"Is there a difference between men's and women's perception of intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions regarding dating profile owners based on whether their bio-texts contain errors or not?"

Bachelor's thesis (SCRSEM2 V)

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Abstract

The article presents an experimental study investigating men's and women's perception of intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions towards online dating profile owners, based on whether their bio-texts contain errors or not. The study also researches possible differences between the two genders' evaluations. The purpose of the study was to gain more insight on the topic of men's and women's perceptions of correct/incorrect language use, as well as to find out if the two genders differ in their evaluations of perceived attractiveness and dating intentions. In this 2 (error/no error) x 2 (male/female) between-subjects design experiment, an online questionnaire was created where the participants were presented with three dating profiles of potential matches of theirs (either with or without errors), whom they then evaluated. The results showed that the presence of errors in dating profile owners' bio texts has a negative effect on how intelligent the writer is perceived by males, as well as by females. However, the errors did not affect neither the perceived attractiveness nor the perceived dating intentions of men and women. A difference between men and women is observed in the finding that men overall evaluated the dating profiles as more attractive than women, and were more likely to date. The results suggest that presence of errors lead to lower evaluations of the writer's intelligence, but it does not affect others' perceived attractiveness and dating intentions towards the writer.

Introduction

Language errors and their influence on reader evaluation of the writer has been a recurring topic of research, especially in the online environment where people nowadays are looking not only for information but also for jobs. Previous findings on the topic suggest that the presence of errors leads to the writer being considered less employable (Scott et.al., 2014). Nowadays, people use the internet to acquaint with others and make new friends or even pursue a romantic relationship. Dating apps have lately been introduced in order to make it easier for new contact-seekers to connect with each other and get to know potential partners (Birnholtz et al., 2014). It has been found that the presence of grammatical/spelling errors in dating profiles or direct messages is sometimes seen as problematic (Van der Zanden et. al., 2020). These errors seem to lead to the writer being evaluated not only as less intelligent and educated, but also less attractive (Van der Zanden et. al., 2020). This implies the importance of correct grammar usage in the online dating world. However, the presence of a profile

picture has always made the biggest impact on the overall evaluation of the dating profile owner, shifting the focus away from the presence of errors (Van der Zanden et. al., 2020). This opened an opportunity to investigate how readers would evaluate dating profile owners based solely on their bio-texts, without being exposed to the writers' pictures. When it comes to existing findings with regards to discrepancies between men's and women's language use and reactions, men tend to be more direct and succinct, whereas women prefer to be more elaborate and cautious in their expressions (Zahn, 1989). As differences between men's and women's evaluations of language errors, especially in the online dating context, had not been researched before, this study fills in a research gap by investigating this topic. The purpose of the study is to get more insight into language error evaluations as well as to find if men and women differ in their perception of errors and the influence errors have on their perceived intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions with regards to potential partners.

Theoretical framework

Online dating applications have become increasingly widespread in the last years and an ever more accepted way to engage in social, romantic or sexual encounters (Birnholtz et al., 2014). In fact, nowadays such systems play a crucial role in millions of people's social life (Fiore et al., 2017). In order to display their identity and character on dating platforms, men and women tend to upload photos of themselves, and a short text fragment often accompanied by emoticons and symbols. Previous research has shown that both men and women consider that these factors affect how other users perceive them, as well as how they perceive others. The strongest factor used to judge perceived attractiveness of the owner is suggested to be the photographs in their dating profile (Chamourian, 2017). However, studies have demonstrated that the text components are also a significant predictor of the writer's dating profile attractiveness (Fiore et al., 2017). The use of language helps dating app users to communicate not only their personality traits but also their intentions i.e., what relations they are looking for (Birnholtz et al., 2014). Past findings observe reliable differences between the use of language of serious-relationship seekers and people looking for casual relations (Van der Zanden et. al., 2019). Thus, linguistic traces play an important role in the likelihood of relationship initiation (Huang & Hancock, 2021). Furthermore, it is suggested that the use of correct grammar and spelling in a bio-text is also taken into account in the profile visitor's evaluation of the account's owner, where grammatical/spelling errors might be a reason for rejection by some people (Chamourian, 2017). In the context of university student essays, it was found that, irrespective of whether a spell-checker was used in the text production or not, the writer is rated as more likely to be responsible for potential errors in the text (Figuierdo & Varnhagen, 2005). Overall, findings show that spelling errors have an effect on readers' perception of the author's abilities (Figuierdo & Varnhagen, 2005). Planken, van Meurs, and Maria (2019) argue that it is not actual errors that have a negative effect on people's evaluation of a writer, but perceived errors. In this study it was shown that non-teacher judges have their own perception of what is correct and what is not, based on which they form an impression on how trustworthy, friendly or competent the author is (Planken, van Meurs, & Maria, 2019).

