National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Department of English Language and Literature

MA Programme "Linguistics: Theory and Applications"

#WeBothSwipedRight: Relational Work in Flirting on Tinder

Evanthia Kavroulaki

217011

Supervisor

Prof. Maria Sifianou

08/02/2019

Declaration

This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of, the work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Maria Sifianou, for supporting the idea of working on this challenging topic and, most importantly, for her constant willingness to provide valuable insights, guidance, inspiration, motivation, and psychological support during this research work. Above all, I would like to express my gratitude to all my friends who helped me with the collection of data, a process which I know was a tough one. Without their immense help, this thesis would have remained just an idea. I am, also, thankful to Dr. Mariza Georgalou for her guidance and encouragement. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who tolerated me at times when I was intolerably stressed and thus endlessly discussing the details of this thesis!

Abstract

Online dating has exploded in popularity in recent years, with a proliferation of dating sites and applications offering an alternative to traditional dating practices. One of the most successful dating applications nowadays is Tinder, a geolocation-based application used to find and interact with prospective romantic partners. Given the prevalence of online dating and Tinder dating, in particular, this study sets out to explore language use while chatting and flirting on Tinder, examining interaction through the linguistic framework of relational work (e.g., Locher 2004, 2006, Locher & Watts 2005, Watts 1989, 2003). Informed by this framework, 198 Tinder naturally-occurring interactions were qualitatively analysed so that relational behaviours pertinent to flirting on Tinder can be pinpointed and better understood. The results of this analysis suggest, among others, that flirting on Tinder can mostly be related to cooperative relationship-management strategies emerging in small talk and self-presentation. These include the exchange of compliments, the display of alignment and concern for the other, and playfulness. Interestingly, non-cooperative behaviours relevant to conflict and rejection are also found in this context. Furthermore, the analysis shows that, although many behaviours seem to have a politeness potential, relational displays and their evaluations can also be politic, impolite, playful etc., thus covering a wide range of behaviours in the relational work spectrum. Since research on the linguistic aspect of online dating has been very limited so far, this study constitutes a first attempt to approach the pragmatics of flirting on Tinder. Therefore, more research is needed in order to be able to make safer claims as to linguistic behaviour in this context.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy

MR. DARCY: It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. Hi ;-)
ELIZABETH: What the fuck.
MR. DARCY: Well, this is the first time that opening line didn't work.
ELIZABETH: I could easily forgive your pride, if you had not mortified mine.
MR. DARCY: So . . . no sexual congress?[1]

At a time when information and communication technologies constitute an integral part of everyday life, it is undeniable that the Internet has led to multiple transformations in the way we perform and think about social relationships and interaction. In terms of romantic relationships, the Internet has offered a variety of channels through which partners can communicate, and as has been reported, it affects extant intimate relationships in both positive and negative ways (Bor & Boehmer 2002). At the same time, it has created opportunities to initiate and maintain interaction with strangers who could potentially become romantic partners. As a result of these new transformations and prospects, social norms continually change, not only in terms of communication with friends and family, but also with regard to interaction among strangers (Bor & Boehmer 2002: 275). In other words, we have welcomed the era of online dating among other internet-related interaction modes.

With more than 1,400 websites aimed at helping people initiate romantic relationships (Bor & Boehmer 2002), online dating or the use of Internet services in

[1] From: *The New Yorker* "Literature's Great Couples on Tinder" https://www.newyorker.com/humor/daily-shouts/literatures-great-couples-on-tinder

order to meet and interact with prospective romantic partners (Heino, Ellison & Gibbs 2010) is becoming more and more popular. Interestingly, it has lately started migrating from online sites to mobile applications, thus becoming even more convenient. Although there are some common characteristics between matchmaking in the online world and its traditional, unmediated counterpart, mainly in terms of self-presentation and assessment of the other (Heino et al. 2010), it is undeniable that online dating has transformed the way we think about meeting prospective companions. Often preferred to face-to-face dating, it offers "a wider pool of potential partners" (Heino et al. 2010: 428), while filtering options facilitate the search for the desirable Other, saving time. In addition to that, mobile holders looking for a romantic partner online can choose among an array of different mobile applications available depending on the specific criteria they have set in order to find a 'perfect' match given their individual needs. Next to generic dating apps such as 'Bumble', there are also apps specifically aimed at the LGBTQ audience, such as 'Grindr' and 'Scissr', while more specialized apps are also available, irrespective of the sexual orientation of daters. For instance, there are special apps for wealthy people who want to meet equally rich people (e.g., 'Luxy'), for people interested only in physically attractive people (e.g., 'BeautifulPeople'), while there are also applications specifically designed for older people (e.g., 'Lumen'), to mention but a few. One of the best-known applications for online dating, and the most downloaded dating app in Greece[2] is Tinder: a geolocation-based app with more than 50 million users throughout the world and 26 million 'matches' a day (Ward 2017).

Tinder, like most dating sites and apps, involves the use of profiles which are created by the members of a platform and are accessed by other members and potential romantic partners who are in search of the 'perfect match', whether that aims

[2] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-2e3f0042-75f6-4bd1-b4fe-9056540c65f8

at a serious relationship or some casual, sexual encounter. Tinder, specifically, draws basic identifying information such as name, age and profile photos from the user's Facebook profile, so that a Tinder profile is created. After creating their profile, daters can start using the app in either its free or one of its paid versions.[3] In order for the application to filter the profiles presented to each member, users are asked, among other things, to define the desirable distance range within which potential partners will be sought. Using the app, people are presented with one user's profile at a time and they have to either swipe right if they are interested in the other person or swipe left if they are not. When both individuals swipe right to each other's profile they are 'matched', and only then can they engage in a conversation. Communication and flirting initially take place on the platform and, depending on the intentions of the individuals, may eventually end up in the offline world where interaction is developed and relationships are worked out (Heino et al. 2010).

The present thesis analyses interaction on the platform of Tinder, approaching it through the linguistic framework of relational work (e.g., Locher 2004, 2006, Locher & Watts 2005, Watts 1989, 2003). Relational work refers to all the 'work' individuals invest in their interaction as they are negotiating their relationship with their interlocutors and constitutes a widely used approach in recent im/politeness research. Viewing politeness as an aspect of a broader framework, relational work is a concept with many 'shades'. Locher and Watts (2005: 11) note that "relational work comprises the entire continuum of verbal behavior from direct, impolite, rude or aggressive interaction through to polite interaction", which means that it enables the exploration of many different interactional phenomena and can facilitate our

[3] There is one free and two paid versions of Tinder, namely Tinder Plus and Tinder Gold. The paid versions offer some premium features, such as unlimited 'likes' and the opportunity to find someone within a greater distance range. There is even the possibility to know who 'liked' your profile before deciding whether to swipe left or right to someone's profile (https://www.help.tinder.com/hc/en-us/articles/115004487406-Tinder-Plus-and-Tinder-Gold-).

understanding of the pragmatics of online flirting. Using this framework, the aim of this thesis is to investigate the linguistic behaviour of Greek-speaking individuals who engage in online dating on Tinder. More specifically, the goal is to explore any patterns that may emerge in this initial-interaction context, looking at the ways users collaboratively manage their interaction on Tinder in order to reach their personal goals. The core research question which, therefore, guides this analysis is the following:

-- What are the relational strategies Tinder users employ while using this application?

Observing how interlocutors initiate, respond to and judge each other's contributions, this piece of research seeks to shed more light on the relational strategies used in this flirting frame, reflecting the users' perceived norms of appropriateness. This exploration will be pursued by looking through naturally occurring Tinder chatlogs, in what seems to be a difficult though promising venture. Importantly, the fact that Tinder does not provide detailed filtering options in terms of the desired characteristics and the intentions of its users (Ward 2017) means that many matches are made between people who seek different things. In Tyson, Perta, Haddadi and Seto's (2016) view, this has also been linked to the fact that a very low number of people decide to meet their matches in real life. However, this is also presumably the reason why Tinder communication can be very illuminating in terms of language practices. In other words, even if people meet online without sharing common interests and motivations for using the app, they are expected to engage in a process of exploring one another, rejecting or accepting the other's views and suggestions, as well as try to build rapport with those they wish to have further communication. These processes will hopefully surface through analysing Tinder discourse.

The importance of exploring the pragmatics of flirting in an online environment lies, at least partially, in the fact that close examination of the language used in dating is rare, since linguistic research in this area is considered to be a 'black box'. This is because access to naturally occurring online and/or offline discourse is limited and delving into private interactions is a hard task (Mortensen 2017), although dating and mate selection, in general, have received much attention from evolutionary, psychological and sociological standpoints (see Surra, Gray, Boettcher, Cottle & West 2006). It is also interesting to note that though much research in relation to online dating has been conducted with regard to self-presentation and self-promoting, impression management and motivations to use some application (see Ward 2017), most research relies on interviews and self-reports rather than natural data. This study hopes to overcome any obstacles related to the nature of the discourse involved and aspires to contribute to the under-researched area of language use in online dating, specifically with regard to interactional pragmatics.

Tinder is selected as the context for this linguistic analysis and preferred over other online environments because its function is to assist flirting and relationship initiation, exclusively. In other words, flirting is the single practice involved in the use of Tinder, thus limiting the scope of the research to flirting per se, leaving out other sorts of social interaction which could be better studied through other platforms, such as social networking ones. Members who start using the app depend on 'text game' in order to fulfil their purposes, and language use is very important, since users can only communicate via text, and, therefore, desire can only be expressed verbally. In the absence of a shared physical context, the chances for the interaction to migrate to an offline setting depend almost exclusively on written, online communication. The significance of language use in terms of successful flirting is, therefore, self-evident and supported in existing online dating literature (see, for example, Mortensen 2017).

To my knowledge, there are no linguistic analyses looking at the flirting game on Tinder from a linguistic perspective, let alone Tinder exchanges with regard to relational work. This is why mapping the area from a linguistic perspective is an interesting first step. Observing how relational work unfolds can be the path towards understanding flirting practices, so that our knowledge of the expression and negotiation of flirtatious intentions will be hopefully advanced and research in the underexamined area of language in online dating can be promoted. At the same time, the study responds to the call for an expansion of contexts for linguistic analysis (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006), as far as language and flirting are concerned, and research in pragmatic phenomena could be enhanced, through the examination of a theory that has not yet been applied to this social situation.

Since more and more people are becoming 'Tinderellas' and 'Tinderellos', knowing how courteous interaction is managed before possible actual, face to face meetings seems a good idea. Also, one could argue that dating is a context inevitably associated with flirting, and courtesy but also with rejection and misunderstandings, and in the context of online dating, in particular, any of those issues may become even more pronounced, given that interactants are strangers and thus lack shared knowledge concerning the interactional preferences of the other. Therefore, in what follows (Chapter 2), I will introduce the theoretical framework of this thesis discussing discursive politeness and relational work (2.1.), the context of digital communication and instant messaging (2.2.), and flirting, online dating and Tinder, in particular (2.3.). Next (Chapter 3), I will present the methodology employed in this study, providing some details about data collection and explaining the ways in which practical and ethical considerations were handled. In the next two chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) I present and discuss the findings yielded after the analysis of data, especially

with regard to cooperative and non-cooperative relational work strategies. Finally, the last chapter (Chapter 6) includes the concluding remarks of this thesis.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Relational Work: From Brown and Levinson's Politeness Model to Postmodern Approaches

The term 'relational work' emerged within the field of linguistic politeness, as a development to early politeness theories. Research in this field was initiated by the highly influential work of Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) and Leech (1983). Of these the most widely used model is that of Brown and Levinson (1978/1987). Inspired by Goffman's (1967) dramaturgical theories, this approach to politeness is based on the concept of 'face' in order to describe what happens in social interaction. The model proposes that when either the positive aspect of 'face' (i.e. the want to be liked and approved of) or its negative aspect (i.e. the want not to be imposed on) is threatened, politeness may emerge as a way to mitigate the threat. Politeness manifests itself through specific super-strategies and their outputs that people use depending on the occasion. Due to the fact that these strategies are well-defined and they are part of a thorough theory, Brown and Levinson's (1978/1987) framework has served as the point of departure for a considerable number of studies on politeness and its importance for later approaches to politeness has been acknowledged (see Locher & Watts 2005 among others).

At the same time, however, the 'success' of the model did not come without criticism. Though it is hard to review all the arguments against this model, the ones that are most relevant for this work are reflected in Eelen's (2001: 119) "triple conceptual bias": the model tends to focus more on the polite end of the politeness/

impoliteness dichotomy, is speaker-oriented, and examines the production of utterances neglecting their uptake. Such criticism led to a shift in politeness research towards more discursive and relation-based approaches, which do not limit their examination of politeness to the utterance level. These approaches tried to go beyond the limitations of Brown and Levinson's (1978/1987) speaker-based model, as well as its dependence on the mutually exclusive 'politeness'/'impoliteness' terms. In an attempt to theorize interaction looking at it from diverse perspectives, different concepts to describe the linguistic aspect of interaction emerged as well. One of these approaches is based on the concept of relational work.

Although discursive approaches are characterised by diversity (a diversity that could, potentially, create confusion), it seems that there are some points of convergence in terms of the way im/politeness is now to be viewed (LPRG 2011). For example, most discursive researchers agree that utterances are not inherently im/polite, but rather im/politeness is the evaluation of interlocutors while they try to negotiate their personal relationships with others. They also point to the messiness of communication which creates the need for any im/politeness analysis to be contextual. Both the message itself and its uptake are taken into equal consideration, and it can often be useful to examine even their trigger and effect so that negotiation of interaction can be put into perspective. This can be achieved by looking at longer stretches of natural discourse (rather than isolated utterances) so that any linguistic choice can be seen as informed by co-text and wider social forces. It may be necessary to note that many discursive approaches follow critical, postmodern thinking in that they do not aim at the establishment of an overarching 'grand narrative', and, therefore, researchers avoid generalizations. According to Locher (2015: 6),

> one of the achievements of what has been termed the 'discursive approaches to politeness research' was to again draw attention to the negotiability of the emic understandings of evaluative concepts such as 'polite', 'impolite', 'rude', etc., and, in connection with this, to highlight the embeddedness of the observed social practices within their local situated framework of the moral order.

