, seems to play an important role in the relation between emotionality and language. Previous research even found that at really high levels of proficiency there might be no difference between the emotionality experienced in the L1 and the LX, and in some cases, the LX might even surpass the L1. In this study, one of the LXU users claimed that he did not know which of his three languages was the dominant one at the time of the study, whereas the other stated that his L1 was his dominant language although he was very proficient in Spanish. The results of this research took a slightly different direction compared to other studies. That is, LXU users were lower rated than L1 users despite their high proficiency. Perhaps the participants of this study were not proficient enough as for finding an equal effect in both languages in terms of emotional perception by receptors. Another possible explanation for these divergent results is the fact that this study adopted a different focus from previous research. In other words, this thesis was not dealing with (self)perception of emotionality from the speaker’s angle, but with a receptor or outsider’s perception of the emotionality conveyed in using S-T/I. This
dissimilar research focus might have influenced the different direction of the results of this investigation.

Studies before had looked whether proficiency would alter self-perception of emotionality in an LX. But this study was testing if a higher proficiency level would result in a higher outsider perception of the emotionality. To phrase it differently, if the more proficient an LX user is in the LX, the more assertive he is when conveying emotionality in the LX. Results show that proficiency level, in combination with other factors such as contact with the LX and learning context of the LX users, favours emotion perception by outsiders, although not at the same level as it does when regarding emotion (self)perception from the speaker’s perspective.

Harris et al. (2006) claimed in their “emotional learning context theory” that a language becomes emotion through experiencing emotion in an LX in real life context. This argument can partially account for explaining the results obtained to Q2. Regarding the learning experience, both LXU participants had lived in a Spanish speaking country and regularly spoke with L1 users of Spanish. Whereas the LXL users had only had classroom instruction and did not speak with L1 users so frequently. This might have exposed the LXU users to emotional situations, including some related to anger, in the LX. One of the LXU participants had actually started learning Spanish in a naturalistic environment, and only later had he started to take formal lessons of Spanish at university. The other one had started learning in a classroom setting, but he moved for a period of time to a Spanish speaking country afterwards. Thus, both LXU participants had received a combination of classroom and naturalistic learning (mixed learning). This implied that the classroom setting LX barrier had been broken by these LX users, who had had the opportunity to use the LX in real life situations, and to possibly experience a variety of emotions in the LX as well. Both participants reported to still have frequent conversations with Spanish L1 users. Moreover, both participants recognised that they preferred their L1 to swear. One of them stated that this was due to the fact that he almost never used his LX to swear and therefore he was not used to it. Both participants coincided in that they found swearwords in Spanish offensive but they preferred their L1 to swear due to language habit. Concerning AO, in the case of this study, both LXU participants had started to learn the LX at an adult age. Perhaps the late AO is one of the reasons why the speech samples’ ratings were significantly different. In any case, it cannot be known
whether this difference is an effect of the late AO of the participants, of their proficiency level, of a combination of both, or of the different research angle of the current study.

Connecting again to the degree of consensus in the ratings given to L1 and LX users in Q1, it can be appreciated that the degree of consensus for the ratings of LXL and LXU users also differed. Parallely to what was found in Q1, there was more consensus when rating the speech samples of the LXU users. This might indicate, that the higher the proficiency of a speaker, the more assertive the LX user is in conveying a certain emotion, in this case, offensiveness. On the other hand, the ratings of the LXL users still show a bigger variety, which means that participants did not agree in the same degree for their offensiveness ratings, as shown by the sd of each group (see Table 8 and 9 in Appendix 6 and Figure 1 and 2 for sd of each group). Thus, having on one side a group which is more heterogeneous in terms of proficiency (LX users) versus a clearly homogeneous group (L1 users) can explain the possible disagreements among participants when rating the speech samples of LX users. Regarding the LXL users, their low proficiency might be the cause behind their mixed offensiveness ratings.