Overall, a large number of the extant scientific studies show results implying that not only perceived intelligence and competence but also perceived attractiveness and dating intention are indeed to a great extent influenced by error/no-error language use (Van der Zanden et. al., 2020). Although there is research conducted on the topic of dating applications and perception of writers based on their spelling/grammatical knowledge, differences between men's and women's perception and evaluation of owners of dating profiles based on their (in)correctly written bio-texts still have not been researched. Earlier research on discrepancies between men's and women's behavior in online dating correspond to the stereotypical claim that the two genders actually differ in their key criteria for a partner, where men predominantly take into account women's physical attractiveness while women mostly pay attention to the socio-economic status of a man (Abramova et. al., 2016). The findings of the study by Abramova et. al. (2016), make it possible to infer that the two genders might also differ with regards to other factors when it comes to online dating, such as their evaluations of language errors and perceptions of attractiveness and dating intentions. This leaves an opportunity for further research on the topic. Research by Prokosh et. al (2009) found that women tend to find more intelligent men appealing as this infers a higher social and material status but there is no information on men's perception of women's attractiveness and their dating intentions towards women, based on women's (i)literacy. The research article by Abramova et. al. (2016), on the other hand, reports on the growing independence of women and their wish for gender equality in present days, which suggests that women do not feel that men are the ones more responsible for providing the family with a high economic status anymore. The implication of this finding is that it is possible that women nowadays do not put that much importance on whether their potential partner uses correct written language.

When it comes to previously researched differences between men and women with regards to their language use and abilities, it was found that females outperformed males when it comes to foreign language knowledge (Putrevu, 2001). Male and female participants' evaluative reactions to men's and women's language use showed higher ratings of the dynamism of men in comparison to women but higher ratings of women's aesthetic quality of speaking. Moreover, it was consistently supported by several studies that women use more formal and grammatically correct language (Zahn, 1989). However, differences between men's and women's evaluations of correct/incorrect language have still not been researched.

The research gap regarding potential discrepancies between males and females' error perception and the contradictory evidence in existing literature when it comes to men's and women's partner preferences (for instance, the fact that men are more focused on physical attractiveness, while women pay more attention to the material status of a potential partner (Abramova et. al., 2016)), lay the foundation for further investigation on men's and women's perception and evaluation of potential partners in the online dating environment based on correct/incorrect use of language. This is why the current study's goal is to come to findings with regards to the following research question, concerning men and women:

"Is there a difference between men's and women's perception of intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions regarding dating profile owners based on whether their bio-texts contain errors or not?"

It is relevant to conduct a study answering the research question proposed as it would contribute to the research observing differences between men and women overall, as well as more specifically in their criteria for choosing a partner and their perceptions of correct/incorrect language use. It is already known that there are differences between the two genders when it comes to their general use of language in the offline context where women use more tentative and emotionally expressive language whereas men are more dominant, humorous and straight to the point while speaking (Zahn, 1989). Nowadays, however, it is becoming an ever more appealing topic of investigation to look for dissimilarities between men and women in the online world as well (Abramova et. al., 2016). This is another reason why this proposed study is important to be performed. Moreover, conducting this research will not only contribute to the research on the topic of dating applications and evaluations of language use but also potentially boost male and female users' positive self-presentation on dating applications as it would give more insight into what potential matches find (un)attractive.

Methodology

The research method chosen for this proposed study was an experiment. The independent variables in this study are dating profile bio-texts (errors or no errors) and gender (male or female). The manipulation of this independent variables would show if there is an effect on the dependent variables, which are men's and women's perceptions of intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions regarding dating profile owners based on their bio-texts (Figure 1).



independent variables

dependent variables

Materials

The independent variables are presence/absence of errors in dating profile bio texts and male/female gender of the participants. In order to operationalize the first independent variable, six bio-texts were used – three of women's dating profiles and three of men's dating profiles. Each of these texts had two versions – one with errors and one written completely correctly. The following cases are classified as errors – code-switching, grammatical errors, spelling errors and non-homophones (misspellings that are orthographically incorrect but phonologically correct (Figueredo & Varhangen, 2005), homophones (in this case only heterographs are considered – words with different spellings that are pronounced the same way

(Figueredo & Varhangen, 2005)), vocabulary errors (words used incorrectly in a given context i.e., ones that do not communicate the intended meaning). These are the error guidelines used to find errors in the bio-texts. The dating profiles and the bio-texts were drawn from a dataset from the dating website "OkCupid", containing 59,946 profiles collected between 2012 and 2015. The profiles in the dataset are of English-Spanish bilinguals living in the US. The profiles were filtered based on 31 user characteristics including 10 free response essays. In these essays the profile owners answered questions about their self-summary, what they are doing with their life, what they are good at, the first thing people notice about them, favorite books, movies, TV, food, six things they could never do without, what they spend a lot of time thinking about, what they do on a typical Friday night, the most private thing they are willing to admit and conditions on which one should message them. The data was anonymized and permission that it can be made publicly available was given by the profile owners before the publication. The six texts that were used for the experiment were chosen after the annotation of all texts in the database with the use of the mentioned error guidelines. The three most relevant bio-texts of male writers and the three most relevant bio-text of female writers were ones that contain explicit errors that a reader would more easily recognize. As mentioned, the dating profiles and the bio-texts were drawn from a real-world data. That is to say, the errors in the bio-text are naturally occurring, which is an innovative aspect of the current research as in other previous studies the researchers have inserted errors artificially. The frequency of errors was around one per sentence but it varies for the different profiles After having chosen the six profiles with errors, the errors of all texts were corrected and half the male participants were exposed to the three correct texts of potential matches whereas the other half were exposed to the initial version of the three texts (with errors). In the same manner, half of the female participants were presented with the three correct versions of potential matches' bio texts while the other half - were exposed to the version with errors. Examples of the error version and correct version of one of the three male and one of the three female dating profiles bio-texts used in the experiment are provided in Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 (the rest of the profiles are included in the appendix):

Figure 2: Male profile 1 without errors



My self story:

Well, my name is NAME. I barely turned 21 this past November. I don't drink or smoke. I like to go out and have fun, without getting into trouble. I love meeting new people, especially from different ethnicities. I want to learn how to speak French. I like going to the movies, to the lake swimming and my favorite fun thing to do is going on rides, like the roller coaster and stuff like that, and I like to laugh and be in love with someone.