Informed by this discursive turn, relational work emerged as an analytical tool proposed by Watts and Locher (e.g., Locher 2004, 2006, Locher & Watts 2005, Watts 1989, 2003). According to this framework, im/politeness surfaces in situated, interpersonal interaction and is just one small part of a more general and inclusive concept, this of relational work, the latter referring "to all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships'' (Locher & Watts 2008: 96). The framework of relational work proposes that interaction is based on norms of appropriateness which individuals may choose to comply with or ignore, and which are dynamically negotiated in the sociocultural context they emerge and are subject to change. Agreeing with the proposition of discursive approaches to im/politeness, that it is 'folk' ('first order') understandings that should be the focus of im/politeness analyses, the researcher is often interested in exploring the judgements of both (or all) interactants on how appropriate specific linguistic behaviours are. Evaluation is based on individuals' frames of expectations, which are the result of their schematic knowledge and experiences. It is obvious, then, that within this framework im/politeness is only one aspect of interpersonal communication: when something is evaluated as polite, the behaviour involved is positively marked and appropriate, while for something to be assessed as impolite, the behaviour in point is negatively marked and inappropriate.

At the same time, it is argued that interaction may not only involve consciously chosen, marked strategies but also unconscious reproductions of social norms through unmarked and socially appropriate behaviour, or what has been termed 'politic' behaviour (Locher & Watts 2005).

Seen through the discursive viewpoint, utterances examined in this framework are not "inherently polite or impolite" (Locher & Watts 2008: 78), while the hearer's judgements are as important as the speaker's. As Locher and Watts (2008: 80) stress,

> a speaker may wish to be aggressive and hurtful, but still not come across as such to the hearer. Alternatively, a hearer may interpret the speaker's utterance as negatively marked with respect to appropriate behaviour, while the speaker did not intentionally wish to appear as such. In a first order approach to impoliteness, it is the interactants' perceptions of communicators' intentions rather than the intentions themselves that determine whether a communicative act is taken to be impolite or not. In other words, the uptake of a message is as important if not more important than the utterer's original intention.

Such perceptions and evaluations are often flexible, first-order ones and not so much second-order, technical terms (see Watts 2005). However, latest postmodern approaches do not deny the importance of second-order concepts, so interactants' judgements are not the exclusive focus in many recent analyses, this thesis included. For example, in relational work, the notion of 'face' as omnipresent and socially negotiated is still a useful one.

The framework of relational work seems to lend itself well to the exploration of online flirting, since courtship can be thought of as learned behaviour and the communicative strategies involved are not just the result of evolutionary forces but

are closely affected by the cultural and temporal context in which they arise (O'Farrell, Rosenthal & O'Neal 2003). Therefore, a framework which emphasizes the importance of sociocultural norms of appropriateness and their fluidity seems more than fitting for the exploration of natural, chat-log data from Tinder. Moreover, relational work seems to have a different orientation compared to other traditional, non-discursive frameworks, since it does not restrict itself to the maintenance of a positive atmosphere based on co-operation, nor does it force the researcher to resort to the aforementioned, traditional politeness/impoliteness dichotomy (Locher 2006). Therefore, it allows the discussion of a greater variety of behaviours within the context of online dating, and will be used as an analytical tool to look at sociocultural norms and their management (Haugh, Kádár & Mills 2013) in dyadic, Tinder interaction.

2.2. The Context of Digital Communication and Instant Messaging

Digital communication has been the focus of much research ever since its advent (Fiore, Taylor, Zhong, Mendelsohn & Cheshire 2010: 1), thus the discussion on its characteristics can be ongoing and multifaceted. For the purposes of the current thesis, I will limit the discussion to elements that seem to be contextually important with regard to the research question relevant to this analysis.

One of the major concerns about digital communication relates to anonymity, which has traditionally been expected to lead to chaotic situations, since people hiding behind a profile could not be held liable for any inappropriate behaviour. Despite these fears, anonymity could also have positive effects, since people interacting in digital environments have lower inhibition and feelings of accountability, thus getting

a feeling of freedom through interaction (Dynel 2015, Lea, Spears & de Groot 2001). At the same time, users of digital channels exert control over their self-presentation to a greater extent (Graham & Hardaker 2017), since they can even reinvent their own personalities when they describe themselves to strangers online. These two possibilities could be the case in Tinder online dating, as well. Appearing only with their first name that can even be substituted with a pseudonym, individuals may feel freer to interact with others, while they have many chances to present themselves to diverse interlocutors. In terms of synchronicity and asynchronicity, communication on Tinder, as in many other modern virtual environments, is conducted through a type of instant messaging (IM), which resembles oral, real world communication in terms of a number of characteristics (Crystal 2006: 45), and is often referred to as a synchronous channel (Baron 2010: 14). [4]

The fact that in digital communication there is absence of the usual, contextual features of face-to-face communication means that interaction "can seem very fragmented, messages overlap, sometimes long gaps can occur" and "messages that are adjacent physically do not necessarily form relevant turns" (Darics 2010: 133). These are characteristics the analyst needs to be aware of so that false interpretation based on turn-taking, for example, can be avoided. At the same time, interactants try to make up for the absence of paralinguistic features, such as gestures and intonation through creative strategies, like unconventional orthography, capitalization, emoticons and GIFs to name but a few. In order to understand these practices, though, interactants "have to rely on their shared understanding of previous experiences in oral interaction in general and transfer the language use of these situations to the computer-mediated setting" (Darics 2010: 137). Through this process, digital

[4] The discussion on synchronicity and asychronicity stresses that the two should not be seen as "polar opposites" (Baron 2010: 15) and I would suggest that this is true especially now that communication channels have advanced possibilities. 'Synchronous' here is used to denote a two-way communication that mostly happens in real time, though remaining sensitive to the schedules of users. Interactants can (and do) still respond at their convenience.

communicators create and share norms and practices in their online communities and, in cases where there is no shared knowledge, things may get more complex in terms of mutual understanding. It is, thus, evident that digital interaction (like any interaction) is not defined exclusively by the messages sent or received per se, but it is rather based on the negotiation of these messages through their co-construction by their audience and recipient(s) (Mey 2018: 19).

In terms of the pragmatics of digital communication, it seems that the selected medium of interaction affects the practices involved, while it can also be the case that users adjust their digital behaviour to suit their relational objectives. For example, trying to approach politeness phenomena from an interactional politeness viewpoint, Darics (2010: 142–143) suggests that although economizing is a typical feature of digital interaction, when there is the risk of losing face or this of communication break-down, economizing comes second and politeness is prioritized, so norms of face-to-face politeness may be followed even if that means that interactants have to double typing time and effort. Graham and Hardaker (2017) also point to the importance of situating phenomena in the context of each specific platform that is under investigation, since constraints can have an impact on the way language is used. Therefore, in the next section the context of online dating and Tinder is discussed.

2.3. Flirting, Online Dating and Tinder

2.3.1. The Language of Flirting and Online Dating

The practice of flirting and the language of flirtatious interaction seem to be topics that challenge researchers, irrespective of whether desire manifests itself in offline or

online settings. Kiesling (2011, 2013), sees flirting as an off-record strategy (in Brown and Levinson's sense), depending on cooperation and negotiation, and thus establishes a relationship between flirting and politeness. He argues that the subtle nature of flirting is especially helpful when there is the prospect of desire being one-sided, much like an off-record invitation or a request: "one can make a 'flirt bid,' but if it is not picked up, it is not as face-threatening as being turned down after asking for a date" (Kiesling 2013: 107). In this way, Kiesling highlights the importance of indirectness and ambiguity, two characteristics of flirtatious behaviour that have politeness potential and which have been linked not only to offline (see, also, Clark, Shaver & Abrahams 1999), but also to online flirting, being attributed to the text-based nature of the latter (Chayko 2008, Gershon 2010).

Online dating has recently become a very popular digital activity. Its popularity is probably the result of its affordances: it is convenient, creates no real-time burden, and offers a variety of options in terms of interactants so that users have more opportunities to meet a future partner (Best & Delmege 2012, Chayko 2008, Heino et al. 2010, Xia, Ribeiro, Chen, Liu & Towsley 2013). Online daters can go through a great number of profiles in a process that can lead to offline interaction (Mortensen 2017), may that be romantic, sexual or both. Taking place in a mediated environment characterised by physical distance, informality and often anonymity, it is no wonder why the popularity of online dating has seen such a surge, especially given the restrictions of the modern way of living, when active search of love is concerned. In research about motivations for online dating through questionnaires (see, e.g., Gatter & Hodkinson 2016), apart from meeting a new partner, online daters mention a variety of other motives and benefits related to matchmaking sites and apps. For some, online dating interaction is an ego-boost since it seems to validate their attractiveness (Chayko 2008). Others use platforms for fun, while there are also those

who seek serious relationships (Ward 2017). Chayko (2008) even suggests that it is possible that relationships initiated in the online world have great chances to work out offline, since personal information is already shared and compatibility between partners is assessed early on during their online communication, to which enough time is often devoted. At the same time, it cannot be denied that the advantages of online dating often come at a price. For example, many argue that online dating promotes a 'shopping culture' (Best & Delmege 2012, Heino et al. 2010), which has both advantages and disadvantages for the people involved in it, especially when dating is an ongoing process. Some users, also, claim that this kind of interaction is sterile and the magic of 'real' dating is lost (Heino et al. 2010).

The context of online dating seems to be very inviting in terms of linguistic research, partly because communication takes place through text and almost exclusively between strangers. This is one of the factors distinguishing flirting in online dating platforms from flirting in other social networks like Instagram and Facebook (Best & Delmege 2012). Mortensen (2017: 585) also argues that this context differs from others since it "functions as a frame that invites and legitimizes romantic interaction" adding that it "works as a constant backdrop that endorses romantic and sexual advance". Therefore, language is important even at a pre-textual level, when daters try to filter out unsuitable matches based on word choice in their bio descriptions (Best & Delmege 2012: 238), and becomes even more important at a first-interaction level. Gibbs, Ellison and Lai (2011) investigated, among others, the ways online daters employ uncertainty reduction strategies, looking at the way individuals validate and share personal information while communicating. Since daters are strangers who do not share some physical context and who cannot depend on non-verbal cues to evaluate the credibility of each other's statements and claims, it is normal that greater uncertainty will emerge, making communication a complex

process. Mutual understanding, then, and the prospect of a viable future relationship depend highly on self-disclosure. Online daters share personal information, both to show that they abide by social expectations and have a job, for instance, and to stand out and present themselves as unique individuals with dating potential. Still, they are aware of the risks involved in their interlocutor being dishonest in their own self-disclosure. Therefore, in their initial interaction with others, users try to verify the information provided through a number of information-seeking strategies. According to Gibbs et al. (2011) apart from directly asking questions, these strategies involve using other communication channels to verify identity (e.g., through the exchange of phone numbers and/or email addresses), and using social and/or professional networking sites, or Google to validate identity information.

Despite the importance of language in dating processes, linguistics is only barely represented in the dating literature, especially with regard to online dating. In contrast, dating is of concern in various other disciplines like psychology, sociology, interpersonal communication and cultural theory (Best & Delmege 2012). In the last couple of decades, there have been numerous studies on different aspects of dating and flirting, such as the role of evolutionary processes and societal conditions under which romance unfolds (Surra et al. 2006), mating preferences (see McDaniel 2005), flirting styles in relationship initiation (Hall, Carter, Cody & Albright 2010), and especially self-presentation (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006). However, what should be noted is that most research in the field of online dating is based on self-reports and interviews, exploring dating sites rather than applications like Tinder. From the above, it transpires that the discourse of online flirting has received hardly any scholarly attention so far. In one of the few studies on the language of online dating, Mortensen (2017) explores what she calls ‘imagined togetherness’ (i.e. hinting at a shared future), as a strategy which online daters use to make flirting relevant while

exchanging biographical information. The aim of the study was to better understand the implicit nature of flirting, approaching online dating sites in a micro-level linguistic and interactional analysis. The findings of the study validate the role of implicitness and ambiguity (see Kiesling 2011, 2013 mentioned earlier) as key characteristics of flirting, since they protect users from rejection and boost excitement. Mortensen (2017) also notes that this implicitness of flirting practices makes it difficult to draw a line between what is considered flirting and what is not, and, therefore, some phenomena may go unnoticed while examining presumably flirtatious instances, thus making the analyst's job even harder. Heino et al. (2010), also, explored the way users of dating sites experience their initial interaction with other users through accepting or resisting the metaphor of dating as a marketplace and studied how this metaphor affects the strategies used and dating ideologies.

Another study touching upon the linguistic aspect of online flirting is that of del-Teso-Craviotto (2006), who examined English and Spanish dating chatrooms and found that cyberflirting often involves the creation of a play frame, in which users feel safer. This frame provides an excuse for users when norms of appropriateness are not followed, while it also promotes feelings of intimacy and protects them from the risks of exposure inherent in the expression of erotic or sexual feelings. This finding is in line with Chayko's (2008) observation that flirting is related to playfulness, occasionally belonging to the fun side of social interaction. According to Chayko (2008: 76),

> we learn to flirt online much as we do face-to-face, by adopting a "playful and ironic" self-description, attitude, and tone, and, if writing, attempting to translate those things to text. As one's tone of voice is absent in the written word, we must spend extra time when conversing textually to ensure that our

> words match our intent as closely as possible. In addition, such matters as the pace of the communication and pattern of the turn-taking take on additional significance.

However, the aforementioned displays depend highly on the specific platform chosen for dating interaction. Therefore, the affordances and limitations of Tinder can carry meaning and should be taken into consideration while analysing interaction occurring on this application. Since the medium chosen as a communication channel can affect the message involved (Gershon, 2010), the next section provides some details, which relate specifically to Tinder.

