Visual and Textual Cues on Online Dating Profiles: What makes you Swipe?

How picture attractiveness and text quality influence the perceived attractiveness and date

intention of Tinder profile owners

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This thesis is the final part of the master's program in Communication and Information Sciences, Track Business Communication and Digital Media. In order to graduate and contribute to scientific research focused on the online dating world, a study has been conducted on to what extent a text without language errors, a text with language errors, or when no text was present in a Tinder profile influenced the perceived attractiveness and dating intention of the profile owner, and to what extent the attractiveness of the profile picture influenced this. Although writing a thesis was challenging for me, I learned a lot in terms of personal and academic skills. While working on this thesis, I was inspired and helped by several people, and without them, it would not have been possible to write this thesis. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to them.

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate to what extent a text with language errors, a text without language errors, or the absence of a text in a Tinder profile influences the perceived attractiveness and date intention of the profile owner, and to what extent the attractiveness of the profile picture influences this. Picture attractiveness was divided into profile owners with attractive and moderately attractive profile pictures. Text quality was subdivided into profile texts with no language errors, text with manipulated language errors, and no text in a profile. Data were collected from a total of 236 participants. A MANOVA showed that profile owners scored higher on perceived attractiveness and date intention when a text without language errors was present in the profile than a text with language errors or no text present. Furthermore, the first interaction effect showed that no matter how attractive the profile picture was, a text without language errors always scored higher than when there was no text or when there was a text with language errors in the profile. Moreover, the second interaction effect showed that a text with language errors has a more negative effect when a profile owner has an attractive picture than an average attractive picture. Thus, it has an added value for a profile owner to add a text in an online dating profile, provided it does not contain language errors, regardless of how attractive the profile picture is.

Keywords: online dating, picture attractiveness, text quality, perceived attraction, date intention, dating profiles.

Table of contents

1. Introduction

The popularity of online dating websites and applications has grown enormously (Bapna et al., 2016), making searching for a date or partner a fundamental human activity (Finkel et al., 2012). Online dating platforms, such as Tinder and Happn, offer the possibility to find a relationship. Profile owners can create a profile on which they present themselves. Based on the other person's dating profile, a user decides whether another person could be a potential date or partner. When a user is interested in another user, the 'swipe' function can be used. When both users have swiped right when seeing each other's profile, they can get in touch with each other through the chat function in the application.

The motivation of a user of an online dating application to swipe another user to the right depends on several factors. Research shows that both visual cues (i.e., profile pictures) and textual cues (i.e., profile owner's self-description in the biography) can be used to form an impression about the profile owner (Fiore et al., 2008). On online dating platforms, such as Tinder, profile owners can make conscious choices regarding what they want to show of themselves or not (Toma et al., 2008). Based on this self-presentation through pictures and or text, users can form a first impression about the profile owner (e.g., Bargh et al., 2002; McKenna et al., 2002).

Previous research has emphasized how cues on profile pictures affect overall impressions about a profile owner (e.g., Fiore et al., 2008; Van Der Heide et al., 2012; Walther et al., 2001). For example, it has been shown that the higher the physical attractiveness of the owner of the profile picture, the more positive the impressions of the profile owner are (e.g., Hitsch et al., 2010; Whitty, 2008). People are more interested in dating someone if they find them physically attractive (Wang et al., 2010). Moreover, research shows that physically attractive people are considered more sympathetic, humorous, intelligent, and socially skilled (Barber 1995; Feingold, 1992; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1993). Therefore, physically attractive people

are often seen as more desirable dating partners than less physically attractive people (Gangestad & Scheyd, 2005; Riggio et al., 1991; Singh, 2004).

Tinder's profiles have a picture-oriented design, leaving limited space for self-descriptions from profile owners (Ranzini et al., 2016). This design entails that not every profile owner utilizes the option to add a self-description, which results in both profiles with and without texts. When a profile owner does not use text on their profile, users have fewer cues at their disposal to form an impression about the profile owner. This lack of information could lead to negative associations. For example, a user might think that a profile owner does not want to put effort into creating a profile or does not take online dating seriously (Ellison et al., 2006). A user can obtain more information when a profile owner has added a self-description text to their Tinder profile. In situations where users cannot obtain a clear impression of a profile owner, they will look for more cues to reduce uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Hancock & Dunham, 2001), which can be provided through, for example, a self-description about the profile owner in a Tinder profile.

When a profile owner has a text present on Tinder, it can contain several cues, which could lead to both positive and negative impressions about the profile owner (Adaval et al., 2007; Mendelsohn & Hearts, 2008). Research by Brand and colleagues (2012), shows that users consider a text as positive and attractive when a socially competent self-description contains humor and intelligence. However, a text can also cause negative associations when it contains, for example, only high positive information about the profile owner (Wotipka & High, 2016). Furthermore, a low self-described description (Sritharan et al., 2009), too much information (Norton et al., 2007), or language errors (Queen & Boland, 2015; Kloet et al., 2003; Van der Zanden et al., 2020) also results in a less attractive impression about the profile owner.

When a user is not convinced of a profile owner based on the profile picture, a text can be added value to obtain more clear information (Ellison et al., 2006). This finding can be confirmed by Howe (1989), stating that a text takes on a more critical role when visual cues are unclear. Moreover, Fiore and colleagues (2008) states that both pictures and profile texts are strong predictors for a users' perceived attractiveness to the profile owner. However, a first impression is often based on the profile picture (Bar et al., 2006) and determines whether the profile owner is physically attractive (Hassin & Trope, 2000). If the information provided by a profile picture is ambiguous, for example, because the picture is moderately attractive, it can be suggested that the user will need more information (i.e., a self-description text) to be convinced of the profile owner. On the other hand, if the picture provides clear information, for example, the picture is attractive or unattractive, the user may not need a profile text to base their choice on. The research question guiding this study is, therefore:

RQ: To what extent do physical attractiveness, text presence, and negative textual cues (language errors) affect perceived attractiveness and dating intention, specifically when users are still ambiguous regarding the profile owner's appearance?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Online dating

Online dating has become enormously popular in the past years (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Online dating platforms, such as Tinder, can be used to search for a new partner, spouse, or short-term fling (Couch & Liamputtong, 2008). An explanation of online dating applications' growth could be due to dating sites' evolution to dating applications. These applications have several advantages over dating websites (Ranzini et al., 2016). First of all, users can communicate with others without meeting in real life (Finkel et al., 2012). Also, Tinder users do not have to be online simultaneously in order to use the application or to like or get to know each other (Bapna et al., 2016). Moreover, in a virtual world, users can

strategically choose what they present about themselves on their profiles. Profile owners have more autonomy about their self-presentation than when they meet someone in real-life (Gibbs et al., 2006). Also, on the application Tinder, users control how they present themselves; Tinder is a self-presentation platform (Ranzini et al., 2016).

In order to create an online dating profile, users need to go through several steps, such as, for instance, answering a few questions about their education, sexual preferences, demographic information, and interests. Also, users decide which and how many profile pictures to present on the profile. Furthermore, a self-description text can be added to the profile (Lenhart et al., 2007). The demographics, pictures, and any text are the necessary components of a profile. Moreover, Tinder users can expand their profile by linking Spotify, Facebook, or Instagram account to their Tinder account (David & Cambre, 2016).

Once the personal dating profile has been created, users can start using Tinder. Users can specify several search preferences in the application, such as age and sexual orientation. Moreover, Tinder is a location-based real-time app, which means that the user can set the maximum distance a match should be from the user. Based on GPS technology, the application then searches for possible matches. Based on the cues a profile owner shows (i.e., pictures or text), the user can choose to like the profile owner. When both users swipe right, there is a match. From that moment on, the users can contact each other through the chat function in the application.

2.2 Self-presentation and impression formation

Self-presentation is a process in which individuals present information about themselves to others (Baumeister, 1982; Goffman, 1999). Moreover, individuals aim to communicate and develop a relationship with others (Miller, 1995). Therefore, it is essential when people enter a new environment how they present themselves, which implies both online and offline.

Previous studies have researched how individuals present themselves online (e.g., Manago et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2008). For instance, Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin (2008) stated that users have no difficulties showing their identity and information about themselves online. However, according to Ellison, Hancock, and Toma (2011), online dating platforms offer users only a few cues to present themselves. Due to the limited presence of cues, users make strategic choices about what they want to show to make the best possible impression (Gibbs et al., 2006).

In the online dating world, individuals present themselves by using cues, such as pictures and self-description texts (Antheunis et al., 2011; Bargh et al., 2002; McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002). On an application like Tinder, where users decide whether they find the profile owner attractive through a short and quick evaluation, profile pictures have an essential role because a user gets an impression of a profile owner's physical attractiveness at a glance. When the information the picture gives to the user is unclear, a text could give some additional information about the profile owner (Hancock & Dunham, 2001). Based on that brief evaluation, a profile owner is either liked or swiped away (Heino, Ellison, & Gibbs, 2010). Therefore, profile owners must be aware of which impression they leave on other users.

In online dating situations, such as on Tinder, users can control which image they present of themselves (Toma et al., 2008). An online dating application user's motive to choose a particular profile picture can be explained by two impression management processes (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The first process is called impression motivation, which explains how people are motivated to control how others see them. The second process is called impression construction, in which individuals choose how they want to appear to others. Individuals want to leave a good impression online and create, therefore, flattering profiles that attract and impress others (Ellison et al., 2006; Hancock & Toma, 2009). However, this does result in

online dating profiles that do not always present the profile owners' most accurate image (Hancock & Toma, 2009).

