Effects of vocals in advertising songs
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Background
• Sung advertising messages are supposed to transport emotions and associations (Allan, 2006).
• Yet it is not clear which factors of the vocals affect the listeners the most.
• Deeper voices are usually associated with credibility, reliability and attractiveness while higher voices are associated with the opposite (Chattopadhyay et al., 2003).
• Following this finding, a male voice should lead to a higher purchase intention than a female voice.
• In many European countries advertising songs are sung in English, even though it is not the recipients’ native language (Endmark AG, 2013). In a country like Germany English messages have a certain appeal, but are sometimes not comprehended by everyone.
• This means, the language of the vocals could have an impact on the perception of the spot and eventually on a potential purchase behavior.

Aims
RQ1: Do the language of the advertising song’s lyrics or the sex of the singer affect the recipient’s appraisal of the advertised product?
RQ2: Do the language of the advertising song’s lyrics or the sex of the singer affect the recipient’s recall of the product?
RQ3: Do the language of the advertising song’s lyrics or the sex of the singer affect the recipient’s purchase intention of the product?

Method
• Laboratory experiment with a 2x2 between-subject design
• 124 German participants (M = 21.6 years old, SD = 4.2; 65% female).
• Procedure: The participants watched a TV commercial segment with seven spots under controlled conditions. In the middle of the segment a spot of an unknown and comparably neutral product (mineral water) was manipulated. The spot was edited with four different soundtracks. We produced an advertising song that was sung two times by a female and two times by a male singer in English and German, see figure 1. After watching the commercials the participants were asked to complete a standardized questionnaire.
• Measurement:
  ⇒ Appraisal (five-point Likert scales, 4 items, α = .87)
  ⇒ Brand recall (unaided recall; only correctly recalled brand names were counted)
  ⇒ Purchase intention (five-point Likert scales, 4 items, α = .84)

Results
RQ1: Language and the sex of the voice have significant effects on the appraisal of the spot. Advertising songs that were sung in German (F(1,120) = 23.89, p < .01) and by a male singer (F(1,120) = 6.60, p < .05) were received as more enjoyable (see figure 2). The interaction effect is significant (see figure 2); F(1,120) = 4.04, p < .05.
RQ2: When German vocals were used the participants recalled the brand name (43% correct recall) significantly better in comparison with English lyrics (23% correct recall, F(1,120) = 5.75, p < .05). The singer’s sex had no significant effect on the participants’ brand recall. The interaction effect is not significant (see figure 3); F(1,120) = 1.94, p = .17.
RQ3: Neither the sex of the singer, nor the language of the song influenced the purchase intention significantly.

Conclusion
• Vocals sung by a male singer are perceived as more enjoyable than female vocals.
• This could be explained by the prevalence of male speakers and singers in German commercials. It seems that a male voice is more suitable for commercials, but we need more mediating factors for the explanation of this result.
• German lyrics lead to a better recall of the brand name. This result could be explained by the familiarity with the language: The message is received, decoded and processed more easily in the native language and therefore more likely activates cognitive scripts and links which eventually lead to a better recall.