2.3.2. Tinder

As has already been mentioned, research on online dating is limited, especially as regards the linguistic aspects of interaction on dating sites and applications. However, before proceeding with the discussion of what little is available, a few words on the Tinder application itself are in order. Tinder is a geolocation-based dating application, which first appeared on mobile screens in 2012 and has achieved international popularity ever since, with a total of 20 billion matches so far. Used in more than 190 countries,[5] Tinder can be considered a 'social phenomenon', to borrow the term used in Tyson et al. (2016). With its distinctive fire icon, which establishes its relationship with flirting and dating through the visual representation of the already known conceptual metaphor of desire as fire (Deignan 2002: 24), Tinder is the first most popular dating application in Greece, as has already been mentioned. Its ground-breaking facility is that it enables its users to discover and communicate with other

[5] https://www.gotinder.com/press

people who are within a specific distance range, a feature which constitutes one of the differences between Tinder and other popular dating apps and sites (Ward 2017), since the criterion for matching with other people is not, for example, mutual interests but locality (Tyson et al. 2016).

Tinder users create profiles, which contain some basic information automatically drawn from the users' Facebook profiles, such as their age and a few photos, and optionally some information about their work and educational background. There is also the possibility for a short bio, while some users decide to connect their Instagram or Spotify accounts to their profiles, so that more photos or their musical interests are occasionally available. After creating their Tinder profiles and selecting the criteria for their preferred potential daters (i.e. gender, distance and age range only), the app presents each user with one primary photo of another user who matches their criteria. Tapping the photo, users can view some more photos of the individual, while at the bottom of the screen there are five icons, among which are a heart icon and a cross icon. Tapping on either icon the user can respond to the photo by 'liking' or 'disliking' the user. The same can be done through swiping right and left, respectively, in a practice that seems very simple and stress-free (Freitas 2017). Therefore, the process of accepting or rejecting someone starts at a pre-chat phase. Users are not aware of who or how many users have liked or rejected them, except when both users have swiped right to each other and have become a match. The only way a user can become aware of someone who likes them is when the latter has 'Super Liked' them, through tapping on another icon. This is the only thing users can do to make their interest visible to the other a priori, though Super Likes are limited to one per day in the free version of the application.

Interestingly, no notification is received when a profile is rejected or when the like is 'one-sided'. When matched, users receive an 'It's a Match!' notification,

prompting them to either ‘Send Message’ or ‘Keep Swiping’. The application sends users notifications to ‘encourage’ them to chat once they are matched and get back to the text game when they have not used the application for some time. This is done creatively, through a great range of different notifications that users receive encouraging Tinder activity (see Appendix 1). As in many online environments, Tinder communication is text-based, and users can depend on a very limited selection of non-verbal elements (Ward 2017), such as emojis and GIFs. Moreover, users cannot exchange photos, videos or voice messages unlike in other applications.

Due to Tinder’s limited filtering options, users are presented with potential ‘matches’ based on a few, very specific criteria, while restrictions in terms of cues also apply to the amount of information presented in a profile. This means that in most cases users get to navigate through numerous profiles, and in order to select whether they would like to try and communicate with a person or not, they are obliged to decide on the basis of limited profile information, contrary to what happens in many online dating sites (cf. Xia et al. 2013). Therefore, more often than not, users judge whether they will swipe right to a profile or not based on the other person’s photos only. In this way, personality characteristics are not available to users prior to matching with others, which is why Tinder is often referred to as a “cut-down” version of online dating (Tyson et al. 2016).

The fact that Tinder offers limited cues prior to matching is an important feature that renders it an interesting context for linguistic research. Limited cues could, probably, be one reason why the rumour circulating around this application is that it is mostly used for casual “hook-ups” (Ward 2017: 1650), or that Tinder users are often in despair (Freitas 2017: 196). Since the criterion upon which matches are made is physical appearance, a criterion commonly thought of as superficial one, it is not surprising that use of this application is often considered a stigmatized activity.

Ward (2017) suggests that stigmatization is probably a reason why claiming to use Tinder just for entertainment sounds more socially acceptable. Stigmatization, however, is not exclusively related to Tinder, but rather to online dating in general. del-Teso-Craviotto, discussing cyberdating in dating chatrooms explains that

> conversations are often riveted by erotic innuendoes, flirty remarks, or sexually explicit jokes, which adds an additional social stigma to the participation in these cyberspaces, namely, the negative connotations associated with actively looking for sex, love, and romance – as opposed to the 'natural' way, which is letting destiny or Cupid do the work for you. Consequently, participants find pleasure in getting involved in the dynamics of Internet flirting, but at the same time they must show to other participants that they are not losers, people without social skills, or psychopaths. (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006: 465).

Nevertheless, it has been suggested that lately the stigma is diminishing and online dating has started to become more socially acceptable (Bor & Boehmer 2002, Ellison, Heino & Gibbs 2006, Gatter & Hodkinson 2016, Gibbs, Ellison & Lai 2011), while it is also true that the fact that cues are limited does not necessarily impede communication, since small cues can be enough for online daters to draw inferences and assess whether another user qualifies as a potential dater or not (Ellison et al. 2006).

As already mentioned, research on Tinder is scarce (Tyson et al. 2016, Ward 2017). Issues explored in the extant literature are mainly user characteristics, self-presentation and motivations to use the application. In terms of the first, Tyson et al. (2016) found that the average Tinder user is in their mid-twenties, a finding which

again may explain Tinder's reputation as an application useful for casual relationships, since this kind of relationship would probably not suit older users (see, also, Gatter & Hodkinson 2016). On the other hand, Gatter & Hodkinson, (2016), who explored differences in terms of user characteristics and motivations in Tinder and online dating agencies, found no significant differences either between Tinder users and users of online dating sites, or between Tinder users and general population, thus providing evidence against the aforementioned age-specific view.

Ward (2017) explored self-presentation on Tinder through interviewing Tinder users in the Netherlands. In her research, she provides some interesting insights concerning user experiences and motivations to use the application. The study also suggests that people use the limited cues the medium offers as a way to present themselves and 'decode' others, and that while using the app they often experiment in their profile choices trying to find the best way to become more accepted by other users. Gender differences have also been studied. Women may get a larger number of matches and in less time than men. This may result from women's high selectivity concerning their matches, since they only 'like' a small number of men (Tyson et al. 2016). Men, on the other hand, like most profiles they view in a more superficial and casual way, potentially because they achieve a very small number of matches and because they tend to be more sexually permissive (Gatter & Hodkinson 2016, Tyson et al. 2016). These Tinder-specific findings are in accord with similar research in the more general context of online dating (Fiore et al. 2010, Xia et al. 2013).

3. Data and Methodology

3.1. Collecting Natural Data

In order to explore language use in the context of Tinder dating, this study employed natural data granted to the analyst by Tinder users. This decision was informed by the generally accepted claim that pragmatic analyses through a discursive approach should employ naturally occurring data (Grainger 2011, Locher & Watts 2008, LPRG 2011), so that emergent phenomena can be viewed as situated and interactionally managed. In addition, according to Locher & Graham (2010: 3), when adopting a pragmatic perspective, analysts should engage themselves in a thorough examination of the ways in which language is used by social actors in the process of shaping and defining their relationships, as well as explore the way these relationships shape language in use. Both these purposes are best facilitated by examining natural data. In addition, given that most research in the field of online dating is "experimental and reported" in nature (Mortensen 2017: 581), using natural data is a much-desired contribution (Mortensen 2015). Apart from having occurred naturally, the data used in this study has another advantage. It derives from interactions between users of the application, all of which took place prior to the present study. This means that all dialogues considered occurred spontaneously, as the result of the real wish of users to communicate with potential romantic partners and are not the product of the researcher's request for data. Since the dialogues pre-existed and were not produced to fit the purposes of the current study, research bias is minimized. This decision, also, seemed less risky in terms of ethics and quality of data, compared to other methods of

data collection, such as asking people to use Tinder and record their messages for the sake of the study or using 'curated' profiles (cf. Tyson et al. 2016). However, tackling naturally-occurring conversations for research purposes is not an easy task, let alone when the research involved is related to dating, where access to personal discourse is fraught with even greater difficulty and is thus limited (Mortensen 2017). This difficulty inherent in any attempt to delve into private interactions relates to practical and ethical limitations (Mortensen 2017), both of which are discussed in the following subsections.

3.2. Practical Difficulties

The practical difficulties this study was met with relate to accessing an adequate number of dialogues by persuading Tinder users to 'donate' data for research purposes. This venture was rather hard, not only because these dialogues are very personal, but also because Tinder is often considered stigmatized, as has already been mentioned and thus many users were sceptical about sharing their logs with the researcher. Given the difficulty, the sampling method employed was this of snow-ball sampling (Saumure & Given 2008). Since Tinder population is hard-to-reach, I started with friends and friends of friends who I knew were Tinder users and then asked them to invite other users they knew. This method was decided upon because participants had to meet specific criteria, i.e. be actual users of the particular dating application and willing to participate in the study. Users were informed about a study broadly construed as one about use of language in Tinder and were recruited through requests made by word of mouth. The sampling method facilitated data collection, creating a climate of trust for the users, since the researcher was not a complete stranger but

rather a friend or an acquaintance, so they could feel safer in ‘exposing themselves’ granting me access to their personal logs.

Another difficulty encountered has to do with the temporality of Tinder logs. More specifically, when users ‘unmatch’ or are ‘unmatched’ by another user, their dialogues are deleted, which is also the case when users delete their accounts. This made things more complicated, since a number of users willing to participate could not access some or all of their past dialogues. Despite these difficulties, the data collected spanned approximately 2 months and derived from a sample of 15 people who accepted the invitation to contribute to the research and provided consent. The present conversational data set consists of 198 interactions between heterosexual individuals, ranging from 1 to over 10,000 words and the vast majority of them are held in Greek.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

In addition to the data collection difficulties, researchers are faced with ethical considerations, too, when dealing with natural data. According to Graham & Hardaker (2017: 800), quality research in digital interaction can be complicated, and every methodological account concerning it should include an ethical component discussing the way the particular research intends to minimize any potential risk for participants. They argue that, towards this direction, two steps should be taken: first, the researcher should obtain consent from the individuals involved, and second remove any personally identifying information. This is in line with the general ‘principle of care’, which “requires the researcher to exercise empathy and care for her participants and ensure to the greatest extent possible to give back to the community” (Mortensen

2015: 2). These guidelines were followed in this piece of research; however, in most cases consent was acquired from only one of the two interlocutors.[6] This is due to the fact that those who volunteered to donate their conversations were free to decide whether they felt comfortable enough with any of their interlocutors to ask for their consent. This decision seemed ethically correct, in that it gave volunteers agentive power (see Mortensen 2015) and their preferences were totally respected. However, it should be noted here that this data set was treated separately: in cases when consent of only one of the two interlocutors was obtained, the discussions were not reproduced in direct quotation. When examples of dyadic interaction are presented, these are exclusively drawn from the few interactions for which the researcher has both interlocutors' consent and all single-turn, direct quotes appearing in the current thesis derive from messages sent by users who have consented to the study. This means that ethical concerns in terms of rights of data ownership were minimized. It also follows, though, that only a small number of practices discussed in this study could be illustrated through actual examples. Acquiring consent from both parts proved to be extremely challenging, especially because it involved communicating retrospectively with people users often had one-off contact.

The most common concern of (potential) participants was that sensitive information would be included in the natural data obtained. For this reason, all participants were informed about privacy issues through an informed consent form (see Appendix 2), which participants read and signed before contributing to this study, noting whether they also had the consent of any of their interlocutors or not. In this briefing consent form, users were reassured that no potentially identifying information would be included in the study. They were also invited to eliminate any information they considered sensitive and remove any screenshot photos and user names,

[6] The problem of not ensuring informed consent by all individuals participating directly or indirectly in research is also highlighted by Mortensen (2015) who faced the same challenge.

especially for the interactions they could not acquire their interlocutors' consent. Knowing that this could be a tiresome process in which some of the participants would not be willing to get engaged, I guaranteed that I would erase any information that I considered sensitive, such as workplace address and Facebook account name. Therefore, no identifiable information is recorded in the data and all names are pseudonyms.

It is important to note that there is, often, no general consensus in terms of ethical guidelines (Graham & Hardaker 2017, Mortensen 2015) and the final decision on how to deal with ethics remains in the hands of the researcher.[7] Especially in terms of dating research and intimate interaction, ethical questions are posed at every step involved, from data collection and recording to research publishing, and they become even harder in the online setting (see Mortensen 2015 for a detailed account). In the case of the present study, the steps taken to respond to the ethical challenges inherent in this research were, to the researcher's view, the best possible ones to protect participants' privacy without compromising the quality of the research. Since this online dating scene involves private discussions, it was a matter of common sense to seek ethical consent and remove any identifying details, not only for reasons of research integrity but also to encourage individuals to contribute to the research.

3.4. The Use of Questionnaires

After being informed about practical and ethical issues relevant to data collection, participants were asked to respond to a very brief questionnaire (see Appendix 3) concerning a limited range of user characteristics, such as gender and age and

[7] Nevertheless, according to Graham & Hardaker (2017: 801), seeking informed consent is advisable when private data is concerned.

motivations to use the application. Information about the aforementioned user characteristics was considered important towards having a better-informed data analysis in the framework of discursive politeness, also given that communication is always situated and should be examined as such (Sillars & Vangelisti 2006: 345).

At the same time, however, the questionnaire was kept short, first because the primary focus of the study is interaction per se, and second because the task assigned to participants in terms of providing their data was already considered great imposition, so no additional burden in terms of an elaborate questionnaire would be a good idea. A brief, focused, questionnaire, then, was seen as an assistive tool to the interpretation of language data, without, however, making general claims concerning user characteristics, especially since this has already been a research topic in the Tinder literature (see Gatter & Hodkinson 2016, Ward 2017). It may be interesting to note that although the researcher only asked for screenshot conversations without requesting any information except for what was included in the questionnaire, some participants voluntarily provided some unprompted, extra information about some specific conversations, such as whether they met offline with the individual they talked on Tinder or not.