2.3 Perceived attractiveness and date intention

Finding another profile owner physically attractive is the most important determinant to like a profile owner when searching for a romantic partner (Ward, 2017; Toma & Hancock, 2010). Research shows that one prefers to communicate and get to know another person when found physically attractive (McCroskey & McCain, 1974). The importance of physical attractiveness when finding a romantic partner has been confirmed in several theories, such as the parental investment theory (Trivers, 1972), and the good genes theory (Hamilton, 1980). These different theories pose that people see physical attractiveness as an indicator of good genes, partner quality, and health (Gangestad & Thornhill, 1993; Gangestad & Scheyd, 2005). These findings have also been confirmed in the Physical Attractiveness Stereotype theory (Dion et al., 1972), which describes the assumption that when individuals are physically attractive, they also possess other socially desirable personality traits. Research shows that physical attractiveness can lead to other benefits for an individual as well. For example, attractive people are deemed to score higher in having better jobs, personality, and better partners (Dion et al., 1972). These theories can also be applied to the online dating world. Similar to real life, attractive people are considered appropriate partners. A user can judge physical attractiveness based on a profile picture of the profile owner (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

According to McCroskey and McCain (1974), attractiveness consists of three dimensions; a liking or social dimension, a task or respect dimension, and a physical dimension. In this study, the liking or social dimension and the physical dimension are included in determining attractiveness, because they have an essential role in the online dating process (Ward, 2017;

Toma & Hancock, 2010). First, the social and liking dimension stands for people's willingness to engage in conversations with strangers and to develop a social relationship. Secondly, the physical dimension contains someone's physical attractiveness and determines how attracted we generally are to someone based on their appearances. The romantic attraction has been added as a third dimension to measure whether people see a profile owner as a potential romantic partner. Romantic attraction is strongly linked to the physical and social attraction (Byrne, London, & Reeves, 1968). For this study, social, physical, and romantic attraction are merged into perceived attractiveness, which makes it possible to measure the extent to which a profile owner is found attractive by using perceived attractiveness as a variable.

In addition to measuring perceived attractiveness, with which the extent to which a profile owner is socially, physically, and romantically attractive is measured, it is also essential to examine the extent to which a user subsequently has the intention to date someone. Users may find a profile owner attractive but may be more selective and pickier when they want to date someone. Research shows that the information available on a profile is essential in choosing if the user wants to date with the profile owner (Fiore et al., 2008). McGloin and Denes (2016) found in their research that the intention to date someone is related to the attractiveness of a profile owner's picture and the extent to which it is considered attractive. This finding was also confirmed in an earlier study that states that one prefers attractive people when looking for a date (Walster et al., 1966). Profile owners use a variety of techniques to present themselves as the maximum suitable partner. For example, they do this by saying that they are more physically attractive, have a greater personality, and own better capabilities (Rosen et al., 2008). In this way, profile owners hope that attractive users will want to date with them. In the current study, date intention is included as a dependent variable. It will be tested

whether users look at a Tinder profile differently when they have to judge a profile owner on attractiveness or want to date that profile owner.

2.4 Picture Attractiveness

Pictures often provide the first impression and cause the first reaction (Bar et al., 2006). With just a glance, a user can often already obtain much information about the profile owner and create a judgement, based on the appearance. In online dating profiles, physical attractiveness becomes visible through profile pictures (Van der Heide et al., 2012; Hitsch et al., 2010).

Several studies highlighted the importance of an attractive picture on a profile in the process of online dating (e.g., Fiore et al., 2008; Ward, 2017). Fiore and colleagues (2008) stated that when a picture of a profile owner is physically attractive, it increases the person's overall attractiveness. Also, Ward (2017) showed through research that users of online dating applications first look at the face of a profile owner to determine whether someone is physically attractive. Both studies show that pictures play a significant role in deciding to like a profile (Whitty, 2008). Wang, Kwon, and Stefanone (2009) found in their study that both men and women are more willing to start a friendship with the opposite sex if a profile consist of an attractive picture. Based on several studies suggesting that an attractive picture on the online dating profile plays a significant role on the overall attractiveness of a profile owner, the first hypothesis is:

H1: *A profile owner on Tinder with an attractive picture scores higher on (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention than a profile owner with a moderately attractive picture.*

2.5 Text quality

Textual cues are important on online dating profiles and can contribute to forming an impression of a potential partner, especially since only a limited number of cues are available on these online dating profiles compared to face-to-face contact (Rosen et al., 2008). Furthermore, research shows that it is easy to interpret when people use a text to describe themselves because something is being said literally. For example, when a profile owner describes themselves as extroverted and social, a user may not interpret this differently (Van der Heide et al., 2012).

Users who have a Tinder profile are free to choose whether they want to add a self-description to their profile, resulting in online dating profiles with and without texts. However, it turns out that when a profile owner does not have any additional information, such as a text present in his profile, this can evoke negative associations with Tinder users. For example, these profile owners are not serious about online dating or do not want to put effort into creating a complete profile (Ellison et al., 2006). Furthermore, the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) states that in situations where few cues are present, a user is likely to look for more information to reduce his uncertainty about the profile owner. People have an aversion to uncertainty and try to avoid it. When there are only a few cues present from which a user can extract information, this could harm the user's impression of the profile owner.

If self-description texts are present on online dating profiles, these texts may also contain cues that influence user impression formation, both positive and negative impressions. Research by Brand and colleagues (2012) shows that a text is considered attractive when it is a socially competent self-description containing intelligence and humor. Moreover, a text is also found attractive when it can be concluded that the profile owner has a certain self-confidence level. However, when a profile owner only shares highly positive information

(Wotipka & High, 2016), has a low self-described ambition (Sritharan et al., 2009), or a text that contains too much information (Norton et al., 2007), it will lead to negative associations.

Another textual cue that has found to appear frequently in profile texts (Van der Zanden, et al., 2018) and that has found to lead to negative perceptions of profile owners is the occurrence of language errors (Van der Zanden et al., 2020). For example, profile owners with language errors in their profiles may affect perceptions about the profile owner's attractiveness and date intention. Several studies have shown that texts containing language errors are rated more negatively than texts without language errors (e.g., Queen & Boland, 2015; Stiff, 2012). A user forms an impression based on what the profile of a profile owner offers. When there are language errors in a text, it can be perceived as being inattentive (Queen & Boland, 2015) or lacking in education or interest (Ellison et al., 2006). It has been shown in these studies that these factors may cause a profile owner to be seen as less attractive and less desirable to date. Based on the discussed literature, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H2: *An owner of a Tinder profile with a text without language errors scores higher on (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention than an owner of a Tinder profile with a text with language errors.*

2.6 Picture attractiveness and text quality

Fiore and colleagues (2008) found in their study that profile pictures and profile texts were both strong predictors of whether the user felt attracted to the profile owner. To be found attractive by other users, profile owners can choose what information to show on their profiles, also known as selective self-presentation. This is also explained in the Hyper Personal Model (Walther, 1996), which states that on computer-mediated communication platforms, such as Tinder, people strategically and controllably choose what information is

presented to show an optimized version of themselves. In the current study, the users of Tinder idealize the information they receive and base their impressions on the limited information available. The selective self-presentation combined with the selective response promotes the level of likability and intimacy. Because a profile owner chooses what information is presented on a profile, the profile owner can also choose to omit information. In such cases, the information provided is ambiguous, for example, when a user is unsure about the attractiveness of a user's profile picture or text, or information is missing (Adaval et al., 2007; Willis & Todorov, 2006).

An example of when information can be ambiguous is when there is no text present on a profile. The user can only rely on the cues from the profile picture of the profile owner and base his choice on that. However, that the information is then ambiguous does not have to be negative. The Social Information Processing theory says that a user can form an impression of a profile owner based on little information (Walther, 2015). In addition to this theory, the Halo Effect (e.g., Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Thorndike, 1920) states that people tend to judge another person based on one positive aspect positively. When applying the Halo Effect to the current study, it could perhaps be argued that when a profile owner has an attractive picture, it suggests to the observer, in this case, the user, that other positive qualities will also be present. Bar, Neta, & Linz (2006) also state that visual cues are often the first signals recognized. Inferences are then drawn based on a profile owner's physical attractiveness (Hassin & Trope, 2000).