Favorite books, movie, TV, food:

Well, I don't read books, but my favorite movies are what happens in Vegas, the time traveler's wife, the hangover, big daddy, mean girls and definitely maybe, and music I like is hip hop, rap, pop, r&b, disco and oldies, and my favorite food is quesadillas and cocktail shrimp.

The 6 things I could never do without:

Family, friends, love, music, car and workouts except during winter 'cause if it is really cold I just wanna be under my blankie lol.

I spend a lot of time thinking about:

My future and the people who surround me.

On a typical Friday night I am:

Working or hanging with my friends.



Figure 3: Male profile 1 with errors



Figure 4: Female profile 1 without errors



Figure 5: Female profile 1 with errors



Name: NAME Location: San Francisco 9 miles away Zodiac sign: Leo Gender: female Relationship status: single

My self story:

Hill My name is NAME and I'm from PLACE ;). I came to San Francisco a few months ago to try to get some studies here (business). Is my first time here and I love this city and all that I've visited in this country. I love to meet people, is the reason why I'm here. I'm a bit shy on the begging until I know you more. I'm a happy person and very smiling. I love sense of humor. I'm honest (always). I love sports, my best one is swimming (hope to try in the ocean to Alcatraz some day). I like help people (if you have the opportunity to help someone and you do not then you're wasting your life). I'm curious without badness, sometimes a little naive (but learning). I love to cravel and see new places, that ever I saw before.

What I'm doing with my life:

Is writing a book (the most important thing to me in this moment), traveling all I can, learning languages and getting lot of experiences!

The first thing people notice about me:

Is my smile. I'm a really happy person and I'm all the time smiling "A smile means a lot. It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who offer it. Lasts a second but the memory sometimes is never deleted" and my eyes I guess.

The 6 things I could never do without:

Friends, family, love, patience, happiness, humor, water, air, sun... 6 is not enough...

On a typical Friday night I am:

With my friends drinking something, maybe at a party (not very often), at the cinema, at home lying (watching tv/film and relax), travelling or writing.



Subjects

There was a total of 131 people who took part in the experiment. They were of Dutch (59.5%), American (0.8%), British (3.1%), Spanish (0.8%), German (11.5%), Bulgarian, Romanian, Polish, Argentinian, Finnish and Luxembourgish nationalities (the last six were under the section "other, namely:" and made up 24.4% of all participants) and hence different L1s - 59.5% of the participants indicated Dutch as their native language, 4.6% indicated English as their native language, 10.7% had German as their native tongue, 1.5% were native speakers of Spanish, and 23.7% answered with the "other, namely:" answer option, so this percentage most probably includes the Bulgarian, Romanian, Polish and Finnish participants. A Chi-square analysis showed that the participants' nationalities were distributed equally (χ^2 (5) = 3.88, p = .567). In a similar manner, a Chi-square showed that they were equally distributed with regards to mother tongue as well ($\gamma 2$ (4) = 3.05, p = .550). The participants were selected via snowball sampling. They were between 18 and 62 years old (M = 24.63, SD = 9.28). A one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference in age between the participants in the two error conditions (F(1, 129) < 1). The female participants were 81 (61.8%) and the male were 50 (38.2%). A Chi-square analysis showed a significant difference in the gender distribution across the two error conditions ($\chi 2$ (1) = 4.53, p = .033). When it comes to their educational level, 11.5% of the participants had already obtained/ were studying for a Master's degree, 58% had already obtained/were studying for a Bachelor's degree, 23.7% had already finished/were soon going to finish high school, and 6.8% choose the "other" answer option. A Chi-square showed that there was no significant relation between the error condition and the participants' education level (χ^2 (6) = 5.85, p = .441). Concerning their previous experience with dating applications, 46.6% of all participants indicated they had never used a dating platform before, while 53.4% already had experience. A Chi-square analysis showed that experienced/inexperienced participants were equally distributed ($\chi^2(1) = .126, p = .722$). When it comes to their preferences for a male/female dating profile, 62.6% of the participants showed a preference for a male profile, while 37.4% preferred to see a female profile. A Chi-square analysis showed that preferences for a male/female was not equally distributed (χ^2 (1) = 7.27, p = .007). Concerning the error condition, a Chi-square test did not show a significant relationship between errors and gender ($\gamma 2$ (1) = 0.56, p = .439). Concerning the participants' English language proficiency, a one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference in the participants' English language proficiency in the two error conditions (F(3, 127) < 1) (M = 5.95, SD = 1.20).