Swearing has been defined as a way to convey emotions in a more readily manner than other words do (Jay, 2009; Jay and Janschewitz, 2008). In other words, swearing has a utility as a communicative act, which is conveying a certain emotion in a powerful and direct way. However, the outcomes of this investigation put this statement into question when regarding LX users of a language. Swearing is an act that all users of a language (L1 and LX) do. After all, swearing is no more than a communicative act in which the speaker is conveying or expressing a certain type of emotion. Swearing has two dimensions from a utility point. On the one hand, it enables the speaker to express personal emotions. On the other hand, it constitutes a vehicle to make others aware of these emotions and provoke a response in them. When looking at emotion self-expression, previous studies have demonstrated that users experience a higher emotion (self)perception of swearing in their L1. Consequently, this language is usually chosen over the LX to express emotions such as anger. This current study has demonstrated that, even when looking at high proficient LX users, the emotional force S-T/I as perceived by receptors/listeners seems to be conveyed in a lesser degree than when L1 users swear. Therefore, it could be said that LX users are failing when trying to convey a certain emotion while swearing either for self-expression of emotions or for communicating them. Other investigations have shown that LX users are aware of their preference for

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their L1 to swear, as they feel their LX as emotionally weaker. Thus, when given the chance they will opt for their L1 to swear, as the ERLC formulated by Kim and Starks (2008) suggest. Nevertheless, and despite their recognition of the LX as less emotional, LX users still swear in their LX when they are using it as a tool for communicating with L1 speakers of the target language, or when the LX constitutes a lingua franca between speakers. The motivation for this might be that LX users are unaware of the fact that the degree of emotionality conveyed to the receptors, in this study regarding only L1 users, is also smaller. The innovative research angle of this investigation concerning the use of S-T words in an LX might make us wonder where the utility of swearing rests for LX users. If a communicative act as swearing cannot achieve the desired goal either for the speaker (lesser emotional self-perception of swearing in the LX) or the receptor (lesser degree of emotionality conveyed when swearing in an LX), then what is the point of swearing in an LX at all? Can a communicative act which does not act at its highest performance (either for self-expression or for communication of emotions) be still considered as useful?

Although having achieved significant and meaningful results and examined a different perspective in the study of S-T words, this dissertation has also faced some limitations. Firstly, the experiment used could be considered as artificial or unnatural. Language is seen as emotion when used in an emotional context and in this case the speech samples were done inside a private room with no more context that the instructions given to the participants. Consequently, there was no true anger from them, which might have caused a lesser degree of offensiveness in their words, as it could be said that they were pretending a certain emotion imposed on them. Yet, despite the experiment could have been perceived as unnatural for all participants, the difference in offensiveness between L1 and LX users could be appreciated by the L1 listeners. This might have compensated for this limitation, as it shows that even in an unnatural setting L1 users are perceived as more offensive. Secondly, important aspects of communication, such as body language, were ignored and instead the focus was on the voices and the prosodic features of it. Paralinguistic features of swearing were disregarded because speech samples instead of video recordings were made due to the desire to preserve the anonymity of the participants. Anyway, although focusing solely on the linguistic features of swearing could be a good criticism, it is also worth to remember that swearing also occurs in contexts such as phone conversations, in which body language is also lost and

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cursing is still regarded as offensive. Thirdly, the results of this study were obtained from a sample population between 20-35 years old, which means that having a wider age sample could imply variations in the results. Fourthly, it is important to keep in mind that, to the researcher’s knowledge, this is the first study that is looking at the emotional force of S-T words from this perspective. Until now studies had solely looked at emotionality (self)perception from the speaker’s perspective and no investigations had been conducted on the receptor’s perception. Consequently, more studies are needed before generalisable conclusions can be drawn, which leads to possible future lines of investigation.