The theories above only describe the situation where the user is convinced of the profile owner's physical attractiveness and do not need more cues on a profile. However, it is unclear to what extent additional cues in the form of a text are essential when the information provided by a picture is ambiguous, for example, when a profile picture is found to be moderately attractive. When a user is unsure of the information obtained, as also discussed in

the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, the user will look for more information. In this case, more information is not available on an online dating profile and the information the user receives remains ambiguous. It could be that the user is not convinced and will judge the profile owner as unattractive. If a text were present in the profile, it might convince a user. Based on the discussed literature, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: *When the picture of a profile owner is attractive, no profile text positively affects (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention, but when a profile picture is moderately attractive, no profile text negatively affects (c) perceived attractiveness and (d) dating intention.*

When both a picture and text are present in a Tinder profile, the user has more cues to determine if the profile owner is attractive and if the intent to date is present. If both cues are present, if the user is not convinced about the profile owner based on the picture attractiveness, one can look for more information in a text. A text can contain multiple cues that can reveal more about a profile owner. For example, there are intended and unintended cues (Ellison et al., 2006). An unintentional cue is, for example, language errors (Walther & D'Addario, 2001). A profile owner does not intentionally make language errors in a self-description, but a user can infer much information from it (Sharabi & Dykstra-DeVette, 2019). Language errors can bring negative associations. A user may perceive a profile owner as someone who does not want to do his best to create a good online dating profile, as disinterested (Ellison et al., 2006), or as someone with a lower social or intellectual level (Queen & Boland, 2015). It may be said that texts with language errors are evaluated more negatively than texts without language errors (Van der Zanden et al., 2020; Queen & Boland, 2015; Stiff, 2012). The current study examines the effect of language errors on picture attractiveness. It likely could be that attractive profile owners are allowed to make language errors because the information they provide through their profile picture is clear enough; they

get away with it. However, moderately attractive profile owners may not be allowed to make language errors and will be punished more severely because their profile picture is not convincing enough. The following hypothesis is formulated based on expectations and existing literature:

H4: *The negative effect of language errors in Tinder profiles on (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention is stronger when a profile owner has a moderately attractive picture than when the profile owner has an attractive picture.*

3. Method

3.1 Participants

In total 236 participants participated in the study. The participants consisted of 170 women (72%) and 66 men (28%). Of all participants, 157 (66,5%) felt most attracted to men, 65 (27,5%) felt most attracted to women and 14 (5,9%) felt attracted to both genders. The average age of the participants was 24,65 years old ($SD = 6.18$). Of the participants, 74,4% were single (N= 176), 5,1% were in a relationship (N= 12), 17,8% were living together (N= 42), 1,7% were engaged or married (N= 4), and 0.8% were divorced (2). In total 220 (93,2%) participants were familiar with Tinder, of which 76 (32,2%) were using the online dating application at the time this study was conducted. Furthermore, with regard to the highest obtained degree, 14,4% of the participants completed or were completing their master's degree (N=34), 16,9% completed or were completing their bachelor's degree (N=40) and 42,4% were students or graduates of HBO (N= 100), 21,6% finished high school (N= 51).

3.2 Design

This study had a 3 x 2 design, with both text quality (no text, text without language errors and, text with language errors) and picture attractiveness (attractive profile picture versus moderately attractive profile picture) as within-subjects variables. During the experiment,

participants were thus exposed to one profile of all six conditions. The dependent variables are perceived attractiveness and date intention.

3.3 Pre-test

Two pre-tests were performed before constructing the materials for the experiment. The goal of the first pre-test was to select the pictures that were found attractive and moderately attractive. Subsequently, these pictures were used in the experiment as the manipulation of picture attractiveness. The second pre-test was carried out to see if profile text with language errors influenced perceived text quality as opposed to profile texts without language errors. The second call was to select texts based on the greatest differences in text quality to use in the experiment. Below it is further explained how the pre-tests were carried out.

3.3.1 Pre-test picture attractiveness

In total, 67 participants participated in the first pre-test. The participant group consisted of 30 (44,8%) men and 37 women (55,2%). The average age was 22.85 years old ($SD = 2.57$). Within this group of participants, 31 participants felt most attracted to men, 37 felt most attracted to women and 2 felt attracted to both sexes. Based on their indicated sexual preferences, participants saw 20 men or 20 women profile pictures in a random order. The participants were asked to rate the profile owner on attractiveness using a 10-point scale (1= very unattractive, 10= very attractive). These 40 pictures were all selected from Unsplash (a database with right free pictures that can be used without permission) and were expected to vary in perceived physical attractiveness. There were some selection criteria for pictures to be selected as picture for the pretest. First, the person in the picture had to have a Western appearance, because most participants were likely to be Western as well. In addition, only the head and a piece of the chest could be shown. This way the participant could only judge the

person in the profile picture on that basis and could not be distracted by other factors. Finally, the person in the profile picture either looked neutral or smiled at the camera.

Based on the results of the pre-test, three attractive and three moderately attractive pictures were chosen of both men and women pictures. The average score for men profile pictures was 3.64 ($SD = 1.21$), and the average score of women profile pictures was 4.62 ($SD = 1.10$). The attractive profile pictures for both men (maximum was 6.80) and women (maximum was 7.41) were chosen based on the highest scoring pictures ($M_{\text{men picture 1}} = 5.30$, $SD = 1.84$, $M_{\text{men picture 2}} = 5.20$, $SD = 2.28$, $M_{\text{men picture3}} = 6.27$, $SD = 2.02$, $M_{\text{women picture1}} = 7.08$, $SD = 1.44$, $M_{\text{women picture2}} = 7.32$, $SD = 1.49$, $M_{\text{women picture3}} = 7.41$, $SD = 1.21$). To select the moderately attractive profile pictures we select those pictures that scored closest to the average ($M_{\text{men picture 1}} = 3.27$, $SD = 1.74$, $M_{\text{men picture 2}} = 3.50$, $SD = 1.78$, $M_{\text{men picture3}} = 3.60$, $SD = 2.06$, $M_{\text{women picture1}} = 4.42$, $SD = 2.02$, $M_{\text{women picture2}} = 4.69$, $SD = 1.93$, $M_{\text{women picture3}} = 4.35$, $SD = 1.57$). Based on the results of the pre-test for picture attractiveness, 12 pictures were selected for the experiment.

3.3.2 Pre-test text quality

A total of 62 participants participated in this pre-test, of which 31 (49,2%) were men and 31 (49,2%) were women. The average age of the participants was 22.87 ($SD = 2.59$). The participants were asked to assess 10 profile texts using a 10-point scale, where one means that the text was low of quality and 10 of high quality. In total there were ten different texts, content-wise. Each text had two versions: one with language errors and one without language errors. There were two lists with texts of which one were randomly presented to the participants. Which means that half of the participants saw text 1 to 5 without language errors, and text 6 to 10 with language errors, while the other half saw text 1 to 5 with language errors and text 6 to 10 without language errors.

All texts were gender-neutral, and the same texts were thus pre-tested among men and women. The contents of the text were based on an existing corpus from a previous study (Van der Zanden et al., 2018). Each text consisted of about 30 words. Every text version with language errors contained two, three or four language errors.

The pre-test of text quality had two purposes. The first objective was to check whether texts with language errors (M= 4.11, SD= 1.34) were generally considered to be of lower quality than texts without language errors (M= 5.55, SD= 1.31). The second goal of the pre-test was to select the texts to be used in the experiment. In total, four different texts were selected as materials for the main study. Of each text, both the version with and the one without language errors were used, resulting in eight variations. These four texts were selected because the largest differences in quality could be seen between them. The third level of text quality entailed adding online dating profiles without any text, to ensure that the six different conditions could be make in the experiment.

3.4 Materials

The experiment consisted of six different lists: three lists with women Tinder profiles and three lists with men Tinder profiles. A participant was assigned to one list in which all six conditions were shown: three attractive profile pictures, three moderately attractive profile pictures, two texts with language errors, two texts without language errors, and two times the variant without a text in the online dating profile.

A total of 36 different combinations of profiles were created to use in the experiment. To avoid that a certain combination of a picture and text variant would result in good or bad scores by chance, all pictures and text variations were combined randomly. Additionally, a participant saw each picture or text variant only once during the experiment.

Tinder's corporate identity was used for the combinations of pictures and text to make the profiles used in the experiment look real. For this purpose, several buttons were used that can also be found in the online dating application itself. Three of the used Tinder profiles are shown in the figures below.

Figure 1

Attractive picture with no text present

Figure 2

Moderately attractive picture with a text with language errors

Figure 3

Attractive picture with a text without language errors

3.5 Procedure

The participants have been recruited through personal network, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, using the snowball sampling method. In total, 236 participants participated in the experiment. Before the participant could start the experiment, an informed consent form was presented. In this form, the participant was assured of anonymity, that the obtained data was handled carefully and only used for study-related purposes. Several demographic questions were asked, such as age, gender and which gender they were most attracted to. These

questions were followed by a short explanation of what the participants could expect during the experiment. In case the participant was not familiar with the online dating application Tinder, more information was provided here. Next, the participant was randomly assigned to one of the six lists. Participants who indicated that they are most attracted to men were randomly presented to one of the three lists in which men profile pictures were shown. For those participants who indicated that they were most attracted to women, the same thing happened. These participants were randomly presented to one of the three lists in which women profile pictures were shown. If a participant indicated that he or she were attracted to both gender, one of the six lists was randomly assigned to them. During the experiment, all participants saw six different replicated Tinder profiles, which they had to assess by answering 13 statements on a 7-point Likert scale. These were statements regarding perceived attractiveness and date intention. After the participants saw a profile and answered all statements, the next profile was presented. When all six profiles were seen and assessed, the participants were asked a control question to check if they saw language errors in some of the profiles. Afterwards, the participants were thanked and debriefed on the research.