3.5. Method of Analysis

The data collected was analysed qualitatively rather than quantitatively, so that micro-level aspects of interaction could be looked at in a conversation-analysis inspired manner. A qualitative approach seems particularly useful for the purposes of this study, since any findings are not theory-driven but the result of a real-life situation that is looked at through the user's own words (Shapiro 2005, as cited in

Best & Delmege, 2012). Qualitative research enables an in-depth exploration of phenomena, and all conclusions are grounded in their real setting, which is why this method is favoured in discursive frameworks (LPRG 2011). Best and Delmege (2012: 244) also stress that "a qualitative methodology is particularly suited to research that intends to uncover shifts in the fabric of cultural, power and norm-based relations, which might otherwise be missed or misinterpreted". Therefore, in the current work, an interpretive, close-observation and qualitative approach to interactional phenomena was used, so that norm-related perceptions and relationship negotiation can be understood through the participants' own instances of verbal communication. This was done with the hope that both conscious and unconscious choices would reveal potentially informative relational patterns. Therefore, contextual factors were taken into account and complete discussion logs were analysed, when possible. Thus, this thesis follows Locher's proposition regarding a holistic approach to interactional phenomena (2015: 8) and it is not based on predefined notions of im/politeness, neither does it aim to propose a generalizable model of relational work. The aim is rather to understand the processes through which speakers and hearers understand and negotiate notions, as these are presented to the researcher in their manifestation in interaction.

4. Data analysis

The qualitative analysis of interactions enabled the identification of distinct practices present in social interaction on Tinder, so that the linguistic area of flirting on the platform can be mapped. It is suggested that the attempt at flirting on Tinder involves various linguistic behaviours, not all of which are indicative of cooperation. The patterns which emerged in the present data set, from flirting initiation to its building or failure, are presented in the following sections, and explored on the basis of the relational work invested. First, I present the findings and discuss issues relevant to interaction initiation and reciprocation. Then, I proceed to consider flirting strategies of cooperative nature and, finally, conflictual interaction.

4.1. Interaction Initiation: Who Initiates the Interaction and How

As is the case with face-to-face encounters, initiation is an important part of Tinder interaction since it 'sets the ball rolling' in terms of getting acquainted with a newly acquired 'match'. In the present data, the vast majority of introductory messages are sent by male users. More specifically, only 8% of the 193 interaction initiations recorded in the data are made by female users. The remaining 92% are made by men trying to start communication in various ways. This may be justified by the fact that women often avoid initiating courtship and let men initiate it instead, so that they can escape a negative first impression and possibly out of fear of rejection (McDaniel 2005). This tendency shows that this data set does not challenge the anecdotal,

traditional norm that men should make the 'first move', which can also be associated with a more traditional style of flirting, according to which traditional gender roles set the limits for behaving and women are more passive than men while flirting (Hall et al. 2010: 369).

The majority of initial messages are of the conventional 'hi, how are you' type, often made slightly less conventional through the use of creative strategies typical of computer mediated communication, like repetition of vowels to signal intonation as if in oral speech, diminutivised first names and greetings including the word 'match' as a term of address instead of names. Greetings and 'how-are-yous' present at the introductory stage of communication are also used to re-initiate discussion after some time has passed and when Tinder interaction spans more than one day. The use of terms of endearment which have a complimenting overtone, such as the term *όμορφη* 'beautiful' in messages such as *γειά σου όμορφη* 'hello beautiful' was also common in a number of initiations. Complimenting terms of endearment range from mild ones, most often embedded in greetings instead of a first name, to more explicitly eroticized ones. In addition, a smaller number of users start chatting in more creative ways. For example, some opt for visual content, sending greeting GIFs or emojis, often accompanied by funny statements. Interestingly, creative uses of language in order to spark interaction often involve humour. Greeting the other, for example, showing familiarity and intimacy and asking questions as if they already know the other (example 1), 'advertising' themselves and indirectly expressing how their 'perfect match' is are examples of humorous initiations.

(1) Λίζα:[8] Lazareeee
Kai esu edw

[8] All user names have been replaced by pseudonyms.

Lisa: Lazaroooos
You are here too

Occasionally one-word attention-getters, typical of oral communication are also used (example 2).

(2) Λίζα: Επ π

Lisa: Ho

Finally, asking questions and making observations drawing on available cues, such as bio information and photos seems to be a common ice-breaking strategy, which also enables the initiation of interaction through compliments. For example, a male user, drawing on one of his interactant's photos and her age, congratulated her on her newly-acquired degree and complimented her on completing her studies early as a way to initiate interaction. It seems that, in the present data, most users avoid a potentially risky creative initiation and opt for more conventionalised types of introductory messages (Table 1). It should be noted that playfulness, drawing on available cues and complimenting behaviour are three practices which are also present in later stages and are, thus, discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Table 1. Linguistic strategies employed in interaction initiation

Type of Message	*Number (out of 193)*
Greeting and/or 'how-are-yous'	116
GIFs or emojis (with or without text)	21
Greeting and complimenting term of endearment	13
Comment about available cues	15
Creative openings	12
One-word attention getter/name in vocative	8
Compliment	8

4.2. Unreciprocated Messages

An interesting finding emerging through the analysis of the data is that a great number of messages sent to initiate interaction remain unreciprocated. Although we cannot draw generalizations on the basis of the percentage of unreciprocated messages, since we know for sure that not all data 'donors' contributed all their logs, we can nevertheless observe that in the present data set there is a significant number of messages which got no reply. Some of this data consist of a single turn, while other unreciprocated logs consist of up to 10 turns of messages (sent in the period of 8 whole months), showing the willingness of the initiator to try hard (though in vain) for a reply. It is noteworthy, that the majority of unreciprocated messages are addressed to women. This may show that women are pickier, probably justified by the fact that female users are more popular than male ones and thus have more options as to whom they respond (Fiore et al. 2010).

Trying to understand whether there are any patterns that can explain how users decide whether to respond to someone or not, unreciprocated messages were micro-analysed to see if the use of language could be a contributing factor. This question was motivated by one of the data contributors who voluntarily told me about her dislike for conventional openings. As she told me, in her bio she wrote that "if you cannot think of something better than the 'creative' "hi, how are you?" message, don't even bother".[9] However, given that the majority of available reciprocated messages are conventional, and since looking at the number of different conventional and unconventional unreciprocated messages (Table 2) did not prove to be informative, we cannot assume that conventionality is the reason users avoid responding. We can,

[9] I have the user's permission to reproduce their bio information.

neither, safely assess whether language use is an important factor predicting reciprocation, since the picture is not so clear, and a number of more creatively expressed messages are also left unreciprocated. Having said that, the fact that the majority (over 50%) of unreciprocated messages are of the highly conventional type could possibly suggest that in this particular environment conventionality in initiation may not be the best idea. This trend could be related to the fact that conventionality goes against the need of at least some participants to select matches among those who stand out from the numerous potential daters in the Tinder pool. Nevertheless, it seems that a larger data set is needed to understand the potential role of language in motivating non/reciprocation of initial messages on Tinder.

Table 2. Different types of unreciprocated messages

Type of Message	*Number (out of 75)*
Single-turn: conventional (greeting and 'how-are-yous')	38
Single-turn: creative (use of emoji, GIF or other)	18
Single-turn: compliment	10
Multiple turns	9

4.3. Cooperative Management of Courtship

Despite the non-cooperative behaviour of some and the fact that many initial messages may never receive a reply, the majority of interactions (92%) are generally cooperative. Users engage in small talk and self-presentation practices, exchange compliments, align with their interlocutor and present themselves as in need of the other, show concern and become playful, while they also often invite their 'match' to continue their communication on another platform and/or meet offline. These practices will be considered in the following sections.

4.3.1. Small Talk and Self-presentation

In the vast majority of chat-logs accessed for the purposes of the present analysis, interactants engage in small talk and self-presentation practices. Although phatic communication is a common practice when individuals meet for the first-time (Pillet-Shore 2011), the conventionality of phatic communication is commented upon by a small number of users, who receive or even initiate a conventional, phatic comment. For example, one user said to his interlocutor that asking how one is sounds awkward since this person is a stranger. Nevertheless, the majority of users still resorted to such initial enquiries.

Self-presentation is also present in most interactions. Whether the logs accessed represent communication that took place in the span of many days or just a few hours, most interactants talk about their jobs, interests, the way their day has been so far or what they are going through in a particular period, and they also invite their interlocutor to do the same. Self-disclosures are both minimal, in that they only respond to the particular question which prompted them, and extended, often including other pieces of information voluntarily offered. Engaging in self-representation through asking and answering questions, participants start to get to know each other, proving that elicitation of self-disclosure and showing interest in the other are common in courtship initiation to encourage intimacy (Hall, Cody, Jackson & Flesh 2008, Hall et al. 2010). Disclosure and the exchange of personal information are also important because they function as uncertainty reduction techniques (Gibbs et al. 2011), helping users understand whether their interlocutors are truthful in how they present themselves. A number of users do not, even, hesitate to make revelations about personal matters, such as the death of a family member, although

communication may have only begun a few minutes before. In many chat logs, interactants use cues instantly available to them in their 'match's' profile, most usually drawing on photos and bios, in order to keep the discussion going. These cues give interactants the opportunity to ask further questions and, as a result, they often end up discussing related topics in long stretches of discourse. Through this process, they can present themselves in ways they deem most flattering, thus maintaining and enhancing their face. At the same time, users collect necessary information to guide their decision as to whether the other is a potential real-life 'match', or they should continue swiping right to other users. Since personal information is exchanged, users can not only detect misrepresentation but also understand the other's intentions while using the application, so problems can be avoided. When users engage in small talk and when they exchange information in the process of introducing themselves and getting to know their 'match' they are mostly non-polite or politic. This means that their linguistic behaviour is socially acceptable and unmarked, in that their interlocutor is not prompted to comment on this behaviour, and communication flows in a cooperative manner (example 3).[10]

(3) Τζένη: Δουλεύεις εδώ;
Ολιβιέ: Ναι, δουλεύω σε εταιρία που αναλαμβάνει customer support
Nothing too fancy alla sxetika kala gia edw
T: *Do u like it?*
O: *I'm bored most of the time but I like my colleagues, we have fun there*
T: *Hahahahah*
Typical of most jobs here
I can identify 😜
O: *But you like your job right?*
T: *I like my subject, I don't really like the way things are done in the field*

[10] In this exchange, as in some others, the users often switch from Greek to English and vice versa. The woman is Greek, while the man is a bilingual French-Greek speaker, so English is frequently used as a lingua franca. The chunks in English are reproduced in italics.

Jenny:	Do you work here?
Olivier:	Yes, I work for a customer support company Nothing too fancy but more or less OK for Greece
J:	Do u like it?
O:	I'm bored most of the time but I like my colleagues, we have fun there
J:	Hahahahah Typical of most jobs here I can identify 😛
O:	But you like your job right?
J:	I like my subject, I don't really like the way things are done in the field

4.3.2. Exchange of Compliments

Drawing on available cues and newly acquired information during small talk and self-presentation, users can often become flirtatious. For example, this can be achieved through compliments, which have been found to play a role in flirting behaviour (Golato 2005: 211). In the current Tinder logs, compliments, whether direct or indirect, reciprocated or unreciprocated, are present more often than not. Users compliment one another on their appearance or the activities they are involved in, as shown in photos. Compliments on appearance have generally been considered the most frequently occurring type of compliment and are common in Greek interactions, too (Placencia & Lower 2013, Sifianou 2001). Interestingly, users go further than that and once interaction is established, many of them compliment the other on cues which are not readily accessible through photos, such as their sense of humour, their creativity and the way they have managed to keep boredom at bay in relation to their current communication (example 4).

(4) Ολιβιέ: Egw eimai gallos opws katalaves :D
Alla menw edw arketa xronia
Τζένη: Τα ελληνικα σου φαινονται πολύ καλα παντως :)

Olivier: I am French as you understand :D
But I have lived here for many years
Jenny: Your Greek sounds very good though :)

Sometimes, compliments are not straightforwardly directed towards the other user, but to the quality of their co-constructed interaction, suggesting, for example, that their interaction has been successful, and possibly hinting at the prospect of successful future encounters (example 5).

(5) Ολιβιέ: *So we 'll make the same jokes*
Αυτό θα πει συνεννόηση

Olivier: So we 'll make the same jokes
That's what coordination means

Comments like these provide evidence for the importance of language use at this stage. Users seem to be happy to understand that their digital communication is smooth because this can somehow guarantee the potential of a successful, future face-to-face interaction. In this way, they appear to be proactive, trying to avoid a potential real-life failure of communication. In terms of uptake, compliments are mostly followed by a one-word thanking phrase, which is a common and 'safe' choice of an appreciative response (Grainger 2013: 34), while users return the compliments paid to them only occasionally. It should be noted that many compliment recipients avoid responding to them and just proceed with another topic, probably because they feel embarrassed (see, e.g., Golato 2005). Interestingly, though rarely, users respond to compliments in more creative ways. For example, one female user responds to two

different compliments on her beauty (both embedded in ‘how-are-you’ sequences) through playful self-praise (examples 6, 7).

(6) Παψε υπερβολικε 😛
Καλα ομορφαινω εσυ;

Stop it, you are exaggerating 😛
Fine I keep getting more beautiful you?

(7) Καλα ειμαι η ομορφη 😛
Εσυ

Fine me the beautiful one 😛
You

Although such responses may seem absurd and could be taken as self-praise, these self-oriented compliments are rather playful than sincere. Exaggerating through self-oriented humour (Haugh 2011: 173), the speaker seems to ridicule her own utterance, which is further supported by the use of the same emoji in both cases, denoting jocular intentions.

Compliments have traditionally been considered a display of cooperation, solidarity and understanding towards the other’s face needs and desires, and their rapport-building potential has often been discussed in the relevant literature (see Placencia & Lower 2013, Sifianou 2001). According to Sifianou (2001: 399), complimenting can be face-enhancing not only for the recipient but also for the complimenter, since in this way both can present themselves as cooperative and considerate of their interlocutor’s face wants. It can, then, be suggested that in the present context compliments have a politeness potential, especially when they are reciprocated or when evaluations such as ‘that was sweet’ are made, though no user explicitly assesses a compliment as polite in the interactions examined. Serving as a

vehicle for the complimenter to present themselves as a worthy prospective partner, the primordial function of compliments on Tinder seems to be face-enhancing, helping to create a bond between the complimenter and the compliment recipient. Although one could suggest that compliments have an instrumental function in that they attempt to secure the continuation of communication, it seems more plausible to suggest that most of them have a rapport-building purpose.