It would be interesting to research if incorporating body language to the swearing acts would modify the results obtained. Additionally, gender differences, that is, looking if L1 and LX female and male speech samples would show gender as affecting the offensiveness ratings. Previous studies on self-perception have identified gender differences between women and men, but are these differences still present when dealing with emotion perception from a receptor’s perspective? Moreover, studies replicating this thesis using other languages, such as English, could be carried out. Finally, and most interesting, having L1 and LX participants rating the swearing acts could be useful. This way, it could be observed if LX participants perceive swearing acts by L1 and LX users with the same intensity or not.

This study has proven that, at least within this research frame, L1 users seem to be perceived by L1 speakers as more offensive than LX users when swearing. Furthermore, proficiency has been found to be a factor that positively influences offensiveness perception, although high proficient users' swearing seems still to differ significantly from L1 users'. The outcome of this work raises questions about the utility of swearing in an LX not only from a self-expression perspective but now also from a communicative perspective and offers a new perspective into the study of the emotional force of swearwords.

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5. Conclusion

Previous literature in the field of S-T words dealt only with (self)perception of emotional force of S-T words in the L1 and LX of bi/multilingual speakers. However, to the researcher’s knowledge, no research had been done on finding if the swearing of L1 and LX users had a different emotional force for L1 users of the target language as receptors. Consequently, this thesis aimed at looking into this unresearched perspective. Namely, there were to main research questions: (1) if there was any difference in terms of offensiveness in the swearing of L1 and LX users and (2) if proficiency level affected offensiveness of LX users’ swearing, and if so, if there was still a difference between the LXU and the L1 users. This investigation provided meaningful and significant results for both research questions.

On the one hand, L1 users’ swearing was perceived as more offensive than the one of LX users by L1 speakers of Spanish. Until now it had been proven that the L1 is generally more emotional than the LX. Nevertheless, the results of this thesis point towards the fact that this lesser emotional perception of the LX results as well in a lesser emotional force conveyed. In other words, not only do the LX users perceive their swearing in the LX as emotionally weaker but the L1 speakers of the target language, in this case Spanish, also interpret this communicative act of swearing by LX users as less offensive. It is yet unknown if these results could change when dealing with another LX different from Spanish, or if adding the dimension of paralinguistic features of swearing, such as body language, could also alter the outcomes obtain in the current study.

On the other hand, proficiency, together with naturalistic or mixed learning experience and frequent use of the LX, were good indicators of offensiveness perception. In other words, the more proficient the LX users were, combined with naturalistic or mixed learning experience and frequent exposure to the LX, the more offensive their swearing was for L1 speakers of Spanish. However, even the higher rated swearing of LXU was perceived as less offensive than the swearing of the L1 users. These results were in accordance with the expectations of this dissertation based on previous literature on the emotionality of S-T words in bi/multilinguals. In this study, despite the high proficiency of the LXU, receptor’s perception of emotional force of the swearing of LX users and L1 users differed. The most interesting point from this finding is that it seems to “deviate” from previous studies that claimed equal or similar emotion (self)perception.

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of S-T words between L1 and very high proficient LX users, or between the L1 and LX of bi/multilinguals. This “divergence” from previous investigations could be caused by the fact that (self)perception of emotionality in LX users and receptor’s perception of the emotional force of LX users’ swearing might work differently. Consequently, high proficiency levels might play an equating role in (self)perception of swearing in an L1 or LX, but in the case of receptor’s perception, it might not be able to place emotionality in both languages at the same level.

This research has demonstrated that when swearing in an LX, LX users do not achieve the same emotional force as L1 users, at least from an L1 speaker’s perception. Therefore, the utility of swearing in an LX has now been questioned from a communicative act perspective. Swearing is inherent to every language. However, if swearing in an LX results in a less effective communicative act, then one of the purposes of swearing might be lost when regarding it as a vehicle to communicate or express emotions to interlocutors. It is now the time for LX users to reconsider the benefits of swearing in an LX, as previous investigations reported a weaker emotional (self)perception of swearing in an LX and this current study has presented the receptor’s perception of LX swearing also as weaker. To look deepener into this matter, more research on the emotionality conveyed by the LX user’s use of S-T words from a receptor’s perspective will be needed.

