

Chapter 24

The Role of Deceptive Communication and Gender in Shaping Online Dating Interactions: A Discursive Approach

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ABSTRACT

Online dating is becoming an increasingly used method for meeting significant others. As the research of lying behavior has advanced so has the technique of detecting the act of lying, especially in the online environment where deception is more likely to happen. The aim of this chapter is to simplify the perception of lying behavior to the general population and examine gender differences of lying behavior, namely, to verify whether one can observe a statistically significant difference in the speech behavior and exploitation of lying cues among men and women. The study shows correlation between gender and deception in online environment.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals are frequently confronted with circumstances in which they must select their words carefully. People making that choice regularly ought to weigh the motive of assigning precise and truthful information against the requirement to preserve that relationship or to save face that is crucial to maintain the proper interaction (McCornack, 1992). At a point when people wish to be truthful, these two objectives may appear to be irreconcilable. With the intention of resolving this discord, people frequently abandon one aim for the other, which repeatedly means that the intent to preserve face as well as maintain the relationship wins out.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-8535-0.ch024

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Communicators make these decisions continuously, some when they “fudge” on their financial situation, others when they lie about their sexual history to a potential dating mate (Pawlowski & Dunbar, 1999). Such choices may include judging whether the goal can be achieved by deception, whether the deceiver will revel in lying, or if the deceiver can ethically validate misleading the other about the topic. These are examples of the views people may have when they are challenged with a state in which people feel uncomfortable presenting the truth. The beliefs people have as they are preparing and expressing their messages are shaped by such aspects as one’s social motives, background, ethical attitude, awareness of one’s communicative behaviors, or perceptions of the approval of deception (O’Hair & Cody, 1994). Influences such as these have an influential impact on how truthful or deceptive that individual is in a certain state (Rowatt, Cunningham, & Druen, 1998) .

Romantic relationships are not always the result of complete honesty. Most individuals specified that they have been dishonest towards their romantic partner (cf. Levine, 2014). In some circumstances, relational deception is used to circumvent sensitive topics (Baxter & Wilmot, 1996) or to suppress appropriate information (Roloff & Cloven, 1990). The ubiquity of relational deception does not appear to be astonishing as there are various studies that aim at indicating that individuals are dishonest in different everyday situations (Drury, 2019; Levine, 2014; Tracy, Robles, 2013). DePaulo et al. (2004) show that individuals reserve their most severe lies for those they are romantically related to (DePaulo, Ansfield, Kirkendol, & Boden, 2004). Besides, there is also research that proposes that while there seems to be a great deal of deception in the mate selection procedure, those involved in that procedure are aware of its existence (Benz, Anderson, & Miller, 2005).

Meeting a significant other online is becoming more and more popular and appropriate way to find love, yet little is documented about the accurateness of the information individuals propose in these online forums. Current work suggests that online daters have diverse motivations for employing the Internet to find love (Lawson & Leck, 2006). Furthermore, deception appears to be more predominant in computer-mediated interactions than to face-to-face communications. Toma, Hancock, and Ellison (2008) are certain of obvious deception in online dating is reduced by the balance between the deceptive likelihoods that is accessible and the social restrictions that can originate from the expectancy of meeting the individual at some time in the future.

The connection between communication and deception may be helpful in understanding how individuals act while attempting to find a possible dating partner. Deception may be used as a way to keep an individual’s independence (Solomon, 1993). Conversely, deception can also be employed as an approach to manage one’s impression (Goffman, 1959), which would make nervous individuals more predisposed to lie

In the background of online dating, it is crucial to assess how truthful the initial messages are as they predetermine the tone for communication in the relationship. Moreover, one ought to be conscious that men and women often differ in how they see and react in romantic relationships (Shulman & Scharf, 2000; Zak, 1998). Consequently, it is important to examine the concept of gender in deception in romantic relationships. DePaulo et al. (1996) state that men and women have been detected to lie roughly the same amount. One can see that men and women have an inclination to lie in different ways. While men more regularly employ self-oriented lies, women are likely to lie in a manner that rises the other person (DePaulo et al., 1996).

Along with investigating lying behavior in an online dating context, this paper also examined how attachment styles might be related to participants’ motivations as well as justifications for their lies. Framing participant’s deception in terms of romantic attachment styles is predominantly significant in

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