Design

The experiment has a 2 (error condition: errors/no errors) x 2 (participant gender: male/female) between-subjects design. Both the male and the female participants were divided into two groups each and were exposed to either three correct bio-texts, written by three dating profile owners, or three texts containing errors. That is to say, it was intended that half of the males participating in the experiment would be presented with the correct versions of three potential matches' bio- texts, while the other half would be exposed to the same texts with errors. In the same manner it was planned that half of the female participants would see the correct versions of three potential matches' bio-texts. However, this did not turn out to be the case as more females participated in the study and the distribution among the genders was not equal (81 females and 50 males). Each participant, male and female, was presented with or without errors. Table 1 shows the distribution of male and female participants across the error/no error conditions.

Condition		Male	Female	Total	
	Error	30	43	73	
	No error	20	38	58	
	Total	50	81	131	

Table 1: Distribution of male and female participants across the error/no error conditions

Instruments

As previously mentioned, the dependent variables of the study are the perception of intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions of the participants with respect to the owners of the dating profiles, based on whether their bio-text contains errors or not. The instrument used in the experiment was an online questionnaire with several items to measure the dependent variables. First of all, questions with regards to the intelligence of the writer were asked. After that, the participants answered questions with regards to how attractive they found the owner of the dating profile and how likely it is that they would date him/her. This would make it clear whether men and women consider literacy (implying intelligence) an important factor affecting their perceived attractiveness and dating intentions towards the dating profile owner, whose

bio-text they read. The questions measuring perceived intelligence consisted of the following statements: "I think the writer is intelligent", "I think the writer is competent", "I think the writer is skilled". The statements are inspired by the study conducted by Vignovic & Thompson (2010). The questions measuring perceived attractiveness consisted of the following statements: "I think this person is pleasant to spend time with", "I think that I could be friends with this person", "I do not feel attracted to this person" (reverse coded), "I would not want to go out with this person" (reverse coded). The questions measuring perceived dating intentions consisted of the following statements: "I do not need to meet this person in real life" (reverse coded), "I would like to chat with this person", "I would like to know more about this person". The statements for perceived attractiveness and dating intentions are inspired by research conducted by Van der Zanden et. al. (2020). The participants were also asked about their gender (the exact question stated "What is your gender" and the answer options were "Male", "Female", "Non-binary" and "Prefer not to share"); age (the exact question stated "What is your age" and there was a text box for the answer underneath); sexual orientation (the exact question stated "In real life, would you prefer to see a dating profile of:" and the answer options were "A woman", "A man", "I don't mind"); education level (the exact question stated "What is your highest current or completed level of education?" and the answer options were "primary school", "high school", "bachelor's degree", "master's degree", "professional degree/apprenticeship", "doctoral degree" and "other: namely" with a text box for the answer underneath); nationality (the exact question stated "What is your nationality?" and the answer options were "Dutch", "American", "British", "Spanish", "German" and "Other, namely:" with a text box underneath); native language (the exact question stated "What is your mother tongue?" and the answer options were "Dutch", "English", "German", "Spanish" and "other: namely" with a text box for the answer underneath); and English language proficiency. English language proficiency was measured by four items: "English reading skills", "English writing skills", "English listening skills" and "English speaking skills". Moreover, they were asked whether they had experience with dating applications (the exact question stated "Have you used a dating platform before?" and the answer options were "Yes" and "No". The participants' answers on all questions were measured on 7-point Likert scales (with 1 stating complete agreement and 7 indicating complete disagreement with the statement). As the dependent variables were measured by several items, the reliability of the scale was measured with the use of Cronbach's alpha.

The reliability of perceived intelligence, comprising three items, was acceptable: α = .77'. Consequently, the mean of all three items was used to calculate the compound variable 'PERC_INTELL_TOTAL' which was used in the further analyses.

The reliability of perceived attractiveness, comprising four items, was acceptable: α =.798'. Consequently, the mean of all four items was used to calculate the compound variable 'PERC_ATTRACT_TOTAL' which was used in the further analyses.

The reliability of perceived dating intentions, comprising three items, was acceptable: α =.79'. Consequently, the mean of all three items was used to calculate the compound variable 'PERC_DATING_TOTAL' which was used in the further analyses.

Procedure

This research study has been approved by the Ethics Assessment Committee Humanities of Radboud University (ETC-GW dossier 2022-2166). In order to recruit the subjects for the experiment, snowball sampling was used where already contacted participants were asked to spread the word to family members, friends and acquaintances and encourage them to voluntarily participate in the study as well. The experiment was conducted via an online questionnaire in Qualtrics that the participants filled in, after having been exposed to either the correct versions of the male/female dating profiles owners' bio-text or the version that contains errors. Before the beginning of the questionnaire, there was a consent form with information about the research, the course of the experiment and the potential risks and discomfort. After that, the first questions asked about the age, gender and sexual orientation of the participants. It should be noted that there was a problem with the sexual orientation question because the participants who answered with "I don't mind" could not see any picture of a profile. However, there was no problem when they chose a preference for a male/female dating profile and a photo appeared. Then, in the participants' answers of the further questions of the questionnaire, they would rate how they evaluate the three bio-text owners' intelligence, attractiveness and their dating intentions towards them, based on the text they read. After that the participants were asked whether they found language errors in dating profile 1, 2 or 3, as well as about their highest current or completed level of education and if they have used a dating profile before. Moreover, the participants also indicated their nationality, native language and English language proficiency. There was not any financial reward or another incentive for participating in the experiment. The experiment was conducted on an individual basis, that is to say that the participants took part alone and not in a group. The research aim was not explicitly disclosed