3.6 Measurements

3.6.1 Perceived attractiveness

The dependent variable perceived attractiveness was measured with items about physical attraction, social attraction (McCroskey & McCain, 1974), and romantic attraction (Campbell, 1999). Each variable was measured in the experiment with three different items. Each item has been assessed using a 7-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). An example of social attraction is 'I think this person is pleasant to spend time with'. An example of physical attraction is 'I think this person is handsome'. Finally, an example of romantic attraction is 'I could fall for this person.' Because one item of romantic attraction and one

item of date intention are negatively worded, these items were recoded (I do not feel attracted to this person, I do not need to meet this person in real life).

The variables physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and romantic attractiveness are computed into one variable, called perceived attractiveness. In order to check whether the items of the three variables can be clustered into one factor (perceived attractiveness), a factor analysis was performed. By means of this analysis, it can be checked whether items used correspond to each other. The nine items which measured physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and romantic attractiveness were subjected to a principal components analysis (PCA) using SPSS version 24. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .87, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970), which allowed the factor analysis in this thesis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, *Approx. Chi-Square* (36) = 13511.76, *p* <.001, indicating that the variables in the dataset are indeed related. Then, to check the scale's reliability, a Cronbach alpha test was performed. The scale has an excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .95. Thus, the scale had a good reliability.

3.6.2 Date intention

Date intention was the second dependent variable included in the current study. This variable was also measured using three items. Each item was assessed by the participants using a 7-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). An example of a statement of date intention was 'I do not need to meet this person in real life'. This item was negatively worded and needed to be recoded. To check the reliability of this scale, a Cronbach alpha test was performed. This scale also has e good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .85.

3.7 Data analysis

For this study, a MANOVA was performed in SPSS version 24. This test analyzed the two independent variables (picture attractiveness and text quality) on the dependent variables (perceived attractiveness and date intention). The independent variable picture attractiveness had two levels: attractive picture and moderately attractive picture. The independent variable text quality had three levels: text with language errors, text without language errors, and no text present in the online dating profile. Because there was a specific hypothesis, planned contrast analyses were performed.

In an exploratory analysis, an additional MANOVA was performed to analyze whether the independent variables picture attractiveness and text quality score differ on the dependent variables social attraction, physical attraction, and romantic attraction. The results of a previous study showed that text (with and without language errors) and pictures (visible picture, blurred picture) could have different effects on different dimensions of attractiveness (Van der Zanden et al., 2020). However, this is not visible in the results of the first MANOVA, where the three variables were measured together in perceived attractiveness. An additional test was performed to see if the three dimensions differ from one another.

This experiment has a within-subject design, which means that each participant assessed six profiles. Therefore, the data has been restructured in such a way that each participant contributed six cases to the dataset. To make sure that the data was not seen as fully independent of each other, it was decided to include the subject number as a covariate in the analyses.

4. Results

To test the hypotheses, a MANOVA was performed with planned contrast. The independent variables that are used in this analysis were picture attractiveness and text quality. The dependent variables that were used are perceived attractiveness and date intention. The means and standard deviations of the variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 1

Means and standard deviations of picture attractiveness and text quality on perceived attractiveness and date intention.

	No text		Text with language errors		Text without language errors	
	Attractive picture	*Moderately attractive picture*	*Attractive picture*	*Moderately attractive picture*	*Attractive picture*	*Moderately attractive picture*
Perceived attractiveness	4.19 (1.35)	3.50 (1.19)	4.02 (1.29)	3.62 (1.20)	4.70 (1.16)	3.85 (1.18)
Date intention	4.27 (1.45)	3.68 (1.33)	3.89 (1.48)	3.72 (1.34)	4.67 (1.32)	3.94 (1.30)

4.1 Main effect of picture attractiveness

The first hypothesis posed that profile owners with an attractive profile picture score higher on (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention than profile owners with a moderately attractive profile picture. The MANOVA showed a significant main effect of picture attractiveness on perceived attractiveness, $F (1, 1541) = 105.88$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2$ = .064. Profile owners with an attractive picture on their Tinder profile ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.30$) were perceived as more attractive than profile owners with a moderately attractive picture on their profile ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.20$). The MANOVA also showed that profile owners with an attractive picture ($M = 4.28$, $SD= 1.45$) score higher on date intention than profile owners

with a moderately attractive picture (M = 3.78, SD = 1.33), F (1, 1541) = 51.03, p < .001, partial η2 = .032. The data thus support H1: Owners of a Tinder profile with an attractive picture score higher on perceived attractiveness and date intention than owners of a Tinder profile with a moderately attractive picture.

4.2 Main effect of text quality

The MANOVA showed a significant main effect for text quality on perceived attractiveness, F (2, 1541) = 22.32, p < .001, partial η2 = .028, and date intention, F (2, 1541) = 17.54, p <.001, partial η2 = .022. Results showed that profile owners with texts without language errors scored highest on perceived attractiveness (M = 4.27, SD = 1.24) and dating intention (M= 4.30, SD= 1.36), then profile owners without any text ($M_{attractiveness}$ = 3.85, $SD_{attractiveness}$ = 1.32; $M_{date\ intention}$ = 3.97, $SD_{date\ intention}$ = 1.42), followed by profile owners with texts with language errors ($M_{attractiveness}$ = 3.82, $SD_{attractiveness}$ = 1.26; $M_{date\ intention}$ = 3.81, $SD_{date\ intention}$ = 1.41).

Hypothesis 2 stated that an owner of a Tinder profile with a text without language errors would score higher on (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention than an owner of a Tinder profile with a text with language errors. The results of the contrast analysis showed that scores given to profile owners with a profile with a text without language errors differed significantly from the scores given to profile owners with a text containing language errors, and this was found on both perceived attractiveness, p < .001, 95% CI [-.607, -.307] and on date intention, p < .001, 95% CI [-.665, -.330]. This means that people perceive profile owners with a text without language errors as more attractive and they would rather date a profile owner with a text without language errors than with language errors. Thus, H2 is confirmed.

4.3 Interaction effect of picture attractiveness and text quality

There was a significant interaction effect of picture attractiveness and text quality found for both perceived attractiveness, F (2, 1541) = 4.39, p = .013, partial η2 = .006, and date intention, F (2, 1541) = 5.63, p = .004, partial η2 = .007. The interactions are depicted in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 4