When they do not emerge as marked and open to a politeness interpretation, compliments seem to be perceived as socially-expected instances of non-polite behaviour, following the perceived norm of appropriacy in the given situation of first-time interaction. Compliments on appearance and communication flow can have flirtatious connotations or can even be explicit displays of flirtation. Their positive affective meaning is often boosted in creative ways, such as the use of emojis and GIFs or creative orthography.

Nevertheless, there are some cases in the data when compliments were taken as too conventional or common place, and provoked a rather negative reaction by the recipient. For example, a female user responds to a compliment about her name by implying that the compliment is too banal, or as she said, “a typical one”. It seems that, for her, compliments of the ‘one-fit-all’ type can be exchanged in a routine-like fashion and thus carry no meaning or additional effort. The recipients, in these cases, probably imply that such compliments do not reflect genuine feelings and are rather mere flattery. Negative reactions are also produced when the compliments are not justified by available cues as, for example, in the case of a male user complimenting his interlocutor on the work skills he assumes she possesses but without really knowing. In this case, the user seems to consider this display as over-polite or irrelevant, in the same fashion that a compliment is negatively judged when evidently false (Spencer-Oatey, Ng & Dong 2008, as cited in Placencia & Lower 2013).

In terms of the negatively marked uptake of compliments and conventionality, it has been argued (Placencia & Lower 2013: 635) that conventional compliments are easier in digital communication, since direct forms are less cognitively demanding and can be produced effortlessly. We may suspect though that, at least in this context, effortlessness can be taken as absence of inspiration and willingness to stand out and thus these compliments may not correspond to the interactants' expected level of necessary relational work. Sifianou, also, notes that complimenting behaviour can be assessed as "simply following social conventions of polite behaviour" (2001: 392) and can thus be equalled by absence of sincerity, as seems to be the case in the instances under scrutiny. Negative evaluations of conventional compliments may reflect the preference of Greeks for non-formulaic and more creative compliments (Sifianou 2001), a claim which could be further supported by the presence of more creative (example 8) and often funny compliments (example 9) in this data set.

(8) Λάμπεις Μπάμπη μου!
You are shining, Babis![11]

(9) Τι ωραίο πορτοκαλί μαλλί 😛
How lovely orange hair 😛

4.3.3. Showing Alignment and Positioning Oneself as in Need of the Other

Another flirting strategy that is often employed drawing on available cues has to do with presenting oneself as needing the other. This is particularly the case when users take advantage of what they know about the other's job, for example, and become flirtatious through stressing their own needs concerning the other's profession,

[11] Intertextually referring to a humorous Greek advertisement.

hobbies, and knowledge. For example, in the following extract, a female user and prospective lawyer says (example 10):

(10) Pes m oti eisai dikigoros
Thelw tn voitheia s
Prepei na m matheis t panta p 3ereis

Tell me that you are a lawyer
I need your help
You must teach me everything you know

This practice, which is observed in a number of different interactions and can be thus considered a strategy, facilitates flirting through making the other feel important and justifies the pursue of communication through a real-life need, even though the speaker probably exaggerates. It may, also, function in the same way as compliments do: it makes the interlocutor feel secure in this communication, since their acceptance by the other is validated. This strategy seems to be part of users' general tendency to show alignment with the other in the process of flirting.

Trying to show alignment and interest in the other person and their contributions to the discussion is evident in cases of chat logs which are made up of more than just a few messages. Linguistic indicators which show understanding, cooperation and alignment, as well as continuers to keep the discussion going abound in the present data. Positive assessments, like *τέλεια* 'perfect', to what the other has just said are also frequent. Showing alignment through the use of various linguistic devices like the aforementioned ones is typical in responses to self-disclosures and initial interactions in general (Haugh & Carbaugh 2015). In the present context, alignment is not limited to isolated linguistic indicators. Users seem to exchange information about what they have in common, thus establishing common ground (see Pillet-Shore 2011), which has traditionally been considered an important display of

politeness in Greek culture, like the expression of solidarity and concern (Sifianou 1992a, 1992b). Alignment is also pursued when a user initiates interaction in a particular, creative way, such as through the use of emojis or GIFs, in which case interactants tend to respond in the same semiotic way, thus showing they are conversant with such means of communication and comply with the frame proposed. This is particularly evident when the frame is a playful one. The same is sometimes seen in the use of forms of address: when someone uses a one-word complimenting term of endearment (e.g., *όμορφη* 'beautiful') instead of a first name, the other user may respond in the same way, and when jokes come into play, they are also often reciprocated. By indicating cooperation and alignment, 'matches' show to one another that they are on the same page, which seems to be very important for them, probably since they make it clear that lack of involvement and interest are not the case in their interaction (Kiesling 2013). For instance, in the following example, users' utterances overlap and this is taken as something indicative of successful communication by both parts (example 11)

(11)

Τζένη:	*GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY, Greek mentality has corrupted u!!!*
Ολιβιέ:	*Greece corrupted me you know*
Τ:	ΧΑΧΑΧΑΧΑΧΑΧΑ
Ο:	*Greece does this to anyone I have witnessed it*
Τ:	Το ειδες ότι το ειπες ταυτοχρονα με μενα αυτό ε;
Ο:	Ναι!!!
	Απίστευτο
Jenny:	GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY, Greek mentality has corrupted u!!!
Olivier:	Greece corrupted me you know
J:	HAHAHAHAHAHA
O:	Greece does this to anyone I have witnessed it
J:	You noticed that we said this simultaneously, right?
O:	Yes!!!
	Unbelievable

By showing alignment, users present themselves as agreeable, adaptive and interested in getting to know more about their potential partners. At the same time, they keep the other user's interest in this particular interaction, discouraging them from switching to another 'match'. Given the importance and fragility of communication at this stage, showing alignment is an important display of relational work aimed at the maintenance of smooth communication. It may, also, have some interesting flirting potential and is a possible sign of flirtatious intentions (Kiesling 2013: 115).

4.3.4. Showing Concern

Showing concern towards the other, as well as being cautious in what you ask and what you say before a possible face-to-face meeting is accomplished, are two emerging, context-specific norms which both have politeness and flirtatious potential. The first one seems to apply to this context despite the fact that users are complete strangers, while on the contrary, the second one seems to be justified by the fact that the interactants are strangers. These two norms can be viewed as interdependent, since when someone is cautious in what they say they often do so in order to show concern towards the other's face, though in the present data they also surface as two distinct norms. Such displays are open to a polite interpretation and are positively assessed by the other.

The display of empathy and concern becomes more pronounced when people talk about negative experiences. In the following example (example 12), the male user seems to be in physical pain. Concern and empathy are shown by his female 'match' who volunteers to console him with a positive suggestion, the use of the inclusive "let's", and an offer of help.

(12) Olivier: *I should probably see a doctor*
Jenny: *Well I suppose that if it werw something serious it would hurt you all the time*
O: *Yeah it's probably not broken but it is annoying!*
J: *Let's wait for 3 more days :)*
O: *Yeah*
J: *Can I do anything to help u psychologically?*
O: *That's cute thank you :)*

Although concern is appreciated, the male user prefers to thank their interlocutor for their concern, characterising it "cute" rather than kind or polite. In fact, in the present dataset explicit evaluation concerning the politeness of this display was absent. The same applies to cases when a user shows respect towards the other's desired degree of self-exposure. It seems that it is appreciated when someone offers to be discrete and non-imposing, though this appreciation is mostly shown through a non-elaborate thanking phrase. The same seems to be the case when users sound willing to accept what the other has suggested.

4.3.5. Playfulness

Elaborate or minimal playful exchanges are present in over 50% of the interactions accessed,[12] and they seem to facilitate courtship initiation and intimacy building. Users often sound ambiguous, ironic, and joking in their interactions, employing a number of linguistic devices. For example, many users use first or second-person plural, especially in greetings. The choice of plural (V) forms to single others, as well as the use of rather formal forms of address such as *κυρία (μου)* '(my) madam', create an atmosphere of pseudo-formality in the case of second-person plural, and pseudo-intimacy in the case of first-person plural as in the case of "let's" in example (12)

[12] The 75 unreciprocated messages in the data set are not taken into account in this calculation. Playfulness is observed in 63 out of the 123 remaining interactions.

earlier. Interaction thus becomes relaxed and intimacy is primed. The same effect is accomplished through the use of GIFs and emojis, which often mark an utterance as ironic or joking and are also used to denote sexual intentions, as they often add to the romantic aspect of interaction (see Mortensen 2017) (example 13).

(13) *Are u by any chance, probably and maybe a bit diiiirty minded these after hours*? 😈

Generally speaking, emoticons help interactants express feelings as well as avoid misunderstandings (Cakir, Bichelmeyer & Cagiltay 2005), while they are also used as meta-comments to "set the record straight" signifying what should not be taken literally (see Darics 2010).

Interestingly, users also sound abrupt, rude and impolite,[13] but only for the sake of playfulness, as can be seen in the following examples (examples 14, 15, 16).

(14) Τζένη: Περαστικα μας!!! Αν και στην ηλικια σου δυσκολα…. 😛

Jenny: Hope we get well soon!!! Though this is hard at your age…. 😛

(15) Τζένη: Παλι καλα που δεν ανοιξες εφημεριδα παππου
Ολιβιέ: Χαχαχα θα σε πνίξω

Jenny: Thank God you did not open a newspaper, grandpa
Olivier: Hahaha I will choke you

(16) Τζένη: Χαχαχαχαχαχα
Εισαι γελοιος!!!!!😂

Jenny: Hahahahahaha
You are ridiculous!!!!! 😂

[13] The term here is used as a lay one.

It is obvious in these examples that whether impoliteness surfaces directly or indirectly, this is only done in the frame of playfulness and it is understood as non-threatening, as shown in the graphemic representations of laughter in the current examples. Teasing often emerges in just a few turns, potentially functioning as an ice-breaker really useful to previously unknown individuals, or in many turns, thus creating an omnipresent frame through which utterances are filtered. Within this frame, possibly threatening exchanges are acceptable and interpreted as mere teasing rather than as criticism (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987: 39, 66), and humour arises in a context where people are not familiar with one another (Haugh 2011).

Playfulness is also achieved through repetition of words that the other user has used or by referring to issues or jokes that the other has raised on a previous day. The following example (example 17) is an instance of humour being co-constructed in this way (see Haugh 2011).

(17) Ολιβιέ: Στην ηλικία μου είμαστε πολύ ευαίσθητοι ξέρεις…

Olivier: At my age we are very sensitive, you know…

The male user has received 'mean' and ironic comments about his age by his 'match' (see examples 14 and 15). Interpreting them as jocular on a subsequent occasion, he takes up this playfulness, making reference to his age in the same way that his female interlocutor first did. Accepting her mocking humour and repeating it in an ostensibly self-depreciative remark, he shows his relaxed attitude while no negative assessments emerge. What he does with the face-threat is that he "casually mentions" it to "counteract" it (Grainger 2011: 48). It is, therefore, as if users co-construct a game in which they build rapport "based on shared experience" (Grainger 2004: 44). It is this shared interpretation of the non-face-threatening nature of such comments which

creates intimacy (Haugh & Pillet-Shore 2018). This technique proves that "joking is a jointly constructed phenomenon, involving initiation and uptake" (Grainger 2004: 45) and can be used as a flirting strategy. Users indirectly show that the other's words have been taken into account and thus interlocutors can feel special, which is important given that users heavily depend on this shared knowledge to engage in interaction. Through rapport-building humour, users keep boredom at bay, [14] while showing alignment (Tannen 1989).

Jocular interaction has been the focus of much research (see, for example, Haugh 2011), while diverse settings of interaction have occasionally been studied in terms of humour (see Grainger 2004). Despite certain notable exceptions (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006, Hardey 2002), flirtatious interaction has been neglected. This is probably due to a common belief that humour predominantly emerges among previously acquainted individuals only (Brown and Levinson 1978/1987, Haugh 2011). In the present data, playfulness does emerge, despite the fact that we are dealing with first time interactants and the use of humour may be risky. One can assume that this is intensified, probably, because interactants have some special, romantic motivation. It seems that making the whole discussion humorous, playfulness contributes to a casual atmosphere, while it also creates intimacy, which can facilitate eroticism (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006). Rendering messages ambiguous often functions as a face saving strategy which mitigates rejection and non-reciprocation, as well as potentially socially risky flirting practices, such as a face-to-face meeting invitation (see del-Teso-Craviotto 2006). Playfulness, in other words, masks the erotic game carried out while it also helps users stand out in a 'plenty of fish' environment. It also provides an 'emergency exit' in times of face-threat,

[14] Boredom is a fear often expressed by users, especially when the other does not remember previously shared information.

offering the ‘I was just kidding’ strategy which can always be employed to avoid losing face (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006, Haugh 2016, Haugh & Pillet-Shore 2018).

Using humour to avoid boring discussions is something that is often positively commented upon by interactants, and given what they say, making the other laugh is important in this context. Whether users explicitly comment on how much they laugh with the other’s comments or their contentment with it manifests itself indirectly, being humorous is only taken positively in this data set. An exception, which is though rare in the data, is when utterances are not understood as humorous and are taken literally, in which case misunderstandings follow. To avoid confusion, users often explicitly mark their utterances as playful. Nevertheless, the general playfulness frame as this emerges through this data is flexible enough to enable the manifestation of ‘mock impoliteness’ in teasing, a kind of superficial impoliteness which does not intend to trigger offence (Culpeper 1996). Judgements related to it are, therefore, never negative. In other words, when utterances which have the potential of being considered impolite are used within the established frame of playfulness, evaluations are positive, and behaviour is considered ‘funny’ rather than socially unacceptable. For example, in the following instance (example 18), the English word ‘silly’, playfully and creatively written using Greek characters, does not constitute an evaluation to be taken at face value.

(18) Γκούντ νάιτ, γιού αρ ρίλι σίλι!

Good night, you are really silly!