to the subjects so that no biases would be evoked and the participants' feedback would be as authentic as possible. The participants only knew that the researchers were looking for their reactions and evaluations of dating profile descriptions. Each participant underwent the exact same procedure as the others and was not exactly debriefed upon the end of their participation in the study, just asked whether he/she found any language errors in the three dating profiles he/she saw. The whole experiment took no more than 15 minutes. The private data of the participants will remain confidential. The experiment was carried out online throughout the period between 12th and 17th of May 2022.

Statistical treatment

Three two-way univariate analyses of variance (repeated measures) with error/no error and male/female as between-subjects factors and dating profiles as a within-subjects factor were conducted to measure perceived intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions. These analyses were used to see if there is an effect of the error condition on males and females' perceived intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions of the writer, as well as to see if there are differences between the two genders' evaluations.

Results

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for participants' evaluations of the dating profile owners' perceived intelligence, perceived attractiveness and perceived dating intentions in function of error condition and participant gender.

Table 2: Number of valid cases, means and standard deviations for participants' evaluations of the dating profile owners' perceived intelligence, perceived attractiveness and perceived dating intentions in function of error condition and participant gender. (1 = very low, 7 = very high)

Condition	E	Error	No error		
	Male Female		Male	Female	
	n = 30	n = 43	n = 20	n = 38	
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M (SD)	

Perceived intelligence	4.15 (0.94)	4.00 (0.81)	4.64 (0.73)	4.57 (0.69)
Perceived attractiveness	4.07 (0.79)	3.52 (0.79)	4.50 (0.96)	3.75 (0.75)
Perceived dating intentions	3.87 (0.98)	3.56 (0.80)	4.61 (0.96)	3.71 (0.97)

A two-way ANOVA with error and participant gender as factors showed a significant main effect of errors on perceived intelligence (F(1, 123) = 4.65, p = .033). Authors of bio-texts containing errors (M = 4.06, SD = 0.86) were perceived less intelligent than authors of bio-texts without errors (M = 4.59, SD = 0.70) However, no significant difference was found between men and women with regards to their evaluations of perceived intelligence (F(1, 123) < 1). The two-way ANOVA did not show a significant interaction between errors and gender (F(1, 123) < 1, p = .365).

A two-way ANOVA with error and participant gender as factors did not show a significant main effect of errors on perceived attractiveness (F(1, 123) = 1.09, p = .298). However, there was a statistically significant difference between men and women in their evaluations of perceived attractiveness (F(1, 123) = 7.34. p = .008). Overall, men found the dating profile owners as more attractive (M = 4.24, SD = 0.87) than women (M = 3.63, SD = 0.78). The two-way ANOVA did not show a significant interaction between errors and gender (F(1, 123) < 1, p = .613).

A two-way ANOVA with error and participant gender as factors did not show a significant main effect of errors on perceived dating intentions (F(1, 123) = 2.43, p = .122). However, there was a statistically significant difference between men and women in their evaluations of perceived attractiveness (F(1, 123) = 7.34. p = .008). Overall, men found the dating profile owners as more attractive (M = 4.24, SD = 0.87) than women (M = 3.63, SD = 0.78). The two-way ANOVA did not show a significant interaction between errors and gender (F(1, 123) < 1, p = .339).

Conclusion and discussion

The current research's aim was to contribute to research in the field of language error evaluations in dating profiles by investigating if there a difference between men's and women's perception of intelligence, attractiveness and dating intentions regarding dating profile owners based on whether their bio-texts contain errors or not. The study's results have revealed that the presence of errors in dating profile owners' bio texts indeed has an effect on how intelligent the writer is perceived to be. These findings correspond to the ones from the research of Figuierdo & Varnhagen (2005), which showed that there was an effect of spelling errors on readers' perception of the writer's abilities. The findings of the study by Van der Zanden et al. (2020), according to which grammatical and spelling errors lead to the writer being evaluated as less intelligent and educated, are also corresponding with the ones of the present study. The same research by Van der Zanden et al. (2020) reported that errors seem to make the writer appear less attractive as well. Research by Chamourian (2017) also assumed that in the context of online dating platforms, errors might be a reason that the writer is rejected by some people. These findings, however, are not in correspondence with the results of the current research, which showed no significant effect of the presence of errors on neither the perceived attractiveness or the perceived dating intentions towards the dating profile owner. The differences between the findings of Van der Zanden et al. (2020) and the current study might be attributed to the fact that in one of the experiments reported of the former research, profile photos of the dating profile owners were included, what could be a possible reason for the different evaluations. Another reason for the discrepancies in the results could be the fact that the participants in the Van der Zanden et al. (2020) study were all Dutch whereas in the present study the participants come from a number of different countries. It could be the case that cultural differences play a role in the evaluations as well. According to Edwards & Fuchs (2019), Dutch people, for instance, are especially critical to errors and non-native accents of English.