Interaction effect of picture attractiveness and text quality on perceived attractiveness
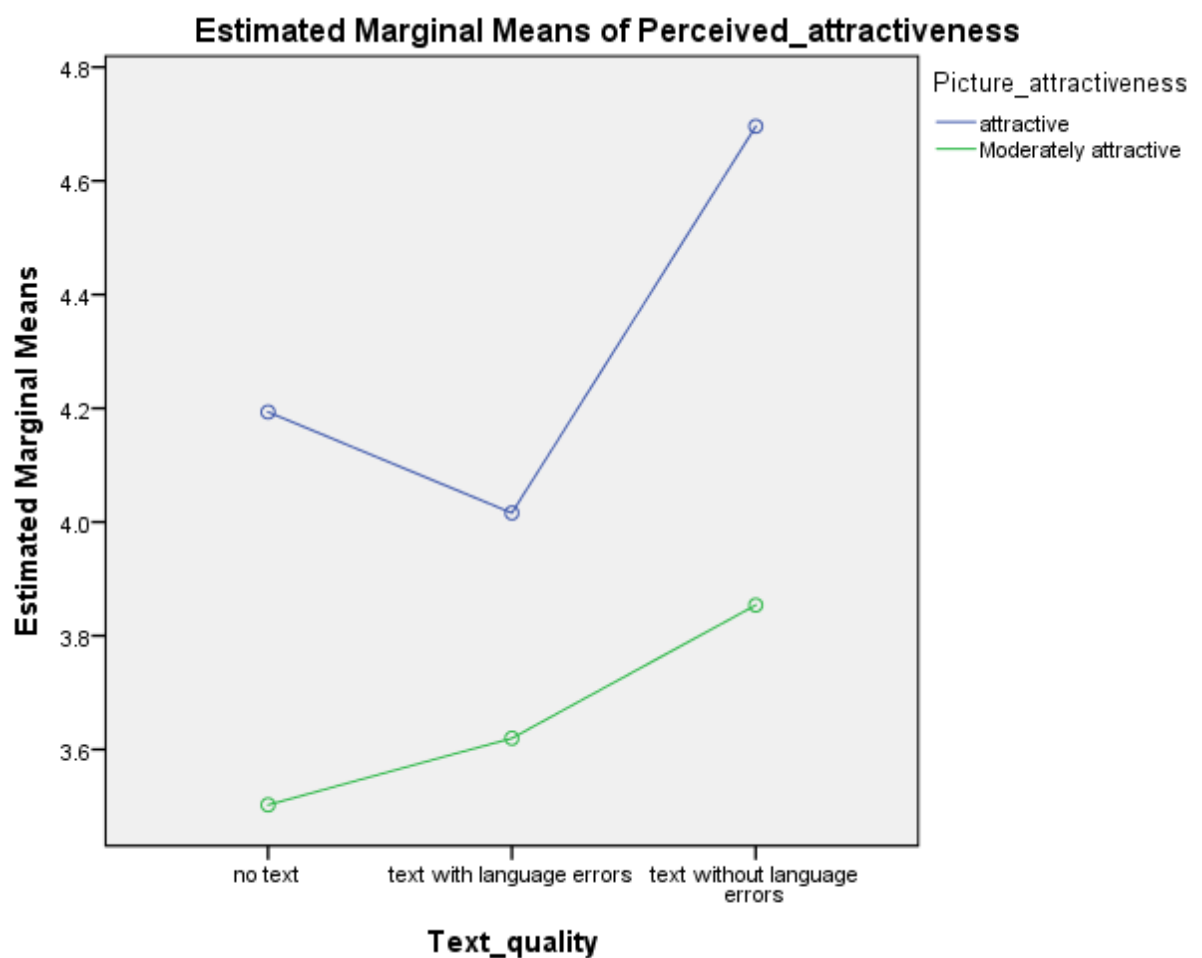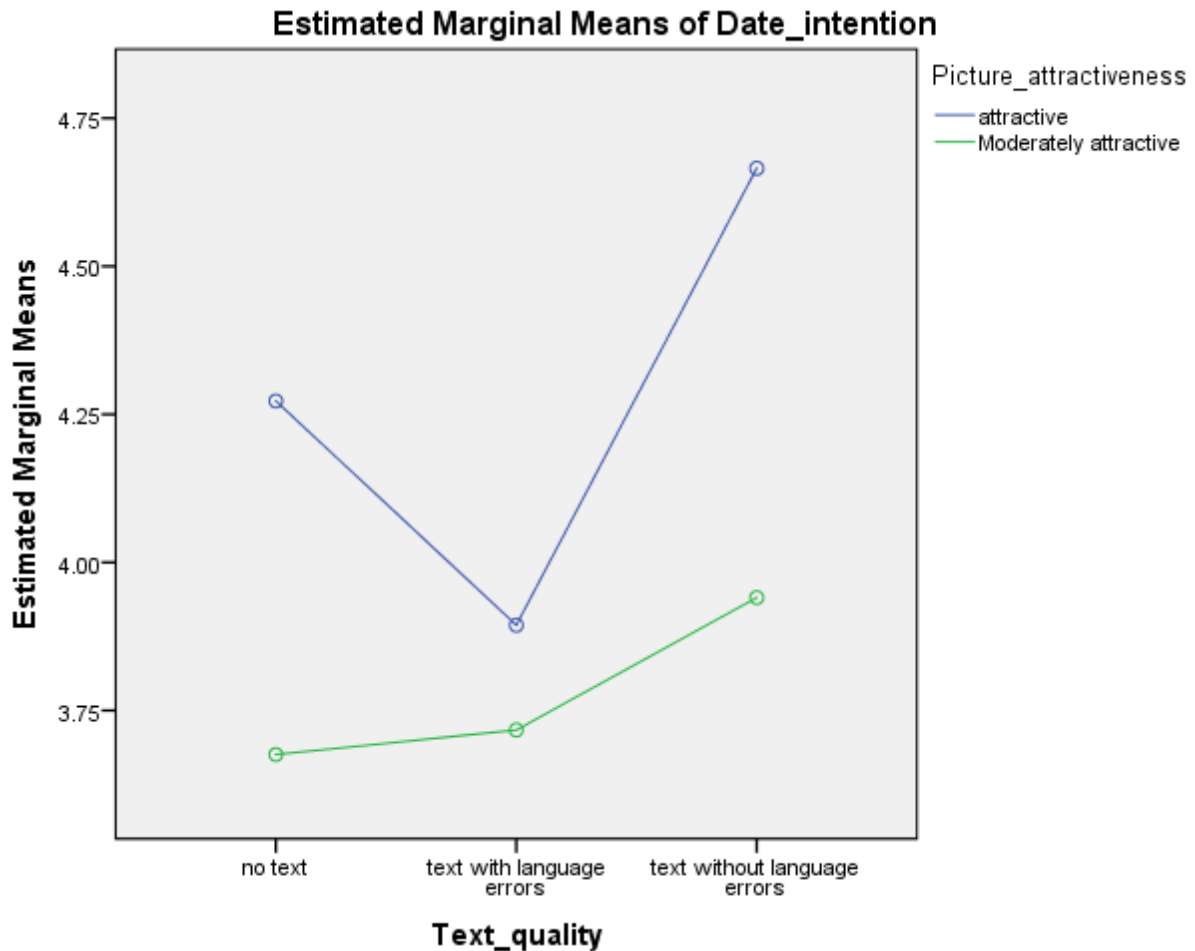
Figure 5

Interaction effect of picture attractiveness and text quality on date intention

To further understand the interaction effect that was found, simple effect analysis has been performed. This involved using as a baseline text without language errors to examine the effect of no text and a text without language errors.

Within the group of profile owners with an attractive picture, profiles with no text present gives on average a lower score on perceived attractiveness than a profile without language errors, *Mdiff* = 0.50, *p* <.001. Also, within the group of profile owners with an attractive picture, profiles with no text present gives on average a lower score on date intention than profiles with text without language errors, *Mdiff* = -.39, *p* - .001. This means that when a profile owner has an attractive picture, profiles with a text without language errors are

preferred over profiles without a text when it comes to judging perceived attractiveness and dating intention. Since the hypothesis is oppositely formulated, when the picture of a profile owner is attractive, no profile text positively affects (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention, H3a and H3b cannot be supported.

Within the group of profile owners with moderately attractive profile pictures, profiles with no text present gives on average a lower score on perceived attractiveness than a profile with a text without language errors, $Mdiff = -.35$, $p = .001$. Also, within the group of profile owners with moderately attractive profile pictures, profiles with no text present gives on average a lower score on date intention than a profile with a text without language errors, $Mdiff = -.27$, $p = .028$. This means indeed that when a profile picture is moderately attractive, no profile text negatively affects (c) perceived attractiveness and (d) dating intention. Therefore, we can support de second part of the hypothesis.

Simple effect analysis for perceived attractiveness showed when a text with language errors is compared to a text without language errors, the effect within the group of profile owners with an attractive picture is $Mdiff = -.68$, $p < .001$. The effect within the group profile owners with a moderately attractive picture is $Mdiff = -.23$, $p = .031$. These results show that language errors have a negative effect on both profile owners with an attractive profile picture and profile owners with a moderately attractive picture. However, it turns out that the negative effect is actually stronger among profile owners with an attractive profile picture. Therefore H4a, the negative effect of language errors in Tinder profiles on (a) perceived attractiveness is stronger when a profile owner has a moderately attractive picture than when the profile owner has an attractive picture, cannot be supported.

Simple effect analysis for dating intention showed, when a text with language errors is compared to a text without language errors, the effect within the group of profile owners with an attractive profile picture is $Mdiff = -.77$, $p = < .001$. The effect within the group of profile

owners with a moderately attractive profile picture is *Mdiff* = -.22, *p* = .064. This shows that there is indeed a significant negative effect of language errors for profile owners with an attractive profile picture. When looking at profile owners with a moderately attractive profile picture, there is no significant difference. Therefore, we cannot support H4b, which stated that the negative effect of language errors in Tinder profiles on (b) date intention is stronger when a profile owner has a moderately attractive picture than when the profile owner has an attractive picture.

4.4 Additional analysis of text quality and picture attractiveness on romantic attraction, physical attraction, and social attraction.

   An additional analysis was performed to see if picture attractiveness and text quality would affect perceptions of romantic attraction, physical attraction and social attraction differently, if we would look at each of the three dimensions differently. To examine this, another MANOVA was performed with picture attractiveness and text quality as independent variables with dependent variables romantic attraction, physical attraction, and social attraction. The means and standard deviations of the analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations interaction effect additional MANOVA.

	No text		Text with language errors		Text without language errors	
	Attractive picture	*Moderately attractive picture*	*Attractive picture*	*Moderately attractive picture*	*Attractive picture*	*Moderately attractive picture*
Social attraction	4.23 *(1.47)*	3.89 (1.33)	4.16 (1.49)	4.26 (1.49)	5.17 (1.24)	4.73 (1.38)
Physical attraction	4.71 (1.57)	3.61 (1.52)	4.57 (1.56)	3.56 (1.46)	4.98 (1.35)	3.72 (1.47)
Romantic attraction	3.65 (1.40)	3.01 (1.21)	3.32 (1.37)	3.04 (1.23)	3.93 (1.32)	3.12 (1.23)

4.4.1 Main effect of picture attractiveness on social attraction, physical attraction and romantic attraction.

The MANOVA showed the same effects of picture attractiveness on each of the three dimensions of attractiveness: Tinder profile owners with attractive pictures were perceived as socially (M attractive picture 4.52, SD= 1.48, M moderately attractive picture 4.29, SD= 1.44), physically (M attractive picture 4.76, SD= 1.51, M moderately attractive picture 3.63, SD= 1.49), and romantically (M attractive picture 3.63, SD= 1.39, M moderately attractive picture 3.06, SD= 1.22) more attractive than Tinder profile owners with moderately attractive pictures (social attraction F (1, 1542) = 10.37, p = .001, partial η2 = .007, physical attraction F (1, 1542) = 220.28, p < .001, partial η2 = .125, and romantic attraction F (1, 1542) = 75.70, p < .001, partial η2 = .047). This implies that there is a difference in scores between profile owners with an attractive or a moderately attractive profile picture on social attraction, physical attraction, and romantic attraction.

4.4.2 Main effect of text quality on social attraction, physical attraction and romantic attraction

The MANOVA showed the same effects of text quality on social, F (2, 1542) = 59.70, p < .001, partial η2 = .072, physical F (2, 1542) = 4.82, p = .008, partial η2 = .006, and romantic attraction F (2, 1542) = 9.26, p < .001, partial η2 = .012. The results were almost similar as to the results of the overall perceived attractiveness variable. For physical attraction and romantic attraction, it was indeed found that profile owners with a text without language errors scores highest on each of the three dimensions separately, followed by profiles without any texts, and then texts with language errors. However, when looked to the results of social attraction, there appeared to be a difference. A profile with a text without language errors scores highest (M = 4.95, SD = 1.33), followed by a profile with a text with language errors (M = 4.21, SD = 1.49), and then profiles with no text present (M = 4.06, SD = 1.41).

4.4.3 Interaction effect of picture attractiveness and text quality on social, physical and romantic attraction.

Because there is a significant interaction effect of picture attractiveness and text quality for both social attraction F (2, 1542) = 5.51, p = .004, partial η2 = .007, and romantic attraction F (2, 1542) = 5.71, p = .003, partial η2 = .007, a simple effect analysis was performed to interpret the interaction. There was no interaction effect found for picture attractiveness and text quality on physical attraction F (2, 1541) = 0.98, p = .378, partial η2 = .001.

Simple effect analysis showed that within the group of profile owners with an attractive profile picture, a profile with a text without language errors gives on average higher scores on social attraction than when a profile has no text present ($Mdiff$ = .95, p < .001) and a profile with a text with language errors ($Mdiff$ = 1.02, p < .001). Within the group of profile owners

with a moderately attractive profile picture, a profile with a text without language errors gives on average higher scores on social attraction than no text ($Mdiff = .84$, $p < .001$) and a profile with language errors ($Mdiff = .47$, $p < .001$). Also, within the group of profiles with moderately attractive profile pictures, a profile with a text with language errors scores on average higher on social attraction than a profile with no text ($Mdiff = .37$, $p - .003$).

Simple effect analysis showed for romantic attraction, within the group of profile owners with an attractive profile pictures, a profile with a text without language errors score on average higher than profiles without a text ($Mdiff = .28$, $p = .013$) and text with language errors ($Mdiff = .61$, $p < .001$). Also, within the group of profile owners with an attractive profile picture, profiles with no text score on average higher on romantic attraction than a text with language errors ($Mdiff = .33$, $p = .004$). There were no significant differences within the group of profile owners with a moderately attractive profile picture.

5. Discussion

5.1 Hypothesis

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which a text without language errors, a text with language errors, or when there is no text present in a Tinder profile affect the perceived attractiveness and date intention of a profile owner, and to what extent these effects are by the attractiveness of a profile owner's profile picture. An experiment was conducted with six different conditions presented to each participant to investigate this. These included Tinder profiles with attractive and moderately attractive profile pictures, text without language errors, text with manipulated language errors, and profiles where no text was present.

The results confirmed H1, as it was indeed found that owners of profiles with an attractive picture scored higher on perceived attractiveness, and Tinder users would rather date a profile owner with an attractive picture than profile owners with a moderately attractive picture. This

finding is in line with previous research that found that an attractive profile picture increases the profile owner's overall attractiveness, which is essential in the process of online dating (Fiore et al., 2008; Whitty, 2008). Moreover, it has also been found earlier that both men and women are more willing to start a relationship with profile owners with attractive pictures (Wang et al., 2009). These studies argued that a picture's attractiveness plays a significant role in how likeable, attractive, and dateable a profile owner is found. The more attractive a profile owner is, the more Tinder users see this person as a potential date. While previous studies primarily focused on differences between perceptions of people with attractive or unattractive pictures, the current study shows that there are also differences between the perceptions of profile owners with an attractive picture and a moderately attractive picture.

In line with what was stated in hypothesis 2, the results of this study show that a profile owner with a text without language errors scored higher on perceived attractiveness and date intention than a profile owner with a text that contained language errors. This finding supports the research of Van der Zanden et al. (2020) who found that language errors lead to negative associations, which, in turn, negatively affect perceptions of attractiveness and participants' intentions to date the owner of the Tinder profile. The negative associations of language errors could be the perception of others' intellectual capacities and the profile owners' lack of interest. The current study and the study of Van der Zanden et al. (2020) found similar results, even though the texts that were used in this study were shorter and consequently also included fewer language errors compared to the study of Van der Zanden and colleagues (2020). This shows that even relatively short texts including only a few errors (i.e., 2-4 errors per profile) already affects perceptions of attractiveness negatively.

In hypothesis 3, it was posed that when the picture of a profile owner is attractive, no profile text positively affects (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention, but when a profile picture is moderately attractive, no profile text negatively affects (c) perceived

attractiveness and (d) dating intention. The results of this study did not support this hypothesis; the opposite was found. It turns out that with a profile with an attractive profile picture, people prefer a text (without language errors) to a profile where there is no text present. The Social Information Processing theory (Walther, 2015) states that one can form an impression about someone based on little information, this may be true, but the results of the current study show that people prefer to see a profile that uses both visual and textual cues. Moreover, profiles with an attractive picture combined with text are seen as more attractive, and people prefer to date such a profile owner. The Halo effect (Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Thorndike, 1920) states that when someone sees a positive aspect in someone, for example, a profile owner has an attractive picture, the missing information is further filled positively. Therefore, expectations had been created that the absence of a text in a profile would positively affect when a profile owner's profile picture is attractive, yet, this does not appear to be the case. However, it is true that when a profile owner has a moderately attractive profile picture, the absence of a profile text has a negative effect. Also, in that case, a text (without language errors) adds value to the profile.

The results rejected hypothesis 4 that posed that the negative effect of language errors in Tinder profiles on (a) perceived attractiveness and (b) date intention is stronger when a profile owner has a moderately attractive picture than when the profile owner has an attractive picture. The results show that indeed for both a profile owner with an attractive or moderately attractive profile picture, language errors negatively affect, which is in line with previous studies' findings (Van der Zanden et al., 2020; Queen & Boland, 2015; Stiff, 2012). However, contrary to expectations, it turns out that this effect is not stronger when a profile owner has a moderately attractive picture but instead when a profile owner has an attractive picture. One explanation for these results could be that people have higher expectations of a profile owner with an attractive picture. Existing theories, such as Parental Investment Theory (Trivers,

1972), Good Genes Theory (Hamilton, 1980), and Physical Attractiveness Stereotype (Dion et al., 1972), state that attractive individuals are expected to score higher in social skills, intelligence, have better jobs and be better partners. Therefore, a user creates higher expectations for a profile owner with an attractive picture, and they could be more disappointed when seeing language errors in their texts. Perhaps, less was expected in the first place of profile owners with a moderately attractive picture.

In the previous analyses, the variable perceived attractiveness is a dependent variable composed of three dimensions; romantic attraction, physical attraction, and social attraction. Additional analysis has been done in which the three dimensions have been taken into account as separate dependent variables. The results are almost similar to the findings of the overall perceived attractiveness variable, where it was found that profiles with a text without language errors scored highest, followed by a profile without text and a profile with language errors. However, the additional analysis results showed a difference when we looked at the social attraction. A text with language errors scored higher on social attraction than no text for a profile owner with a moderately attractive profile picture. The social attraction is measured by questions such as "I think it would be fun to spend time with this person" and "I think I could be friends with this person. It could perhaps be that when getting to know someone on a friendly level, instead of in a romantic way, making language mistakes are found to be less unattractive.

5.2 Implications

This study's results have several implications for the existing literature on online dating and impression formation, as well as several practical implications for online dating applications. First, the results of this study add something to the Social Information Processing Theory (Walther, 2015), which states that one can form an impression about someone else based on a limited number of cues. Therefore, based on this idea and the Halo

Effect (e.g., Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Thorndike, 1920), it was expected that it would be positive when a profile owner with an attractive picture does not add text to the profile. When a profile owner has a moderately attractive profile picture, the information is ambiguous, and in that case, more information in the form of a text should be offered. However, the results show that people always prefer multiple cues, as in a text and a picture, to judge someone on attractiveness and dating intention. It may be that the Social Information Processing Theory (Walther, 2015) is applicable; however, when it comes to perhaps determining if someone is a potential romantic partner, that people still prefer more information. This finding aligns with the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), in which it is stated that one is always looking for more cues to reduce uncertainty about someone. Moreover, Hancock, and Dunham (2001) and Rosen et al. (2008) argue that text is a valuable addition to form a good impression about a profile owner.

Second, in addition to the above implication, however, it is essential that when a profile owner adds text to their profile, it is free of language errors. If a profile owner is unsure of their text, they may choose not to use any text at all. The current study results show that the absence of a text scores less negatively on perceived attractiveness and date intention than the presence of a text containing language errors.

Third, several theories that have examined how important physical attractiveness is when looking for a partner. The parental investment theory (Trivers, 1972) and the good genes theory (Hamilton, 1980) say that if a person looks physically attractive, one sees that person as a good and healthy partner with many qualities. The Physical Attractiveness Stereotype theory (Dion et al., 1972) says that if one sees a positive factor in another person, for example, that they are physically attractive, that person is generally viewed positively as well. Also, it is said that physically attractive people score higher in terms of jobs and social and personal skills (Dion et al., 1972). Thus, these theories assume that attractive people are smarter and

better partners, perhaps creating higher expectations. That there are high expectations for profile owners with an attractive picture is evident in the current study. These profile owners are judged more negatively on perceived attractiveness and date intention, when they make language errors in a text than profile owners with an average attractive profile picture. Profile owners with an attractive profile picture cannot compensate for the language errors made with their appearance. It is precisely because of these high expectations that it is disappointing when the profile owner cannot live up. Moreover, it may not be the case that we do not have an image of profile owners with an moderately attractive picture, and therefore the mistakes are weighted more heavily. On the contrary, it may be that we have lower expectations of these profile owners.

Resulting from the theoretical implications, this study has also a practical implication for the designers of online dating platforms such as Tinder. The results of the current study shows that adding text with personal information has an added value. Therefore, it is advisable to change the profiles' design and give text a more critical function. Nowadays, on dating platforms as Tinder, pictures have appear on the most prominent place on the profile. Consequently, users first see a picture and make an initial decision based on (the attractiveness of) this picture alone. Often someone is then already clicked away while the text was not yet visible.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has a few limitations that have to be taken into account. Firstly, the participants were collected for the experiment using the snowball sampling method. The results show that almost 80% of the respondents are higher educated. So it is debatable whether the results can be generalized over the entire population. In general, highly educated people are more likely to notice language errors in a text (e.g., Hawkins & Bender, 2002; Van der Elst et al., 2005) and it has previously been shown that only perceptions of people who notice language errors

are negatively affected the occurrence of language errors (Van der Zanden et al., 2020). Future research could use a different sampling method by which all strata of society is included, to see whether the results can be generalized to a broader population.

The second limitation is the labeling of which pictures are attractive and which are moderately attractive in the current study. In preparation for the pre-test of picture attractiveness, a total of 20 men and 20 women pictures were selected, which were expected to vary from high to low in physical attractiveness. However, the scores given to the pictures in the pre-test were in general rather low. Therefore, the pictures that were considered attractive in this study scored 4.30, while the moderately attractive pictures score in general 3.66 on a ten-point scale. Even though previous research has shown that participants are often reluctant to use the higher scores on a scale (e.g., an eight or higher) (de Graauw, 2021), it is difficult to argue that there is agreement with the labeling of the pictures used. As such, both sets of pictures should always be considered as relative to each other, with moderately attractive pictures being less attractive than attractive pictures. In a future study, the researchers could make a broader selection and check whether they added enough versatility of different types of men and women.

A follow-up point to this and a suggestion for future research is that more research can be done on moderately attractive pictures and whether these profile owners are indeed perceived as more ambiguous. In the current research, the claim was made that when a profile owner's picture is moderately attractive, the user receives ambiguous information, compared to attractive and unattractive pictures. However, it may not necessarily be the case that people find it difficult to form an impression about a moderately attractive profile owner. In a possible future study, more research could be done on when a picture is moderately attractive and whether, indeed, such pictures do not provide clear information. This could be done, for example, by having a series of different pictures rated by participants. In doing so, the

pictures may differ in body language, facial expressions, and how much of the rest of the body is visible. Participants then judge not only to what extent they find the profile owner attractive but also whether they find it easy to create a precise impression at all or not and what causes this.

Finally, 25% of the participants who participated in the experiment were in a relationship when completing the questionnaire. It could be that this influenced the way they judged the Tinder profiles, and this might ultimately have influenced the results. For example, during the experiment, participants had to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statements such as "I would like a relationship with this person" or "I could fall in love with this person. However, the intention may differ between singles or people in a relationship since they do not look for a new partner or a date. Future research might consider setting a requirement for study participation in the future, for example, that all participants are single or can imagine being so. This requirement will ensure that respondents' marital status does not influence results and that the results are probably more accurate.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which a text without language errors, a text with language errors, or when there was no text present in a Tinder profile affect the perceived attractiveness and date intention of the profile owner, and to what extent was this affected by the attractiveness of the profile picture (attractive vs. moderately attractive pictures). Participants had to view and assess the profiles' owner by answering a few statements regarding the profile owner's perceived attractiveness and their intention to date the profile owners. Results showed that participants considered assessed profile owners with a text without language errors more attractive than profile owners with a text with language errors, or no profile text at all, regardless of the attractiveness of a profile picture. However,

when language errors are present in a profile text, this has a more negative effect on perceived attractiveness and date intention when a profile owner has an attractive picture than a moderately attractive picture. Even though the results showed that the attractiveness of the picture is the most important determinant over profile attractiveness, the current study suggests that adding a profile text can contribute to positive impressions of perceived attractiveness and dating intention, but only if the text is free of language errors.

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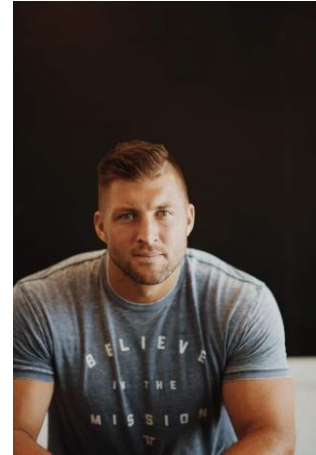
8. Appendices

Appendix A. Pictures pre-test: men

M: 2.33, *SD:* 1.40

M: 2.77, *SD:* 1.68

M: 3.87, *SD:* 1.70

M: 4.63, *SD:* 2.36

M: 2.93, *SD:* 1.64

M: 2.23, *SD:* 1.10

M: 4.30, SD: 2.15   M: 3.93, SD: 1.89   M: 3.50, SD: 1.78

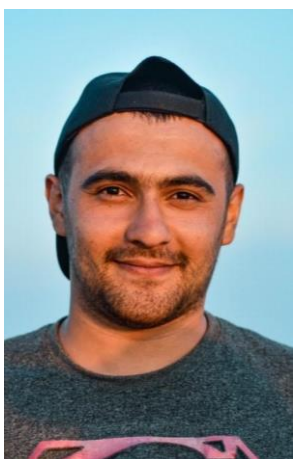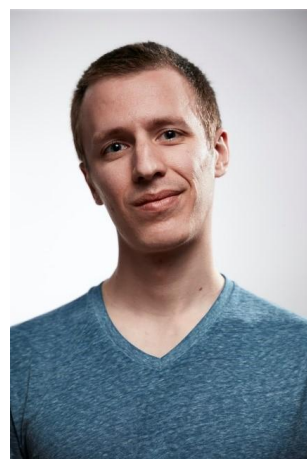M: 2.97, SD: 1.56   M: 6.27, SD: 2.02   M: 3.27, SD: 1.74

M: 2.53, SD: 1.46   M: 3.10, SD: 1.54   M: 3.60, SD: 2.06

M: 2.80, SD: 1.57   M: 3.10, SD: 1.52   M: 2.13, SD: 1.17

M: 5.30, *SD:* 1.84   *M:* 5.20, *SD:* 2.28

Appendix B. Pictures pre-test: women

M: 7.32, *SD:* 1.49

M: 3.23, *SD:* 1.66
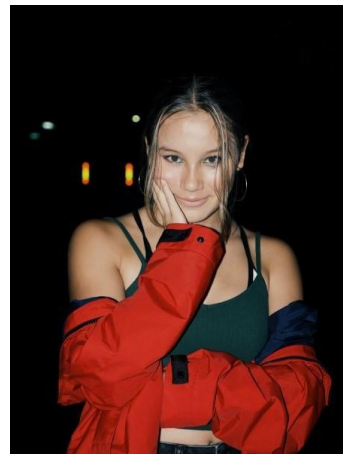
M: 7.54, *SD:* 1.21
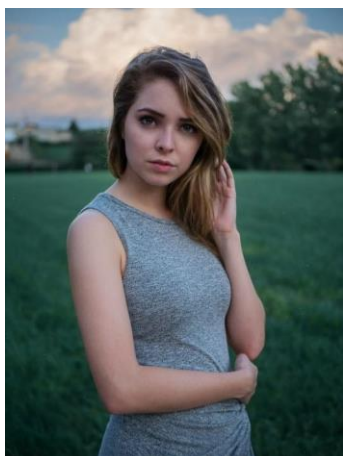
M: 5.31, *SD:* 2.11