The fact that teasing is mostly accepted as such without creating misunderstandings shows that it is a shared stance or, in other words, part of the users’ common social knowledge in this context (Haugh & Pillet-Shore 2018). Given the prominence of

playfulness in this data set, we can assume that it may be one of the most characteristic relational work displays in flirting on Tinder.

4.3.6. Invitations to Change Platform and/or Meet Offline

Another interesting observation relevant to a significant number (37%)[15] of the interactions accessed is that users either ask their interactants to transfer their communication to another platform or propose face-to-face meetings. In terms of the first type of invitation, change of medium is proposed by both male and female users only after some basic communication has already been established and rarely earlier. In the vast majority of cases, users ask to move to Instagram or Facebook, and this invitation is often justified. Some express fears that Tinder will bug and they will lose their contacts, others refer to the limitations of Tinder not allowing photo exchange and restricting access to few photos only, etc. Finally, some users express their concern that their contact will be interrupted since they do not log in the platform often enough to have an ongoing conversation.

According to Gershon (2010), switching media offers insights concerning users' intentions. These insights do not only relate to the affordances of different platforms, but also come as a result of the users' decision to discontinue communication on the platform of Tinder. In other words, the intention to change medium may be indicative of users' media ideologies concerning the platform. Suggestions to change medium probably reveal the users' need both to have more options in terms of their digital communication, and to cross-validate the cues available to them through Tinder profiles getting additional cues for identity verification purposes (Gibbs et al. 2011: 72). According to Gibbs et al., this practice

[15] Again, unreciprocated messages were not taken into account.

also indicates that a relationship has started to progress (2011: 91). Thus, users may imply that Tinder can be an acceptable platform in terms of communication initiation but not in terms of its continuation.

Some users, however, are 'bold' enough to invite their 'match' to meet in real-life directly, without expressing any need for further communication on another platform. These invitations are of two types: invitations for a casual, friendly meeting and invitations that implicitly or explicitly denote the prospect of sexual encounter. Of course, we can assume that since many interactions migrate to other platforms, some invitations for face-to-face meeting will be made outside Tinder. Nevertheless, what can be said about these invitations is that most of them are made by male users, and that the invitation is probably expressed in a more direct way when the prospect of a sexual encounter has already been implied. For example, in the case of an interaction full of sexual innuendos, the male user said he is coming out of the shower and he invites his interlocutor to join him in bed and see if they are a real 'match', thus making what seems to be an explicitly sexual invitation. In other cases, invitations are mitigated through humour or presented as an alternative indirectly expressed. In the following example the heavily hedged invitation is made by a male user in a discussion about movies (example 19).

(19) Gnk polla m aresoun den exw thema..na s pw poia eida kai m arese? Des to rememory h to seven sisters.. Alliws blepoume kai kamia mazi

Generally I like many movies.. do you want to know which one I watched and I liked? Watch rememory or seven sisters.. Or we can watch one together

4.4. Non-cooperative Management of Interaction: Conflict and Rejection

Although the ultimate goal in a flirting context seems to be the establishment of rapport, instances of conflictual interaction are not absent in the data set examined, even despite the limited number of logs accessed. In most cases of conflict, disagreement between users seems to have emerged due to different motivations to use the application, and thus different expectations of their interaction with their 'match'. Some conflictual interactions also seem to emerge from different ideologies concerning particular norms. An interesting example includes a lightly sexualised interaction in which interlocutors have also connected on Instagram, as can be understood from the data. At some point, the male user decides to send some explicitly sexual content. This move is taken as an offensive, face-threatening act, and the female user explicitly suggests he must have some psychological or mental issues, thus returning the face-threat. It is, therefore, understood that being more sexual than your 'match' deems suitable may be seen as breaching the perceived norm of appropriate, flirting behaviour on Tinder. The picture is more complex, though. After reciprocating face-threatening acts, the interlocutors continue to negotiate the norm exchanging opinions on sexual permissiveness and digital interaction. The male user tries to persuade his 'match' that what happened was no big deal and motivates her to do the same. After some exchanges, it is understood that she is convinced and has sent some sexual content, as well. Therefore, in this context, too, norms are clearly not static and shared by all members of a community. Although there are some commonly accepted norms, many of them are perspectival and personal, and are thus subject to negotiation.

Conflict may also emerge as a result of misrepresentation. According to Ellison, Hancock, and Toma (2012), in location-based dating environments, the

possibility of deception is minimized as a result of the prospect that users will meet offline. Therefore, although profile embellishment is common, blatant deception is not. However, it seems that this is not the case when there is no shared intention to meet in real-life. The one case of misrepresentation found in the data is a worth-noting example of conflict management. In this case, the male user used fake photos in his profile, which he confesses to his 'match' after interacting for a couple of weeks. Priming his account, he shows concern for his interlocutor's time and then voluntarily admits to having used fake photos, without, however, apologising. On the contrary, he explicitly says that his account does not constitute an apology. What follows is a long discussion on deception, real communication, and the motivation behind his misrepresentation. Conflict here has to do with the norm of being truthful and with medium ideologies which are far from identical (see Gershon 2010). For him, no apology is necessary: since he uses Tinder for fun and superficial communication with no intention of a real-time meeting, he does not have to be truthful. Avoiding acceptance of his fault, the male user tries to avoid the threat to his own face. On the other hand, the female user considers it irrational to engage in such childish, and definitely dishonest behaviour, and threatens his face through the use of criticism, attributing what she explicitly argues to be a lie to his low self-esteem.

The most interesting aspects of this interaction is that users are willing to negotiate the incident for a long time, and that she receives his account showing concern and giving him advice, instead of just expressing her distress about what happened. Giving advice, in this interaction, indicates that his behaviour is negatively judged. It shows that she now approaches him as a problematic individual and she takes on a role different than this of the potential partner, explicitly taking pity on him. It may also be interesting to observe when and how this long negotiation concludes. The interaction is brought to an end the moment he tries to sound

humorous. Jocular behaviour seems to be unacceptable here, since it triggers her one-word leave-taking phrase. In other words, his attempt at remedial work probably fails, because the work he invests (i.e., choosing some humorous linguistic management) is not the expected one under these circumstances. This incident, besides being an informative manifestation of how conflict is negotiated, proves that different understandings of truthfulness, morality and expectations can have an adverse effect on relationship building in the context of Tinder. It seems that when the "contract" between online daters prescribing truthful profile representation is broken (Ellison et al. 2012: 56–57), misrepresentation is deemed unacceptable and triggers negative moral judgements. This incident also shows that specific utterances and speech acts cannot be safely linked to im/politeness and other judgements without first critically approaching context. Here, for example, giving advice is not appreciated by the advice-recipient, since the act itself is probably taken as a face-threatening one and the piece of advice is understood as unsolicited.

Utterances taken as impolite also create conflict. In these cases, conflict is mostly non-negotiated, and users stop communicating after a few instances of behaviour they perceive as impolite or aggressive. For example, in one of the interactions accessed, a male user seems to be judged as offensive on the basis of his comment concerning the age of his 'match' and her 'ability' to find a sexual partner in the offline world. Flaming, an instance of digital aggressive verbal interaction (Morand & Ocker 2003), escalates quickly, and when he insists on his opinion that this medium is the only way through which she can find a sexual partner, the female user responds in a long, didactic contribution and then never texts back (example 20). Interestingly enough, the final part of her contribution is again a piece of advice, as she probably tries to save face.

(20) Δεν έχεις ιδέα τι είναι οι γυναίκες, τι είναι οι άλλοι άνθρωποι, τα φύλα, οι σχέσεις, το app στο οποίο βρίσκεσαι και η ίδια η ζωή. Που θα σου αποδεικνύει ξανά και ξανά ότι σκέφτεσαι σάπια και γι αυτό βγαίνεις σε αδιέξοδα, αλλά εσύ θα κοιτάς απ' την άλλη και θα υποκρίνεσαι ότι είσαι στ' αρχίδια σου και ότι στην πραγματικότητα δεν ήθελες αυτό που δεν κατάφερες να αποκτήσεις, και θα το χλευάζεις για να σε πείσεις. Αν θες κάτι να αλλάξει, δεν είναι αργά.

You have no idea what women, other people, genders, relationships and the app you are in are, or what life itself is. And this will prove you again and again that the way you are thinking is rotten and that's why you are led to dead-ends, but you will be looking the other way and pretend you don't care and that in reality you don't like what you do not manage to get, and you will mock it to persuade yourself. If you want to change something, it is not too late.

In the (rare) conflictual interactions found in the data, it is obvious that when assumed norms are breached and the level of relational work invested does not conform to the expectations of the other, negative evaluations are triggered and/or, sooner or later, communication is brought to an end. The potential of conflict is avoided only when different motivations to use the application are negotiated in a playful way, or when one of the two interlocutors changes the topic of discussion.

In terms of rejection, this mostly emerges when one of the two 'matched' users stops reciprocating messages. Especially when it is women who do not reply, men often text again to playfully complain and humorously motivate users to respond so that communication can restart. In this case, playfulness mitigates the imposition involved in complaining about the presumed rejection: being playful, users can indirectly complain about rejection without losing face and appearing needy or imposing. It is evident that rejection, too, can be related to different expectations, or different approaches to norms. For example, a user may stop responding after the other expresses their sexual intentions, or after an invitation for a face-to-face meeting is deemed as hasty. In one of the few instances where rejection is explicitly justified, one of the interactants explains to their 'match' that boredom is the reason why they

gave up on them. Whether explained or not, rejection is accepted in most of the cases and is not negotiated.

4.5. Some General Comments

Apart from the strategies that have already been discussed, an interesting common practice of Tinder users is to discuss the reasons they have signed up on Tinder. Although topics related to the medium of interaction and the situation in which the interactants find themselves are common ones in phatic communication between new acquaintances (Schneider 1987), this practice can provide some noteworthy insights. First, it contributes to our knowledge concerning motivations to use the application. While discussing issues around Tinder, many users refer to it as an effective way to meet new people in a romantic way, and only in a few interactions is Tinder use exclusively related to ephemeral, sexual encounters. However, most of those who contributed to the study and were asked to complete the complementary questionnaire responded to the relevant question saying that they mostly use Tinder for casual flirting and one-night-stands. Nevertheless, what remains clear is that flirting is the main reason why Tinder users are on the application, whether they seek fleeting romance or a meaningful relationship. This means that interaction in this application is predominantly related to romantic intentions more than anything else, so relational management strategies can be safely examined through this prism.

The tendency to ask to know more about why the other is on the platform, and the way users answer may also show that stigmatization in terms of online dating is still of concern, at least in Greece. Apart from mentioning that they are on the application to find a romantic partner, pursue sexual encounters and have fun, some

users told their interlocutor that their friends created their profile just for fun, that they have only used it once or that they signed up at a difficult period of their life when they wanted some distraction. In fact, one user stresses that they do not need this platform anymore, since he is now healthy and not depressed, implying that if you are not desperate in one way or another, other means of getting dates are preferred. It can, therefore, be suggested that accounting for their presence on the application, users "establish a safe distance between their real (critical) selves and their virtual (enjoying) selves" (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006: 466), so that they do not identify as 'habitual' Tinder users. Stigmatization and Tinder's negative connotations can also be related to the previously discussed tendency of users to transfer communication to other platforms. Apart from solving practical issues, the change of medium can make users feel better in their communication, knowing that the context there is less ethically condemned. Further research is needed to assess the extent to which this looming stigmatization is an important contextual factor shaping negotiation of courtship in Tinder.

What can generally be inferred about users' beliefs concerning Tinder is that it is a casual medium, and its informality is shown in the discontinuity of communication on it. In the present data, it is evident that interaction is largely fragmented and unpredictable, especially as to how and when it will stop. Quite a few users stop responding at some unexpected point, often vanishing without explaining why and without showing any signs that they are discontent with their communication with the other. This may be an illustration of the 'ghosting' phenomenon, which has been discussed in popular press and recently in scholarly articles as a unilateral, communication avoidance practice that is usually enacted through digital media and aims at relationship dissolution (LeFebvre et al. 2019: 10). Leave-takings, also, are not always there to signal the end of communication, and it seems that they are

present when interaction has progressed, rather than when it is still at an initial stage. In other words, communication and its continuation are never guaranteed on this platform. In addition, users respond to messages sent months before or re-initiate interaction a long time after their last contact, and in both cases, communication may continue after just a small comment of the 'long-time-no-see' type. Interestingly, also, totally unexpected things may be said right after the other has kicked off the discussion. Revelations of various types, exchange of sensitive information and details that would probably seem irrelevant in a face-to-face, first-time meeting are just common practice in Tinder, and most of the time they go unmarked since they are not commented upon by users. It may be important to note here that the ages of those who contributed to this study ranged from early twenties through to early forties, with the vast majority being between early twenties and early thirties. It thus follows that the present sample comprises of young people, who are probably not bothered by this style of communication. Nevertheless, it is this casual nature of communication which may be one of the reasons why Tinder is often considered a casual platform, better suited for ephemeral relationships (Ward 2017: 1650) and perhaps just spending one's time.

5. Discussion

According to Mortensen (2015: 14), “online dating is both an entertaining enterprise as well as a vehicle for exhaustive and intense affective experiences including joyful expectation, intimate recognition, and sad disappointment”. The present analysis comes to validate this observation: it seems that Tinder interactions are multifaceted and flirting on Tinder may involve many communicative management processes, as well as some ‘collateral damage’ when conflict occurs. Using an inclusive approach to better understand this ‘relational mosaic’ proved to be a good idea, in that we had the opportunity to analyse various displays of the work users invest in getting acquainted with their ‘matches’ and being flirtatious.