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Son of a bitch or hijo de puta?

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https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/agreeable


Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi. (2006). When is a first language more emotional? Psychophysiological evidence from bilingual speakers. ... and *Bilingualism*, (1), 257–283. https://doi.org/10.1.1.69.5830


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Son of a bitch or hijo de puta?


Appendices

Appendix 1: list of S-T/I for Questionnaire A

Puta
Hijo/a de Puta
Hijo/a de la gran puta
Cabrón/cabrona
Imbécil
Gilipollas
Tonto/a
Me cago en tus muertos
Estúpido/a
Retrasado/a
Cómeme la polla
Mierdaseca
Tus muertos a caballo
Capullo/a
Soplagaitas
Malparido
Gilipuertas
Me cago en tu puta madre
Calientapollas
Huevón/huevona
Paquete
Tocapelotas
Panoli
Un cipote
Una polla
Cojones
Mierda

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Joder
Coño
Caraculo
Inútil
Tu puta madre
Me cago en la puta
Me cago en la puta madre que te parió
Subnormal

Appendix 2: S-T/I organised according to offensiveness ratings from Questionnaire A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low offensive SW/I</th>
<th>Medium offensive SW/I</th>
<th>High offensive SW/I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imbécil</td>
<td>Cabrón/cabrona</td>
<td>Me cago en tu puta madre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonto/a</td>
<td>Gilipollas</td>
<td>Calientapollas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estúpido/a</td>
<td>Retrasado/a</td>
<td>Tu puta madre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mierdaseca</td>
<td>Subnormal</td>
<td>Cómeme la polla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tus muertos a caballo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Me cago en la puta madre que te parió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capullo/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Puta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soplagaitas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hijo de la gran puta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malparido</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hijo de puta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilipuertas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Me cago en tus muertos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huevón/huevona</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paquete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tocapelotas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panoli</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un cipote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Una polla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cojones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mierda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coño</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 3: list of S-T/I used for the SS recordings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijo de puta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me cago en tus muertos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijo de la gran puta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me cago en la puta madre que te parió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cómeme la polla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu puta madre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calientapollas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me cago en tu puta madre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 4: Results of the pre-Cronbach’s alpha to test GR2 participants pleasantness.

Table 4. Cronbach’s alpha between all participants upon results of Questionnaire B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>raw α</th>
<th>r.drop α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU user</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU user</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL user</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL user</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Overall raw α = 0.81

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Appendix 5: Results of the post Cronbach’s alpha test to test correlation between GR2 participants.

Table 5. Cronbach’s alpha between all participants upon results of Questionnaire C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>raw α</th>
<th>r.drop α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU user</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU user</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL user</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL user</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Overall raw α = 0.89

Table 6. Cronbach’s alpha between all L1 upon results of Questionnaire C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>raw α</th>
<th>r.drop α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LXU user</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU user</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL user</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL user</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Overall raw α = 0.88

Table 7. Cronbach’s alpha between all L1 upon results of Questionnaire C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>raw α</th>
<th>r.drop α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 user</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Overall raw α = 0.78

Appendix 6: Descriptive statistics for Q1 and Q2.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics for Q1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 users</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LX users</td>
<td>11.54</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 Son of a bitch or hijo de puta?
Table 9. Descriptive statistics for Q2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 users</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU users</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL users</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-0.82</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 7: Shapiro-Wilk test results for Q1 and Q2.

Table 10. Shapiro-Wilk test results for Q1.

Shapiro-Wilk test for normality of distribution regarding Q1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>W</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 users</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.96**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LX users</td>
<td>11.54</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.97**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Table 11. Shapiro-Wilk test results for Q2.

Shapiro-Wilk test for normality of distribution regarding Q2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>W</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 users</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.96**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXU users</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.95**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXL users</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.93**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

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52 Son of a bitch or hijo de puta?