M: 5.42, *SD:* 1.68

M: 3, *SD:* 1.36

M: 4.35, *SD:* 1.57

M: 5.23, *SD:* 2.10

M: 5.23, *SD:* 1.70

M: 2.46, *SD:* 1.48

M: 3.19, *SD:* 1.55

M: 4.69, *SD:* 1.93

M: 4.27, *SD:* 2.13

M: 2.58, *SD:* 1.53

M: 5.50, *SD:* 1.84

M: 3.46, *SD:* 1.42

M: 4.42, *SD:* 2.02

M: 7.08, *SD:* 1.44

M: 3.12, *SD:* 1.42   *M:* 4.31, *SD:* 1.78

Appendix C. Pre-test text

Means and SD text	Text
Text 1a *M:* 6.17, *SD:* 2.18	Ik zal mezelf even voorstellen. Ik vind reizen en op avontuur gaan heel erg leuk. Daarnaast maak ik graag een dansje in de stad in een van mijn favoriete kroegen. Op mij kun je rekenen; ik ben heel eerlijk en zorgzaam. Ook houd ik van koken en probeer ik graag nieuwe gerechten uit. Wil je een keertje samen een uitgebreid diner op tafel toveren?
Text 2a *M:* 5.83, *SD:* 1.97	Welkom op mijn profiel! Ik ben een spontaan en ondernemend persoon en ik ben op zoek naar iemand om leuke dingen mee te doen. Ik ben zelf erg sportief en zou het leuk vinden als jij dat ook bent. Daarnaast ben ik graag buiten. Stuur vooral even een berichtje als we overeenkomsten hebben!
Text 3a *M:* 4.38, *SD:* 2.22	Hallo iedereen! Ik vind het moeilijk om mezelf te omschrijven, maar ik heb het toch geprobeerd. Ik ben een lief en gezellig persoon die graag reist maar het ook prima vind om lekker thuis op de bank te zitten. Ik zoek een maatje om dit beide mee te doen. Ben jij geïnteresseerd?
Text 4a *M:* 6.25, *SD:* 1.62	Wie ben ik? In het kort: ik ben een sociaal persoon die vrienden en familie heel erg belangrijk vind. Daarnaast hou ik van humor en van samen buikpijn hebben van het lachen. Heb jij goede humor en kun jij tegen slechte grapjes? Swipe mij dan naar rechts.
Text 5a *M:* 5.38, *SD:* 2.06	Leuk en spontaan persoon op zoek naar een leuke en vrolijke partner! Ik heb veel verschillende hobby's, maar koken vind ik het allerleukste. Zie jij het zitten om een keertje een hele dag met mij in de keuken te staan? Hopelijk tot snel!
Text 6b *M:* 4.54, *SD:* 1.20	Ik kom niet zomaar iemand tegen door mijn drukke werk, vandaar dat ik Tinder maar een uitprobeer. Ik ben een echt buitensmens en wandel graag. Daar naast

	drink ik graag een koffietje en op zijn tijd een wijntje. Het is een perfecte avond als ik dan ook nog een goede film op Netflix heb gevonden.
Text 7b *M:* 5.38, *SD:* 1.71	Hi! Ik ben opzoek naar een gezellige partner die samen veel leuke dingen wil doen. Zelf vind ik het erg leuk om naar het strand te gaan, een goed stuk te fietsen of te toeren. Zie jij dit wel zitten? Hoopelijk hebben we een match en kunnen we de volgende keer er samen op uit!
Text 8b *M:* 3.92, *SD:* 2.38	Zullen we elkaar beter leren kennen onder het genot van een goede wijn en een lekkere maaltijd? Ik ben op zoek naar iemand die hier ook heel erg van kan genieten. Ik kook graag; mijn curry is men specialiteit. Ben jij ook een Boergondiër? Laten we elkaar vooral 9bontmoeten!
Text 9b *M:* 2.25, *SD:* 1.42	Hoi! Ik ben een soziaal iemand die graag zich onder de mensen begeefd. Ik hou ervan om lekker druk te zijn en veel dingen te plannen. Mijn weekendeN zijn daarom ook nooit saai. Heb jij zin om erop uit te trekken met mij?
Text 10b *M:* 4.63, *SD:* 2.06	Ik ben geen expert in online daten, Maar heb besloten het toch een een kans te geven. Ik ben op zoek naar iemand die ik kan vertrouwen en veel lol mee kan hebben. Ik vind het leuk om in de weekenden leuke activiteiten te ondernemen. Zei jij dit wel zitten? Swipe mij dan naar rechts!
Text 1b *M:* 5.33, *SD:* 2.06	Ik zal mezelf even voor stellen. Ik vind reizen en op avontuur gaan heel erg leuk. Daarnaast maak ik graag een dansjes in de stad in een van mijn favoriete kroegen. Op mij kun je rekenen; ik ben heel eerlijk en zorgzaam. Ook houdt ik van koken en probeer ik graag nieuwe gerechten uit. Wil je een keertje samen een uitgebreidt diner op tafel toveren?
Text 2b *M:* 4.33, *SD:* 2.24	Welkom op mijn profiel! Ik ben een spontaan en ondernement persoon en ik ben opzoek naar iemand om leuke dingen mee te doen. Ik ben zelf erg sportief

	en zou het leuk vinden als jij dat ook bent. Daarnaast ben ik graag buiten. Stuur vooral ff een berichtje als we overeenkomsen hebben!
Text 3b *M:* 3.67, *SD:* 1.81	Hallo iedereen! Ik vind het moeilijk om mezelf te omschrijven, maar ik heb het toch Geprobeerd. Ik ben een lief en gezellig persoon die graag reist maar het ook prima vindt om lekker thuis op de bank te zitten. Ik zoek een maatje om dit beide mee te doen. Ben jij geïnteresseert?
Text 4b *M:* 3.33, *SD:* 2.20	Wie ben ik? In het kort: ik ben een sociaal persoon die vrienden en familie heel erg belangrijk vindt. Daarnaast hou ik van humoor en van samen buikpijn hebben van het lachen. Heb jij goede humor en kun jij tegen slegte grapjes? Swipe mij dan naar rechts.
Text 5b *M:* 4.21, *SD:* 2.13	Leuk en spontaan persoon opzoekt naar een leuke en vrolijke partner! Ik heb veel verschillende hobbies, maar koken vind ik het allerleukste. Zie jij het zitten om een keertje een hele dAg met mij in de keuken te staan? Hopelijk tot snel!
Text 6a *M:* 5.29, *SD:* 2.07	Ik kom niet zomaar iemand tegen door mijn drukke werk, vandaar dat ik Tinder maar een uitprobeer. Ik ben een echt buitenmens en wandel graag. Daarnaast drink ik graag een koffietje en op zijn tijd een wijntje. Het is een perfecte avond als ik dan ook nog een goede film op Netflix heb gevonden.
Text 7a *M:* 6.17, *SD:* 1.69	Hi! Ik ben opzoek naar een gezellige partner die samen veel leuke dingen wil doen. Zelf vind ik het erg leuk om naar het strand te gaan, een goed stuk te fietsen of te touren. Zie jij dit wel zitten? Hopelijk hebben we een match en kunnen we de volgende keer er samen op uit!
Text 8a *M:* 4.79, *SD:* 2.30	Zullen we elkaar beter leren kennen onder het genot van een goede wijn en een lekkere maaltijd? Ik ben op zoek naar iemand die hier ook heel erg van kan genieten. Ik kook graag; mijn curry is mijn specialiteit. Ben jij ook een Bourgondiër? Laten we elkaar vooral ontmoeten!

Text 9a *M:* 5.71, *SD:* 2.12	Hoi! Ik ben een sociaal iemand die graag zich onder de mensen begeeft. Ik hou ervan om lekker druk te zijn en veel dingen te plannen. Mijn weekenden zijn daarom ook nooit saai. Heb jij zin om erop uit te trekken met mij?
Text 10a *M:* 5.88, *SD:* 1.70	Ik ben geen expert in online daten, maar heb besloten het toch eens een kans te geven. Ik ben op zoek naar iemand die ik kan vertrouwen en veel lol mee kan hebben. Ik vind het leuk om in de weekenden leuke activiteiten te ondernemen. Zie jij dit wel zitten? Swipe mij dan naar rechts!

Appendix D. Survey questions

Social attractiveness

McCroskey & McCain (1974):

1. Ik denk dat het leuk is om tijd door te brengen met deze person.

2. Ik denk dat ik bevriend zou kunnen zijn met deze persoon.

3. Ik zou wel een gezellig gesprek met hem/haar willen

Physical attractiveness

McCroskey & McCain (1974):

1. Ik vind deze man/vrouw knap.

2. Ik vind deze man/vrouw aantrekkelijk.

3. Ik vind deze man/vrouw mooi.

Romantic attractiveness

1. Ik voel me niet aangetrokken tot deze persoon.

2. Ik zou een relatie willen met deze persoon.

3. Ik zou verliefd kunnen worden op deze persoon.

Date intention

1. Ik hoef deze persoon niet te ontmoeten in het dagelijkse leven.

2. Ik zou graag chatten met deze persoon.

3. Ik zou graag meer te weten komen over deze persoon.

Swipe intention

1. Ik zou deze persoon liken.

Appendix E. Tinder profiles experiment

Joost

Hallo iedereen! Ik vind het moeilijk om mezelf te omschrijven, maar ik heb het toch Geprobeerd. Ik ben een lief en gezellig persoon die graag reis maar het ook prima vindt om lekker thuis op de bank te zitten. Ik zoek een maatje om dit beide mee te doen. Ben jij geïnteresseert?

Lennard

Sam

Ik zal mezelf even voorstellen. Ik vind reizen en op avontuur gaan heel erg leuk. Daarnaast ma; ik graag een dansje in de stad in een van mijn favoriete kroegen. Op mij kun je rekenen; ik be heel eerlijk en zorgzaam. Ook houd ik van koke en probeer ik graag nieuwe gerechten uit. Wil je een keertje samen een uitgebreid diner op tafe toveren?

Tom

Wie ben ik? In het kort: ik ben een sociaal persoon die vrienden en familie heel erg belangrijk vindt. Daarnaast hou ik van humoor en van samen buikpijn hebben van het lachen. Heb jij goede humor en kun jij tegen slegte grapjes? Swipe mij dan naar rechts.

Rick

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Joris

Sam

Tom

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Lotte

❌ ⭐ 💚

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