The most important aspects of socially acceptable behaviour in this context seem to be being humorous and showing alignment and concern. The personal, mostly romantic goals of the interactants create a need for the construction of familiarity. This familiarity is co-constructed through the aforementioned processes. Especially humour, in its diverse linguistic manifestations, is used to “bond with the reader” (Locher 2006: 261), so in a flirting context it promotes a relaxed atmosphere and facilitates intimacy. When the sense of humour is shared, users can build on what they have in common, and this potentially advances communication. Humour also takes on the role of mitigator in the manifestation of romantic or sexual intent and makes the expression of desire subtle. Its dominant role in this context can possibly be due to the fact that it makes flirting easier: since rapport is being built in a way that resembles a game, the expression of erotic or flirtatious intent can be ambiguous and thus both interlocutors can save face if something goes wrong since “all is done in jest” (del-

Teso-Craviotto 2006: 466). The multiple roles of playfulness in the present interactions make it clear that humour is an important display of relational work invested in flirting, while the same is true of showing alignment. Using available cues, users also show concern and interest in the other. They appear eager to follow the line proposed by their interlocutor, in terms of using particular semiotic modes, for example, and they actively show their cooperation and consideration of the other's face.

What can be proposed about positively marked behaviours in the present data, especially those related to the above-mentioned practices, is that they have the potential to be considered polite, but users resort to more emotionally loaded kinds of evaluation, approaching them more as sweet than as polite. Playful behaviour, for example, is assessed positively more often than not without, however, being judged as polite. The same applies to other displays, such as showing alignment, concern and empathy. The politeness potential of small talk has long been established, especially in relation to showing agreement and interest in the other (Schneider 1988). The latter two (i.e. displaying agreement and interest), though, have mostly been related to politeness in the literature about non-flirtatious interaction (see Haugh 2011, Svennevig 1999). Therefore, asking users to characterise the pertinent behaviours would be a good idea before making politeness claims. In this way, we may gain better insights and see if post-hoc positive evaluations are, indeed, more emotionally loaded and if the term 'polite' is not thought of as accurate enough to describe how people evaluate such behaviours.

Moreover, what can be suggested based on the present data is that behaviours which are marked as positive or/and seem to have some politeness potential are those which are related to the expression of intimate and romantic intentions, rather than those relating to the exchange of personal information in the process of getting to

know the other. Interaction in the latter case can better be described as politic behaviour. In other words, in most cases of small talk and other processes involved in self-presentation, behaviours seem to be socially acceptable but unmarked.

In accordance with Locher's (2006: 258) claim that polite behaviour is not as frequent as has traditionally been believed, the findings of the present study are indicative that polite behaviour constitutes only one aspect of the relational work invested in Tinder interactions and can be observed less frequently compared to other aspects of relational work, such as politic behaviour. What is even more striking, though, is that in a digital environment created for people who would like to get closer and intimate, instances of impoliteness, aggressive behaviour and breaching of norms are not absent. In terms of negative, often less subtle, judgements, behaviours seem to be clearly taken as rude, impolite or ignorant when norms are breached, and behaviour becomes socially unacceptable, often resulting in conflict and hindering further communication. Although users could instantly 'unmatch' the user who triggered negative feelings and offense, it seems that in the few instances of conflict observed users prefer to negotiate the reasons and effects of misunderstandings, account for their conduct or, at least, respond to aggressive behaviour without letting go. This may be an attempt to save face even though the interactants are strangers, an attempt which may be related to the sensitivities around using Tinder. It is also interesting that Tinder users do not seem to breach norms only because they say something socially inappropriate. Users appear to judge behaviours as unacceptable also when they find them boring, overly complimentary and conventional, guided by their personal ideologies rather than by culturally and socially defined 'rules' only. For example, sexual permissiveness and the extent to which it can manifest through language, the importance of creativity in order for someone to 'pass' as a potential partner and the extent to which compliments are welcome in this context are only a

few aspects of flirting practices that do not seem to be explained by single, collectively agreed on norms. In any case, the diversity of practices proves that a holistic approach to interpersonal communication is a good idea in order to fully understand the texture of online dating, especially since, to my knowledge, no previous study has touched upon the non-cooperative side of online dating interaction.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore the relational implications and subtleties, as well as the particularities of language use in the context of online dating on the platform of Tinder. The findings of this exploration show that, while on Tinder, people engage in many interactional processes. For example, they talk about themselves and ask questions to find more about their interactants, they joke and show interest in and concern for the other. The relational role of these processes, in most of the cases observed in the current data set, seems to be the building of intimacy, which facilitates flirting and ultimately helps users attain their (mostly romantic) goals. The creation of a cooperative environment seems to be interactants' major concern, thus supporting Kiesling's (2013: 106) claim that flirting is an activity based on cooperation. Relational work is invested in all communication practices of interactants, whether treating the other with consideration is the goal, or not. For example, relational work is also present in the processes of filtering out unsuitable matches or when conflict has occurred. It, therefore, follows from this piece of research that the framework of relational work can be of great explanatory value in the context of online dating discourse. This is probably because through a norm-based, holistic framework the researcher can approach a wide range of sociolinguistic phenomena and see how they blend in interaction.

The main limitation of this study is that it is based on a small, convenience sample that only allows tentative conclusions. This means that the data set accessed is not homogeneous, since it includes from discourse fragments to very long interactions. This data, also, derives mostly from chat logs of Greek-speaking users of

Tinder and thus no claims are to be made except those about the immediate context, both in terms of the medium and in terms of the cultural context. Limitations apply to the data retrieved through the use of questionnaire, as well, in which case findings can potentially be affected by self-report issues and respondent bias. However, the questionnaire findings were only used to better understand Tinder characteristics and motivations, so these limitations have not affected findings in terms of relational work claims, which is the main focus here.

Given these limitations, a larger scale study seems to be necessary to shed more light on issues that have only been touched upon in extant research, so that observations based upon trends can be validated or rejected. In a more representative project, it would be interesting to assess the way social variants and individual characteristics can be correlated with specific linguistic strategies on Tinder. It would also be particularly interesting if findings concerning digital, Tinder flirting are compared to face-to-face flirting, so that we could understand which of the findings discussed above are due to the digital nature of Tinder communication and which can be attributed to the flirting frame itself. Another suggestion would be to see how communication unravels after it has migrated to another platform and investigate whether platforms which provide more opportunities in terms of communication enable a different negotiation of norms and relationships.

In this study, the biggest problem in accessing Tinder natural data was finding 'data donors'. However, this should not be seen as a reason (or an excuse) to avoid future research in the field but should rather pivot discussion on how to find ways to motivate users to contribute to such research. I believe that future projects could prompt participants to contribute, through monetary compensation, for instance. It is clear that the venture of linguistically examining private, romantic communication is full of limitations. However, the present study aspires to help us reconsider the

benefits of exploring this type of discourse. The plethora of online dating platforms invites theorizing about the pragmatics of online flirting, while it seems that, at least in its digital form, romantic discourse can be rich in practices that could be analysed from diverse linguistic perspectives, such as from a critical discourse one or a feminist discourse one to name but a few.

Overall, this thesis hopes to contribute to the limited research on the pragmatics of flirting in online dating by highlighting the different behaviours manifest in flirting on Tinder and discussing the ways these shape the users' perceptions of the other and their shared experiences. Despite the limitations, a first attempt was made towards understanding relational practices on this platform. Investigating the complexities of relational work proved to be an effective way towards understanding linguistic practices and giving a more comprehensive account of the linguistic strategies used in this popular kind of technology-mediated discourse. It enabled an exploration of both speaker's contributions and hearer's evaluations, as they emerged through observable linguistic cues, while it also helped us grasp the social, joint and multifaceted nature of Tinder interactions. Hopefully, this first study will give a direction towards future projects related to internet use, language and flirting, so that flirting stops being just a notoriously undefined term of the "I know it when I see it" kind (Kiesling 2013: 106).

References

Baron, N. S. (2010). *Always on: Language in an Online and Mobile World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Best, K. & Delmege, S. (2012). "The filtered encounter: Online dating and the problem of filtering through excessive information". *Social Semiotics* 22(3): 237–258. doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2011.648405

Bor, S. & Boehmer, J. (2002). "The Internet". In A. E. Grant & J. H. Meadows (eds.), *Communication Technology Update and Fundamentals*. Boston: Focal Press, 275–282.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. [1978](1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cakir, H., Bichelmeyer, B. A. & Cagiltay, K. (2005). "Effects of cultural differences on e-mail communication in multicultural environments". *The Electronic Journal of Communication* 15(1–2).

Chayko, M. (2008). *Portable Communities : The Social Dynamics of Online and Mobile Connectedness*. New York: SUNY Press.

Clark, C. L., Shaver, P. R. & Abrahams, M. F. (1999). "Strategic behaviors in romantic relationship initiation". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 25(6): 709–722. doi.org/10.1177/0146167299025006006

Crystal, D. (2006). *Language and the Internet.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Culpeper, J. (1996). "Towards an anatomy of impoliteness". *Journal of Pragmatics* 25(3): 349–367. doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(95)00014-3

Darics, E. (2010). "Politeness in computer-mediated discourse of a virtual team". *Journal of Politeness Research* 6(1): 129–150. doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2010.007

Deignan, A. (2002). "Metaphors of desire". In K. Harvey & C.Shalon (eds.), *Language and Desire*. UK: Taylor & Francis, 31–52.

del-Teso-Craviotto, M. (2006). "Language and sexuality in Spanish and English dating chats". *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 10(4): 460–480. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2006.00288.x

Dynel, M. (2015). "The landscape of impoliteness research". *Journal of Politeness Research* 11(2): 329–354. doi.org/10.1515/pr-2015-0013

Eelen, G. (2001). *A Critique of Politeness Theories.* Manchester: St. Jerome Press.

Ellison, N. B., Hancock, J. T. & Toma, C. L. (2012). "Profile as promise: A framework for conceptualizing veracity in online dating self-presentations". *New Media & Society* 14(1): 45–62. doi.org/10.1177/1461444811410395

Ellison, N. B., Heino, R. & Gibbs, J. (2006). "Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment". *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 11(2): 415–441. doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2006.00020.x

Fiore, A. T., Taylor, L. S., Zhong, X., Mendelsohn, G. A. & Cheshire, C. (2010). "Who's right and who writes: People, profiles, contacts, and replies in online dating". In R. H. Sprague Jr (ed.), *Proceedings of the 43rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. Los Alamitos, CA: Computer Society Press, 1-10.

Freitas, D. (2017). *The Happiness Effect : How Social Media is Driving a Generation to Appear Perfect at any Cost*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gatter, K. & Hodkinson, K. (2016). "On the differences between Tinder™ versus online dating agencies: Questioning a myth. An exploratory study". *Cogent Psychology* 3(1): 1–12. doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2016.1162414

Gershon, I. (2010). “Breaking up is hard to do: Media switching and media ideologies”. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(2): 389–405. doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1395.2010.01076.x

Gibbs, J. L., Ellison, N. B. & Lai, C.-H. (2011). “First comes love, then comes google: An investigation of uncertainty reduction strategies and self-disclosure in online dating”. *Communication Research* 38(1): 70–100. doi.org/10.1177/0093650210377091

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-face Behavior*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Golato, A. (2005). *Compliments and Compliment Responses*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Graham, S. L. & Hardaker, C. (2017). “(Im)politeness in digital communication”. In J. Culpeper, M. Haugh & D. Z. Kádár (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im)politeness*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 785–814. doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-37508-7_30

Grainger, K. (2004). “Verbal play on the hospital ward: Solidarity or power?”. *Multilingua* 23(1–2): 39–59. doi.org/10.1515/mult.2004.007

Grainger, K. (2011). “‘First order’ and ‘second order’ politeness: Institutional and intercultural contexts”. In LPRG (ed.), *Discursive Approaches to Politeness*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 167–188.

Grainger, K. (2013). “Of babies and bath water: Is there any place for Austin and Grice in interpersonal pragmatics?”. *Journal of Pragmatics* 58: 27–38. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.08.008

Hall, J. A., Carter, S., Cody, M. J. & Albright, J. M. (2010). “Individual differences in the communication of romantic interest: Development of the flirting styles inventory”. *Communication Quarterly* 58(4): 365–393. doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2010.524874

Hall, J. A., Cody, M. J., Jackson, G. L. & Flesh, J. O. (2008). “Beauty and the flirt: Attractiveness communication, and opening lines in date initiation”. Paper presented in *The 58th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association*. Montreal, Canada, 1–40.

Hardey, M. (2002). “Life beyond the screen: Embodiment and identity through the Internet”. *The Sociological Review* 50(4): 570–585. doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00399

Haugh, M. (2011). “Humour, face and im/politeness in getting acquainted”. In B. L. Davies, M. Haugh & A. J. Merrison (eds.), *Situated Politeness*. London: Continuum, 1–19.