This research has filled in a research gap by investigating for the first time if there are possible differences between men and women's perception and evaluation of owners of dating profiles, based on whether the profiles' bio-texts contain errors or not. The results of this study showed that when it comes to perceived intelligence, there was no significant difference between men and women's evaluations of the writer because both genders' evaluations of perceived intelligence of the writer decreased if the bio-text contained errors. This was also the case in the research by Van der Zanden et al. (2020), although this study did not make a distinction between the two genders. However, a significant difference between men and women was found when it comes to perceived attractiveness, where males evaluated the dating profiles as more attractive than females, irrespective of whether the profiles they saw contained errors or not. In the same manner, males' perceived dating intentions towards the dating profile owners of the bio-texts they saw were higher than females' dating intentions towards the profile

owners, which implies that men are more willing to date online than women and are less critical. This finding corresponds to the results of Buunk et al. (2002), which suggested that women set higher standards for their partner than men. However, for perceived dating intentions the results of both men and women's evaluations showed no effect of the presence of errors as well. In other words, coming back to answer the research question, there is indeed a difference between men and women when it comes to their perception of attractiveness and their dating intentions towards online dating profile owners but this difference is not based on whether the profiles' bio-text contain errors or not. It may be assumed, then, that these discrepancies are on one hand due to men's bigger willingness and courage to date online and on the other hand women's bigger risk takers than women, which quality of theirs may also play a role in the online dating context. This observed difference between men and women is an interesting finding, the reasons for which could be further investigated in future research, because it would give more in-depth insight into men and women's behavior in the world of online dating applications.

There are several limitations to this study. The first one is undoubtedly the fact that the number of male participants (50) was unequal to the number of female participants (81). Moreover, neither the males nor the females were completely equally distributed across the conditions (30 males were presented with the three bio-text with errors, while only 20 males were shown the three bio-text without errors; 43 females were presented with the three bio-text with errors, whereas 38 were shown the three bio-text without errors). In future research it would be preferable that the number of male and female participants is the same and that they are equally distributed across the different conditions. As the participants had many different nationalities, some of them were native speakers of English whereas others were not. In further research, it would be advisable to focus on one or two nationalities for more accurate results. It would be useful to look more closely into that because first of all, in the current study native speakers could have found more errors than non-native speakers and second of all, some nationalities may have been more critical towards errors than others. For instance, as previously mentioned, in previous research Dutch people were found to be more disapproving of errors (Edwards & Fuchs, 2019). When it comes to limitations of the research method, an online questionnaire may not be the best choice for research with no financial reward or other incentive for participation as it could have been the case that participants did not pay that much attention to the bio-texts. In future research it would be advantageous that a participation incentive is included if the researchers have enough available means. This would motivate the participants to be more observant and read the bio-texts more carefully and thus find more errors. Another limitation of the current study is that the participants evaluated three dating profiles, after which their evaluations for all profiles were grouped together. This might also have affected the interpretation of responses in the sense that participants could have perceived the three bio-texts' writers differently. Besides, the participants' evaluations of perceived attractiveness and dating intentions could have been affected not only by the presence/absence of errors but also by the content of the bio-text itself. This is why, in further research participants' evaluations of each bio-text should be investigated separately. A limitation of this study is also the fact that the participants who answered the sexual orientation question with "I don't mind" could not see any picture of a profile and thus take part in the experiment properly. In future research, it is advisable that the researchers ascertain that questionnaire is well-set and works as intended before publishing it.

The finding of the current study that showed no significant effect of errors on men and women's perceived attractiveness and dating intentions lays the foundation for further more indepth research investigating the reasons behind this result. For example, future studies could look at men's and women's perceived attractiveness of bio-text with a greater number of more easily-recognizable errors and see if in this case the results will be the same. Moreover, the outcome of this research that showed notable discrepancies between men and women's overall perceived attractiveness and dating intentions towards the dating profile owners is another opportunity for future studies researching men and women's willingness to date online and the motives for that.

Overall, by answering the research question the present study has contributed to the sphere of research investigating discrepancies between men and women and more specifically in their behavior in the online dating world. Moreover, the findings have provided more information about men and women's perception and evaluation of correct/incorrect language use. The findings of the experiment confirm the findings of previous research that language errors lead to lower evaluations of the writer's intelligence. Moreover, the results add new insights with regards to differences between men and women in their online dating behavior, namely that men overall are more willing to find owners of online dating profiles attractive and be willing to date them. This experiment has not only impacted scientific research but has societal relevance as well. By finding out that the presence of errors in a dating profile bio-text leads to the writer being evaluated as less intelligent, the study's results emphasize the importance of errorless use of written language. This indicates that people should pay more

attention to the grammatical/spelling correctness in their writing, which in turn would make them appear to others as more intelligent and positively evaluated. References:

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Appendix:

Analytical model

Figure 1: Analytical model



independent variables

dependent variables

All dating profiles in the different conditions

Figure 2: Male profile 1 without errors



Figure 3: Male profile 1 with errors



Well my name is NAME. I berly turn 21 this past November. I dont drink or smoke. I like to go out and have fun without getting into trouble. I love meeting new people, especially from diferent ethnicity. I wan to learn how to speak french. I like going to the movies, the lake swinming, and my fun favorite think to do is going on the rides like the roller coaster and stuft like that, and like to laugh and be in love to someone.

Well I dont read books but my favorite movies are What happens in Vegas, The time travelrs wife, The hungover, Big daddy, Mean girls and Definitely maybe, and music the I like is hio hop, rap, pop, r&b, disco, and oldies, and my favorite food is quesadillas and cocktail shrimp.

The 6 things I could never do without:

Family, friends, love, music, car and workout expet during winter cas is really cold I just wanna be

I spend a lot of time thinking about:

My future and the people who surround me.



Figure 4: Female profile 1 without errors



Figure 5: Female profile 1 with errors



Figure 6: Male profile 2 without errors



My self story:

What can I say? Well, I've been in SF for quite awhile. Since I've been living in this small city, I've been too busy working and going from place to place socializing with anyone, who want to share a real relationship with me. In other words, I am a person, who likes to meet people from everywhere and respect them to the fullest. I am very understandable person, who forgive people right away because we deserve a second chance. I believe that we all commit errors of any kind, as the days go by, so why shouldn't I forgive?

What I'm doing with my life:

l have an ordinary life. Working in a catering company and going to city college because l want to learn what l didn't do in my sweet years. l don't regret it dough! Back on track Mario :)

I'm really good at:

Jogging, riding bike, making friends, and sleeping. I am scare to swim in the ocean though, and deep swimming pools.

The things I could never do without:

Mom, because she has given me unconditional love. Friends, because they remind me that I am still alive. School, because there always is something to learn about. TV, because it keeps me away of my loneliness. Books, because I like to know the wisdom of others.

On a typical Friday night I am:

Go to the bar with friends or watch TV if I don't want to drink. Like today:)



Figure 7: Male profile 2 with errors



My self story:

What can I say? Well, I've been in SF for quite awhile. Since I've been living in this small city, I've been too busy working and going from place to place socializing with anyone who wants to share a real relationship with me. In other words, I am a person who likes to meet people from everywhere and respect them to the fullest. I am a very understandable person who forgives people right away because we deserve a second chance. I believe that we all commit errors of any kind, as the days go by, so why shouldn't I forgive?

What I'm doing with my life:

I have an ordinary life. Working in a catering company and going to city college because I want to learn what I didn't do in my sweet years. I don't regret it though! Back on track Mario :)

I'm really good at:

Jogging, riding bikes, making friends, and sleeping. I am scared to swim in the ocean though, and deep swimming pools.

The things I could never do without:

Mom, because she has given me unconditional love. Friends, because they remind me that I am still alive. School, because there always is something to learn about. TV, because it keeps me away from my loneliness. Books, because I like to know the wisdom of others.

On a typical Friday night I am:

Going to the bar with friends or watching TV if I don't want to drink, like today :)



Figure 8: Female profile 2 without errors



Name: NAME Location: San Francisco 10 miles away Zodiac sign: Cancer Gender: female Relationship status: single

My self story:

I grew up in a little town in PLACE, where it is full of drugs and guns, and people get killed everywhere. It wasn't like that when I was little though. I moved to the city to go to college, and when I finished I decided to come here to learn English. I lived in DC for 17 months, and have been here for about 6 months. I love food, especially unhealthy delicious food (I've got great genes :)), and also love beer.... I hate fancy places. I'm a very happy person. I love life!!!!!

What I'm doing with my life:

For now, I'm just enjoying my time in this amazing country :).

I'm really good at:

I'm very good at drinking beer, and very good at having hangovers. I'm a very good eater and I'm very good at talking.

On a typical Friday night I am:

Sometimes I just want to open a beer, get some peanuts and watch a good movie in bed.... Some other days I feel like putting on uncomfortable heels, spending some time (20 min) on my hair, and going out with my friends!



Figure 9: Female profile 2 with errors



Figure 10: Male profile 3 without errors



Figure 11: Male profile 3 with errors



Figure 12: Female profile 3 without errors



Figure 13: Female profile 3 with errors



My self story:

I'm from PLACE. Now I'm in a cultural interchange here. I like to meet new people, different cultures and I'm really open mind for new experiences. I'm a sincerely, spontaneous and passionate person. I was studying philosophy and I love it, but I needed to breath and broke my routine and I change my life completely for a little bit. I hate routines!!! Hom+sofa+cuddling watching movies when is raining, it will be great. I think is very cute take a walk under the rain too. The communication with other person about your feelings and be honest is the best way for a good relationship. I always give the 100% and I expect the same. I'm very laid-back. I'm looking for someone who knows to enjoy the life with music, dance, art, good conversations pleaseeee and who can feel passion (of course, good sex is important too). I always ready to learn new things, for that I love when a person can teach me something new. I spend my free time be volunteer in an animal rescue shelter. I totally enjoy the outdoors!!! Hiking, camping, going to the gym, doing yoga, swimming, rollerblading, reading, listening music, exploring new places, travelling, looking for live music, doing collages, sleeping and looking for new people here.

What I'm doing with my life:

Now I'm living in San Francisco with my new family. I came here to live new experiences and meet people. Walking at the beach. I really love it. I never can't live in a place far to the beach!!! Specially now I trying to live the moment!!! ;) I trying to finish this profile, but I'm always put something new!!!

The first thing people notice about me:

My beautiful smile, my accent and that I'm a very friendly and sociable person.

On a typical Friday night I am:

Sometimes I like going out and getting something to eat or have some drinks in a cool bar or trying something new. I also like to stay at home and just relax in the bathtub or watch movies. But if you propose something different and fun to me, I'm open!!!



Qualtrics online questionnaire:

Figure 14: Questionnaire



INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Evaluation of dating profiles

Introduction

We would like to invite you to participate in an online research study. Participation is voluntary. If you want to participate, we will ask you to sign a consent form. Before you decide whether or not to take part, we will give you information about the study. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If something is not clear, or you would like more information, please ask the researcher.

Outline and aim of the research study

In this research study we want to investigate reactions to and evaluations of dating profile descriptions. We want to know what you think about what people have written about themselves in the profile they have posted on a dating website. We for instance want to know if, based on the profile, you find the person attractive and if you would be interested in dating them.

What is going to happen to you?

In this research study you will read a short dating profile and evaluate it using a questionnaire with open questions and rating scales. We expect this to take at most 15 minutes. We ask you for the following personal information: gender, age, country of residence, nationality, native language, language proficiency.

Risks and discomfort

This research study carries certain risks/discomforts. We ask you to indicate your sexual orientation in order to match you with appropriate dating profiles. If you prefer not to disclose your personal information, please do not take part in this study.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research is voluntary. This means that you can withdraw your participation and consent at any time during the research, without giving a reason. Even up to two weeks after participating you can have your research data and personal data removed, by sending a request to iris.hendrickx@ru.nl.

What will happen to my data?

The research data we collect during this study will be used by scientists as part of data sets, articles and presentations. The anonymized research data is accessible to other scientists for a period of at least 10 years. Personal data collected remain confidential. When we share data with other researchers, these data cannot be traced back to you. All research and personal data are safely stored following the Radboud University guidelines.

More information?

If you have any questions or would like more information about the research study, please contact us using the contact information at the bottom of this letter.

Ethical assessment and complaints

This research study has been approved by the Ethics Assessment Committee Humanities of Radboud University (ETC-GW dossier 2022-2166).

Should you have any complaints regarding this research, please contact the researcher. You can also file a complaint with the secretary of the Ethics Assessment Committee Humanities of Radboud University (etc-gw@ru.nl)

For questions on data processing in this research, please contact: dataofficer@let.ru.nl

Consent form

If you want to participate in this research study, we ask you to agree to the information on the consent form that you can access by clicking on the following link:

https://radboudletteren.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1XQWPa4eJDVVRFY

With this consent, you declare that you have understood the information we have provided and consent to participate in this research study.

Kind regards,

Victoria Gillrath (victoria.gillrath@student.ru.nl) Marek Grandia (marek.grandia@ru.nl) Mihaela Popova Hilda Ouraaha Iulia Visan Julia Heijckers Klaas Kant Lisa Janssen Nina Florijn

I consent to participate

I do not consent to participate



How old are you?



What is your gender?

Female

Male

Non-binary

Prefer not to share

In real life, would you prefer to see a dating profile of:

A woman

A man

I don't mind



Here the participant was exposed to the first dating profile according to their sexual orientation and was randomly assigned to either the error or no error condition

Radboud University

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Neutral	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think the writer is intelligent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I think the writer is competent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I think the writer is skilled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Neutral	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think this person is pleasant to spend time with	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I think that I could be friends with this person	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I do not feel attracted to this person	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I would not want to go out with this person	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Neutral	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I do not need to meet this person in real life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I would like to chat with this person	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I would like to know more about this person	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The participant was exposed to the second profile (same condition) and was asked the same questions

The participant was exposed to the third profile (same condition) and was asked the same questions

Have you noticed any language errors in dating profile 1?

No

Yes

Have you noticed any language errors in dating profile 2?

No

Yes

Have you noticed any language errors in profile 3?

No

Yes

What is your highest current or completed level of education?

primary school
high school
bachelor's degree
master's degree
professional degree/ apprenticeship
doctoral degree
other: namely

Have you used a dating platform before?

No

Yes

What is your mother tongue?

Dutch		
English		
German		
Spanish		
other: namely		

What is your nationality?

Dutch
American
British
Spanish
German
Other, namely:

How would you evaluate your following skills?

	Poor						Good
English writing skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
English speaking skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
English reading skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
English listening skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
							\rightarrow
							_



We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Statement of own work

Student name: Mihaela Popova

Student number: s1033589

PLAGIARISM is the presentation by a student of an assignment or piece of work which has in fact been copied in whole or in part from another student's work, or from any other source (e.g. published books or periodicals or material from Internet sites), without due acknowledgement in the text. DECLARATION: a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (https://www.ru.nl/facultyofarts/stip/rules-guidelines/rules/fraud-plagiarism/) and with Article 16 "Fraud and plagiarism" in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's programme of Communication and Information Studies. b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my ownwords c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature:

Place and date: 12th of June, 2022