Haugh, M. (2016). “‘Just kidding’: Teasing and claims to non-serious intent”. *Journal of Pragmatics* 95: 120–136. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2015.12.004

Haugh, M. & Carbaugh, D. (2015). “Self-disclosure in initial interactions amongst speakers of American and Australian English”. *Multilingua* 34(4): 461–493. doi.org/10.1515/multi-2014-0104

Haugh, M., Kádár, D. Z. & Mills, S. (2013). “Interpersonal pragmatics: Issues and debates”. *Journal of Pragmatics* 58: 1–11. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.09.009

Haugh, M. & Pillet-Shore, D. (2018). “Getting to know you: Teasing as an invitation to intimacy in initial interactions”. *Discourse Studies* 20(2): 246–269. doi.org/10.1177/1461445617734936

Heino, R. D., Ellison, N. B. & Gibbs, J. L. (2010). “Relationshopping: Investigating the market metaphor in online dating”. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 27(4): 427–447. doi.org/10.1177/0265407510361614

Kiesling, S. F. (2011). “The interactional construction of desire as gender”. *Gender*

and Language 5(2): 211–237. doi.org/10.1558/genl.v5i2.405
Kiesling, S. F. (2013). "Flirting and 'normative' sexualities". *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 2(1): 101–121. doi.org/10.1075/jls.2.1.04kie
LeFebvre, L. E., Allen, M., Rasner, R. D., Garstad, S., Wilms, A. & Parrish, C. (2019). "Ghosting in emerging adults' romantic relationships: The digital dissolution disappearance strategy". I*magination, Cognition and Personality*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0276236618820519
Lakoff, R. (1973). "The logic of politeness; or, minding your p's and q's". In C. Corum, T. C. Smith-Stark & A. Weiser (eds.), *Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistic Society, 292–305.
Lea, M., Spears, R. & de Groot, D. (2001). "Knowing me, knowing you: Anonymity effects on social identity processes within groups". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 27(5): 526–537. doi.org/10.1177/0146167201275002
Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
Linguistic Politeness Research Group. (2011). "Introduction: The Linguistic Politeness Research Group". In LPRG (ed.), *Discursive Approaches to Politeness*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1-17.
Locher, M. A. (2004). *Power and Politeness in Action : Disagreements in Oral Communication*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
Locher, M. A. (2006). "Polite behavior within relational work: The discursive approach to politeness". *Multilingua* 25(3): 249–267. doi.org/10.1515/MULTI.2006.015
Locher, M. A. (2015). "Interpersonal pragmatics and its link to (im)politeness research". *Journal of Pragmatics* 86: 5–10. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2015.05.010
Locher, M. A. & Graham, S. L. (2010). "Introduction to interpersonal pragmatics". In M. A. Locher & S. L. Graham (eds.), *Interpersonal Pragmatics*. Berlin: Mouton, 1–13.
Locher, M. & Watts, R. (2005). "Politeness theory and relational work". *Journal of Politeness Research* 1(1): 9–33. doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2005.1.1.9
Locher, M. & Watts, R. (2008). "Relational work and impoliteness: Negotiating norms of linguistic behaviour". In D. Bousfield & M. Locher (eds.), *Impoliteness in Language. Studies on its Interplay with Power in Theory and Practice*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 77–99.
McDaniel, A. K. (2005). "Young women's dating behavior: Why/why not date a nice guy?" *Sex Roles* 53(5–6): 347–359. doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-6758-z
Mey, J. L. (2018). "How social is the internet?". *Internet Pragmatics* 1(1): 13–28. doi.org/10.1075/ip.00002.mey
Morand, D. A. & Ocker, R. J. (2003). "Politeness theory and computer-mediated communication : A sociolinguistic approach to analyzing relational messages". In R. H. Sprague Jr (ed.), *Proceedings of the 36th Hawaii International Conference* on *System Sciences.* Los Alamitos: IEEE Press
Mortensen, K. K. (2015). "Informed consent in the field of language and sexuality: The case of online dating research". *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 4(1): 1–29. doi.org/10.1075/jls.4.1.01mor
Mortensen, K. K. (2017). "Flirting in online dating: Giving empirical grounds to flirtatious implicitness". *Discourse Studies* 19(5): 581–597. doi.org/10.1177/1461445617715179
O'Farrell, K. J., Rosenthal, E. N. & O'Neal, E. C. (2003). "Relationship satisfaction and responsiveness to nominates' flirtation: Testing an evolutionary explanation". *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 20(5): 663–674.

doi.org/10.1177/02654075030205005
Pillet-Shore, D. (2011). “Doing introductions: The work involved in meeting someone new”. *Communication Monographs* 78(1): 73–95. doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2010.542767
Placencia, M. E. & Lower, A. (2013). “Your kids are so stinkin’ cute! :-): Complimenting behavior on facebook among family and friends”. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 10(4): 617–646. doi.org/10.1515/ip-2013-0029
Saumure, K. & Given, L. M. (2008). “Nonprobability sampling”. In L. M. Given (ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. United States: SAGE Publications, 562.
Schneider, K. P. (1987). “Topic selection in phatic communication”. *Multilingua* 6(3): 247–256. doi.org/10.1515/mult.1987.6.3.247
Schneider, K. P. (1988). *Small Talk: Analyzing Phatic Discourse*. Marburg: Hitzeroth.
Shapiro, I. (2005). *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Sifianou, M. (1992a). *Politeness Phenomena in England and Greece : A Cross-cultural Perspective.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Sifianou, M. (1992b). “The use of diminutives in expressing politeness: Modern Greek versus English”. *Journal of Pragmatics* 17(2): 155–173. doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(92)90038-D
Sifianou, M. (2001). “‘Oh! How appropriate!’ Compliments and politeness”. In A. Bayraktaroğlu & M. Sifianou (eds.), *Linguistic Politeness across Boundaries: The Case of Greek and Turkish*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 391–430.
Sillars, A. L. & Vangelisti, A. L. (2006). “Communication: Basic properties and their relevance to relationship research”. In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 331–351.
Spencer-Oatey, H., Ng, P. & Dong, L. (2008). “British and Chinese reactions to compliment responses”. In H. Spencer-Oatey (ed.), *Culturally Speaking: Culture Communication and Politeness Theory.* London: Continuum, 95–117.
Surra, C. A., Gray, C. R., Boettcher, T. M. J., Cottle, N. R. & West, A. R. (2006). “From courtship to universal properties: Research on dating and mate selection, 1950 to 2003”. In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 113–130.
Svennevig, J. (1999). *Getting Acquainted in Conversation: A Study of Initial Interactions*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
Tannen, D. (1989). *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Tyson, G., Perta, V. C., Haddadi, H. & Seto, M. C. (2016). “A first look at user activity on tinder”. In *Proceedings of the 2016 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining (ASONAM)*. Piscataway, NJ: IEEE Press, 461–466.
Ward, J. (2017). “What are you doing on Tinder? Impression management on a matchmaking mobile app”. *Information Communication and Society* 20(11): 1644–1659. doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412
Watts, R. J. (1989). “Relevance and relational work: Linguistic politeness as politic behavior”. *Multilingua* 8(2–3): 131–166. doi.org/10.1515/mult.1989.8.2-3.131
Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Watts, R. J. (2005). “Linguistic politeness research: Quo vadis?”. In R. J. Watts, S. Ide & K. Ehlich (eds.), *Politeness in Language: Studies in its History, Theory*

and Practice, 2nd edn. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, xi–xlvii.
Xia, P., Ribeiro, B., Chen, C., Liu, B. & Towsley, D. (2013). "A study of user behavior on an online dating site". In *Proceedings of the 2013 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining (ASONAM)*. New York: ACM Press, 243–247.

Appendix 1: Notifications sent to Tinder users

A. Notifications encouraging the user to start a conversation with their newly acquired match

- The one who sends the first message wins. Ready. Set. Go!
- Say something sweet!
- It's good you didn't accidentally swipe left
- If only there were a way to start a conversation. Oh wait…
- The definition of FOMO: Fear of Missing Out
- Great question! Ask to get the answer.
- Winning!
- It all starts here.
- 5 million messages sent in the last hour…you can't even think of one?
- How many languages can you type in?
- Did the cat bite your tongue?
- How many friends have you made on Tinder?
- #WeBothSwipedRight
- In many cultures, silence is considered rude.
- Billions of messages have been sent on Tinder. What will yours be?
- You miss 100% of the memories you never make.
- Don't swipe and drive
- Say something nice about one of their photos
- Give them a compliment and watch what happens.
- What are you waiting for?
- Are your hands tied or something?
- Your move…
- You know they already want to talk to you, right? #WeBothSwipedRight
- How long until you send a message?
- See that box down there? Compliment me.
- It started here.
- Make them smile.
- Achievement unlocked!
- Be social.
- I wonder what tagline they got.
- There's nothing wrong with sending the first message.
- Insert thoughtful message below.
- This screen would look a lot better with a conversation in it.
- It's not Tinder until you send a message.
- Tell them why you swiped right?
- Are you waiting for an invitation?
- Staring at this screen won't start a convo…
- You' re not getting any younger.

B. Notifications sent to the user to encourage using the application

- Don’t keep your match waiting. Send him a message. 💌
- Somebody likes you. 😍Open Tinder and swipe right to see who!
- Who are all these new people swiping in your area?🤔 Swipe to find out👉
- You have 75 new likes ❤️. Swipe to see if you like them back. 🔥
- Hey good-looking 😉Swiping Right is the easiest way to meet someone new👉
- Haven’t seen you for a while, but we know staying fly is a full-time job. 💅Don’t forget to stop by and show off your hard work 🤳
- Your profile is about to be hidden.🙈 Open Tinder to continue to be seen by potential matches.

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ

Έντυπο συναίνεσης για διπλωματική εργασία

Τίτλος Ερευνητικής Εργασίας: Η Γλωσσική Έκφραση στο Tinder

Ερευνήτρια: Ευανθία Καβρουλάκη (email: ekavroulaki@enl.uoa.gr, κιν. 6979294743)

1. Σκοπός της διπλωματικής εργασίας
Είμαι μεταπτυχιακή φοιτήτρια του Τμήματος Αγγλικής Γλώσσας και Φιλολογίας του Εθνικού και Καποδιστριακού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών και μελετώ τον διαδικτυακό λόγο. Συγκεκριμένα, σκοπός της παρούσας διπλωματικής μελέτης είναι η διερεύνηση του τρόπου έκφρασης κατά τη χρήση της εφαρμογής Tinder.

Διαδικασία
Για το λόγο αυτό, θα σας παρακαλούσα να μου παραχωρήσετε ανώνυμα συνομιλίες σας, όπως αυτές προέκυψαν κατά τη χρήση της εφαρμογής Tinder. Από τις συνομιλίες αυτές μπορείτε να ζητήσετε να παραλειφθούν συγκεκριμένα τμήματα. Οι συνομιλίες θα μελετηθούν με στόχο την ποσοτική και ποιοτική τους ανάλυση, χωρίς να ταυτοποιείσθε με οποιονδήποτε τρόπο. Επίσης, θα σας ζητηθεί η ανώνυμη συμπλήρωση ενός ερωτηματολογίου με στόχο τη διερεύνηση των κινήτρων χρήσης της εφαρμογής, έτσι ώστε οι συνομιλίες να μπορούν να αναλυθούν με τον καλύτερο δυνατό τρόπο.

2. Δημοσίευση δεδομένων – αποτελεσμάτων
Η συμμετοχή σας στην έρευνα είναι εθελοντική και μπορείτε να μην συναινέσετε ή να διακόψετε τη συμμετοχή σας όποτε το επιθυμείτε. Συμμετέχοντας στην έρευνα συμφωνείτε με τη μελλοντική παρουσίαση σε συνέδρια ή δημοσίευση των αποτελεσμάτων της, με την προϋπόθεση ότι οι πληροφορίες θα είναι ανώνυμες και οι συμμετέχοντες δεν θα ταυτοποιούνται με οποιονδήποτε τρόπο. Τα δεδομένα που θα συγκεντρωθούν θα κωδικοποιηθούν με αριθμό, και τα ονόματα θα αντικατασταθούν με ψευδώνυμα. Τα δεδομένα θα κρατηθούν σε ασφαλές μέρος μέχρι το πέρας της έρευνας.

3. Πληροφορίες
Αν έχετε οποιεσδήποτε ερωτήσεις, ανησυχίες ή αμφιβολίες σχετικά με τον σκοπό ή τη διαδικασία της έρευνας επικοινωνήστε μαζί μου να σας δώσω περισσότερες διευκρινίσεις.

4. Δήλωση συναίνεσης
Διάβασα το έντυπο αυτό, κατανοώ τις διαδικασίες που θα ακολουθήσω και συναινώ να συμμετάσχω στην έρευνα με έναν ή και τους δυο από τους παρακάτω τρόπους:
(Κυκλώστε το αντίστοιχο γράμμα).

Α. Παραχωρώντας συνομιλίες για τις οποίες έχω την άδεια του ατόμου με το οποίο συνομίλησα.
Β. Παραχωρώντας συνομιλίες για τις οποίες δεν έχω ζητήσει ή λάβει άδεια από τον/την συνομιλητή/τρια και στις οποίες έχω διαγράψει τη φωτογραφία και το user name του συνομιλητή μου, καθώς και οποιαδήποτε πληροφορία οδηγεί στην ταυτοποίησή του.

Ημερομηνία: __/__/__

Ονοματεπώνυμο και υπογραφή συμμετέχοντος

Υπογραφή ερευνητή

Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ για τη συμμετοχή σας. Η βοήθειά σας είναι πολύ σημαντική για μένα.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire

Ερωτηματολόγιο για τη χρήση της εφαρμογής Tinder

Το παρακάτω ερωτηματολόγιο αποτελεί μέρος της διπλωματικής εργασίας της μεταπτυχιακής φοιτήτριας Ευανθίας Καβρουλάκη. Η εργασία αφορά στη χρήση της εφαρμογής Tinder. Στόχος του ερωτηματολογίου είναι να βοηθήσει στο να αναλυθούν με την μεγαλύτερη δυνατή ακρίβεια οι διάλογοι που έχουν παραχωρηθεί ή θα παραχωρηθούν. Τα ερωτηματολόγια απαντώνται ανώνυμα και θα κωδικοποιηθούν με αριθμό έτσι ώστε να μπορούν να αντιστοιχηθούν με τις επίσης ανώνυμες συνομιλίες σας. Εάν δεν επιθυμείτε μπορείτε να μην απαντήσετε σε μία ή περισσότερες από τις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις. Παρακαλώ απαντήστε στις ερωτήσεις μόνο εάν είστε χρήστης του Tinder, άνω των 18 ετών. Για οποιαδήποτε περεταίρω διευκρίνηση ή απορία επικοινωνήστε στην ηλ. διεύθυνση: ekavroulaki@enl.uoa.gr.

Επιλέξτε:

1. **Φύλο**
   - ☐ Άνδρας
   - ☐ Γυναίκα
   - ☐ Άλλο
2. **Ηλικία**
   - ☐ 18 - 22
   - ☐ 23 - 27
   - ☐ 28 - 32
   - ☐ 33 - 37
   - ☐ 38 - 42
   - ☐ 43 - 47
   - ☐ 48+
3. **Για ποιους από τους παρακάτω λόγους χρησιμοποιείτε το Tinder;** (μπορείτε να επιλέξετε παραπάνω από έναν λόγο)
   - ☐ Για να χαζεύω προφίλ άλλων
   - ☐ Για να συνομιλώ διαδικτυακά
   - ☐ Για να βρω κάποιον/α σύντροφο με τον οποίο/α να κάνω σχέση
   - ☐ Για να βρω κάποιον/α για one night stand ή «χαλαρό» φλέρτ
   - ☐ Για πλάκα
   - ☐ Άλλο: