

CENTRO DE ESTUDOS GERAIS  
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS  
PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS

BEATRIZ ORLANDINI GAMA E SILVA

**ONLINE DATING: PROMOTING THE SELF AND IDEALIZING THE OTHER**

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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL FLUMINENSE

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**ONLINE DATING: PROMOTING THE SELF AND IDEALIZING THE OTHER**

por

BEATRIZ ORLANDINI GAMA E SILVA

Tese de Doutorado em Estudos Lingüísticos, apresentada à Coordenação da Pós-Graduação em Letras da Universidade Federal Fluminense, para obtenção do grau de Doutor em Letras.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. David Shepherd

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## RESUMO

GAMA E SILVA, Beatriz Orlandini. **Namoro virtual: a autopromoção e a idealização do outro.** 2008. 209 f. Tese. (Doutorado em Estudos Lingüísticos) – Faculdade de Letras, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, 2008.

Combinando-se instrumentos da análise da composição textual com a especificidade das análises dos gêneros e da linguagem da avaliação, a pesquisa apresentará uma proposta para a categorização de perfis em *sites* de encontros como um subgênero digital *de facto*, pertencente à colônia dos gêneros promocionais. Os textos autodescritivos serão considerados eventos comunicativos socialmente dependentes e intencionais (Martin, 1986, 1992; Bhatia, 1993, 2004), do modo ostensivo (Tanaka, 1999), cuja construção funcional assemelha-se àquela da oferta/produto (Bhatia, 1993, 2004), promovendo incentivo e sedução através de estratégias discursivas de autopromoção e valorização (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). A análise do corpus será realizada a partir dos movimentos retóricos e táticas conversacionais que permeiam o discurso do gênero promocional, mapeando-se, dessa forma, os macro- e micro-padrões organizacionais, assim como os recursos semântico-discursivos relativos à linguagem da avaliação, presentes na organização esquemática incomum desse tipo emergente de hipertexto.

Palavras-chave: *Sites* de Encontro; Gênero Promocional; Teoria da Avaliação; Movimentos Retóricos; Qualificadores.

## ABSTRACT

GAMA E SILVA, Beatriz Orlandini. **Online dating: promoting the self and idealizing the other.** 2008. 209 f. Tese. (Doutorado em Estudos Lingüísticos) – Faculdade de Letras, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, 2008.

This research seeks to combine the tools of corpus analysis, together with the specificity of genre analysis and the appraisal system framework, in an attempt to categorize online dating personal profiles as a genuine digital subgenre within the genre system of online dating. Evidence will be provided to confirm the hypothesis that such profiles are realized as socially dependent communicative events of staged and purposeful social process (Martin, 1986, 1992; Bhatia, 1993, 2004), of the ostensive kind (Tanaka, 1999). It will be argued that their functional construction resembles that of offer/product (Bhatia, 1993, 2004), promoting incentive and seduction through discourse strategies of self-promotion and appraisal (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). The corpus will undergo scrutiny from the perspective of rhetorical moves and conversational tactics which permeate discourse of this promotional genre. These analytical categories are brought in as an effort to map out macro-patterns and micro-relations, as well as semantic-lexical, discourse-level resources of the appraisal system, inherent to the schematic organization of this emerging type of hypertext.

Keywords: Dating Sites; Promotional Genre; Appraisal Theory; Rhetorical Moves; Qualifiers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	14
1.1 A description of the online dating phenomenon .....	14
1.2 The dynamics of online dating sites .....	17
1.3 Research on online dating .....	21
1.4 The relevance of genre-oriented analyses .....	23
1.5 The object of investigation .....	26
1.5.1 Introduction .....	26
1.5.2 Phase 1 – Macro-analysis .....	27
1.5.3 Phase 2 – Micro-analysis .....	28
1.6 The corpus .....	30
2. APPROACHES TO GENRE CHARACTERIZATION .....	32
2.1 Genre typology .....	33
2.1.1 Swales’ genre exploration .....	34
2.1.2 Biber’s multidimensional analysis .....	35
2.1.3 Martin’s functional model .....	39
2.1.4 Bhatia’s analysis of discourse as genre .....	41
2.2 Textual organization .....	44
2.2.1 Metafunctional patterning .....	45
2.2.2 Interactive patterning .....	48
2.3 From theory to practice: <i>the analytical framework</i> .....	50
3. HYPERTEXTS AND COMPUTER-MEDIATED GENRE SYSTEMS .....	55
3.1 General properties of the WWW .....	55
3.2 Web text production and reception .....	56
3.2.1 Multi-medianess .....	56
3.2.1 Hyper-reading: a three-mode process .....	57
3.3 Reading online dating sites: a two-modal shift model .....	62

4. DATING SITES AS A COMPUTER-MEDIATED PROMOTIONAL GENRE .....	65
4.1 Multiple communicative purposes .....	65
4.1.1 <i>Ostensive-inferential communicative</i> .....	71
4.1.2 <i>Discourse type features</i> .....	73
4.2 Structural organization and rhetorical moves .....	76
4.2.1 <i>Macro-patterns of dating sites: navigating mode</i> .....	77
4.2.2 <i>Moves in discourse structure of online dating forms: navigating mode</i> ....	79
4.2.2.1 <i>Move positions</i> .....	80
4.2.2.2 <i>Move strategy frequencies</i> .....	85
4.2.2.3 <i>Move distribution</i> .....	98
5. CULTURE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE .....	100
5.1 Culture .....	100
5.1.1 <i>Cross-cultural variability</i> .....	104
5.2 Language of gender .....	109
5.2.1 <i>Early studies</i> .....	110
5.2.2 <i>Second Wave feminism</i> .....	111
5.2.3 <i>Third Wave feminism</i> .....	115
5.3 Gender differences in cyberspace .....	120
6. ARTICULATING THE APPRAISAL SYSTEM .....	125
6.1 Engagement .....	126
6.1.1 <i>Heteroglossia</i> .....	128
6.1.2 <i>Intertextuality and dialogism</i> .....	130
6.1.3 <i>Modality</i> .....	133
6.2 Attitude .....	136
6.2.1 <i>Affect: evaluating emotional responses</i> .....	138
6.2.2 <i>Judgement: evaluating behavior</i> .....	140
6.2.3 <i>Appreciation: evaluating physical attributes</i> .....	144
6.3 Graduation .....	146
6.3.1 <i>Force</i> .....	147
6.3.2 <i>Focus</i> .....	148

7. ATTITUDINAL MAKE-UP OF EVALUATIVE SEGMENTS: READING MODE ...	151
7.1 Evaluation of the self .....	154
7.2 Evaluation of the desired other .....	163
7.3 Graduation resources: force and focus .....	169
7.4 Comparative analyses: attitudinal evaluations .....	173
7.4.1 Carioca vs. New Yorker male attitudinal evaluations .....	176
7.4.2 Carioca vs. New Yorker female attitudinal evaluations .....	178
7.4.3 Carioca male vs. Carioca female attitudinal evaluations .....	181
7.4.4 New Yorker male vs. New Yorker female attitudinal evaluations .....	183
8. CONCLUSION .....	189
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES .....	199

## LIST OF FIGURES

1	Basic Information Windows .....	19
2	Basic Information Windows .....	19
3	Full Profile Form – Match.com, Yahoo! .....	20
4	Text topology .....	48
5	Metafunctional make-up of online dating profiles .....	54
6	Fuller’s topology of ideational and interpersonal sourcing .....	134
7	The Appraisal System and its ramifications .....	150
8	Attitudinal evaluation .....	153

## LIST OF TABLES

1	Classification of digital genre systems .....	25
2	Text organization .....	46
3	Profile elaboration (MDA) .....	53
4	Online personal ads: features of discourse type .....	74
5a	Interaction of Macro-patterns of online personal ads .....	79
5b	Interaction of Macro-patterns of online personal ads .....	79
6	Revised Move Schemata of online profiles .....	84
7	Move 1: overall distribution of strategies .....	85
8	M1 tokens – Carioca males .....	86
9	M1 tokens – Carioca females .....	86
10	M1 tokens – New York males .....	87
11	M1 tokens – New York females .....	87
12	Move 2: overall distribution of strategies .....	88
13	M2 tokens – Carioca males .....	88
14	M2 tokens – Carioca females .....	89
15	M2 tokens – New York males .....	89
16	M2 tokens – New York females .....	89
17	Move 3: overall distribution of strategies .....	90
18	Move 4: overall distribution of strategies .....	91
19	M4 tokens – Carioca males .....	91
20	M4 tokens – Carioca females .....	92
21	M4 tokens – New York males .....	92
22	M4 tokens – New York females .....	92

23	Move 5: overall distribution of strategies .....	93
24	M5 tokens – Carioca males .....	94
25	M5 tokens – Carioca females .....	94
26	M5 tokens – New Yorkers .....	94
27	Move 6: overall distribution of strategies .....	95
28	M6 tokens – Pressure tactics – Carioca vs. New York males .....	96
29	M6 tokens – Pressure tactics – Carioca vs. New York females .....	96
30	Move 7: overall distribution of strategies .....	97
31	M7 tokens – Attention-getting codas – Males .....	97
32	M7 tokens – Attention-getting codas – Females .....	98
33	Judgement: social esteem and social sanction .....	142
34	Attributes of the self – Affect – Carioca males .....	156
35	Attributes of the self – Affect – Carioca females .....	156
36	Attributes of the self – Affect – New York males .....	156
37	Attributes of the self – Affect – New York females .....	156
38	Attributes of the self – Judgement – Carioca males .....	157
39	Attributes of the self – Judgement – Carioca females .....	158
40	Attributes of the self – Judgement – New York males .....	158
41	Attributes of the self – Judgement – New York females .....	159
42	Attributes of the self – Appreciation – Carioca males .....	160
43	Attributes of the self – Appreciation – Carioca females .....	161
44	Attributes of the self – Appreciation – New York males .....	162
45	Attributes of the self – Appreciation – New York females .....	162
46	Attributes of the other self – Affect – Carioca males .....	163
47	Attributes of the other self – Affect – Carioca females .....	164

48	Attributes of the other self – Affect – New York males .....	164
49	Attributes of the other self – Affect – New York females .....	164
50	Attributes of the other self – Judgement – Carioca males .....	165
51	Attributes of the other self – Judgement – Carioca females .....	166
52	Attributes of the other self – Judgement – New York males .....	167
53	Attributes of the other self – Judgement – New York females .....	167
54	Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – Carioca males .....	168
55	Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – Carioca females .....	168
56	Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – New York males .....	168
57	Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – New York females .....	169
58	Graduation resources – Force – Carioca males .....	170
59	Graduation resources – Force – Carioca females .....	170
60	Graduation resources – Force – New York males .....	171
61	Graduation resources – Force – New York females .....	171
62	Graduation resources – Focus – Carioca males .....	171
63	Graduation resources – Focus – Carioca females .....	171
64	Graduation resources – Focus – New York males .....	171
65	Graduation resources – Focus – New York females .....	172
66	Graduation resources: overall distribution .....	172
67	Attributes of the self: overall distribution .....	174
68	Attributes of the other self: overall distribution .....	175
69	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: males .....	176
70	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: males .....	177
71	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: females .....	179
72	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: females .....	180

73	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: Cariocas .....	182
74	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: Cariocas .....	183
75	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: New Yorkers .....	184
76	Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: New Yorkers .....	185
77	Most frequent attributes of the self – Cariocas .....	186
78	Most frequent attributes of the self – New Yorkers .....	186
79	Most frequent attributes of the other self – Cariocas .....	187
80	Most frequent attributes of the other self – New Yorkers .....	187

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 A description of the online dating phenomenon

The use of online dating services has evolved from a marginal to a mainstream social practice over the last decade. Looking for love has long moved on, from the days of small ads, on the back pages of newspapers or magazines, to the World Wide Web. According to reporter Mary Wilson (*cf.* The Guardian, July 12, 2007), the web has brought smart databases, a wider reach and, often, faster results.

In December 2007, at least 97 million people world wide used an online dating service (*cf.* ComScore). *Online Dating Magazine* (October, 2007) estimates that more than 40 million people visit at least one online dating service a month. In the US, 31% of adults say they know someone who has used an online dating service (*cf.* Pew Internet & American Life Project Report: Online Dating, March 2007). In Britain, the taboos around online dating also seem to be falling away. Dating sites received 6.4 million visitors in May 2007, according to web measurement group comScore World Metrix. Britain currently has as many or even more than 141 dating sites, according to Nielsen/NetRatings.

Two out of five single Brazilians used an online dating service in 2007; on average, there were 20 million visitors to online dating sites each month in Brazil in that year. *“Estamos no século XXI, época da internet, do messenger e das mensagens pelo celular. Tá difícil arrumar namorado(a) pelos meios convencionais? Leia-se através de amigos, bares e danceterias, exposições, e até supermercados. Fácil! Use a Internet!”* (*cf.* CyberLove.com.br).

Online dating seems to have shed its stigma as “matchmaker for the awkward” (*cf.* Goodwin, 1990), to claim a new prominence in the social lives of millions of users. Prospective daters are increasingly eroding the stigma of seeking cyber love. In fact, the

online personals category is one of the most lucrative forms of paid content on the web in the United States and the online dating market is expected to reach \$642 million in 2008 (*cf.* Mediamark Research Inc., henceforth, MRI). Some other MRI findings are the following:

- Of the 2.462 million adults who reported participating in online dating in the last 30 days, 52.2 percent are men and 47.8 percent are women.
- Younger people (ages 18-34) comprise almost half of all online daters, making it 59 percent more likely than the population as a whole will be in this group.
- Middle-aged people are significantly represented by nearly one-quarter (24.2 percent) of online daters who are between the ages of 35-44.

Founder and chief executive of *Meetic*, Marc Simoncini, launched his first dating site in his native France with divorced men in mind. *"I had a meal with three of my best friends and all of them were divorced. They were all saying they couldn't meet anyone. I said to myself, if I know three guys who are not about to find a girl, maybe there are millions of them and it might be a good time to launch a web site."* He was overwhelmed with registrations to the point of giving up the day job as a business consultant. *"It was really booming, and then we tried it in Spain. It was the same. So we tried it in Italy, it was a boom. It worked everywhere...in the beginning people felt ashamed, no one would admit to being on Meetic. Now it's trendy."* Most significantly, more women are now joining, according to Mr. Simoncini: *"when we started we had 25% women and 75% men. Now we are close to 50-50 in France and Spain,"* (*cf.* ComScore).

Match.com, the leading dating site, is now betting on investing more substantively in markets that have already proven to be competitive such as Japan, the US and Brazil, and plans to expand business to less favorable individual markets represented by France and Germany. Match.com operates in 18 languages and 37 markets, and every year it brings 500,000 online subscribers who are seeking relationships. *"We have a large-scale, flourishing*

*business with sky-high profits*", said Thomas Enraght-Moony, CEO of Match.com, in a recent visit to Paris (*cf.* marketingcharts.com).

While the top three dating sites - Match.com, Yahoo! Personals and American Singles.com - pull in more than half of all online daters, there is, in addition, a legion of competitors. Among those vying for paying subscribers are a number of sites targeting niche groups, such as DeafSingle.com; Harley-Match.com for bikers and the women who love them; and MyCountryMatch.com, where cowboys can meet cowgirls.

Ubiquitous access to the Internet, the diminished social stigma associated with online dating and the affordable cost of Internet matchmaking services contribute to the increasingly common perception that online dating is a viable, efficient way to meet dating or long-term relationship partners.

Given their prevalence, it seems likely that online dating systems have begun to influence not only individual lives but also cultural notions of love and attraction with their overflowing profiles of potential partners and their sometimes idiosyncratic choices in terms of personal characteristics to highlight. However, despite the incredible number of people using these services, little is known about how users perceive each other and interact through these mediated channels, or how such technologies might affect their selection of partners for dating, sex and marriage.

Mediated matchmaking is certainly not a new phenomenon: newspaper personal advertisements have existed since the mid-19th century (*cf.* Schaefer, 2003) and video dating was popular in Europe in the 1980s (*cf.* Woll & Cosby, 1987; Woll & Young, 1989). Although scholars working in a variety of academic disciplines have studied these earlier forms of mediated matchmaking (*cf.* Ahuvia & Adelman, 1992; Lynn & Bolig, 1985; Woll, 1986; Woll & Cosby, 1987), current Internet dating services are radically different from those activities due to their larger user base and more sophisticated self-presentation options.

The online dating realm creates the opportunity to observe changing cultural norms surrounding technology-mediated relationship formation and to gain insight into important aspects of online behavior, such as impression formation and self-presentation linguistic strategies.

## 1.2 The dynamics of online dating sites

Online personal systems usually include personal profiles of users, which document their location, gender, age, physical attributes, race, religion, smoking and drinking habits, self-description, and preferences for these characteristics in a potential date; a private messaging system; and a mechanism for indicating interest without writing a substantial message, usually termed “winking,” or “favorites”.

User profiles include a title or nick, constrained descriptors like age and hair color, free-response descriptors, and sometimes photographs. Constrained descriptors limit users to certain categories (*e.g.*, the set of hair colors) or types of input (*e.g.*, numeric for age). Free-response descriptors let the user compose arbitrary texts. Certain sites give straightforward prompts for free-response descriptors, such as “Describe yourself” or “Describe who you’re looking for”. Others provide less direct prompts: “Best (or worst) lie I’ve ever told,” “Song or album that puts me in the mood.”

Other new personals sites also incorporate personality psychology into their profile-building process; Tickle, eHarmony, and PerfectMatch purport to match their members according to the results of personality tests. Most systems provide both searching and matching functionality. In *searching*, users provide specific characteristics they are looking for in their partners. They can search the set of profiles based on constrained descriptors, including age, eye color, and religion, and sometimes by keywords in the free-response descriptors.

In *matching*, which is slightly less direct, systems pair users by comparing their profile descriptors to the descriptors of others through clustering techniques. Different systems apply different assessments for the features of the profiles. Online personals systems invariably provide a private channel through which members communicate without revealing their names or regular email addresses. Typically, it functions like a web-based email client, providing a field to enter a subject for the message and a larger field for the message body, except that users can write only to others on the same site.

Users generally write each other with the private messaging system to find out whether they want to proceed to contact via email, phone, or face-to-face interaction. This provides for privacy and safety until the users are comfortable with each other. Although sites often allow free browsing and searching in order to attract customers, most require users to pay for the ability to send private messages. Certain sites allow non-paying users to reply to messages from paying users but not to initiate conversations on their own.

Upon registration, prospective members of most dating sites are asked to fill out a form with personal introduction, personal appearance, and description of an ideal prospective date. Members describe themselves and list the attributes of their idealized partners. As expected, profile information is supposed to be attractive. And the way in which it is presented – the kind of language used – undoubtedly, constitutes a crucial and decisive move.

First, users must submit an application form with personal data for approval, and next, depending on the site, pay a monthly fee. Once approved, an online questionnaire becomes available for users to fill in, with information they want to have posted. A menu of pre-selected options is offered for most items in the questionnaire. The participant chooses an option by clicking on it. Kinds of information being asked in the full profile questionnaire (fields with no asterisks) are optional, *i.e.*, participants may choose not to provide information regarding particular aspects of their life, such as income, and for that they will choose on the

menu the option “I don’t want to inform”. Several other informational segments of the profiles are created by the users themselves.

Profiles on dating sites are to be regarded as an asynchronic system since they display identifiable elements, rules of form, and content supporting both production and consumption. Various forms of interaction, both synchronic and asynchronic, may follow. For example, a viewer identifies with, or feels attracted to, another profiled subscriber, and may then choose a face-saving move that consists of simply clicking on the icon “add to favorites”, on top of the other’s profile window, to show interest. A window with basic information including an attention getter (a sentence produced by the profiler), a nickname or handle, basic information such as age, location and, in most cases, a photograph will be displayed on the recipient’s list of favorites. Another possibility, more assertive, is to send an e-mail message to the other party through the site (personal e-mail addresses are not disclosed).

A further communication channel, this time of the synchronic type, is open to subscribers. By clicking on the icon “FasTalk” (Match.com, Yahoo!), users request permission to engage in private chats with selected online members.

Figures 1 & 2 – Basic information windows – Match.com, Yahoo!



If the recipient is interested, the full profile will be available by clicking on the nickname or photograph and a larger window will open with full profiles similar to that shown below:

Figure 3 – Full profile form – Match.com, Yahoo!

Nick

## Introduction

### Basic Information

Gender:

Sexual Orientation:

Age:

Location:

Relationship Type:

(options available)

- Friendship/Activity partner
- Relationship/Casual relationship
- Relationship/Serious romance
- Sex

Height and weight:

Body type:

I consider myself:

Ethnicity:

Eyes:

Hair:

## Personal Presentation

### General Information

Relationship status:

(options available)

- single alone
- single dating
- separated
- divorced
- widowed
- married

Regarding housing:

Income:

Children:

Religion:

Education:

Languages:

Work:

Sign:

Physical Exercises:

Alcohol:

Smoke:

How frequently I go out:

Where I go out:

Hobbies:

Sports:

### Interests

How much I like to watch TV:

TV and movies, my favorite genres are:

How much reading do you like to do?

Reading styles are:

These are the music genres I like:

Most of the time my looks are:

Kinds of food I enjoy:

My favorite trips are:

I have the following pet(s):

About who ---- is looking for:

Gender:

Sexual Orientation:

Age:

Location:

Height:

Ideal weight between:

Body:

Ethnicity:

Eyes:

Alcohol:

Smoke:  
Relationship status:  
My soul mate's living arrangements:  
(options available)

- Living alone
- Living with parents
- Living with children
- Living with friends

Income:  
Education:  
My soul mate's Sign:  
Hair:  
Physical Exercises:

### **Description of who ... is looking for:**

As can be seen from the illustration above, the letter heads in bold introduce sections to be created by users themselves without any interference on the part of the web designer. They are expected to produce: 1. an introduction, functioning as an attention-getting strategy, 2. a personal presentation and, finally, 3. a description of who they are looking for. Members describe themselves and list the attributes of their idealized partners. The dynamic nature of “seductive” discourse is due to the fact that it is designed to be attractive and persuasive. In short, its primary purpose is to seduce by offering incentives for users to establish contact. As expected, profile information is quite attractive and the way in which it is presented – the kind of language used – is typical of the language of persuasion found in advertising (*cf.* Chapter 4 for promotional genres).

### 1.3 Research on online dating

Mixed-mode relationships, wherein people first meet online and then move offline, challenge established theories that focus on exclusively online relationships and provide opportunities for new theory development (Walther & Parks, 2002). Although previous research has explored relationship development and self-presentation online (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002; McLaughlin, Osbourne, & Ellison, 1997; Parks & Floyd, 1996; Roberts & Parks, 1999; Utz, 2000), the online dating forum is qualitatively different from many other online settings due to the anticipation of face-to-face interaction inherent in this context (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006) and the fact that social practices are still nascent.

So far, most researchers have studied online friendships and romantic relationships from psychological and sociological perspectives (*cf.* Fiore & Donath, 2004; Van Gelder, 1996; Walther, 1996; Bargh *et al.*, 2002), comparing their emotional and social impact to that of personals ads that appear in print publications (*cf.* Lynn & Bolig, 1985; Ahuvia & Adelman, 1992). The work carried out by the Berkeley group, headed by Hearst & Cheshire (School of Information) and Mendelsohn (Department of Psychology), focuses on the way online personals not only reflect but also have the potential to shape how people attract one another, date, and fall in love. The aim of the research carried by this group is to analyze usage data of the preferences and behavior of people seeking relationships via online personals in order to provide web designers with opportunities to refine information visualization and user interface design tools. Research findings are intrinsically interesting as social science, but, more importantly, they are aimed at future designs and matching algorithms to improve the experience of online dating (*cf.* <http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~atf/dating/>).

The study by Gibbs, Ellison & Heino (2006) investigates self-presentation strategies among online dating participants, exploring how participants manage their online presentation of self in order to accomplish the goal of finding a romantic partner. Thirty-four individuals active on a large online dating site participated in telephone interviews about their online dating experiences and perceptions. The analysis is centered on the relationship between impression management pressures and the desire to present an authentic sense of self. This study provides empirical support for Social Information Processing theory in a naturalistic context while offering insight into the complicated way in which "honesty" is enacted online.

To date, online personals have been mainly analyzed in order to characterize behavioral patterns of online dating activities, which, in turn, yield insight into what users seek in a date and how they evaluate potential partners. Studies are inherently comparative in

nature. They break down their analyses into demographic subgroups – populations offline and online – and compare their evaluative techniques. Social Information Processing (SIP) theory and related frameworks are employed in order to illuminate computer-mediated communication (CMC), interpersonal communication, and impression management processes in an attempt to establish the veracity of identity claims.

However, contemporary linguistic perspectives have not yet been fully explored in the analyses of online dating profiling production. Specifically, there have been to date, no attempts to analyze online dating in terms of textual organization, descriptive discourse strategies and lexical choices. In other words, no efforts have been made to build an awareness of the features which typify online dating discourse, and to improve understanding of the crucial role which promotional and evaluative tactics hold when daters build their persona and describe their ideal prospective partners.

#### 1.4 The relevance of genre-oriented analyses

Since its introduction into linguistics in the 1980s, the concept of genre has been a matter of considerable discussion in research communities throughout the world. In Australia, systemic functional linguists, including Martin (1992) and Eggins (1994), have used the concept to complement the Hallidayan notion of register for use in primary and secondary education. In North America, genre studies, labeled “The New Rhetoric”, have focused on interactions in various contexts. In both the United Kingdom and North America, Swales (1990) has developed his seminal model for genre analysis which discourse analysts have gladly welcomed and used as a tool for analyzing various academic genres within EAP (*i.e.*, English for Academic Purposes). However, Swales’ initial models (1990) have been criticized and refined in order to make them even more fit for covering the complexities of genres. Finally, in the Far East, Bhatia (1993) has paved the way for the practical application of genre

theory by suggesting a comprehensive framework for analyzing non-literary genres, especially, for various professional genres in EOP (*i.e.*, English for Occupational Purposes)<sup>1</sup>.

While these genre studies offer important insights into the notion of genre, the theoretical discussions and the practical genre analyses tend to focus on genres transmitted through, specifically, print, whereas little has been done to use the genre model on genres transmitted through one of the most significant digital media of today: the World Wide Web.

Systems of computer-mediated genres have evolved over the past decades to promote the communication of ideas and information in socially compatible interactive forms. As suggested by Yates, Orlikowski and Rennecker (1997:51) “*Each organization has a repertoire of genres that can be identified with it at a certain moment of analysis. A set of genres can also interrelate in a wider communicative process thus forming systems of genre.*” Conventional forms that are instantly recognized as hypertexts constitute a genre system *i.e.*, a sequence of communicative actions. The genre system as a whole, as well as the individual subgenres constituting the system, can be said to have a socially recognized purpose and common characteristics of form.

Emerging digital genre systems have already been the subject of analysis by many scholars but no detailed survey has yet produced the exact number of genres that can be found on the World Wide Web. Of course, the Internet is far from being a homogenous virtual context, thus it offers a great variety of formats, allowing, in turn, for different operating procedures with regard to participation and interactive processes. Marcuschi (2004:26-30) uses the Portuguese terms “*ambiente*” and “*gênero*” for what Yates, *et al* (1997), call genre system and subgenre respectively, and relates the two concepts by saying that the former consists of a superordinate category that very often conditions the latter. Therefore, genre systems are not to be regarded as discursal domains proper but rather domains of production

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed analysis of approaches to genre theory will be presented in Chapter 2.

and textual processing from which subgenres arise. Marcuschi (*op. cit.*) has identified twelve digital genre systems which are then related to their non-virtual counterparts, cited in the following table:

Table 1 – Classification of digital genre systems

<b>Emerging digital genre systems</b>	<b>Pre-existing genre-systems</b>
<b>1. E-mail</b>	<b>Personal letter//note//snail mail</b>
<b>2. Open Chat</b>	<b>Multilateral conversation</b>
<b>3. Private Chat</b>	<b>Bilateral conversation</b>
<b>4. ICQ Chat (scheduled)</b>	<b>Personal meeting/date</b>
<b>5. Private room Chat</b>	<b>Confidential conversation</b>
<b>6. Interview with guest</b>	<b>Interview with guest</b>
<b>7. E-mail class tutorial</b>	<b>Distance learning tutorial (snail mail)</b>
<b>8. Virtual class</b>	<b>Real classroom tutoring</b>
<b>9. Interactive video conference</b>	<b>Group meeting//conference//debate</b>
<b>10. Discussion list</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>
<b>11. E-mail address</b>	<b>Postal address</b>
<b>12. Blog</b>	<b>Personal journal// diary// note pad</b>

(Adapted from Marcuschi, 2004:31)

Personal ads, not included on the above list as a digital genre, constitute a distinct generic form which is linked to the small ad. While the ad offers something, the personal ad offers but, more essentially, seeks; it is, namely, the private search for the desired other.

Online dating, an activity that has drawn large numbers of web surfers, from all over the world, would certainly constitute an additional variety of the emerging digital genre systems. Sociological and psychological interpretations for this recent trend have already been mentioned (*cf.* Chapter 1.3). However, analyses of hypertexts on dating sites have not been carried out from the perspective of genre analysis. This recent computer-mediated activity, still controversial and underrated by many from a social perspective, is undeniably spreading and discourse forms displayed on dating sites certainly deserve exploratory investigations due to their large variety of creative linguistic realizations.

Recent years have seen a virtual explosion of web-mediated communication, not least due to the immense popularity of the Internet worldwide, and if researchers want to account for the discursive practices in which people engage in our society, which is the core idea behind the concept of genre, digital genres must obviously be included in the analyses as well.

Online dating sites offer a variety of functional interactions to their subscribers. The viewer can have access to many communicative moves that together accomplish an interaction: communication by means of emails, private chats and scheduled chats. The social interaction actually involves a blend of digital genre systems and the combination of subgenres to be surveyed, in terms of user perceptions of the form and contents of dating sites, reveals a significant correlation between commonly found elements and user preferences and expectations reflected in discourse.

## 1.5 The object of investigation

### 1.5.1 Introduction

This research seeks to combine the tools of corpus analysis, together with the specificity of genre analysis, aimed at a categorization of online dating personal profiles as a genuine digital subgenre within the genre system of online dating. In Phase 1, evidence will be provided in an attempt to confirm the hypothesis that such profiles are realized as socially dependent communicative events of staged and purposeful social process (Swales, 1990, 2004; Martin, 1986, 1992; Bhatia, 1993, 2004), of the ostensive kind (Tanaka, 1999). It will be argued that their multidimensional construction (Biber, 1988) resembles that of offer/product (Bhatia, 1993, 2004), promoting incentive and seduction through discourse strategies of self-promotion and appraisal (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005).

Furthermore, the arbitrary descriptive texts in the corpus – the two segments encompassing self-description and description of the other created by users – will undergo scrutiny from the perspective of rhetorical moves and conversational tactics that permeate discourse of the promotional genre. In Phase 2, the analysis will map out and explain micro-relations such as semantic, discourse-level resources of the appraisal system, inherent to dating site profiles, and will also attempt to identify the most frequently used lexicogrammatical resources in the textual organization of the subgenre, according to gender specificity (*cf.* Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1986, 1991, 1995; Holmes, 1997, 1998, 2001; Cameron, 1990, 1992; Talbot, 1998).

#### 1.5.2 Phase 1 – Macro-analysis

The first part of the research aims to provide a theoretical exploration of the genre model in general as a scaffold for a tentative characterization of online dating sites as a genre (*cf.* Chapter 2). The reasons for choosing the online dating site are the following: (i) it is a web-generated genre in the sense that it came into existence with the advent of the WWW and has no direct parallel outside the Web (printed personal ads do not offer the multifunctionality of dating sites); and (ii) it has not been analyzed as thoroughly as other web-generated texts to have reached genre status.

In Chapter 3, an attempt will be made to establish whether the genre model is suitable for capturing the essence of web-mediated genres – the hypertext – to provide new insights into the constituents of the genre model. I will investigate two media properties in more detail, namely *multi-mediality* and *hypertext/hyper-reading*. These are, of course, also part of the general properties of the WWW, but whose characteristics have a significant influence on the nature of web-mediated texts and, therefore, become valuable concepts in the genre characterization.

The following step (*cf.* Chapter 4) is to argue that, since advertising constitutes a promotional genre system, variations of promotional ads, associated with related text types determine the status of online personals as a promotional subgenre. Analysis of the promotional genre macro-patterns and moves in discourse structure are contemplated in this segment in order to yield richer insight into genre categorization.

Specifically, I intend to have answered the following questions by the end of Phase 1:

- a. Do online dating sites constitute a promotional sub-genre of the digital family?
- b. Does overall macro-patterning typically characterize the subgenre?
- c. Do promotional-oriented rhetorical moves apply to online dating profile forms?

### 1.5.3 Phase 2 – Micro-analysis

This phase aims to contribute to the analysis of personal advertising by considering the subjective presence of profilers as they evaluate their emotions and impressions, other people and their world. It deals primarily with lexical choices made by male and female subscribers and how these forms can be articulated within the Appraisal system (*cf.* Martin, 1996; Martin & Rose, 2003 and Martin and White, 2005).

This is realized through a taxonomy of the language used to communicate propositions relating to one's emotions and opinions – a subsystem referred to as 'Attitude'. The appraisal system further states that these propositions of attitude are used to negotiate social relationships and considers this dimension in a subsystem termed 'Engagement'. Both attitude and engagement are modified by the third subsystem 'Graduation'. Graduation alters the intensity and strength of conviction of appraising utterances. Appraisal is comprised of three systems cooperating in parallel:

- Attitude
  - affect
  - judgement
  - appreciation
- Engagement
  - monogloss
  - heterogloss (evaluative language is dialogic)
- Graduation
  - force (modifying strength of appraisal)
  - focus (blurring semantic categories)

For the purposes of the qualitative segment of this chapter, an appraisal analysis consists of: identifying appraisal-bearing propositions in the profiling process and labeling the constituents according to the attitude, engagement and graduation typologies (*cf.* Chapter 6).

However, in addition to qualitative parameters, a quantitative analysis is felt to be warranted since men and women are expected to differ in the ways they use language (*cf.* Chapter 5). When describing and analyzing data I intend to locate individual frequencies in a distribution. This location will be made in terms of percentile ranks. The percentile requires the location of the cumulative frequency at the point of the individual or group score. In the present study, the distributions will be related to the ‘cultural’ parameter, *i.e.*, Rio de Janeiro vs. New York residents, and the ‘gender’ parameter, *i.e.*, men vs. women. Apparent gender differences in communication parallel gender differences in existing social arrangements. Therefore, by identifying – or not – gender-differentiated lexical choices of attributes, the common belief that women tend to be more emotionally expressive than men is put to test.

Chapter 7 presents a comparative analysis highlighting graduation resources and attitudinal evaluations, *i.e.*, *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation*, produced by female/male cariocas and female/male New Yorkers.

Specifically, I intend to have answered the following questions by the end of Phase 2:

- d. Is it possible to relate lexical items in the corpus with appraisal-bearing propositions?
- e. Do women make more use of affective force-enhancement resources than men?

- f. Are there culture-oriented differences with regard to frequency in the use of graduation resources?
- g. Are there gender-marked differences with regard to variety and frequency in the use of attributes? For example, women being more rated on appearances (physical attributes) than men?
- h. Are there culture-oriented differences with regard to variety and frequency in the use of attributes?

## 1.6 The corpus

The hypertexts analyzed are profile questionnaires posted on Match.com, Yahoo! from July to December 2007, of online male and female members from both the Brazilian and the International website versions. All forty (40) full profile forms, randomly selected for this study, were elaborated by *Carioca* females (10) and males (10) and New Yorker females (10) and males (10), with ages ranging from 35 to 40, who were online from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. By restricting the scope of the research to texts produced by mature, adult subjects living in cosmopolitan areas such as Rio de Janeiro and New York City, the corpus is, arguably, more homogeneous and cohesive with regard to cultural diversity and register variation.

For the macro-analysis in Phase 1 (*cf.* Chapter 1.5.2 above), the multidimensionality of the online dating activity will be linguistically assessed by means of the basic information windows and full profile forms. This can be justified by the fact that one of the most important properties of the World Wide Web (*cf.* Chapter 3) is the overt *intertextuality* where various virtual texts are connected by links, allowing the reader to move from one text to another in a very simple manner while engaged in a single social practice with a specific communicative purpose (*cf. navigating mode* – Chapter 3). The embedded intertextuality of web texts gives them a particular property compared to printed texts: the conceptualization of

one text depends on its relation with other texts. The isolated text has no genre-specific meaning in itself in the overall textual system but must be seen in relation to the texts to which it is linked (*cf.* Mitra & Cohen, 1999).

This multifunctional standpoint is also shared by Swales (2004: 61-73) in his revised account of communicative purpose. Genre typology, according to this author, encompasses complex networks which may switch modes, text types and register varieties. Therefore, text types and communicative events feed into genres.

In Phase 2 (*cf.* Chapter 1.5.3 above), devoted to a micro-analysis of profilers' lexical choices, the corpus undergoing analysis comprises the two segments completed by prospective daters without the aid of the website menu of previously selected options. They are, specifically, forty (40) personal presentations and forty (40) descriptions of who the subscribers are looking for, totaling eighty (80) descriptive segments.

The reason for the focus on these two hypertext segments may be easily justified by the inherent parameters of the Appraisal system and relations that can be established among categories (*cf. reading mode* – Chapter 3). The extracts can be examined in an attempt to identify significant lexico-grammatical patterns of Appraisal. Linguistic patterns of online dating users have the potential to yield rich insight into what users seek in a date and how they evaluate themselves and potential partners (*cf.* Chapter 7). Studying linguistic choices made by forty heterosexual users of both genders and from two metropolitan cultures is expected to yield reliable evidence about online dating promotional writing (*cf.* Chapter 4), ensuring that quantitative and qualitative findings can be confidently generalized.

## 2. APPROACHES TO GENRE CHARACTERIZATION

The aim of this chapter is two-fold. First, it serves as a theoretical exploration of the genre model in general. It attempts to establish whether the model is suitable for capturing the essence of web-mediated genres or whether the digital context of web genres may call for a reconsideration of – or at least provide new insights into – the constituents of the genre model (*cf.* Chapter 3). Second, even though a systematic characterization of web-mediated genres is presented in the following chapter, online dating sites are used as exemplary material in the theoretical discussion in a way to provide an introductory channel to the characterization of online dating sites as a genre. Genre analysis has traditionally been viewed as a textual investigation, although more comprehensive analyses also use other techniques including ethnographic techniques, cognitive procedures, computational analysis and critical awareness.

Frameworks for the definition and categorization of genres have been proposed over the past thirty years by various researchers. Different parameters have been used to classify texts feeding into genres according to: linguistic features (Tarone, *et al.*, 1981; Henderson & Hewings, 1987; Biber, 1988, 1993; Salager-Meyer, 1994), situational features (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1989) and functional features (Swales, 1990, 2004; Martin, 1992, 2000; Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Eggins, 1994; Eggins & Martin, 1997; Hoey, 1986, 1997, 2001).

In the following chapters (*cf.* 2.1 and 2.2), attempts will be made to lay some groundwork for the understanding of recent trends in genre theory and typology, as well as a rationale for genre topology. Models and frameworks to be discussed and further employed, in the current study, are specifically based on the works produced by Swales (1990, 2004), Biber (1988, 1993), Martin (1992, 2000), Bhatia (1993, 2004) and Hoey (1986, 1997, 2001), in an effort to analyze the online dating corpus.

## 2.1 Genre typology

There is no objective procedure for categorizing a genre. A sub-genre to one theorist might be treated as a genre or a genre colony by another. Swales (2004) argues that the concept of genre is often subjective, dynamic and flexible (*cf.* Chapter 2.1.1). Genres are the result of an understanding or knowledge of a specific community's conventions. Genres are negotiated through conversations and actions of informed and practicing members of a professional community and they are, according to Bhatia (2004: 186), *‘the media through which members of professional or academic communities communicate with each other’*. Genres both shape and are shaped by actions and sense-making processes of community members.

Genres, according to various frameworks, may adopt the following general orientations:

- a. genres are recognized communicative events with a purpose that is understood by member of a specific discourse community;
- b. genres have some predictable structures and conventions, both in terms of their form and also in terms of their lexico-grammatical features;
- c. genres are reflections of a community’s culture, and in that sense focus on social actions embedded within its practices;
- d. genres are a form of situated cognition embedded in a community’s culture.

With the emergence of genre theory for the analysis of written discourse, three distinct frameworks were developed and used for analyzing genre. The first is popularly known as the North American school of genre studies, represented by the works of Bazerman (1994) and Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995). The Sydney school of systemic-functional approach to genre is represented by the work of Martin, Christy and Rothery (1987), Martin (1992), Frances Christie (2002), Rose (1997), Martin and Rose (2003), and Martin and White (2005).

Finally, the British ESP School, represented in the works of Swales (1990, 2004) and Bhatia (1993, 2004).

Martin's typology (1992), in common with those of other scholars from the systemic-functional linguistics schools (Christie, 2002 and Rose, 1997), focuses on what is defined by the North American New Rhetoric School and ESP theorists (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Swales, 1990, 1998, 2002, 2004) as 'pedagogic' genres. Others, notably, de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) classify the same texts as 'text types' rather than 'genres'.

In the following segments, (*cf.* Chapters 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3) frameworks for the categorization of genres will be explored in detail. This discussion will allow for some reflections and decisions about the interconnections between genre and text types.

#### 2.1.1 Swales' genre exploration

Swales has explored the concept of genre for almost thirty years. According to his framework (1990: 58) "*a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes [...] constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style*". Thus, genres are primarily function-oriented patterns of communication that aid in the realization of specific communicative goals.

In *Other Floors, Other Voices* (1998) Swales turns from applied concerns to an appreciation of the richness and variety of academic discourse for its own sake. Here he explores how people are embedded in making their textual lives, within the discursive landscapes their communities afford. This author provides an empirically grounded, fine-grained analysis of those communicative networks people identify as discourse communities.

In his more recent work (2004), Swales expands his initial definition of genre by adding that a single communicative purpose is not enough to categorize 'genre'. The

communicative purpose of a genre is not rooted in a single individual's motive for communicating, but in a purpose that is constructed, recognized, and reinforced within a community. Swales (2004), drawing from Orlikowski and Yates (1994: 542), proposes a multifaceted perspective that describes genres of organizational communication as socially recognized types of communicative actions such as memos, meetings, expense forms, training seminars, that are habitually enacted by members of a community to realize particular social purposes. Therefore, a genre structures communication processes by means of shared expectations that refer to both content and structure.

Swales (2004: 61) offers a revised notion of communicative purpose based on the rationale that genre categories are products of metaphor-generating processes varying in proportions according to circumstances. Thus a 'repurposing' orientation of genre typology is proposed (2004: 73), encompassing evolving social parameters, aiming at genre identification as a construct. Genres, from this multifunctional viewpoint, can no longer be seen as single and separable communicative entities, but as complex networks which naturally switch mode from writing into speech and move from a register variety into another.

### 2.1.2 Biber's multidimensional analysis

The major concern underlying Biber's multidimensional analysis (1988), henceforth, MDA, is the establishment of textual relations among spoken and written genres so as to provide the necessary foundation for the systematization of salient characteristics of the speaking and writing modes. Conversation represents the type of communication experienced every day (Biber 1988: 10), whereas speech is produced in situations in which there are few producers and many receivers (e.g., classroom lectures, sermons, and political speeches). Academic prose is a typical formal-written genre that differs markedly from the two spoken genres.

While MDA was originally developed to compare written and spoken registers in English (Biber, 1988), the approach has been used extensively in (1) synchronic analyses of specific registers and genres (Biber and Finegan, 1994; Biber and Conrad, 2001; Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1994) and author styles (Biber and Finegan, 1994); (2) diachronic studies describing the evolution of registers (Biber and Finegan, 1989, 1992; Atkinson, 1992, 1993), and (3) register studies of non-Western languages (Biber and Hared, 1992, 1994; Kim and Biber, 1994) and contrastive analyses of different languages (Biber, 1995). In addition, MDA has also been applied in addressing corpus design issues (Biber, 1993) and the definitional issues of register/genres and text types (Biber, 1988). More recently, Biber, *et al.*, (2002) have considered the implications of MDA for the development of teaching materials.

Biber (1988) presents a full analysis of twenty-one genres of spoken and written British English on the basis of sixty-seven linguistic features in 481 texts from the Lancaster/Oslo-Bergen (LOB) and London-Lund (LLC) corpora. This study established the multidimensional approach to genre analysis. As these dimensions underlie linguistic features, they are conceptually clearer than the many features considered individually.

Spoken and written texts are compared along dimensions of linguistic variation. These dimensions define continuums of variation rather than discrete poles and are identified as continuous quantifiable parameters of variation, *i.e.*, as continuous scales. These scales are labeled in terms of their poles, but a continuous range of texts can be characterized along each dimension. That is, 'styles', 'registers', 'genres', and 'text types' are not related in terms of dichotomous differences; rather they are similar (or different) to differing extents with respect to each dimension (1988: 22-23).

First, the notion of dimension is discussed from a situational or functional perspective and later the notion is discussed from a strictly linguistic perspective. Biber (1988: 24) maps out linguistic co-occurrence patterns in texts. Such co-occurrence patterns underlying

dimensions are identified empirically and not proposed on an a priori functional basis. The resulting dimensions are interpreted in functional terms. His overall goal is to relate functional or situational parameters to co-occurring sets of features that are systematically used across a range of texts. Biber (1988: 19) argues that “*once linguistic dimensions are identified and interpreted, they can be used to specify the ‘textual relations’ among different kinds of texts in English*”.<sup>2</sup>

There are seven dimensions in Biber’s MDA. They are informational versus involved production (Dimension 1), narrative versus non-narrative concerns (Dimension 2), explicit versus situation-dependent reference (Dimension 3), overt expression of persuasion (Dimension 4), abstract versus non-abstract information (Dimension 5), online informational elaboration (Dimension 6), and academic hedging (Dimension 7). Some factorial structures (namely, Dimensions 1 and 3) include linguistic features with negative loadings. Positive and negative loadings along a dimension are written with a plus or minus symbol, as in factor +1 and factor -3. Biber observes that features with positive loadings co-occur frequently, whereas features with negative loadings occur together on a dimension.

The linguistic features Biber (1988) selected for his MDA are all functionally related. The features with positive loadings on Dimension 1, for example, first-and second-person pronouns, *that* deletion, contraction, discourse markers, and private verbs such as *believe* and *think*, are all “*associated in one way or another with an involved, non-informational focus*” (Biber, 1988: 105). Conversely, high frequencies of features with negative weights on Dimension 1 (*e.g.*, word length, type/token ratio, attributive adjectives and prepositions) are typically associated with a high informational focus and a careful integration of information in a text.

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<sup>2</sup> As can be noted, the term ‘text’ is often used to refer to ‘genre’. However, the author (1998: 20) re-aligns the concept by saying that “*those features that co-occur in different texts across several genres are the ones that define the basic linguistic dimensions of English*”.

The features with salient positive weights on Dimension 2 (e.g., past-tense verbs, third-person pronouns, perfect aspect verbs, present participial clauses, and public verbs such as *agree*, *report*, and *say*) can all be used for narrative purposes, although narrative discourse depends heavily on the past tense and verbs marked for the perfect aspect (Biber 1988: 109).

Together with Dimension 3, which is related to explicit versus situation-dependent reference, features with positive loadings include WH relative clauses, phrasal coordination, and nominalization. As Biber (1988: 110) observes, relativization specifies “*the identity of referents within a text in an explicit and elaborated manner, so that the addressee will have no doubt as to the intended referent*” while “*the co-occurrence of phrasal coordination and nominalizations with these relativization features indicates that referentially explicit discourse also tends to be integrated and informational*”. The two features with negative weights on this dimension, time and place adverbials, on the other hand, depend crucially on the addressee for text-internal references.

The features associated within Dimension 4 (e.g., prediction modals such as *will* and *shall*; necessity modals such as *ought*, *should*, and *must*; conditional subordination; and suasive verbs such as *ask*, *beg* and *propose*) function together to mark persuasion (Biber, 1988: 111), whether that be the overt marking of the addresser’s own viewpoint or an assessment of the advisability or likelihood of an event presented to persuade the addressee.

The features associated with Dimension 5 (i.e., abstract vs. non-abstract) are conjuncts, main/subordinate passive constructions, and adverbial subordinators. Discourse with a high frequency of passives is typically abstract and technical in content, as well as formal in style. This type of discourse (Biber, 1988: 112) is generally characterized by complex logical relations, which are achieved by conjuncts and adverbial subordinators.

Features with salient positive weights on Dimension 6 (e.g., demonstratives such as *this* and *that*, *that* relative clauses, and *that* clauses as verb and adjective complements)

function to mark informational elaboration in discourse that is informational but produced under real-time conditions (Biber, 1988: 113-14).

Dimension 7 has only one salient positive feature, SEEM/APPEAR. SEEM and APPEAR mark perception rather than assertion of fact and thus mark an assertion as uncertain. They are typically used in academic discourse as downtoners to qualify the extent to which an assertion is known (Biber, 1988: 114). As the factorial structure of this last dimension was not strong enough for a firm interpretation, it was not discussed in detail by Biber (1988). Accordingly, this dimension is omitted in our analysis.

Biber's study focuses on two fundamental differences between typical speaking and writing: that speaking is faster than writing, and that speakers interact with their audiences to a greater extent than writers. It also proposes an underlying dimension associated with each of these situational differences: integration/fragmentation and detachment/involvement. Along the integration/fragmentation dimension, integration is marked by features that function to pack information into a text, such as nominalizations, participles, attributive adjectives, and series of prepositional phrases, and fragmentation is marked by clauses in succession without connectives or joined by coordinating conjunctions. Along the detachment/involvement dimension, detachment is marked by passives and nominalizations and involvement by first person pronouns, emphatic particles and hedges.

### 2.1.3 Martin's functional model

The negotiation of meanings through texts plays a key role in analyzing social activity. Interpreting discourse presupposes a macro-perspective analysis focused on socially contextualized meanings that are constructed from the sequencing of meanings derived from minimal structures such as the clause. Therefore, social discourse is interpreted on the basis of social cultural contexts developed as sequences or waves of meanings construed in a text. A

clause, a text and a culture are social processes that unfold through ‘*uncountable series of situations, as our lives unfold through such situations as learners, speakers and actors, producing texts that unfold as sequences of meanings*’ (Martin & Rose, 2003:1).

According to Martin’s model (1992), drawing from the work done by Halliday (1978), a genre maps social processes with various communicative purposes. The basic configuration of a genre is triggered by the co-occurrence of three variables that define the register: *field*, *tenor* and *mode*. *Field* identifies the social activity and the communicative intent inherent to the genre. *Tenor* indicates the status, the role and relations of participants in the communicative event. And, finally, *mode* is related to the function of the text, the role of language, and rhetorical modes and channels.

Halliday stresses that ‘uses’ are responsible for giving shape to the language system. Functionality, thus, is intrinsic to language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 31). As such, language would not be regarded as arbitrary since there is a functional organization, structured according to human needs, in the communicative interaction. As functionality is intrinsic to all languages, it would be redundant and pointless to discuss their basic functions. This author then proposes the adoption of the term ‘metafunctions’.

As to the systemic nature of language, Halliday explains that his theory involves meaning and choice. The grammar of a language is represented by systemic networks rather than an inventory of structures (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 23). Structures are forms resulting from systemic choices made by the speaker/writer. Language is, therefore, a meaning-making resource and meanings reside in choice-generated systemic patterns (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 23).

This systemic network of choice corresponds to certain basic functions of language. Halliday suggests two main metafunctions: the ideational, which is subdivided into experiential and logical, and the interpersonal. The third metafunction, textual, blends with

the other two, providing for relevance (*cf.* Halliday, 1994, 1970 and Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The role of the textual metafunction is facilitatory. It serves to make possible a presentation of ideational and interpersonal meanings in the form of information which may be exchanged, and it also offers the speaker strategies for how to direct the listener (or reader) in his or her interpretation of the text. All three metafunctions are reflected in the structure of the sentence (Halliday, 1970: 143) and interact in the construction of a text, accounting for its multifunctional nature.

Following these parameters, studies within Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) analyze language as a social process through which three dimensions of meanings interact simultaneously. Meanings that insert interlocutors in a social order (interpersonal), meanings that construct an external reality (ideational), and meanings through which the interpersonal and the ideational are organized in the unfolding of a text, namely, textual meanings.

The final configuration of genres to be presented will, therefore, require the inclusion of semantic configurations of ideational, textual and interpersonal features. Genre taxonomy must be reformulated with reference to these meanings: genres are characterized from the sets of meanings they activate and, consequently, by discursive, rhetorical and lexico-grammatical choices available in the domain of metafunctions (*cf.* Chapter 2.2.1).

#### 2.1.4 Bhatia's analysis of discourse as genre

Bhatia (2004: 19-21) describes discourse as text as operating within a *textual space* “where the knowledge about language structure and its function, which may include knowledge about intertextuality, is exploited to make sense of it”. However, whereas discourse is embedded in context, discourse as text often excludes engagement with context (except for its intertextual features). Bhatia distinguishes four frameworks that represent different concerns about discourse (2004: 18-22). He identifies the following:

- (i) discourse as text,
- (ii) discourse as genre,
- (iii) discourse as professional practice, and
- (iv) discourse as social practice.

These four interacting views of discourse are complementary rather than exclusive. Whereas an applied linguist might begin from the textual space, analyzing it exhaustively and working towards social space, a sociologist or an anthropologist might begin from the social context and the discursive practices, working downward but not necessarily getting seriously engaged in the textual space. On the basis of these four views, Bhatia provides his conception of a multi-perspective model of discourse comprising four spaces: textual, tactical, professional and social. The two most important characteristics of the genre-based view of language, according to Bhatia (1993, 2004), are the emphasis on conventionalized generic features and the observation that genres are dynamic and evolving.

The analysis of discourse as genre is extended to incorporate context in the broader sense to account for the way a text is constructed and the way it is interpreted, used and exploited to achieve particular goals. Genre analysis in this *tactical space* might include linguistic and socio-cognitive and ethnographic analysis. Bhatia (2004: 20) extends the notion of genre as a social practice to the *professional space* where the interaction with the context moves in the direction of a broader social context with a shift of focus from the textual output to the features of context, “*such as the changing identity of participants, the social structures or professional relationships the genres are likely to maintain or change, and the advantages or disadvantages such genres are likely to bring to a particular set of readers*”.

Bhatia (2004) subcategorizes domain-specific genres as comprising genre sets, *i.e.*, specific typical genres of a particular professional which are distinct, yet intertextually linked, systems of genres, *i.e.*, genres produced by all the participants in a professional activity, and disciplinary genres, representative of a particular professional domain. The concept of genre

colony is introduced as a collection of genres within and across disciplines with a common communicative purpose (primary members). It is also viewed as “*a process whereby generic resources are exploited and appropriated to create hybrid (both mixed and embedded) forms, which may be considered secondary members of the colony*” (Bhatia, 2004: 58).

In considering the colony of promotional genres, Bhatia (2004: 60-63) enumerates advertisements, promotional letters, book blurbs, job application letters, reference letters, which demonstrate a common promotional purpose. Furthermore, each genre may be described at a lower degree of generalization. For example, advertisements may be distinguished between print ads, TV commercials, radio advertisements, among others. Secondary genres would be those that have strong promotional concerns, for instance, fundraising letters, travel brochures, grant proposals, book reviews, company brochures, among others.

Bhatia (2004: 87) comments on the recent tendency of expert members of a discourse community to adopt lexico-grammatical, rhetorical, discursal conventions from a particular genre, in the construction of another, in order to communicate their private intentions. This results in the “*colonization of one genre by the other by invading its integrity*”. This invasion of territorial integrity is determined by the dynamic and interrelated spheres of current academic, institutional and professional life. Advertising is a case in point. It has invaded several genres: academic, corporate, political and journalistic, among others, and this corroborates Bhatia’s claim that informative functions are more likely to be colonized by promotional functions since they are unlikely to create tension. (*cf.* Chapter 4 for the application of Bhatia’s framework to the promotional genre).

In terms of the concepts of discourse communities and communities of practice, Bhatia (2004: 149) suggests that the difference between them is a matter of focus. Whereas in discourse communities “*the focus is on lexico-grammar, texts and genres that enable*

*members throughout the world to maintain their goals, regulate their membership and communicate efficiently with one another*”, in communities of practice *“the emphasis is on practices and values that hold the communities together, or separate them from one another”*. He further adds that expert members of a community often exploit generic resources within the constructs of socially recognized communicative purposes.

Bhatia (2004:156) constructs a model of analytical procedures for a complex, dynamic and constantly developing world where he suggests investigating the textual space (for the text-internal features of language use), the socio-cognitive space (for the tactical aspects of language use) and the professional space (to account for social relationships and the process of genre construction, interpretation and exploitation).

The professional space also needs to take into account the way expert users mix, embed, bend and appropriate generic resources to create hybrid genres. Beyond this, the social space is also used to account for the influence of socio-cultural events to create and sustain identities, social structures and the functioning of social institutions through discursive practices. Discursive practices include both having knowledge of different genres to suit different purposes and in different contexts, as well as knowledge about the different modes of communication and their appropriateness for different kinds of action.

## 2.2 Textual organization

Historically, genre analysis has adopted an approach of textual patterning with a fragmentation of texts into discreet, sequentially organized parts. However, interpersonal values/meanings are manifested in non-discreet categories that permeate the text. And textual meanings are cumulative, generating clusters of meanings scattered at strategic points in the unfolding of the text (*cf.* Halliday, 1978, 1979).

In this chapter, two different approaches to textual organization will be discussed: the metafunctional framework, developed by Martin and Rose (2003) and the interactive model, proposed by Hoey (2001).

### 2.2.1 Metafunctional patterning

Martin & Rose (2003: 184-186) suggest that cumulative patterns may provide wide-scale structuring for texts. For the sake of exemplification, these authors demonstrate how certain strategically located clauses, labelled as ‘macro Themes’ act in a hierarchy of periodicity to predict subsequent choices of ‘Theme’ across the span of text. Similarly, other strategically located clauses, labeled ‘Macro New’, review the choices of ‘New’ across the span of a prior text.

Martin & Rose (2003:186-187) conclude that an important organizing principle of text is provided by these different layers of textual waves. Theme and New within the clause provide for one smaller scale hierarchy of periodicity and Macro Theme and Macro New provide for a broader scale hierarchy.

This functionally diversified approach, centered on the stratified model of context, aims to map the way genre structure involves patterns of co-occurrence of variables from across the various metafunctions. In their view, it is possible to characterize genres by reference to a set of choices which relate to various metafunctionally-determined meanings. Texts might be grouped, for example, by reference to whether they are activity focussed or thing focussed<sup>3</sup>. Such a choice involves ideational meanings and, therefore, is field oriented, since activities and things are phenomena which the language construes as properties of some external reality. The grouping would be as follows:

- activity focussed: personal recounts, historical recounts

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Activity focussed’ when describing some chronologically unfolding sequence of events and ‘thing focussed’ when describing some atemporal state of affairs.

- thing focussed: description, descriptive report

Texts might be further classified with reference to whether their participants are specific or generic. Such a choice involves textual meanings and, hence, is mode oriented. This follows because of the role of the textual metafunction in relating the communication to its social context, in establishing modes of connection between the text and the social world. Thus it is a textual issue as to whether the text references individual participants or generic participants – it thereby establishes different modes of relationship with the social context.

The discussion above may be applied in the analysis of the promotional sub-genre under consideration (*cf.* Chapter 4). It contributes to the understanding of how register variables determine genre properties, and how those variables may be diversely located across the metafunctions.

Martin (1992) extends his text taxonomy by including ‘story telling’ which will be referred to here as ‘narrative’ (*cf.* Biber, 1988). He notes that with narratives, the activity sequence is individual or specific, thereby distinguishing the narrative from ‘text types’ with generalized activity sequences. Another variable is further proposed: narratives are documentative rather than explanatory – they simply describe and organize facts and events in a text. Consequently, they are distinct from scientific reports, for example, that include descriptions of phenomena, their origins, developments and consequences, thus marked by causal explanations. Table 2, below, illustrates Martin’s text organization.

Table 2 – Text organization

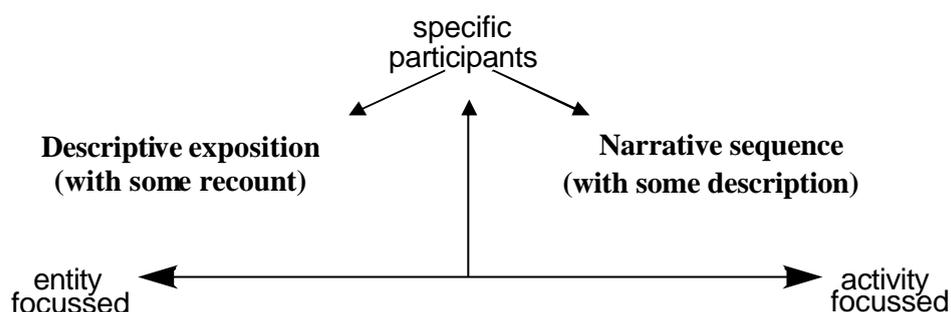
	<i>specific (non-generalized)</i>		<i>generalized</i>	
	<i>document</i>		<i>explain</i>	
<i>unstructured activity</i>	description	report	exposition	discussion
<i>structured activity</i>	narrative	procedure	explanation	exploration

Although there are additional features to be considered in any characterization of profiles on dating sites as text type, a preliminary classification may be offered, according to the taxonomy above. The types of description share the feature of grounding in an individualized unstructured activity sequence and an orientation to ‘exposition’ (contained in *explain*). Tentatively, such items may be classed, therefore, as ‘expositive descriptions’.

This type of analysis is thus useful in clearly articulating points of difference. But as Martin (1992) argues, in the context of actual textual analysis, such an analysis needs to be accompanied by one where such absolute and categorical boundaries are not required. Thus, a topological approach is needed to complement the typological since topologies map degrees of similarity rather than absolute boundaries of difference.

Topologies locate items on gradients of similarity along various functional parameters. Such an approach is needed in this context because, in practice, texts are rather more mixed than the typological description would suggest. For example, expositive descriptions are viewed as entity rather than activity focussed. However, it is possible that personal descriptions, such as those found on dating sites, might include some sort of activity in the form of personal recounts of, say, circumstances under which prospective partners should meet. In such a case, it would not be possible to classify the text as absolutely entity focussed. The same sort of variability seems to be possible across the various dimensions of metafunctional difference. A topology is capable of mapping precisely this type of variation locating the texts, under consideration, variably along various clines of similarity and difference. Below, a scheme for text topology adapted from Martin (1992).

Figure 4 – Text topology



Accordingly, what was previously construed in terms of opposition is reworked as a set of parameters which define a set of semantic regions. Items may be located within those regions so as to indicate parameters of difference and parameters of similarity.

### 2.2.2 Interactive patterning

Hoey (2001:11) defines texts as “*the visible evidence of a reasonably self-contained purposeful interaction between one or more writers and one or more readers*”. This interaction may be viewed as a series of hypothetical questions the reader makes to the writer and that the latter answers, or should answer, both locally, at sentence level, and globally, at discourse level.

Hoey (2001:136) describes this interactive phenomenon by means of what he calls ‘culturally popular patterns of organization’. These patterns are mainly characterized by an organization based on frequency of culturally-based typical elements and adequate combinations and patterns.

Hoey (2001:145-169) distinguishes four pattern types: *problem-solution*, *goal achievement*, *opportunity-taking* and *desire arousal-fulfillment* or *gap in knowledge-filling*.

They are summarized in one abstract pattern represented as *SPRE*, where *S* stands for the situation; *P* for the problem, goal or need of knowledge; *R* for the response, the way of achieving a goal and, finally, *E* represents a positive evaluation, when the pattern ends, or a negative evaluation, when the pattern is recycled (*cf.* Chapter 4.2 for the application of Hoey's macro-patterns to promotional genres).

One of the most common patterns is problem-solution, which is characterized by the following elements (2001: 123-124):

- (1) an optional previous Situation, which provides a context for the pattern;
- (2) the Problem or aspect of a situation requiring a response;
- (3) the Response to the problem and
- (4) a Positive Result or Evaluation.

All these features can be seen in Hoey's example (2001: 123):

- (1) I was once a teacher of English Language.
- (2) One day some students came to me unable to write their names.
- (3) I taught them text analysis.
- (4) Now they all write novels.

The outline can be modified when the response given to the problem is inappropriate or not valid ("Negative Result or Evaluation, stage 4). He considers (2001: 130), for instance, the alternative (4) "This had little effect", for the previous text. In such cases, the pattern is recycled until finding a response that provokes either a positive evaluation or a negative one with no possibility of retrieval.

Hoey (1986:190) indicates the potential usefulness of this approach by saying that "*textual patterns have been described with the purpose of accounting objectively for the way clauses or groups of clauses relate to each other in the discourse, in other words, the real nature of the pattern is the sense of order perceived by a reader*".

Hoey (2001: 204) also emphasizes the importance of lexical signals and specific vocabulary provided by the author for the reader's identification of patterns. The frequency of these signals varies across genres and depends on the presupposed knowledge of the reader. Signals can be *evaluative* and *non-evaluative* and they may have a clear pattern-referring function, e.g., "solution" or "problem", "goal" or "achievement" and "arousal" or "fulfillment". Furthermore, following Martin's (1992) terminology, they can be *inscribed*, explicitly encoded, or *evoked*, implicitly encoded in the patterning of a text.

Writing, according to Hoey (2001: 128), must be considered from an interactive point of view, since the ultimate aim of any text is to be read and comprehended by a reader. Thus, the writer has the responsibility of creating a text which accommodates to the potential reader(s). The writer needs to use language, content, and conventions of writing in a way that will enable the reader to extract the intended meaning effectively.

The rationale above may be said to constitute the core of the interactive approach since, from the writer's point of view, the different patterns may facilitate the reader's understanding of the socio-functional nature of the text through the ordering of patterns. Identification of the patterns can be useful to the reader since, as Hoey claims (2001: 167-168), "*The various SPRE patterns serve as ready-made templates and, while it is emphatically not the case that all good writing has to conform to them, it can benefit a learner writer to have a pattern to stick to*".

### 2.3 From theory to practice: the analytical framework

The view to be adopted in this thesis, based on Swales' considerations (2004: 61-73), distinguishes 'text types' based on a linguistically-oriented definition, from 'genres', a functionally-oriented concept. Text types such as 'descriptions', 'reports', 'expositions', 'discussions', 'procedures', etc. feed into genres. For example, genres such as tourist

brochures and encyclopaedia entries are instances of descriptive text types. Recipes and manuals of all sorts are procedural texts. Novels, obituaries, reports, etc. are examples of narratives, and, finally, editorials, thesis reviews, blurbs are regarded as argumentative text types.

Biber's contributions (1988, 2001) also apply to the corpus to be analyzed in Phase 2 of the present research. Online dating profiles (*i.e.*, self-descriptions and descriptions of the desired other) are integrative and involved, displaying many features like attributive adjectives and some nominalizations and many involved features such as first person pronouns and emphatics. In addition, features such as underlining, bold-face, and certain punctuation marks allow for the opportunity for interaction within the text, eliminating temporal constraints that other written texts of various genres present.

With respect to Dimension 1 (Biber, 1988), online profiles, due to their communicative functions, cut directly across any distinction between the written and spoken modes. They are written and not produced in real time, but have the characteristics of both informational production and presence of an affective or interactive focus. They have both an involved and an informational focus.

With regard to Dimension 2, the texts under analysis have predominantly non-narrative purposes. They introduce expository information through the use of many attributive adjectives providing descriptive details that elaborate and specify the personal identity of subscribers. Overall, this subgenre is predominantly nominal and descriptive rather than verbal and narrative.

From the perspective of Dimension 3, the profiler assumes familiarity with the production situation since the communicative purpose is to find a partner. Although the physical situation is constrained by virtual contact, participants do share familiarity with the

situation of the event. Familiarity with both physical and temporal situations is assumed since they are current site subscribers.

In relation to Dimension 4, the genre under consideration is highly marked for persuasive discourse. The writer attempts to persuade the addressee that he is the desirable partner. There is direct expression of the profiler's own intentions (indicated by status of the participant as a subscriber) and descriptions are heavily loaded with persuasive tones.

Following the parameters for Dimension 5, the descriptive texts under consideration include active, human participants and concrete topics. They are marked by non-abstract types of discourse. While engaging in online dating participants deal with concrete referents, namely, prospective partners in concrete actions, interacting in instant chats and presumably meeting one another in real situations.

The application of variants for Dimension 6 brings evidence that the information presented in this subgenre is given in relation to personal attributes and attitudes, thus indicating high levels of informational elaboration with no real-time production constraints.

Summarizing the overall relations present in online dating profiles, according to Biber's multidimensional analysis, this subgenre is characterized by involved participation and informational production (Dimension 1), a marked non-narrative concern (Dimension 2), dependence on situational reference (Dimension 3), a highly marked expression of persuasion (Dimension 4), non-abstract types of discourse (Dimension 5), and a relatively high use of on-line informational elaboration. In the table below, online dating profiles are framed according to Biber's MDA (1988).

Table 3 – Profile elaboration (MDA)

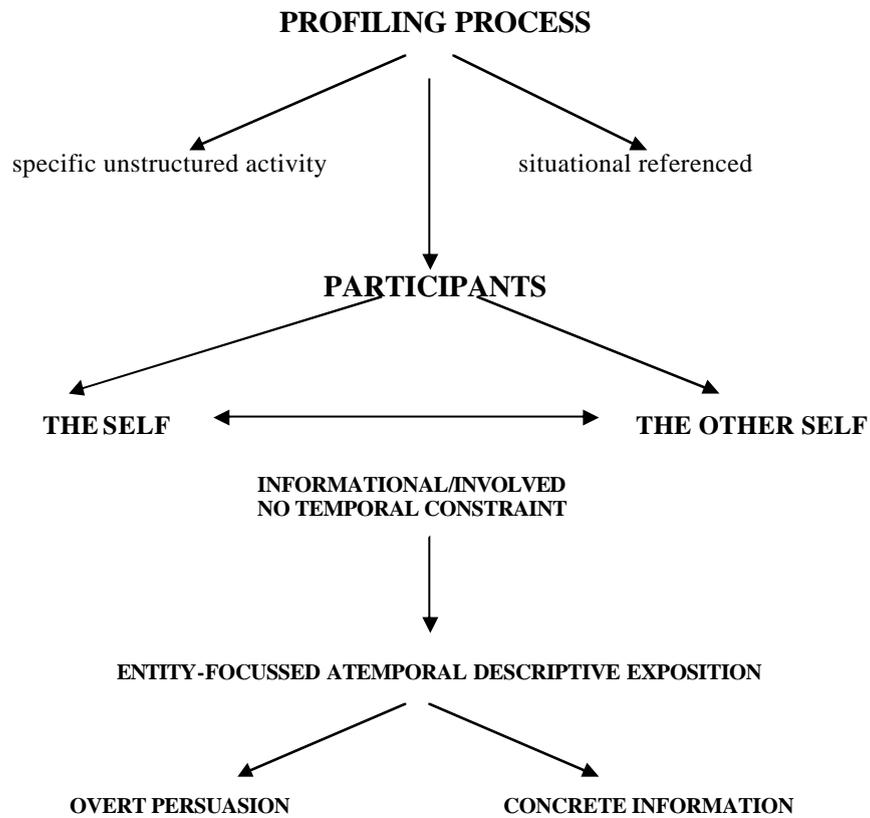
DIMENSION PARAMETERS	⇒	PROFILE ELABORATION
<b>1</b> informational versus involved		<b>Informational and involved interaction</b>
<b>2</b> narrative versus non-narrative		<b>Non-narrative elaboration</b>
<b>3</b> explicit versus situation-dependent		<b>Situation-dependent reference</b>
<b>4</b> overt versus covert persuasion		<b>Overt persuasive tones</b>
<b>5</b> abstract versus non-abstract		<b>Non-abstract information</b>
<b>6</b> real versus no real-time		<b>Online information with no real-time constraints</b>

Finally, Martin’s variables may be applied to the metafunctional make-up of profilers’ descriptions on online dating sites. The profile descriptions may be categorized as atemporal descriptions of “object”: 1. self-description of the subscriber (a potential partner), and 2. descriptions of ‘the object of desire’ (desired partner for relationship). At a more detailed level, the descriptions are made in first and third persons, involving relational processes of the personal type, with no temporal sequencing. These choices of variables draw from the ideational and, therefore, are grouped under field-oriented metafunctions.

The same texts may also be analyzed, for the sake of genre configuration, in terms of type of participants involved in the communicative event. Profilers are specific participants, site subscribers, and this presupposes choices in the domain of textual meanings with mode-oriented metafunctions.

Figure 5 below is my own attempt to illustrate the metafunctional make-up of online dating profile forms by merging Biber’s MDA (1988) and the topology proposed by Martin (1992) and Martin & Rose (2003).

Figure 5 – Metafunctional make-up of online dating profiles



The application of the framework above allows for the exploration of possibilities of extending the functional genre model to account for non-linear, multi-modal, web-mediated documents. It adds a two-dimensional perspective to the genre analysis model in order to account for the fact that web documents not only act as text but also as medium.

### 3. HYPERTEXTS AND COMPUTER-MEDIATED GENRE SYSTEMS

The growing digitization of communication and the dominance of Internet in the 1990's have extended the field of genre studies to digital genres. The World Wide Web provides a public space in which anyone with access to the Internet is free to search for information and establish virtual presence in cyberspace.

The technology of the World Wide Web allows for the mediation of different software or media genres, such as chat, mail, Usenet, and websites. It is well-known in media studies that “*the medium is the message*”, as pointed out by McLuhan (1962) in the sixties. Therefore, the World Wide Web should not be seen *only* as an important contextual feature of web genres; rather the WWW is an *integrated* part of web genres.

This also infers that, although many web genres have printed counterparts – online dating personals, a case in point – the medium adds unique properties to the web genre in terms of production, function and reception which cannot be ignored in the genre characterization.

#### 3.1 General properties of the WWW

One of the most important properties of the World Wide Web is the overt *intertextuality* where various virtual texts are connected by links, allowing the reader to move from one text to another in a very simple manner. The embedded intertextuality of web texts gives them a particular property compared to printed texts: the conceptualization of one text depends on its relation with other texts.

Another property of the World Wide Web is its *global reach*; authors of web texts may use the medium to reach a global audience, and Internet users have immediate access to information, irrespective of distance and time.

*Immateriality* (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005: 13) is a third property of the WWW. Web texts are not always materialized in a printed version. And, contrary to their printed counterpart, web texts tend to display an extremely dynamic nature: being changed, replaced or withdrawn within hours or days.

Finally, as the users of the WWW take active part in linking web texts, the Web is also subject to vivid discussions of where the limit between the reader and the author goes. Authors of websites have no monopoly on the information on their websites in the sense that a site is immediately accessible to all web users throughout the world. And even though web authors might insert instructions on how to use the site and how to navigate it, the users are not required to follow the path designed by the authors.

### 3.2 Web text production and reception

*Multi-medianess* and *hypertext/hyper-reading* (Lieshout, 1999) are also part of the general properties of the WWW and these characteristics have a significant influence on the nature of web-mediated texts and, therefore, are crucial concepts in the genre characterization of online dating sites.

#### 3.2.1 Multi-medianess

The WWW may be characterized as a *main* medium which integrates various sub-media into one common text format. Most web texts may combine text, images, sound, and animations and the result is a screen-page text which has more in common with a television/video screen than with a text in its traditional sense. As argued by Mitra & Cohen (1999: 188): “*Improved technologies of video compression, developments in better data transmission technology, and speedier processors in computers are making it possible to supplement the written text of the World Wide Web with streaming video and audio*”. Thus,

the written word is not only hyperactive in the World Wide Web text, but its meaning is constantly implicated by the multimedia images that accompany the text.

When the multi-media potential is exploited to its fullest, web users are provided with the possibility of reading a text, listening to a song or a speech, viewing pictures, or watching a movie. This can be achieved either separately or in combination (*cf.* Chapter 4.3 for rhetorical moves). This multi-mediality of the web tends to promote the tabular and non-sequential reading process of web text. The reading process is not only interrupted due to the graphical frame structure of the website, but also by the users' modal shifts – where they either read, listen, or watch depending on the nature of the media. Furthermore, the multi-mediality of web texts supplies the texts with a rich polysemous potential where the web user is “invited” to participate actively in assigning meaning in the process of text consumption (Bolter, 2001).

### 3.2.2 Hyper-reading: a three-mode process

The study of reading originated with printed materials, but electronic transmission of the written word has long been ubiquitous. From a literary point of view, electronic formats have called into question previous conceptions of textuality. Theoretical and philosophical understandings of *text* have become intertwined with the technologies that are used to present pieces of writing. The hypertext is thus the key medium used on the WWW to present information on the Web.

Hypertexts relate web texts to each other, thus enabling a non-linear transmission of information. Their general characteristics influence and constrain text production and reception on the Web. In other words, the hypertext is a system of non-hierarchical text blocks where the textual elements or nodes are connected by links.

Among scholars, **hypertext** is difficult or even controversial to define. Theorists Landow and Delany (1991: 3), for example, offer a rather loaded definition of hypertext, describing it as “*the use of the computer to transcend the linear, bounded and fixed qualities of the traditional written text*”. In keeping with this definition, many discussions of hypertext emphasize its nonlinear qualities, but these descriptions have been viewed as problematic and continue to be widely debated amongst scholars. Crane and Mylonas (1991: 219) propose that “*hypertext refers to the electronic linking of blocks of text*”. This definition highlights the key property of hypertext, namely, its capacity to create conceptual and literal links among disparate sections of a given text or among completely separate texts.

For hypertext technologists dealing with hypertexts from a content-oriented perspective, focus is on the textual structure formed as a “network” – a term used to emphasize the non-linearity of hypertexts (Fritz, 1998; Lieshout, 1999). According to these experts, the hypertext is characterized as a non-sequential *text system*.

However, for many literary hypertext researchers (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Bolter, 2001; Harrison, 2002; Askehave & Nielsen, 2005), who apply a more receiver-oriented perspective, the definition of hypertext is not based on how hypertexts are structured, but on how they are *accessed* by the reader. Thus, according to the above researchers, there is no clear distinction between text production and text reception on the Internet. They argue that the readers can choose where to begin their reading and where to end it. They choose their own itinerary and thereby create their own text in the hypertext system. Therefore, instead of basing their definition of hypertext on *structural patterns*, the literary approach tends to base its definition on the *reading process* associated with hypertext.

Scholars are divided as to whether or not the act of reading differs across hypertext and print environments. Surveys of general reading behaviors make it clear that the types of associative thinking often ascribed to reading hypertexts are not at all unique to that format

(McHoul & Roe, 1996). Some hypertext documents are better read in a linear manner, just as some print works, such as reference books, are designed to be read in any sequence.

The effect of hypertexts on web-users and the approach to web-mediated texts, as compared to traditional texts, constrain the reading pattern and promote the practice of a new mode of reading referred to as “*hyper-reading*” (Sosnoski, 1999: 135; Askehave & Nielsen, 2005: 15). Linearity is thus the dividing line between traditional reading and hyper-reading. Hypertext reading is a non-linear activity in which the reader skims filters and scans the text, whereas traditional reading is linear.

Protopsaltis and Bouki (2005) developed a model for describing the process of reading in a hypertext format. The model consists of eleven components in which readers set a goal, scan and read the sections or categories, select a strategy, build and incorporate knowledge, evaluate the results, and repeat the cycle whenever necessary. The pattern is not particularly innovative; it is similar to other established models of information seeking behavior and reading cognition. An important point, though, is that readers interact with the hypertext in both linear and random ways. The process accommodates a significant amount of backtracking, re-reading, and monitoring or assessing the content and structure of the text, which are all activities that rely on proper labels and linkages between document sections.

Protopsaltis and Bouki's model (2005: 163), takes on additional significance when understood in the context of the primary navigation strategies that readers are found to use:

- serial / linear
- mixed
- mixed review

Readers who use the linear strategy choose links in the order that they are presented in the document. In the mixed method, readers choose links without any discernable pattern. Finally, readers who utilize the mixed review strategy scan all available choices before

selecting links, which sometimes result in a linear reading pattern and sometimes a more random order.

At this point, reader disorientation becomes a concern that commonly emerges in the hypertext environment. The structure of a piece might not as easily be discerned on a computer screen as on a printed page for the simple reason that the limited amount of text that can be viewed at a given time makes it more difficult to scan the document and get a “feel” for its structure. Hypertext markup languages allow authors to organize documents' content both visually and conceptually to minimize disorientation.

As described, the most basic property of hypertext is its capacity to create links within and among texts. Hyperlinks can equally be used to draw connections among blocks of information that are not explicitly linked in the hierarchical document structure. For example, a semantic link (Blustein, 2000: 203) connects one block that summarizes information to a more in-depth description elsewhere in the document.

Moreover, hypertext inherently lends itself to inter-textual linking. In terms of reading tasks, inter-textual linking opens the reader to a virtually infinite body of information that is related to the original document in some way. However, this can again exacerbate the potential for disorientation as readers may lose focus of the primary reading task. The logical structure of the original document becomes irrelevant when another text is encountered. In the end, though, the linking properties of hypertext can take readers to additional levels of comprehension beyond the text itself. In this way, hypertext can enhance the reading experience on multilayered levels that are not possible in the print world (McGann 1995).

When reading a hypertext, the ultimate path that readers take is dependent on the choices and structural cues provided by the document's creator. It has been argued that the hypertext environment “frees” a text and gives greater control to readers to shape their own reading experiences (*cf.* Bolter, 2001; Landow & Delany, 1991). Readers' choices in

navigating a hypertext seek a coherence in the text that meshes with their information goal. Protopsaltis and Bouki (2005) and Blustein (2000) assume that the end goal of comprehension always guides the reading process. However, in both studies, the strategies that readers employ have more to do with preference and satisfaction rather than increased performance and comprehension. Blustein (2000) found that readers often assert that they prefer hypertext documents, even when they do not use them particularly well in comparison with print sources. This suggests that while reading styles may be the same for both hypertext and print, there are certain fundamental differences in the ways in which people think about reading hypertexts. Readers' attitudes toward electronic works differ from their opinions of print resources and, therefore, they tend to approach hypertext documents with different methods and goals in mind.

Many computer-mediated technology researchers have questioned the peculiarity of hyper-reading in relation to the WWW. Finnemann (1999) suggests, for instance, that both types of reading are very similar since, in printed texts, the reading activity may also involve filtering, skimming and fragmentation of the information, *i.e.*, non-linear reading. Hyper-reading is then regarded as a particular *reading mode* which can be found both in printed and in web-mediated texts. The difference to be emphasized here is that in ordinary texts the order of information content is sequentially pre-established. The reader moves from information Block 1 to information Block 2, according to the layout of the traditional text. On the other hand, while reading a hypertext the reader is the one to determine the order in which she will choose to read the text. The web user chooses the serial order while navigating the website.

Nevertheless, Finnemann (1999: 25) claims that *'the optional freedom in hypertext systems is not a freedom from sequentialized linearity, since the user cannot make more than one choice at a time'*. The author then suggests (1999: 26-27) that instead of operating with the linear/non-linear dichotomy, hypertexts should be analyzed as text systems which have the

potential to activate two modal shifts in the reading process: the *reading mode* and the *navigating mode*.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.3 Reading online dating sites: a two-modal shift model

Genre certainly plays a role in how texts are read, regardless of whether the work is print or digital (Miall, 1999). The concept of modal shifts in hypertext reading offers an interesting perspective to further justify the corpus analyses to be carried out in the present research (*cf.* Chapter 1.6). The analysis of the web genre under consideration should be centered on the two modes. In Phase 1 (*cf.* Chapter 4.2), the corpus will be analyzed from a macro perspective, taking into consideration the entire profile form. Both navigating and reading modes are activated at this point in order to map out genre macro-patterns and rhetorical strategies.

The use of hypertext on dating sites allows users to isolate a single basic window, with a specific nick or holder, and then locate an in-depth description of the selected subscriber with one click of the mouse. Hyper linking thus creates equality among the individual fields of a dating catalog in that users can find the specific basic window from any access point by using the nick or holder, and search for each individually, to find detailed information related to the profiler. Of course, the hyperlinked items are predetermined by site designers as access points to the targeted profile record, so the possible targets of a single link are finite. However, given the ease with which users can pass from one profile to another, there are innumerable routes (*e.g.*, nick, age, location, height, among others) by which information can be located.

Hypertext allows individual documents to be linked on a number of levels, thereby enhancing the hierarchical classification that has been standard in the past. When the

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<sup>4</sup> Finnemann (2001) distinguishes between three modes, *viz.* reading, browsing/navigating and editing modes. I have left out the editing mode, as this mode is concerned with user-generated pages and other interactive processes which are outside the scope of the present analysis.

connections between items are encoded into a system, it makes it much easier to view and trace the links among profiles forms and thereby access information with greater efficiency. Users log on, navigate and activate links to sets of basic profile windows, *i.e.*, the navigating mode. This 'navigating mode' allows the reader to navigate the site and actively construct his/her own reading path. Subsequently, from the navigating mode there is a shift to the reading mode when users in a traditional reader position adopt sequential reading as the guiding principle: linear reading is processed for the selection of profile windows. When users' attention is drawn by information contained in the basic windows, they may activate links to the extended profile forms. Once these windows are open, there is a back shift to the reading mode in order to capture all the descriptive information of the other self.

In Phase 2, qualitative and quantitative analyses of lexico-grammatical choices (*cf.* Chapter 7) are focused on the two segments created by users themselves, which are constituent parts of the full form. Therefore, the reading mode here is strictly linear, similar to traditional reading. The proposed two-modal shift model accounts for the fact that a hypertext also functions in the navigating mode where the text, due to its media constraints, becomes an interactive medium, dynamically employed to navigate the online dating website. Therefore, when consuming online dating hypertexts, the web user employs two different cognitive abilities and demonstrates two different types of behavior when she/he shifts from the reading to the navigating mode and vice versa. They carry out modal shifts between acting as a reader and acting as a navigator. Those shifts are circular with a frequent change between reading and navigating.

When the reading mode is activated, daters zoom in on the text and use the web page as a printed text, since they basically read the hypertext. When in the navigating mode, the navigator zooms out of the text and uses the website as a medium, exploiting all the navigation potential. In the navigating mode, the medium will be characterized in terms of

communicative purpose, macro-patterns and moves and rhetorical strategies (*cf.* Chapter 4). In the reading mode, the descriptive open segments will be characterized in terms of attitudinal evaluations, taking into account lexico-grammatical choices made by profilers (*cf.* Chapters 6 and 7).

#### 4. DATING SITES AS A COMPUTER-MEDIATED PROMOTIONAL GENRE

Due to the importance of the interplay between genre and medium, when discussing web-mediated texts, it is vital to present an account for the communicative properties, textual patterning and rhetorical strategies of the medium through which dating sites are distributed.

Swales (1990, 2004) and Martin (1985, 1992) share similar ideas while classifying texts. Martin's framework, based on genre theory, originates from Hallidayan systemic functional grammar and expands Halliday's work (1989, 1994) on language varieties by categorizing language use in terms of the culturally appropriate goals language users try to achieve through language. Such goals may, for instance, be to describe, explain, or narrate something realized by the genres 'description', 'explanation' and 'narration'<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the genre determinant is that of the goal or communicative purpose of a text. He further suggests that the major linguistic signal of 'purpose' in a text is the staging structure through which a specific genre unfolds.

In his more recent work, however, Swales (2004) revises his initial definition of genre by adding that a single communicative purpose is not enough to categorize 'genre'. The communicative purpose of a genre is not rooted in a single individual's motive for communicating, but in a purpose that is constructed, recognized, and reinforced within a community.

##### 4.1 Multiple communicative purposes

When Martin (1985) defines 'genre' he refers to the fact that the staged and goal-oriented organization of a genre is expressed linguistically through a functional structure referred to as the 'schematic structure'. Eggins (1994:36) also asserts that the primary

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) regard such categories as 'text types' and Hoey (2001:12) further proposes that text types such as descriptions, narratives, etc. feed into both genres and register.

determinant of genre membership is that of 'purpose' while schematic structure and linguistic features are regarded as dimensions to the realization of genres.

According to Swales (1990: 58), "*A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes.*" These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Thus genre is defined not as a text but rather as a social or communicative event. Furthermore, the definition tries to establish a relationship between the purpose accomplished by a genre and the structure of the genre, conveying the idea that the communicative purpose of a genre shapes the genre, rendering it a schematic structure.

Communicative purpose is central to the classification of texts with peripheral genre characteristics such as content, form, intended audience, medium, among others. Swales (1990: 58) refines the concept by saying that "*Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community.*"

Bhatia (1993, 2004), borrowing from Swales' framework, claims that promotion letters and job applications belong to the same genre because the overall communicative purpose of both texts is to promote a product, a company or a person with a typical schematic structure where a move or stage can be determined by the content of the move, grammatical or lexical patterns or functional features of the move.

So far, the notion of communicative purpose seems to play a fundamental role in genre theory. However, a thorough and undisputable definition of the term has not yet been produced to account for the variations within genres.

In his book *Genre Analysis*, Swales (1990: 45-47) comments on the challenges and difficulties associated with the use of ‘communicative purpose’ as genre determinant. First of all he comments on the fuzzy nature of the term: *“Placing the primary determinant of genre-membership on shared purpose rather than on similarities of form or some other criterion is to take a position that accords with that of Miller (1984) or Martin (1985a). The decision is based on the assumption that, except for a few interesting and exceptional cases, genres are communicative vehicles for the achievement of goals. At this juncture, it may be objected that purpose is a somewhat less overt and demonstrable feature than, say, form and therefore serves less well as a primary criterion. However, the fact that purposes of some genres may be hard to get at is itself of considerable heuristic value. Stressing the primacy of purpose may require the analyst to undertake a fair amount of independent and open-minded investigation, thus offering protection against a facile classification based on stylistic feature and inherited beliefs, such as typifying research articles as simple reports of experiments.”*

Furthermore, Swales (1990: 47) also acknowledges the difficulties in identifying the communicative purpose of a genre and the need, in some instances, to work with sets of purposes: *“While news broadcasts are doubtless designed to keep their audiences up to date with events in the world (including verbal events), they may also have purposes of moulding public opinion, organizing public behaviour (as in an emergency), or presenting the controllers and paymaster of the broadcasting organization in a favorable light.”*

In order to clarify the concept of ‘communicative purpose’ Swales introduces two types of communicative purpose in his definition – what I refer to as overt communicative purpose and covert communicative (*cf.* Chapter 4.1.1 for Sperber & Wilson’s notion of

ostensive-inferential communication). He does so when he identifies the purpose of news broadcasts as that of keeping their audiences up to date with events in the world, the generally socially acceptable purpose of news broadcasts which I refer to as 'ostensive purpose'. Swales further proposes that the purpose of news broadcasts may also be that of molding public opinion, organizing public behavior or providing the network, radio station or news source with a favorable image. Here the purpose of the text would be categorized as 'covert', which is not necessarily accepted or acknowledged by individuals exposed to the genre.

Thus, Swales fails to comment on these distinctions in a straightforward manner and, while analyzing the promotional genre, this distinction which I will present in the following section devoted to inferential communication is crucial to the identification process of a genre on the basis of its communicative purpose.

In Bhatia's genre analysis (Bhatia 1993, 2004), which is partially based on Swales' framework (1990, 2004), a company brochure is regarded as a 'promotional genre' and its multifaceted purpose is considered to be that of promoting the company in a specific social situation. Following the same line of reasoning, personal ads on dating sites would also be expected to display the communicative purpose of promoting the profiled person in the situational context of online dating. This works acceptably since the focus lies on the view of the sender – the person who describes himself in an intentional and purposeful way. However, from the receiver's perspective, the communicative purpose could be seen in a different light: the covert intentions behind the personal profiles. Therefore, by accepting the basic corollaries of functional linguistics, *i.e.*, that the cultural and situational contexts add meaning and purpose to a text, in order to identify the purpose of a text it is necessary to consider the context in which the descriptive texts occur so as to go beyond the overt intention of promoting oneself and arrive at the more covert one: what the individual is trying to achieve

through its promotion. The combination of overt and covert intentions would then make up a subgenre within the primary genre.

In the corpus under analysis, the more overt purpose is to find romance, a partner and companion and, as many participants blatantly declare, to find their 'soul mates'. The rapid rhythm of urban centers which ultimately yields to loneliness and, consequently, pursuit of a partner, either for entertainment or romance, enhances the value of relationships. Thus, being able to browse through various online profiles becomes a useful tool and a highly valued asset. As a consequence, the main goal in the context, the overt intention, is to describe oneself as a 'qualified potential partner'. Here the collection of profiles plays a vital role. Even though the hypertexts do not establish partnerships in themselves, they might facilitate the matchmaking process through attractive descriptions of senders. All texts in the corpus emphasize the qualities of a potentially great and reliable partner by means of attention-getting devices prompted by choice of words and sentence structures. But there might be multiple purposes that are covert. The covert purposes may be, for example, to impress the opposite sex through aesthetic beauty (when photographs are included) or refined writing, to create the image of a reliable person, to assess the impact of one's own profile on the audience by the quantity of e-mails received, or even to obtain satisfaction through initiatives from readers/viewers.

The point being made is that only by studying the participants in the situational context, both the sender (= the one describing himself) and the receiver (= the one reading the profile), can online dating personal ads be characterized as a genre in terms of communicative purpose. Furthermore, there may be multiple purposes behind such ads and those purposes depend on cultural values and attitudes on the part of registered participants of dating sites.

By studying both the context of texts and the participants in this context the analyst will have the necessary tools to identify the overt purpose as well as a wide range of covert

purposes which people also intend to achieve by means of their profiles. In accomplishing this, the same communicative purpose will not only be assigned to one general genre, but rather to various subgenres. Partnerships can be established by means of a wide range of genres such as opportunity notes (in Brazil, they are called *torpedos*), letters, cellular messages, among others. In other words, purposes are very subjective and indefinite; there may be multiple covert reasons for posting a profile on a dating site.

The question of the multifunctionality of texts, which also illustrates the difficulty in connection with using communicative purpose as genre determinant, should not be disregarded. Texts seldom fulfill an isolated function and Swales (1990, 2004) acknowledges this fact. Reasons may vary among individuals for the production of promotional texts of this type. It depends, in the final analysis, on the person writing the text, those reading the text and the contexts in which they are inserted. And once all these parameters are combined and thoroughly analyzed the researcher will refrain from considering company brochures, job applications, tourist promotion folders, magazine/newspaper advertisements of all kinds and book blurbs as instances of the same genre – the promotional genre which, in the work of Bhatia (2004: 60), is defined as having “*the communicative purpose of promoting a product or service to a potential customer*”. This is an extremely generic category which should undergo further categorization into subgenres. According to which purpose should the text be classified? Is the overt purpose more important than the covert? And which of the purposes will actually influence the schematic structure?

This chapter illustrated the problems faced when using communicative purpose as the primary means of classifying text genres. There is no implication whatsoever that genre analysis should be undermined and forgotten. On the contrary, one of the most interesting aspects of genre analysis lies in the attempt to identify overt and covert intentions behind a text and to regard the plurality of intentions as subgenre-specific parameters.

Concluding, it would be wise to consider advertising as a promotional genre system (cf. Bhatia, 1993, 2004) and variations of promotional ads, associated with related text types, as determinants of its subgenres: online “personals” ads, a case in point.

#### 4.1.1 Ostensive-inferential communication

Sperber and Wilson (1986: 63) propose the notion of ostensive-inferential communication as a form of communication that facilitates inferential comprehension: *“The communicator produces a stimulus which makes it mutually manifest to communicator and audience that the communicator intends, by means of this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions.”*

In order to succeed in communication, the communicator must attract the audience’s attention through an act of ostentation, indicating that she is providing relevant information which will make the audience’s effort worthwhile. Human beings automatically pay attention to ostensive stimuli since they are conditioned to turning their attention to what seems most relevant to them. Relevance, according to these authors, is the key to human cognition.

Sperber & Wilson’s Relevance Theory was applied by Tanaka (1999) to the analysis of advertisements encompassing both covert and ostensive communication. By engaging in covert communication, the focus of which is commercial advertising, the advertiser does not inform for the sake of improving knowledge of the world, but only to sell products or services. Thus, covert communication is a response to inter-related problems faced by advertisers in their task of persuading or influencing. They wish, for example, to avoid negative social reactions toward aspects of their advertisements such as the use of sex and the exploitation of other politically incorrect concepts (*e.g.*, snobbery, wealth, glamour, ethnicity, among others). Ostensive communication, on the other hand, encourages the fixation of belief. The communicator’s intention to inform something overtly may lead to success in

making the audience believe it. In commercial advertising, however, lack of trust does not prevent ostensive communication from taking place. Success will be attained once the audience recovers the advertiser's informative intention, without necessarily making the target audience believe something. It is common for people to easily recover the set of assumptions intended by the advertiser without actually believing them.

While in commercial advertising covert communication may prove itself to be more advantageous from the standpoint of the advertiser, in the subgenre of personal ads on dating sites ostensive communication is inevitable due to the fact that the very informative intention of those sites is inherently publicized.

Ostensive communication takes place in personal ads on dating sites and degrees of mutual trust and social co-operation are high once the monologic hypertexts of profiles are supposed to function as the initial channel for future real-life encounters. It is then presupposed that a trustworthy candidate introduces and describes herself to a trusting addressee. However, cases of limited or non-existent trust in ostensive communication through this medium may occur when the manifested sets of assumptions do not conform to realistic intentions. For example, someone who takes on a false identity in order to interact with the opposite sex virtually and create an unrealistic emotional environment to satisfy her fantasies. Notwithstanding, the informative intention is by all means true once the goal is to find a partner regardless of the status of participants: virtual or real.

For the reasons mentioned above, existing trust will be taken as a norm in the present analysis. Ostensive rather than covert communication is present here. The single man/woman searching for prospective dates on the Internet may be compared to advertisers whose primary goal is to persuade and attract an audience composed of single men/women registered on the site. Their activated profiles have two main functions: informing and persuading the viewer to establish contact. In addition, similar to typical strategies of advertisement campaigns,

pictures are often placed on profile pages which serve as a reward for the audience's attention as well as a "magnet" – a source of physical attraction and sexual arousal, motivating the viewer to open a channel of communication by exchanging e-mail messages, making telephone calls or meeting face to face.

#### 4.1.2 Discourse type features

The array of ads in the modern world has points of contact with various discourse types. In addition to persuading, which is a function central to the majority of ads, there are ads which are devised for reasons other than selling, for example, ads which simply inform, give directions, warn, etc.

There are many kinds of ads and, as a consequence, many discourse types associated with the genre. Cook (1992: 6) distinguishes different kinds of functions in relation to ads: addresser-function, sender-function, addressee-function and receiver-function. He asserts that a clear-cut characterization of ads – persuading to buy – is over simplistic and distinguishes product ads (houses, fridges, etc.) from non-product ads (charity and political campaigns, etc.), and offers a four-dimension categorization of ads according to: 1. medium: TV, radio, the Internet, among others.; 2. product or service (perfume, liquor, sports car, watches, housecleaning, laundry, car tune-up, etc.); 3. technique – reason and tickle ads, appealing to reason and emotion respectively (*cf.* Bernstein, 1974: 118); and 4. consumer – categorization of target groups: women, men, young/old, middle/upper class, etc.

It is important to note, however, that these dimensions will not generate a uniform classification of ads. That is to say that all ads sharing one or more of these parameters will not necessarily constitute a distinct subgenre of advertisements. Therefore, no simple definition is currently available to be assigned to ads in general. Advertisements perform

multiple functions, in different forms, through different media, for various purposes and for different audiences.

The above features may be related to personal ads on dating sites: they are tickle non-product ads displayed on the Internet targeted at singles, male or female, who want to find a partner: the desired other.

Table 4 – Online personal ads: features of discourse type

Context	Participants		Function	Intertexts	Co-texts	Situation	Paralanguage	Substances
sender / receiver								
Online dating	Male I/He	Female I/She	Finding a partner	Other profile hypertexts on the site	Introduction: attention-getter  Questionnaire  Personal presentation  Description of the other self	Browsing the site to meet people  Seducing readers/viewers	Capitals  Italics  Abbreviations  Onomatopoeic signals  Photographs	Computer screen  Mouse  Hypertext

Although personal introductions are provided in the written mode, the register often presents interactive features such as conversational tactics and moves. It resembles to some extent face-to-face interactive conversation, with heavily loaded information with lexical density communicated. Profile writers *'talk'* about themselves and request some reply from their audience. As a result, the self-descriptive texts under consideration are characterized grammatically by the frequent use of the first person pronoun *I*, a lesser frequent use of the person pronoun *you*, while addressing the reader of the ad – *a potential date*, a great deal of qualification by means of adjectives and/or adjectivals in general, and very few action verbs (*cf.* Chapter 7 for the categorization of attributes). Some examples of the New Yorker and carioca corpora are listed below.

*Bom, não sou careca e a barriga ainda não se manifestou. Acho que estou dentro da média, não?...*

*Bom, talvez até eu seja super em alguma coisa, mas isso é você quem deve descobrir...*

*Quando você me conhecer, vai se arrepender... de não ter me conhecido antes! Por quê? Porque eu sou um cara legal. Sou sincero, carinhoso, extrovertido, amigo, romântico, calmo, tipo pé no chão, e estou procurando uma pessoa, assim como você, para tornar ainda mais agradáveis os bons momentos da vida...*

*I love the outdoors. Camping, Hiking, Motorcycle vacations, and traveling in general are at the top of my "fun" list.*

*I'm a hard worker and have a great job here in the states.*

*I look forward to telling you more about myself and learning more about you.*

*I'm a charming, intelligent, sexy, romantic, talented, sensual, mature showbiz male who travels the world as an entertainer... I'm quite well built, not over thin, maybe could lose a pound or two, but certainly not fat. Manly would describe me.*

*I'm good looking: 6'1", blonde, brown eyes, dark skin, nice lips. I may not be the smartest man in the world, but I work hard in every facet of my life. I'm also divorced with no children.*

Other typical features include (1) attractive and/or funny nicknames or holders to make the piece more eye-catching, (2) catchy headlines – attention getters – capturing the reader's attention, (3) short paragraph and sentences with many intensifiers which are easier to follow and grasp, (4) formatting: capitals, bold, italic and underline that create impact and emphasis, and (5) photographs that add eye-appeal.

Therefore, the role taken on by the writer is that of an *expositor* – “the persuading agent”<sup>6</sup> – describing physical and personality traits of his/her own. Through persuasive language, the writer wants to reach the audience composed of *prospective partners* – “the persuaded participants” – so as to make them reply to his/her ad.

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<sup>6</sup> I have coined the terms *persuading agent(s)* and *persuaded participant(s)*. They refer respectively to profile writers and their potential audience. While examining the related literature I did not come across the use of such terminology.

## 4.2 Structural organization and rhetorical moves

As suggested by Swales (1990) the communicative purpose of a genre not only shapes the schematic structure of the discourse, it also influences and constrains choices of *content and style*. Therefore, the next step in the genre analysis model is to explore the level of *form* – more specifically the structural organization and rhetorical strategies used to realize a particular communicative intention. Generally, there is no one-to-one correlation between a particular move and the verbal and non-verbal strategies used to instantiate a move. However, texts belonging to the same genre often deploy identical or at least very similar rhetorical features. For example, while reading expressions like ‘man seeks woman for a lifetime of excitement’, it is presumed that the genre in point is the personal ad on dating columns or dating sites since the lexico-grammatical choices are extremely genre-specific.

The aim of the structural and rhetorical analyses is to look for such regularities or standard practices in the actual formulations of the online dating genre. This does not mean, however, that there is no room for variation when writing a genre-text. In the same way as writers may choose between moves from a common repertoire when structuring their texts, writers choose between rhetorical strategies from a whole network of linguistic/non-linguistic strategies and create their personalized versions of a particular genre. As Bhatia (1993: 13) claims, in his extension of Swales’ genre definition: “*Most often it [the genre] is highly structured and conventionalised with constraint on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s)*”.

In the present genre analysis, one of the most interesting findings is to explore the “common repertoire” of organizational and rhetorical strategies, *i.e.*, all the different possibilities which exist for saying practically the same thing to realize the same move. And

equally important is to establish whether some structural organizations and moves are more preferred and, therefore, more genre-specific than others.

Lexical and syntactic choices are of course also constrained by the communicative purpose (Swales, 1990: 53). Eggins (1994) relies solely on lexicogrammar. Martin (1992: 443) focuses on the layout of a text, suggesting that “*titles, sub-titles, headings and subheadings are commonly deployed to keep track of the composition structure [of the texts]*”, while Bhatia (1993: 87) concludes that “*the ultimate criteria for assigning discourse values to various moves is functional rather than formal*”.

In the present chapter, following Martin (1992, 2003), Bhatia (1993, 2004) and Hoey (1997, 2001), the composition structure of online dating extended forms will be analyzed. Lexico-grammatical choices will be dealt with in Chapters 7.1 and 7.2, when the analysis will be oriented toward specific segments in the profiling process of the self and the other self descriptions.

#### 4.2.1 Macro-patterns of dating sites: navigating mode

Advertisements regularly use Opportunity-Taking and Desire Arousal-Desire Fulfillment patterns “*hinting at the commodification of sex on the one hand and the eroticization of selling on the other*” (Hoey, 1997:103). In the analysis of the corpus drawn from Match.com, Yahoo!, Opportunity-Taking stands for the medium itself: the dating site proper. Once individuals become members of a dating site, the opportunity is readily available to them. The profiled attractive man is the object with a purpose and that purpose is fulfilled when the opportunity is taken – he is making himself available for the satisfaction of the other: the desired female.

Furthermore, Problem-Solution and Goal-Achievement patterns can be easily identified since males and females whose ads are posted on the site are single – the problem –

and therefore want to find a partner – the solution. Concomitantly, they have a clear goal in mind: finding prospective partners, communicating with them, and eventually meeting them in real situations, which is what they want to achieve.

The promotional subgenre in this study promotes the interaction of Problem-Solution and Goal-Achievement patterns lodged within the larger Desire-Arousal pattern. All three macro-patterns are implicated in the structural organization of the subgenre and they often have indistinct borderlines.

Descriptions are given together with evaluation in terms of reactions to them, that is, intention to arouse desire in another. They also serve to allow identification of the object of desire by means of character detail in order to motivate action. The inclusion of an Object of Desire statement licenses a description in which the writer's physical and personality traits may be used for the satisfaction of the opposite sex.

Stereotypical features of attractive masculinity such as *tan*, *hairiness* and *virility*; femininity, *curvy*, *voluptuous*, *sexy*, interwoven with positive evaluations such as *‘fantastic partner’*, *‘ideal man’*, *‘fun company’*, *‘cúmplice em tempo integral’*, *‘príncipe encantado para Rapunzel’*, *‘sou real de verdade’*, *‘sua musa inspiradora’* etc. set up the causal link between the Object of Desire and Desire Arousal.

In sum, Positive Evaluation by the first-person male/female writer of the Positive Result for the female/male, reader/viewer becomes an Attempt to fulfill his/her own Desire. Tables 5a and 5b, below, illustrate the overlap of macro-patterns in online personal ads.

Table 5a – Interaction of macro-patterns of online personal ads

OPPORTUNITY-TAKING/ DESIRE-AROUSAL	Looking for good company and maybe more?
PROBLEM-SOLUTION/ GOAL-ACHIEVEMENT	A sensitive man who'll really listen to you after a hard day's work? That's me.
GOAL-ACHIEVEMENT/ PROBLEM-SOLUTION/ DESIRE-AROUSAL	Look no further! I'll hold you late at night. I guarantee I can change the oil in your car in 10 minutes flat.
DESIRE-AROUSAL	I'm good looking: 6'1", blonde, brown eyes, dark skin, nice lips. Love, kissing, touching, music, movies, talking with that person, sex, smile.... sharing and candle light dinner, just being with that special person

Table 5b – Interaction of macro-patterns of online personal ads

OPPORTUNITY-TAKING/ PROBLEM-SOLUTION/ GOAL-ACHIEVEMENT	Amante da vida procura... Adoro a natureza e adoraria ter alguém que também curtisse.
DESIRE-AROUSAL/ GOAL-ACHIEVEMENT	Amar na plenitude em ambientes naturais, como praia, montanha e cachoeiras...
DESIRE-AROUSAL/ GOAL-ACHIEVEMENT	Tenho ombros largos, coxas grossas, pelos nos braços, pernas e tórax, dentição perfeita. Estou normalmente bronzeado devido as minhas caminhadas e por jogar vôlei de praia. Agora que vc já me conhece um pouquinho, escreva pra mim... me dê o prazer de tê-la como par perfeito....estou aguardando...

#### 4.2.2 Moves in discourse structure of online dating forms: navigating mode

Bhatia (1993, 2004) proposes a framework for the promotional genre on the basis of moves in discourse structure. The seven moves are (1) establishing credentials, (2) introducing the offer, (3) offering incentives, (4) enclosing documents, (5) soliciting response, (6) using pressure tactics and (7) ending politely.

#### 4.2.2.1 Move positions

Bhatia's seven-move discourse structure when applied to the present corpus requires two additional rhetorical moves, a substitute for (1) which will merge with (2) and adaptations for moves (4) and (7).

The first additional move is “attention-getting starters” since profiles on dating sites offer the opportunity for a personal statement before one's description. The functional purpose of this move is to focus the reader's attention on the heading of the profile. Typical strategies are the use of shocking, funny or unexpected statements or general pleasantries:

*Hello there from here :)*

*Interested in chatting? But not for too long...:)*

*American looking for beautiful and intelligent international friends!*

*Sexy, Mature, Intelligent, Showbiz*

*Primo do Macaco Louco das Meninas Super Poderosas: Procuero*

*Príncipe Encantado busca bela Rapunzel para amar e honrar para sempre*

*Já me disseram ser clone do Toni Ramos...risos...até de um Nicolas Cage ..que pretensão...olha a forma...mas acima de tudo sou EU à procura de um EU especial..um sotaque curioso mistura português (origem), gauchesco (que barbaridade...tchê...), agora carioca..e ainda dizem que têm toques de francês...*

*Já imaginou um cara com pinta de alemão dançando frevo???*

*Quando você me conhecer, vai se arrepender...*

*Sou como um rio navegando para o mar.....(será você?)*

Bhatia's move (1) **establishing credentials** should be embedded in move (2). In establishing credentials, the goal is to confirm reliability by means of a specialist account. No such information can be found in dating site profiles. The closest kind of data is related to e-mail address, profession, area of expertise, among others. Move (2) **introducing the offer** has the function to highlight what the *product* offers. Since the second part of the profile form is used for the description of one's personality, looks, tastes, etc., the information given also functions as incentives (cf. “offering incentives” – Move 3). Therefore, it is necessary to collapse the first three moves proposed by Bhatia (Moves 1, 2 and 3) into a single and more

pervasive move: “describing the self”. This may be exemplified from the following data excerpts:

*I love the outdoors. Camping, Hiking, Motorcycle vacations, and traveling in general are at the top of my "fun" list. I'm a hard worker and have a great job here in the states. I'm just starting to learn Portuguese. Will you be my private instructor? :-)*

*I'm a charming, intelligent, sexy, romantic, talented, sensual, mature showbiz male who travels the world as an entertainer. I love Opera, Jazz, quality Pop (Beatles, Stevie Wonder etc), I particularly love Bossa Nova! I've even sung it in Europe and even Brasil itself! I also love old films, town markets and flirtatious, gorgeous women! ;-)*

*I'm an easy-going, open-minded, sincere, caring, sensitive, romantic and honest guy who likes to have fun. I'd love to travel more, but making friends around the world is good too.*

*Gostos: coisas, lugares, pessoas, sensações... Café expresso, pizza de massa fina, trabalhar com criatividade, Marcelo Kayath, Ipanema, Arpoador, Rio de Janeiro, passear de mãos dadas, conversar amenidades, papo de anjo, espreguiçar-se nas manhãs de sábado, dolce far niente, Cinema, Bergman, Woody Allen, Charlie Parker, crustáceos, cerveja premium, Matisse, óleo sobre tela, pintura abstrata, Paul Klee, Ang Lee, Música, violão, silêncio, som, chuva, aquietar-se, ouvir, pernas, dorsos, mulheres elegantes, preto e marron, Paris, Quartier Latin,...*

*Não sou super em nada, apenas um cara comum.*

*Bom, talvez até seja super em alguma coisa, mas isso é você quem deve descobrir..rs*

*De imediato, posso te garantir uma super amizade, atenção, compreensão, transparência...*

*Sou um ser da floresta e tenho bom coração. Trabalho no Ministério do Rei (o Leão) e sou respeitado pelas macacadas (não macaquices). Vivo meio só e tô a fim de uma gata (digo: mulher). Sou romântico e escrevo poemas. No momento estou escrevendo um texto sobre as romances na Floresta Encantada. Se você quiser participar eu vou gostar.*

*Sou pintor bissexto e há mais de 2 anos estou com 9 telas para terminar (fora esboços...). Arre! Só produzo quando estou apaixonado. Sou um sapo honrado que quer virar príncipe, bonito, inteligente e culto. Aceito beijos. Quero ser jovial e saudável, ter interesse pelas belas artes, especialmente literatura, música, balé. Pelas artes viajei por aí.*

The second additional move has the function of describing the attributes of the prospective partner – the object of desire. As such it will be called “describing the desired other”. Examples of such move are the following:

*Firstly, I'm looking for an unattached, sexy, seductive woman of, say 20-40ys who prefers a mature man like me, preferably without children. I prefer warm, romantic women, but those who are also intelligent. A love of music is a big plus! Physically, I prefer curvy busty figures and I ADORE Brazilian women!*

*I don't like women who are only interested in my money or any who are over-jealous.*

*Just looking for a woman who appreciates Sunday picnics, baseball games, fine French dining, Broadway shows, casual BBQ dinners on my porch, and a little imperfection every now and then.*

*I'm looking for someone who likes to laugh, can make me laugh, knows how to enjoy life, and is open-minded to other cultures. Someone who enjoys swimming and going to the beach and outdoors.*

*pessoa decidida..afinal se conhecer via net, até pode ser mais seguro e profundo do que um encontro eventual num bar á noite...pessoa resolvida, que goste de evoluir..pessoa independente, que goste de sua profissão e respeite o trabalho da outra pessoa...tenha atitude, positiva, pra frente, a vida pode ter ameaças mas para muitos estes podem ser desafios bem interessantes...*

*Se você: (1) É bem-humorada até nas variações hormonais; 2) Não lê Caras, nem no cabeleireiro; 3) Gosta de cinema europeu; 4) Não usa correntinha no tornozelo; 5) É esbelta; 6) Não faz dança de salão; 7) Gosta do sexo oposto (sabe conviver com as diferenças e até mesmo admirar algumas delas); 8) Acha Reality Show um porre!; 9) Gosta de literatura; 10) Não acredita em duendes; 11) Acha engraçada a onda de esportes radicais; 12) Não é natureba; 12) Sabe que livro de auto-ajuda só "ajuda" o autor, que tal começarmos uma conversa?*

The first move to be adapted requires minor changes. In texts like those analyzed, there are no enclosed documents. It is possible, however, to find some related function: the optional insertion of one's photograph. Actually, the site allows for the posting of three photos at the user's discretion.

The second move to be refined frequently comes at the end of many profiles when site members, after having described their ideal partners, include a pleasant and frequently persuasive and seductive closing statement or question. This kind of move is an adapted version of Bhatia's (7) **ending politely** but, in addition to concluding with pleasantries, profile writers usually include some statement or a piece of comment that aims at attracting, persuading and/or seducing the reader. These two functions are tightly intertwined in many of the profiles under analysis. Indeed, when one looks at them more closely, it is easy to see that these two moves have much in common. As such, the communicative function of this move is to produce closure by seducing readers, either through sex appeal or humor, and make them feel compelled to respond. Therefore, the term "attention-getting codas" will be adopted to refer to the last move. Excerpts from the corpus of profiles are listed below.

*I look forward to telling you more about myself and learning all ... about you.*

*I want a woman who makes it clear that she wants me! ;-) Are you skilled in love-making?*

*Give me a back rub when I come home tired, I'll do whatever you want in return...*

*Bom é isto, eu só queria te dizer uma coisa: quero estar com vc, juntinho em um final de tarde na praia!!!*

*Esse monte de Blá, blá blá só serve como referência, é essencial uma conversa ao vivo e a cores. Precisamos ser instigantes um com o outro...e assim...sentir o pulso mais fortemente latejar !!!*

Soliciting response is done by means of different strategies such as pleasantries, challenges (some pressure tactics are sometimes embedded here), direct and indirect requests, popular sayings or proverbs.

*I look forward to telling you more about myself and learning more about you.*

*Well, why not write to me and find out more?*

*Write me with your questions and I will try to answer.*

*Escreva-me sem medo, podemos trocar fotos e idéias.*

*Será que estou querendo demais? Bem... Se você também pensa assim, por quê não me escrever?*

*Estou aguardando um contato seu para que possamos nos conhecer.*

*Que tal começarmos uma conversa?*

*Vamos nos falar, mande um e-mail com seu endereço e te respondo e envio fotos.*

*Se vc é uma mulher alegre, inteligente e carinhosa, então, temos muito em comum. Que tal nos conhecermos?*

Pressure tactics involve the use of language of seduction that appeals to heart, mind, body and soul, stimulating the readers' imagination. Seduction does not only rely on sex appeal but also on wit and humor. The "persuading agent" weaves the language of seduction/persuasion, encloses his photo, in most of the cases, and solicits urgent response from members. Examples of instances of pressure tactics are found in:

*I'm just starting to learn Portuguese. Will you be my private instructor? :)*

*Well, why not write to me and find out more. You won't be disappointed. Go on! **You know you want to!***

*Se vc quiser ....fprietoARROUBAopenlink. O resto é o de sempre....*

*Chame, tenho certeza que vc não irá se arrepender...*

*Bom, talvez até seja super em alguma coisa, mas isso é você quem deve descobrir..rs*

*Afinal se conhecer via net, até pode ser mais seguro e profundo do que um encontro eventual num bar à noite...*

With the changes and modifications described above, the order of moves from the perspective of the navigating mode is: (1) **attention-getting starters**, (2) **describing the self** (collapsing the functions relevant to credentials, introduction of offer and incentives), (3) **enclosing photos**, (4) **describing the desired other**, (5) **soliciting response**, (6) **using pressure tactics** and (7) **attention-getting codas**.

Table 6 – Revised move schemata of online profiles

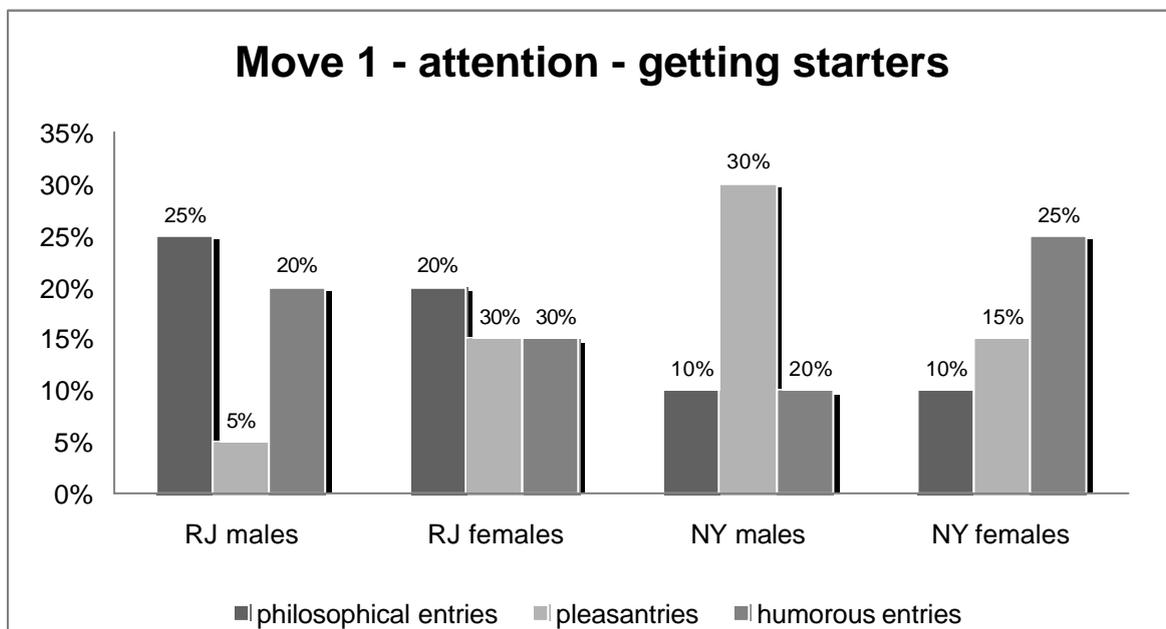
<p><b>MOVE 1: Attention-getting starters</b>  Comments intended to get the readers' attention (quotations, proverbs, sayings included)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• philosophical entries</li> <li>• pleasantries</li> <li>• humor</li> </ul>
<p><b>MOVE 2: Describing the self</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical features</li> <li>• personality traits</li> <li>• mental attributes</li> </ul>
<p><b>MOVE 3: Enclosing photos</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maximum of three (3) photos allowed</li> </ul>
<p><b>MOVE 4: Describing the desired other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical features</li> <li>• personality traits</li> <li>• mental attributes</li> </ul>
<p><b>MOVE 5: Soliciting response</b>  The reader is encouraged to respond through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pleasantry</li> <li>• challenges</li> <li>• questions/requests</li> </ul>
<p><b>MOVE 6: Using pressure tactics</b>  The reader is seduced, challenged or reminded of future regrets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal e-mails</li> <li>• sayings or proverbs</li> </ul>
<p><b>MOVE 7: Attention-getting codas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• polite, humorous, seductive and erotic comments at the end of profile</li> <li>• rhetorical questions</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.2.2 Move strategy frequencies

All seven moves are found in the corpus drawn from both Rio de Janeiro and New York female and male residents. However, strategies that comprise each of the moves vary according to nationality and gender.

Tables 7-32 below summarize information about the moves in the corpus of the selected 40 profile descriptions of the self and 40 profile descriptions of the other self. The male corpus is represented by twenty self-descriptions and twenty descriptions of the other (10 from American males and 10 from Brazilian males). The female corpus follows the same guidelines. The American profilers (male and female) are residents of New York City, and the Brazilian counterpart, residents of the City of Rio de Janeiro. They include the percentage of strategies for each move within profile descriptions for each nationality and gender category.

Table 7 – Move 1: distribution of strategies



The distribution for Move 1 strategies indicate that although the total number of strategies is identical (RJ -  $N=20$ , NY-  $N=20$ ), there is an inversion with regard to the variable

*philosophical*<sup>7</sup>. Cariocas make more use of philosophical remarks (5 - males; 4 - females) as attention-getting starters while New York males and females resort to a larger number of pleasantries entries (males - 6 and females - 3). As for humorous attention-getters, individuals from both nationalities employ a total of 7 entries. However, there is an inversion here as far as gender is concerned. Carioca males (4) and New York females (5) are the ones to produce more humorous comments in the corpus. Below, M1 tokens in the corpus are filtered and sorted according to gender and nationality.

Table 8 – M1 tokens – Carioca males

Philosophical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Procuro por você em cada onda que vejo. Esperarei por você em qualquer oceano!</i></li> <li>2. <i>Ser e fazer feliz... meu objetivo.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Sou como um rio navegando para o mar... (será você?)</i></li> <li>4. <i>Vivo cada momento com a intensidade de quem busca e me renovo a cada dia.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Mulheres. Para mim, um mistério indecifrável. (Orson Welles)</i></li> </ol>
Humorous	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Príncipe Encantado busca bela Rapunzel para amar e honrar para sempre.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Quando você me conhecer, vai se arrepender...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Como se chamaria uma pessoa na medida certa?</i></li> <li>4. <i>CARINHO DE UM HOMEM;-)</i></li> </ol>
Pleasantries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Homem maduro, interessante procura cúmplice serena.</i></li> </ol>

Table 9 – M1 tokens – Carioca females

Philosophical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Sol... Mar... e Amor</i></li> <li>2. <i>O amor é o tempero da vida.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Muitos dos mistérios de si mesmo só se revelam nos relacionamentos.</i></li> <li>4. <i>Nada é ruim o tempo todo; venha me conhecer para a janela se abrir...</i></li> </ol>
Humorous	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>My soulmate. I am here waiting for you!!!:☺))</i></li> <li>2. <i>Quero encontrar meu Par. Não precisa ser Perfeito, só precisa me amar!</i></li> <li>3. <i>Guerreira, porém --- hiper fêmea:☺))</i></li> </ol>
Pleasantries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>A procura de um cúmplice para o futuro.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Procuro homem charmoso, inteligente, para ser meu Par Perfeito...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Espero...Procuro...Encontro?!</i></li> </ol>

<sup>7</sup> The category *philosophical* is employed by Celia Shalom (1977) to refer to metaphorical realizations typically found in personal advertisements.

Table 10 – M1 tokens – New York males

Philosophical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Love has no Limits. Let's find out.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Infinite reasons for you to stay and I love you more.</i></li> </ol>
Humorous	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Warm and affectionate (me) seeks fun lover (you) for romance.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Nice, faithful, charming young cutie for a faithful loving cute Lady ☺</i></li> </ol>
Pleasantries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Architect looking for some fun!</i></li> <li>2. <i>NYC man looking for friendship and love.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Doctor and nature lover seeks girlfriend.</i></li> <li>4. <i>Romantic New Yorker...</i></li> <li>5. <i>Athletic and fun doctor seeks someone who is active and fun!</i></li> <li>6. <i>World traveler seeks like minded aficionado.</i></li> </ol>

Table 11 – M1 tokens – New York females

Philosophical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Diamond in the rough...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Darwinian philosophy...</i></li> </ol>
Humorous	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Peek-a-Boo...Caught you looking!</i></li> <li>2. <i>Sparkly and Bubbly!</i></li> <li>3. <i>Keep Smiling ☺</i></li> <li>4. <i>Anyone out there????!!</i></li> <li>5. <i>What are you doing for Christmas???</i></li> </ol>
Pleasantries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I have a creative streak that expresses itself in different ways.</i></li> <li>2. <i>River deep Mountain high</i></li> <li>3. <i>Would like to meet...</i></li> </ol>

The tables below present the semantic distribution of attributes for each set of profiles. Attributes, in this section, will be generally classified in relation to personality, physical and mental categories. This initial and tentative distribution is based on the work by Shalom (1997). However, in later sections, with the articulation of the Appraisal System (*cf.* Chapters 6 and 7), the classification will be finer tuned with respect to the personality and mental parameters. Personality traits will be distributed into the categories of either ‘affect’ or ‘judgement’ of the social sanction typology, whereas mental attributes will be related to ‘judgement’ values that promote self esteem.

Frequencies for Move 2 are indeed very revealing. Whereas self-descriptions of personality traits are more frequent than physical and mental attributes among New Yorkers (males and females) and Carioca females, physical features are given more emphasis by Carioca males. (*cf.* Chapter 7 for a detailed analysis of attributes based on the appraisal

system framework). Table 12 displays the frequency distribution for Move 2 and the following tables (13-16) illustrate the self-descriptive strategies produced by all four groups.

Table 12 – Move 2: overall distribution of strategies

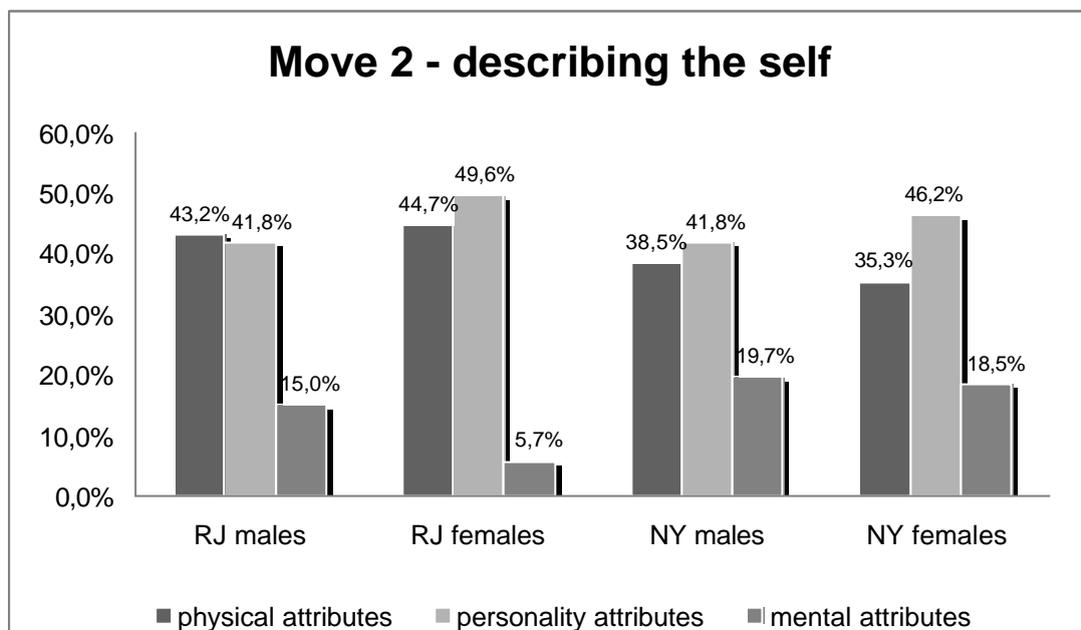


Table 13 – M2 tokens – Carioca males

Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Sou elegante, com rosto bonito e corpo esbelto sempre bronzeado, um pouquinho neurótico com aparência, malhado sem exagero (faço ginástica com aparelhos todo dia)..., não tenho barriga nem pneus, estatura mediana (1,70 com 70 kg), cabelos e olhos castanhos. Aparento bem menos idade do que tenho...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Possuo um corpo firme e jovem. Algumas pessoas dizem que aparento ter menos de 30 anos.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Corpo harmônico, pele macia, pernas, braços, etc., bem desenhados.</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Prático como os móveis da Tok &amp; Stok, simples como deve ser a vida, objetivo, contemporâneo, sincero para comigo mesmo, cuidadoso com o outro, sempre atento, curioso com as coisas que me cercam.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Sou alegre, bem humorado e bem antenado.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Sou educado e cavalheiresco, não sou grosseiro... às vezes um pouco turrão...</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Sou economista, pós-graduado, trabalho bastante, mas mantenho sempre meu bom humor.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Interesse pelas Belas Artes, especialmente literatura, música e balé.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Sou pesquisador e professor universitário... Amante da cultura. Sou apaixonado por filosofia, música e leitura.</i></li> </ol>

Table 14 – M2 tokens – Carioca females

Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Tenho o corpo em forma, pratico natação, seios médios, coxas grossas.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Sou mignon, tipo violão. Cintura fina, coxas grossas. Não tenho barriga, pois faço 600 abdominais todo dia, antes do banho.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Sou grande, substanciosa, tipo violão. Aliás, sou toda “ão”!</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Tenho personalidade forte, sou sincera e autêntica.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Sou uma mulher de bem com a vida, decidida, verdadeira, sensível, fiel e carinhosa.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Sou pura de sentimentos. Romântica, prática quando necessário.</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Jornais e livros fazem parte do meu cotidiano.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Profissionalmente, carreira em pleno vapor!</i></li> <li>3. <i>Gosto de ler, ir ao cinema e ao teatro...</i></li> </ol>

Table 15 – M2 tokens – New York males

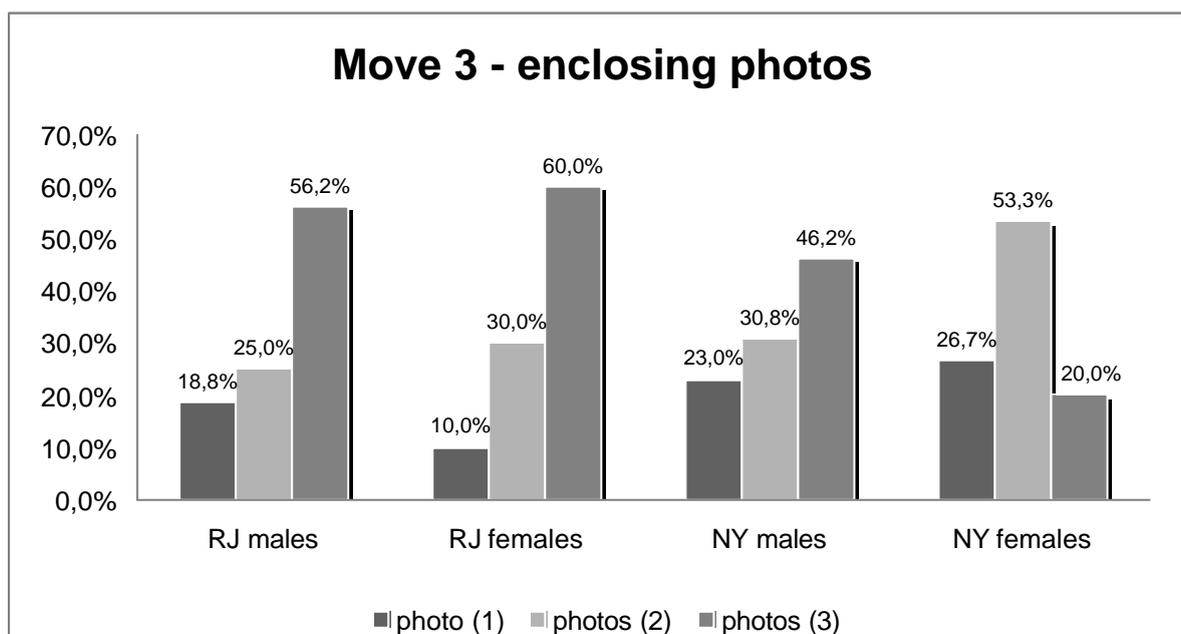
Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I'm in shape, work out and go to the gym regularly. I have a muscular, athletic build and attractive facial features.</i></li> <li>2. <i>I'm 5'10, 180 pounds, solid build, muscles, brown hair – curly, wavy and long now.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Slim and athletic but very white skin. Burn easily on the beach but have strong legs.</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>...I am outgoing and sociable and love soccer and music.</i></li> <li>2. <i>I'm honest, loyal, faithful, trusting, kind, caring, loving and fun, with a compassionate and generous nature.</i></li> <li>3. <i>A funny guy (not clumsy) that can make you laugh until you cry; I can take you to parts of the world most people only see on National Geographic; I love traveling on a whim....</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I'm a physician with a clinic in NYC as well as being a University professor.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Articulate, well-mannered African-American male, ...loves live jazz &amp; R&amp;B concerts. Also enjoys the ballet, charity premiers, and museums.</i></li> <li>3. <i>I'm a successful businessman, financially secure; all about working hard but still finding time for my personal projects...</i></li> </ol>

Table 16 – M2 tokens – New York females

Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I'm an average person. Firm body, lovely face and sexy look. Soft and pretty skin, thick thighs, penetrating eyes and silky hair.</i></li> <li>2. <i>My body is like Jennifer Lopez's (JLo). Very curvy and feminine. I have an exotic look about me, i.e. Italian, Greek, but I'm actually of Russian descent.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Pretty good shape. Dark hair, slim body, brown eyes and lovely dimples (so I'm told...).</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I'm adventurous and always keen to try something new.</i></li> <li>2. <i>I'm loyal, faithful and optimistic – without being overbearing. I am intuitive, hard working, but fun to be with (sometimes!!).</i></li> <li>3. <i>I'm fun loving, sensual and tactile. A woman who likes to live life to the fullest. Always smiling, impulsive and daring! Outgoing and love meeting new people.</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I consider myself a smart, attractive woman with a big job...Reading lifts my spirit.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Positive, successful professional lady with 2 children (13 &amp; 14)...</i></li> <li>3. <i>My degree was in Math but I work in theater publishing...</i></li> </ol>

In relation to Move 3 Cariocas, both male (16) and females (20), posted more photographs online than New Yorkers (males-13; females-15). There are no photographs posted by two Carioca males and one female; and by three New York males and one female. Furthermore, four Carioca female profiles display three photos while only one New York female posts the maximum number of photos in her profile. An interesting facet that was depicted among Carioca male members is that they constantly update their photographs. Every two or three weeks, most male members of the Brazilian site replace their photos and, in most cases, they keep on looking younger and younger!<sup>8</sup>

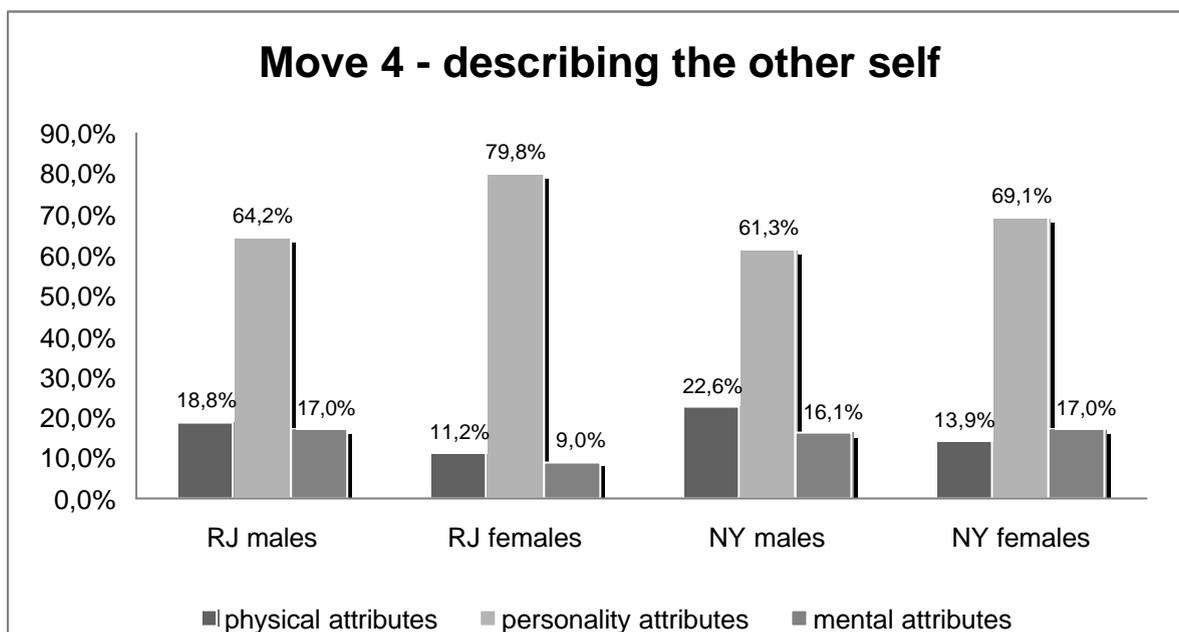
Table 17 – Move 3: distribution of strategies



Move 4 – describing the desired other – is the one move that presents more variation across nationalities. Carioca males use almost twice as many attributes as compared to New York males (106 x 62). This variation is not felt between Carioca females and New York females (99 x 94) (*cf.* Tables 18-22 below).

<sup>8</sup> Carioca males, while describing themselves, seem to be extremely concerned with their youth. They constantly mention that they look younger than their age directly or indirectly (*cf.* hypotactic and paratactic projections in Chapter 6.1).

Table 18 – Move 4: distribution of strategies



While describing the desired other, all four groups resort to more personality attributes *i.e.*, judgement evaluations in their descriptions. Physical traits (appreciation evaluations) come in second place for carioca males and females and New York males. New York females constitute the only group that values more mental rather than physical attributes. Their evaluations are mostly oriented to the judgement parameter rather than appreciation (*cf.* Chapter 7.4 for the quantitative analysis).

Table 19 – M4 tokens – Carioca males

Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Bela e elegante... Cuidado com o corpo e saúde é um "must".</i></li> <li>2. <i>Afinal, sensualidade e beleza (é claro) seduzem bem mais...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Uma mulher que não tenha vergonha de si mesma, de seu corpo e do seu jeito de ser. Que seja cheirosa, linda, deliciosa em todos os sentidos. Beleza é fundamental!</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Aprecio uma mulher equilibrada, com bom gosto e simplicidade, elegante nas formas pessoais.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Uma mulher de estilo, cativante, verdadeira, carinhosa, amiga, sensível, cúmplice e, principalmente, DESCOMPLICADA!!!</i></li> <li>3. <i>Uma mulher que esteja preparada para ter um relacionamento descontraído, sem traumas, sem cobranças excessivas, e que saiba respeitar a individualidade da outra pessoa.</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Eu estou querendo conhecer uma pessoa culta,...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Uma mulher... inteligente e que tenha senso de humor...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Procuro uma mulher reflexiva, inteligente...</i></li> </ol>

Table 20 – M4 tokens – Carioca females

Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Ah! E sapatos sempre limpos e unhas bem cortadas... rs Olhos profundos e transparentes..</i></li> <li>2. <i>Elegante e sofisticado, sem ser afetado...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Um homem bem cuidado, perfumado...</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Gostaria de conhecer alguém de bem com a vida, de espírito jovem, bem humorado e alegre... Sincero, fiel, carinhoso e que saiba tratar bem... rs</i></li> <li>2. <i>Que seja sonhador, romântico, não esqueça datas importantes, me ligue todas as manhãs para desejar um bom dia, seja muito gentil, muito franco e cúmplice, que não seja dorminhoco, nem esteja sempre cansado ou querendo ver televisão... .</i></li> <li>3. <i>Busco um cavalheiro romântico sem ser grudento. Verdadeiro nas palavras e atitudes.</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Procuro um homem interessante, inteligente, versátil...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Quero alguém que seja maduro o suficiente para saber o que quer...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Que tenha boa índole, não seja crítico destrutivo.</i></li> </ol>

Table 21 – M4 tokens – New York males

Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I like women with Marilyn Monroe type figures.</i></li> <li>2. <i>In good health, in shape, a lovely smile...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Seeking alluringly elegant, classy, slender lady...</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Desire a woman who is honest and a direct communicator: no games, please.</i></li> <li>2. <i>I'm searching for a true loving lady, a down to earth, romantic soul mate.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Looking for a good-natured and warm-hearted woman to share night out and in with.</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Looking for someone who is exciting, intelligent, open a good communicator.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Someone who is down-to-earth, intelligent, with a great sense of humor.</i></li> <li>3. <i>I want a woman who will explore life with me and try to understand why we exist, why we live, what life is for, and what we want from it.</i></li> </ol>

Table 22 – M4 tokens – New York females

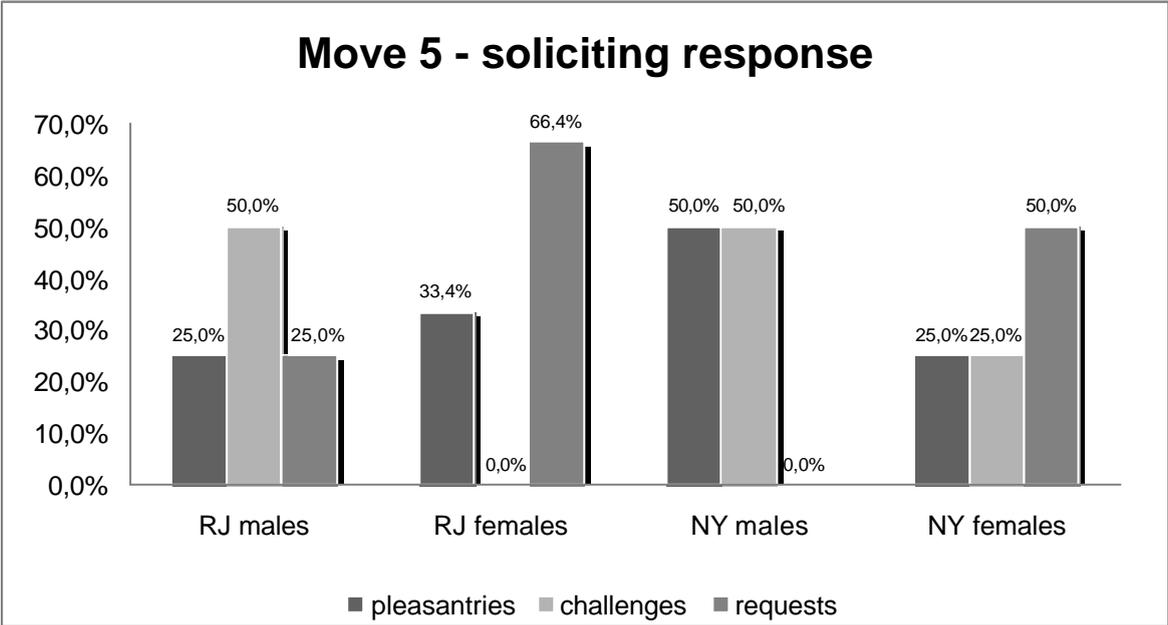
Physical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>You are handsome, attractive, athletic, classy, great kisser, charming, sexy...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Tall and handsome. He should look good in jeans.</i></li> <li>3. <i>My ideal man would be one who is attractive, with a zest for life.</i></li> </ol>
Personality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I'm seeking someone nurturing, humble, kind, respectful, honest..., basically an all around good guy with a great sense of humor.</i></li> <li>2. <i>An independent type who is not looking for supper on the table and slippers at the end of the day.</i></li> <li>3. <i>A caring and sharing personality with a good sense of fun and a real understanding of what is important.</i></li> </ol>
Mental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I am looking for an intelligent and romantic man with diverse interests.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Someone who doesn't shy away from making decisions, even those difficult ones.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Most important to me is that you are clever, interesting and interested in everything.</i></li> </ol>

In all, it has become clear that Cariocas are much more detailed (and demanding) in their descriptions of desired attributes of their prospective dates. In the two descriptive

segments (self-description and description of the desired other) Cariocas make use of many more attributes as compared to New Yorkers (474 x 366). They describe in depth the characteristics of their ideal partners: Carioca males – 252 attributes, Carioca females – 222 attributes, New York males – 153 attributes and New York females – 213 attributes. It is also interesting to note that while carioca males are more detailed in their descriptions as compared to Carioca females, the New York corpus presents reversed results: females include in their descriptions more attributes in all three categories, *i.e.*, physical, personality and mental, as compared to their male counterparts.

Cariocas in the corpus are more straightforward while soliciting responses (Move 5), as compared to New Yorkers.

Table 23 – Move 5: distribution of strategies



The Carioca male corpus displays three direct requests and one challenge for response e.g. *‘Pq não tentarmos? Aproveite que o homem simpático que vos fala está inteiramente disponível para você’*.<sup>9</sup>

Table 24 – M5 tokens – Carioca males

Direct requests	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Se vc quiser, fprietoARROUBAopenlink. O resto é o de sempre.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Se você também pensa assim, por que não me escrever? Bem...guardo você.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Temos já de forma virtual muito em comum. Guardo seu contato..</i></li> </ol>
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The Carioca female corpus also includes two direct requests and, interestingly enough, one ‘negative’ direct request that restricts the possibility of contact e.g., *‘Estou aqui! \*Mas não me enrole’!!! MENTIROsos E FINGIDOS --- Acesso negado, não me aborreçam!!!*

Table 25 – M5 tokens – Carioca females

Direct requests	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Me escreva. Se você for alguém muito especial que realmente deseje ser meu Par no Bem Viver, chega mais.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Entre em contato pelo katitapires do rroty ½. Vamos conversar?</i></li> </ol>
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In the American corpus, three female New Yorkers solicit response while only one New York male produces a direct request.

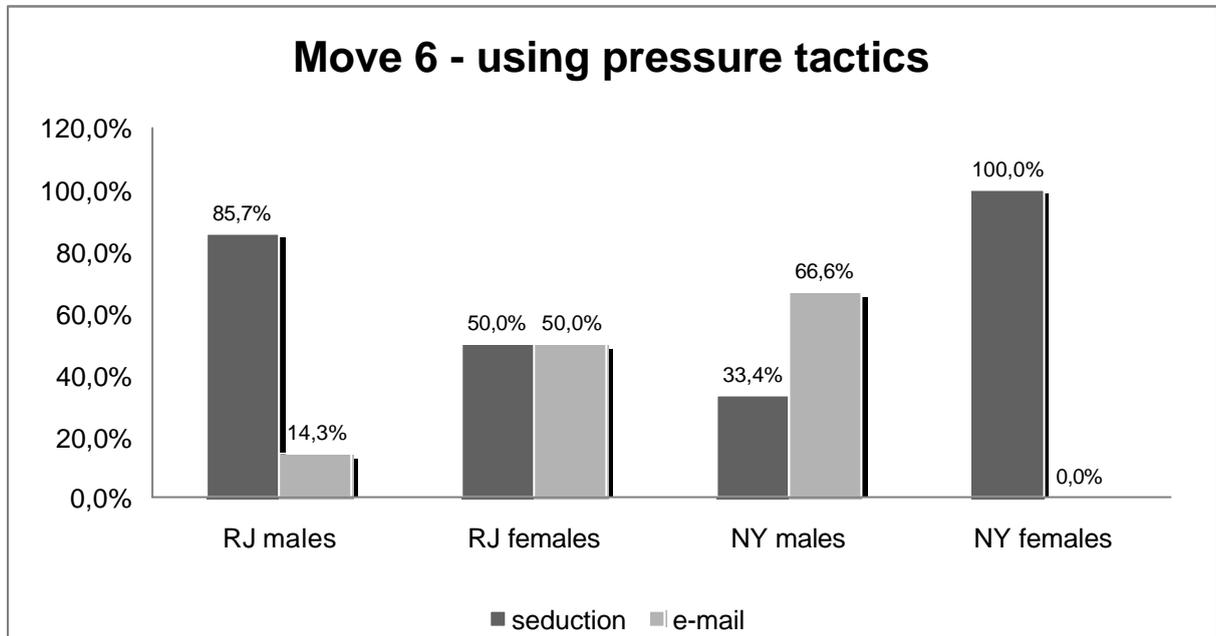
Table 26 – M5 tokens – New Yorkers

Male	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>If you’re ready to meet a great guy, write me back.</i></li> </ol>
Female	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I’m looking forward to hearing from you.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Do you exist? If you do, respond to me.</i></li> <li>3. <i>I hope that after reading this you will contact me and if not, then good luck with your search...</i></li> </ol>

<sup>9</sup> Moves 5 and 6 interact in the last statement. It is also possible to interpret the function of the sentence as that of pressure tactics.

The overall frequency distribution for Move 6 – using pressure tactics – is displayed in the table below:

Table 27 – Move 6: distribution of strategies



As for the use of pressure tactics, Carioca males are by far the ones to make more use of seduction as a means to obtain some kind of response from female members (one negative and five positive remarks). One Brazilian male even offered his personal e-mail address to make sure he would get some kind of response<sup>10</sup>. On the other hand, only one New York male exerts pressure, in a very subtle way, while soliciting response by revealing his name and adding the time expression *'for now'*.

<sup>10</sup> E-mail messages are exchanged via the dating site. Personal e-mail addresses are not provided in any of the fields of questionnaires posted on the site.

Table 28 – M6 tokens – Pressure tactics – Carioca x New York males

Cariocas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>No amor, um ritual de sempre e no corpo um campo de prazer, sem peias, sem limites...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Ah... e por último que moremos próximo para poder viabilizar tudo isto!!! Se vc quiser... fprietoARROUBAopenlink. O resto é o de sempre.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Já descobri que pessoas que só gostam de gêneros musicais como: sertanejo, pagode, funk farofeiro, chorumelas do Tchã/SPC e etc... estão fora da minha área de atuação. (negative force tactic)</i></li> <li>4. <i>Que goste de curtir um bom filme agarradinha, que tenha aquela atração de pele...</i></li> <li>5. <i>Gostaria de encontrar você para dividir momentos.</i></li> <li>6. <i>Aproveite que o homem simpático que vos fala está inteiramente disponível para você.</i></li> </ol>
New Yorkers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Write me back. Bye for now, Christopher.</i></li> </ol>

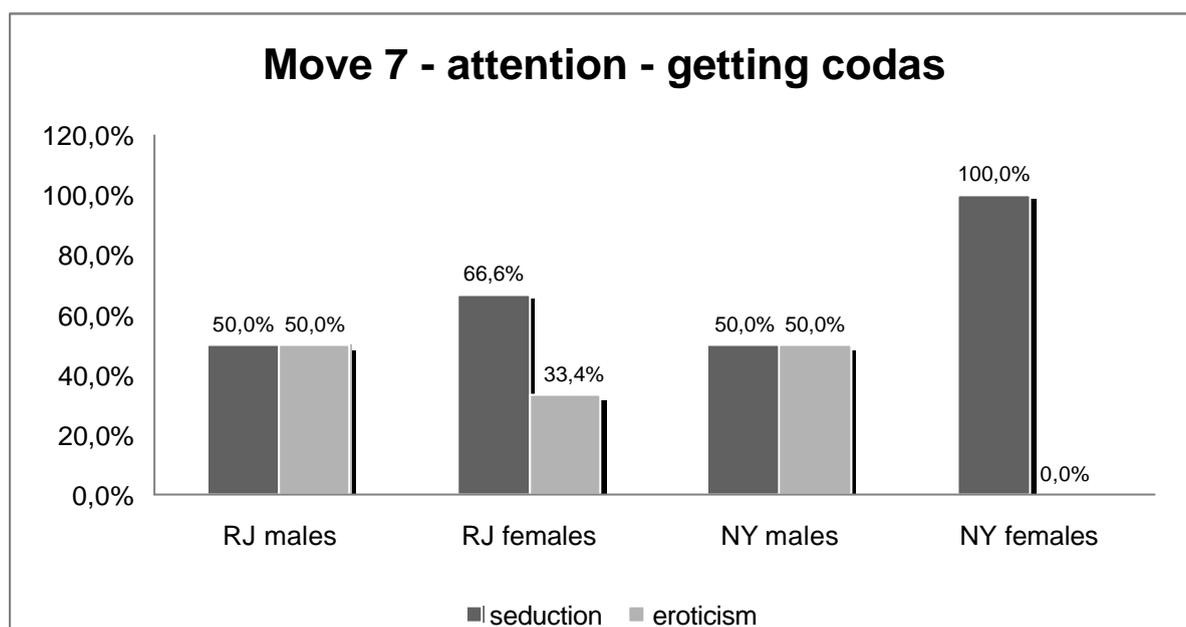
Curiously as it may seem, New York and Carioca females are at a par with regard to Move 6. Each group produces two instances of pressure tactics. And, furthermore, what seems even more amazing, one positive and one negative comment!

Table 29 – M6 tokens – Pressure tactics – Carioca x New York females

Cariocas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Um terno e longo abraço feito de alegria e festa!</i></li> <li>2. <i>NÃO ENROLE. (negative force tactic)</i></li> </ol>
New Yorkers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I'm just a mouse click away.</i></li> <li>2. <i>If my star sign matters to you, you're not the man for me! (negative force tactic)</i></li> </ol>

The last move *i.e.*, attention-getting codas, is only found in fourteen out of forty profiles. Table 30, below, displays the overall frequency distribution for Move 7.

Table 30 – Move 7: distribution of strategies



In the Carioca corpus segments, there are six codas produced by males and four by females. The closing sentences of three male profile descriptions are marked by appeals to either seduction or romanticism, whereas most females resort to essentially romantic remarks.

The same does not apply to the four codas produced by New Yorkers. Only one female and two male profilers close with romantic and somewhat utilitarian remarks, and one male profile writer makes use of eroticism: *Because better than the sexual organ is our brain... So, we must stimulate it...* (cf. Tables 31 and 32).

Table 31 – M7 tokens – Attention-getting codas – Males

Cariocas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Até o inesperado e onde a paixão chegue de repente.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Esse monte de blá, blá, blá, só serve como referência; é essencial uma conversa ao vivo e a core: olho no olho.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Que seja compreensiva e amiga para ser para sempre a minha companheira ideal...</i></li> <li>4. <i>Mais do que beleza valorizo a simpatia e a inteligência.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Vamos mergulhar juntos no azul profundo dos oceanos!</i></li> <li>6. <i>Bom é isto, eu só queria te dizer uma coisa: quero estar com vc, juntinho em um final de tarde na praia!!!</i></li> </ol>
New Yorkers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Because better than the sexual organ is our brain... So, we must stimulate it...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Having said this, being able to attract and communicate should do the trick; the rest we can accomplish together...</i></li> <li>3. <i>Give and take is the way, the only way.</i></li> </ol>

Table 32 – M7 tokens – Attention-getting codas – Females

Cariocas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Livre para amar, sem comprometimento com o passado...</i></li> <li>2. <i>Não procuro um super-homem, apenas alguém de bem com a vida.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Espero um gentleman para dar todo o amor que existe em meu coração.</i></li> <li>4. <i>Cheiros e beijos.</i></li> </ol>
New Yorkers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>I need someone to chill me out and bring out the best in me.</i></li> </ol>

Curious as it may seem, males in the Carioca corpus approach online eroticism in a more reserved manner while writing their descriptions. One of the possible reasons for this is the assumption that online dating is still viewed with skepticism and suspicion by most *Cariocas*<sup>11</sup> and as such, site members may show some hesitation toward blatantly writing about their thoughts and intentions.

#### 4.2.2.3 Move distribution

Another interesting aspect that deserves attention is where individual moves occurred relative to each other in the subgenre of dating site descriptions. Although the fields that require elaboration by members are sequentially ordered: 1. a nick or holder, 2. an introduction, functioning as an attention getting strategy, 3. a personal presentation, 4. a body description and, finally, 5. a description of who they are looking for, some moves are either differently placed, repeated or even embedded in others.

The location of three of the moves (M1, M2 and M4) is quite predictable. Although certain information on attributes of the self and of the desired other (M2 and M4) may be found scattered and embedded in other moves, for example, M5 and M7, they are also present

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<sup>11</sup> This remark results from informal enquiries among friends and acquaintances. There is no scientific evidence from surveys that confirms my hypothesis. Ellison, Heino & Gibbs (2006) provide empirical support on how online participants mediate the tension between impression management pressures and the desire to present an authentic sense of self through tactics that reflect their "ideal self" and establish the veracity of their identity claims and intentions. However, no cross-cultural comparison was carried out to offer insight into the fuzzy and intricate way in which "honesty" is enacted online.

in their respective sections, immediately following one another (*cf.* note that M3 - enclosing photos - is optional and pictures are posted on the left upper side of the profile page, thus not included within the space for description writing).

Moves 5 and 6 are the most flexible. They occur and, at times, co-occur, with nearly equal frequency in the beginning, middle and end of descriptions.

Move 7, attention-getting codas, is the one that is most ignored by profilers (3 instances in the Brazilian Corpus Segment and 2 in the American profiles). Instances of attention-getting strategies that would normally function as codas co-occur with other previous moves in the texts.

Based on the above mentioned results, certain observations can be made about how moves are used within the subgenre. First, corpus tokens confirm that most moves identified and described by Bhatia (1993, 2004) are obligatory in the general structure with the relevant adaptations (*cf.* Chapter 4.2.2). Secondly, Bhatia's Move 7 – ending politely, which underwent adjustments due to the genre under consideration, seems to be merely optional in online dating profiles. Move 2 – introducing the offer and M3 – offering incentives, as previously discussed, collapsed in a single move category. This can be accounted for by the fact that since the *ambience* of dating sites is inherently filled with seduction and desire, whenever one describes the self he is inevitably offering incentives and encouragement for action by means of persuasive language, either sensual or humorous, to meet the overall goal of desire-arousal and a final achievement.

## 5. CULTURE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE

Research on culture and gender speech variation in sociolinguistics (*cf.* Hall, 1986; Godard, 1987; Howitt *et al.*, 1989; Talbot, 1998; Tannen, 1995; Holmes, 1998; Freedman, 2003; Rowe-Finkbeiner, 2004) has taken two differing but complementary directions, namely, showing the extent of speech variation among men and women in different cultures, and identifying and analyzing the linguistically distinctive forms by which both genders express the self and interpersonal perceptions in their own cultures. Capitalizing on the study of the language of eighty (80) descriptive segments of forty (40) Brazilian and American online dating questionnaires posted on Match.com, Yahoo!, one of the aims of the present work is to investigate language variation between men and women, targeting at the word class of adjectives, as well as examples of hedging (*cf.* Chapter 7). For that reason, an overview of the related literature is in order so as to compile evidence for findings related to the following proposed inquiries (*cf.* Chapter 1.5):

- Do women make more use of affective force-enhancement resources than men?
- Are there culture-oriented differences with regard to frequency in the use of graduation resources?
- Are there gender-marked differences with regard to variety and frequency in the use of attributes? For example, women being more rated on appearances (physical attributes) than men?
- Are there culture-oriented differences with regard to variety and frequency in the use of attributes?

## 5.1 Culture

Cultures are more than language, dress, and food customs. Cultural groups may share race, ethnicity, or nationality, but they also arise from cleavages of generation, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, ability and disability, political and religious affiliation, language, and gender. Two features are essential to remember about cultures: they are always changing, and they relate to the symbolic dimension of life. The symbolic dimension is the place where meanings are made and identities enacted.

Culture is multi-layered and constant in flux. What you see on the surface may mask differences below the surface. Therefore, cultural generalizations are not the whole story, and there is no substitute for building relationships and sharing experiences, coming to know others more deeply over time. As conditions change, cultural groups adapt in dynamic and sometimes unpredictable ways. Thus, no comprehensive description can ever be formulated about a particular group. Any attempt to understand a group must take the dimensions of time, space, context, and individual differences into account. Knowing the cultural norms of a given group does not predict the behavior of a member of that group, who may not conform to norms for individual or contextual reasons.

Culture is largely below the surface, influencing identities and meaning-making. It is not easy to access these symbolic levels since they are largely outside our awareness. Cultural influences and identities become important depending on context.

‘Culture’ is a topic that must be investigated in conjunction with situational variability. Needless to say, it is not my intention to review the vast body of literature on the topic. I will focus on one or two aspects that seem to be the most relevant for the present purposes.

According to Robinson (1985), culture may be defined from various perspectives. From the behaviorist point of view, “*culture consists of discrete behaviors or sets of behaviors, e.g., traditions, habits or customs, as in marriage or leisure. Culture is something which is shared*

*and observed*” (Robinson, 1985: 8). The cognitive definition “*shifts attention from the observable aspects of what is shared to what is shared “inside” the “cultural actor”*” (Robinson, *ibid.* p. 10). Culture, viewed from this angle, is a shared process. Conversely, a symbolic definition stresses the product rather than the process: “*while cognitive anthropologists focus on the mechanism for processing, i.e., the cognitive map, symbolic anthropologists focus on the product of processing, i.e., the meanings derived*” (Robinson, *ibid.*, p. 11).

Poyatos (1976: 313) sees culture as “*a complex mesh of behaviors, and of the active or static results of those behaviors.*” Culture is seen as a dynamic superorganism where language, “*one of the systems within the general framework of culture*”, is to be found (Poyatos, 1972: 64). Furthermore, the author stresses the communicative (or exchangeable) facet of culture. I quote from Poyatos (1972: 66): “*Even though in defining culture I mentioned social patterns and personality, along with those elements perceived through our senses, we must admit that the three of them originate in a biopsychological organism, that is MAN, in contact with similar organisms. We would hardly refer to Robinson Crusoe’s culture before he comes across Friday in that island, for there was no exchange of communication.*”

Poyatos’s view of culture is in fact a semiotic one. He adds that communication within culture should be viewed both from an anthroposemiotic and a zoosemiotic perspective. In other words, in addition to language as a typically anthroposemiotic system, the zoosemiotic systems in man (which he shares with other animals, *e.g.* proxemics) and what Poyatos calls *chronemics* (the use of time in a given culture) should be investigated as well. Furthermore, he suggests that we should approach signs in a triple way: semantic (meaning of signs), syntactic (association of signs) and pragmatic (origin and use of signs).

On the basis of such formulations, Poyatos (1972: 68) proposes a theory of behavior on which to base the analysis of those significant portions of cultural activity sensorially or

intellectually apprehended in signs of symbolic value. According to the author, any such portions can be analyzed as a unit (which can be divided up into smaller units or amalgamated into larger ones): a *cultureme* (cf. Poyatos, 1976: 313-314 & Forgas, 1985b). This theory bases itself on three assumptions (Poyatos, 1972: 68): (a) “any act of behavior, although a physical continuum, shows a spot after which various alternatives are possible”; (b) “no cultureme should be regarded as a minimum indivisible unit, since they are always subject to a looser, or a more critical analysis”; (c) “these analyses cannot be accurate without fully understanding the **cultural** and **situational** context” [emphasis mine].

The analysis of a culture through its culturemes consists of several phases or stages: “*a progressive analysis is carried out from a broader view of culture to an exhaustive and minute study of features*” (Poyatos, 1976: 314). I will not go into detail about the scheme because I do not intend to extend the present research to such a deep level. This would lead us too far out of the proposed scope of this project.

Our knowledge is socially structured and transmitted from the first day of our life, is colored by the values, motivations and norms of our social environment in adulthood, and ideas, knowledge and representations are created and recreated at the social as well as individual level. Societies, as social gatherings of individuals are engaged in the creation, processing and definition of knowledge. Our internal cognitive processing system is in fact a ‘mechanism’ that has been shaped through an ‘archimechanism’ that has filtered our impressions in the first place.

The process of ordering the environment in terms of categories, for instance, “*is impregnated by values, culture and social representations, which goes beyond the purely analytic classification of information*” (Tajfel & Forgas, 1981: 114).

Moscovici (1981: 186) views social representations as “*phenomena that are linked with a special way of acquiring and communicating knowledge*”. In his view, social representations must be described and explained since they are essential to social cognition.

Howitt *et al.* (1989: 118-119) regard social representations as an extension of schema theory which basically tries to explain how individual experience leads to the construction and development of schemata that will affect the processing of incoming information. The authors, however, point out that schema theory overlooks the fact that schemata are in fact not created out of individual experiences since one may have a schema about people or events one has not actually had any experience with. Therefore, ‘situation representation’, while being a subjective image of the ‘situation’ in the participants’ minds, is also a sociocultural process insofar as at least some of our representations seem to be the fruit of the application of our social cognitive structure.

### 5.1.1 Cross-cultural variability

In investigating cross-cultural variability, it is common practice to tackle it by relating social situation with language choice and trying to figure out which cultural elements are important in that particular situation. Naturally, this kind of perspective must assume a comparative guise since it is only by comparing attitudes and behavior (linguistic or otherwise) that the differences stand out.

Robinson (1985: 55-72), drawing on Gumperz, Jupp & Roberts (1979) suggests that communication between people from different ethnic background breaks down mainly because of different cultural assumptions about the situation and appropriate behavior and intentions within it. Robinson reports the following case: an American teacher, presumably concerned about the slow progress a Vietnamese child is making in her class, sends a note home requesting to talk to the child’s parents. To her surprise and annoyance, it is the child’s brother

that turns up. The teacher's reaction was to think that the parents did not care, not knowing that (a) the child's father was dead and (b) in their culture it is the eldest brother (and not the mother) that takes over the responsibility of looking after the family.

Young (1982) develops an interesting thesis about the differences between Chinese and American discourse based on the notion of 'topic-comment' structure. She says (1982: 75), *"I will suggest that in such discourse tasks as explaining, justifying, and persuading, the organization of the discourse mirrors the order presented in the topic-comment utterance. The relationship of the main point to the rest of the discourse is in the order of the semantic relationship of topic to comment."*

Social situations are defined differently by different cultures. Some social situations are indeed shared by more than one culture but some others may be specific to a given community. The social situations may be similar in two cultures, but the routines associated with them may differ. For instance, Richards & Sukwiwat (1983: 115) report that in Japan they have different routines for the 'answering the phone' situation: callers rather than answerers may speak first.

Godard (1987) studied the routines regarding phone calls in France and in America. She argues that there are different norms that reflect differing cultural values attached to telephone calls as speech events. She points out that, unlike in France, in the United States (or, at least, in Philadelphia) the caller does not check the number to see whether he has reached the right house, the French caller will identify himself before asking for his intended addressee. Of course, Godard stresses that there are different types of calls and that the norms will vary slightly from one type to another.

In interpreting the differences observed, Godard (1987: 216-217) sees the French norm as a reflection of the cultural assumption that by saying 'Hello?' the answer is giving the caller an indication of her availability to be interrupted to answer the phone but not to be a

partner in conversation. The author reports that, for Schegloff (1982), there is an immediate equivalence between the 'Hello?' given by the answerer and her availability. The author concludes by saying that while it is clear that the ring of the phone followed by 'Hello?' is an instance of a summons-answer role sequence (Schegloff, 1982), the features which are specific to the role of phone callers receive different interpretations in different cultures.

According to Hall (1986), responsible for early discoveries of key cultural factors, culture is communication and communication is cultures. Since most of what is known about communication has been learned from the study of language, Hall (1986) projects some principles of language (language as it is spoken, not written, writing being a symbolization of a symbolization) into other less elaborated and specialized communication, including language. Every message can be broken down into other less elaborated and specialized communication systems. He devises a common terminology for all forms of communication, including language. Every message can be broken down into three parts: 'sets', what one perceives first, *e.g.*, words; 'isolates', the components that make up the sets, *e.g.*, sounds; and 'patterns', the way in which sets are strung together in order to give them meaning, *e.g.*, grammar and syntax.

Hall's theory (1986) predicts that culture operates on three levels: formal, informal, and technical. While one of these modes of behavior dominates, all three are present in any given situation. Some societies are predominantly formal in their behavior, and invest tradition with an enormous weight. Americans and Brazilians, for example, have emphasized the informal at the expense of the formal. The informal is made up of activities and mannerisms that were once learned, but that are done automatically. Technical behavior is fully conscious behavior. Science is largely technical. When violations of a formal mode occur, they are accompanied by a tide of emotion. The formal tends to change slowly, almost

imperceptibly. The formal, informal and technical exist in a relationship of continuous change.

With regard to change, different cultures are analogous to different species in the sense that some of them, being more adaptive than others, have a greater capacity for survival. Change is a complex circular process. It proceeds from formal to informal, to technical to new formal. Small informal adaptations are continually being made in daily life. These adaptations, when successful, eventually become technicalized as improvements, and these accumulate imperceptibly until they are suddenly acclaimed as 'break-throughs'. All change originates in the out-of-awareness nature of the informal.

Culture, according to Hall (1986), is further characterized by context (low vs. high), time (monochronism vs. polychronism) and territoriality (low vs. high). In a high-context culture, there are many contextual elements that help people to understand the rules. As a result, much is taken for granted. In a low-context culture, very little is taken for granted. While this means that more explanation is needed, it also means there is less chance of misunderstanding particularly when visitors are present. For example, Brazilian contracts tend to be short (in physical length, not time duration) as much of the information is available within the high-context Brazilian culture. American content, on the other hand, is low-context and so contracts tend to be longer in order to explain the detail (*cf.* [http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/hall\\_culture.htm](http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/hall_culture.htm)).

As for time, formal sets include days, hours, minutes, weeks, months, seasons, years and so on. The vocabulary of informal time is often identical with that of technical and formal time. The context usually tells the hearer what level of discourse is being used. Informal isolates include 'urgency', related to the impression of time passing rapidly or slowly; 'monochronism', doing one thing at a time. Western cultures vary in their focus on monochronic or polychronic time. Americans are strongly monochronic while Brazilians

seem to have a much greater polychronic tendency. Thus, a Brazilian may turn up to a meeting late and think nothing of it, much to the annoyance of an American co-worker.

Hall (1986) is also concerned about space and our relationships within it. He calls the study of such space *Proxemics*. Space is organized differently in each culture. Some people need more space in all areas. People need less or greater distances between them and others. In Latin America, for example, the interaction distance is much less than in the US (*cf.* [http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/hall\\_culture.htm](http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/hall_culture.htm)). A Brazilian who needs less space thus will stand closer to an American, inadvertently making the American uncomfortable. People cannot talk comfortably with each other unless they are very close to the distance that evokes either sexual or hostile feelings in North America.

Every living thing has a physical boundary that separates it from its external environment. There is a secondary boundary outside this physical one: the organism's territory. The act of laying claim to and defending a territory is termed 'territoriality', which is highly elaborated in humans, and greatly differentiated from culture to culture. Some people are more territorial than others with greater concern for ownership. They seek to mark out the areas which are theirs and perhaps having boundary wars with neighbors.

Territoriality, according to Hall (1986), also extends to anything that is 'mine' and ownership concerns extend to material things. Security thus becomes a subject of great concern for people with a high need for ownership. People with high territoriality, *e.g.*, Americans, tend also to be low context. People with lower territoriality, *e.g.*, Brazilians, seem to have less ownership of space and boundaries are less important to them. They will share territory and ownership with little thought. They also have less concern for material ownership and their sense of 'stealing' is less developed (this is more important for highly territorial people). People with low territoriality tend also to be high context.

In the end, Hall (1986: 107) stresses that “*culture is not only imposed upon humanity, it is humanity in a greatly expanded sense*”. Culture is the link between human beings and the means they have of interacting with others. By broadening their understanding of the forces that make up and control their lives, human beings can learn where they are and who they are. Bringing to awareness what has been taken for granted should contribute to increased self-knowledge and decreased alienation.

## 5.2 Language of gender

All institutions, organizations, and day-to-day interactions in modern society are built around fundamental differences between boys and girls, men and women, and masculine and feminine. Although English is not as grammatically gendered as Portuguese, gender pervades the language, as in the traditional use of the inclusive male pronoun “he” and the generic man in referring to both genders. Such words make females appear as exceptions.

Sexist female terms were often created in the past as mere extensions of existing male terms by adding an -ess or -ette or by using the words lady, female, or woman as noun modifiers (*e.g.*, lady doctor, woman lawyer, female engineer). Even the use of non-gendered terms like congressperson or spokesperson implies that the individual being referred to is female. The fact that women's job titles are modifications of traditional male terms reinforces the cultural belief that most occupations are still the man's domain, with the woman being an exception to the rule. There's no need to call a man a male engineer or a male doctor, because the terms doctor and engineer already imply a male occupant.

Recent research claims that gender-typed language variations in the third millennium are actually the result of power imbalances rather than inherent gender differences. For example, Talbot (1998: 49) points out that “*we need to attend to gender and not sex since we are dealing with socially acquired behavior and not biology*”. She further adds (1998: 49-50)

that the gender factor alone is too simplistic since it interacts with age, class/status and, not least, culture. Gender differences, Talbot concludes (1998: 50), “*come about because of the social roles men and women have. They depend on what spoken and written genres men and women work within, what they have access to, whether they are encouraged, expected or able to participate in public or private discourse*”. Therefore, with this new view, a one-to-one correlation of form and function (*cf.* Lakoff, 1975) is unfeasible since a single linguistic feature may function in different ways, according to the “context of the interaction”. As such, recent sociolinguistic trends propose that there should be a shift from itemization of linguistic features to an examination of those items within the dynamics of the interaction.

### 5.2.1 Early studies

Jespersen’s work, *Language: its nature, development and origin* (1922) is regarded as the first work to analyze women’s language. Talbot (1998: 36-38) reports Jespersen’s assertion that women speak more politely than men, and have smaller vocabularies. It is also claimed that women’s language differs from that of men in their use of some adjectives and adverbs. His claim may be interpreted as meaning that women use a different language than men. It is important to note that his work treats the group represented by men as the norm and women as deviant. Furthermore, his data was collected from women’s dialogs in novels written by men, rather than from authentic interactions.

Feminists have argued that because of Jespersen’s blatant prejudice against women and the limitations of his methodology, women’s language in his work should be considered as a product of the andocentric ideology. However, according to Talbot (1998: 37), the problem is not only that Jespersen’s work is stereotypical, but that these stereotypes have been accepted and perhaps are still believed by most people.

The second major study of gender and language is Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (1975). It is concerned with differences in the actual way of speaking or interactional styles of men and women. Lakoff (1975: 52-54) posits that women's speech is more polite and makes more use of a variety of "powerless" linguistic strategies such as "empty" adjectives, hedges, tag questions, and a question intonation in statements. She further suggests that, out of the wide range of adjectives used in expressing approval or admiration, for example, many are strongly marked as feminine, such as *divine, adorable, charming* ("empty adjectives"). She refers to such words as 'empty' adjectives. Lakoff (1975: 54) also maintains that "women use hedges out of fear of seeming too masculine by being assertive and saying things directly". Some of the features of what Lakoff calls "women's language" include specialized color terms, for example, *mauve*, words to mitigate the strength of a statement (hedges such as *sort of, maybe*), expressive *so* (as in *It is so adorable!*), tag questions (such as *This room is quite hot, isn't it?*, which sounds softer than *This room is quite hot.*), rising pitch in declarative statements so that they sound like questions, and avoidance of swearing and other taboo words. Lakoff (1975: 63) argues that women use these features because they are denied means of strong expression within a male-dominated society.

### 5.2.2. Second Wave feminism

Later studies on sex differences in English language have developed through arguments based on Lakoff's work (1975). The focus then shifts from linguistic levels of phonology and morphology to syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and stylistic differences (*cf.* Cameron, 1994; Holmes, 1997, 1998, 2001; Tannen, 1995). Most researchers agree on the existence of linguistic variation between man and woman. However, the parameters that indicate this variation are not agreed upon. Some advance the parameters of power and

dominance (Lakoff, 1975, Tannen, 1995), cultural difference (Cameron, 1994, Tannen, 1995), and interactional variables (Tannen, 1995, Holmes, 1997, 1998).

Holmes (1998), focusing on male power and dominance in interaction, has added different kinds of features, besides the ones proposed by Lakoff (1975) and Jespersen (1922). She posits, for instance, that men interrupt women more than women interrupt men, that men raise new topics more often, talk more in public than do women, and that they are more unpredictable and also make use of silence as a form of control. It is suggested that what had been termed “women’s language” would be more appropriately termed “powerless language”, and that, in fact, both men and women use these features in certain situations. This phenomenon has been labeled “dominance” versus “difference” approaches. Holmes (1998: 462-475) contends that:

- a. Women and men develop different patterns of language use.
- b. Women tend to focus on the affective functions of an interaction more often than men do.
- c. Women tend to use linguistic devices that stress solidarity more often than men do.
- d. Women tend to interact in ways which will maintain and increase solidarity.
- e. Women are stylistically more flexible than men.

Therefore, the *dominance approach* sees women as an oppressed group and interprets linguistic differences in women’s and men’s speech in terms of men’s dominance and women’s subordination. Researchers using this model (Lakoff, 1975; Fishman, 1980) are concerned to show how male dominance is enacted through linguistic practice. In other words, according to the dominance approach, ‘doing power’ is a way of ‘doing gender’.

Research by Maltz & Borker (1982), Jones (1990) and Coates (1993) argue that the features in women’s speech reflect not so much the point of a power imbalance between women and men but that the sexes have different norms for conversational interaction. This

second approach, the *difference model*, emphasizes the idea that women and men belong to different subcultures and that speech differences reflect gender-specific subcultures (cf. Cameron, 1994, Tannen, 1995). This ‘two-cultures’ model has been widely criticized for its failure to recognize the importance of sexual inequalities at the societal level, where men are given greater power, status and privileges as compared to women.

Holmes (1997) has preferred to adopt a mid-way position by combining elements of both the dominance and difference approaches. She claims (1997: 203) that “*sex is different from gender, in that the former is strictly biological while the latter is cultural. Hence, because of its cultural dimension gender is a complex continuum which interacts with other social dimensions such as social status, ethnicity, age and power*”.

With regard to the cultural difference parameter, Tannen (1986, 1991, 1995) argues that gender differences are parallel to cross-cultural differences. She claims that when interpreting the cultural information encoded by language, men and women rely on different subcultural norms. Female subculture uses language to build equal relationships, while male subculture uses language to build hierarchical relationships. In other words, Tannen (1986, 1991) argues that differences in language between women and men result from a misunderstanding of the intent of the other sex, and not necessarily from the dominant position of men in society. Later, in her work entitled *Talking from 9 to 5* (1995: 238-40), she observes that men's interactions tend to involve exhibitions of knowledge and skill and performances to get attention from the audience. She sums up by saying that "*men are focused on report rather than rapport*" (1995: 241). In conclusion, women tend to focus on rapport and the affective, supportive function of conversation; broadly speaking to be oriented toward the interpersonal. Men tend to focus on report and the informational function of conversation. She makes use of a variety of binary oppositions to characterize women and men's different styles of talk:

Sympathy/problem-solving

Rapport/ report

Listening/ lecturing

Private/ public

Connection/ status

Supportive/oppositional

Intimacy/independence

These binomials overlap a good deal, but they are quite revealing and may strike a chord for many people. Her distinction between rapport talk and report talk is an interesting one. It can be related to the distinction Holmes (1997) makes between affective and referential

functions of language. While Tannen's books are harshly criticized by many feminists for denying societal inequality, a theoretical shift ultimately demonstrated that these two explanations related to subcultural difference vs. social dominance are not necessarily contradictory.

Talbot (1998: 14-16) proposes that there are two ways of tackling the relationship between language and gender. One view is called the 'weak' one and contends that language simply reflects society, so that social divisions on gender grounds are reflected in patterns of language use. Women in working settings, for example, are said to be frequently subordinate in status to men, and this is reflected in their greater use of politeness strategies. According to the second perspective, a 'stronger' view, language does not just reflect gender divisions; it actually creates them. Differences in the use of politeness strategies, the asymmetrical usage of terms of address for women and men are not just reflecting society but rather create and sustain inequality. Thus, according to Talbot (1998: 14) *"the two extremes are language-as-mirror and language-as-reproductive"*.

By following research shifts and orientations over the past years, it becomes clear that the study of the relationship between language and gender has moved towards viewing language as *performative* of gender and not simply *reflective* of it. In short, people create gender through language. If people perform gender roles, it is expected that the performance will vary from one context to the next.

Thus, women's or men's language in the context within which they find themselves should not be seen as simple capitulation to dominant forms. Furthermore, women's adoption of positions of institutional status may result in the use of language styles which are characterized by a different approach to 'doing power'. Power is undeniably exercised through language, but it does not seem to be possible to describe precisely the way power may influence localized and contextualized interactions.

In the same line of thought, Holmes (1997: 203) suggests that *“a more satisfactory way of studying the linguistic realizations of gender thus involves examining the way individuals express or construct their gender identities in specific interactions in particular social contexts”*. Such an endeavor would most certainly indicate the ways language is used to contribute to the building of the ‘gendered world’ online daters construct for themselves and for the desired other.

### 5.2.3 Third Wave feminism

Third Wave feminism seeks to challenge the Second Wave's definitions of femininity, which often assumed a universal female identity and over-emphasized experiences of upper middle class white women. (cf. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third-wave\\_feminism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third-wave_feminism)). According to Freedman (2003), the roots of the Third Wave began in the mid 1980's. Feminist leaders called for a new subjectivity in feminist voice. They sought to negotiate prominent space within feminist thought for consideration of race related subjectivities. Third-wave feminism's central issues are that of race, social class and sexuality. However, they are also concerns of workplace issues such as the glass ceiling, sexual harassment, unfair maternity leave policies and respect for working mothers and mothers who decide to leave their careers to raise their children full-time.

Rowe-Finkbeiner, (2004), a third-wave author and activist, defines the feminist culture for this generation as third wave because it is an expression of having grown up with feminism. The author (2004: 116) claims that *“second-wave feminists grew up where the politics intertwined within the culture, such as the Vietnam War, civil rights, and women's rights, while the Third Wave sprang from a culture of punk-rock, hip-hop, consumerism and the Internet”*. Faludi (2007) argues that a backlash against Second Wave feminism in the 1980's has successfully re-defined feminism through its terms. She contends that Third Wave

feminism constructed the women's liberation movement as the source of many of the problems alleged to be plaguing women in the late 1980's. The author (2007: 17-18) also argues that "*many of these problems are illusory, constructed by the media without reliable evidence*". According to her, this type of backlash is a recurring historical trend since it always appears when women have made substantial gains in their efforts to obtain equal rights.

Third Wave feminist linguistics focuses on the way that words are made to mean in specific ways and function to achieve certain purposes in particular contexts (Christie, 2001). Thus, rather than discussing oppressive global social structures such as patriarchy, Third Wave feminists analyze the way that gender and conflict are managed by women at a local level (Cameron, 1998) . It is still possible to refer to structural inequality and to highlight instances of discrimination, but Third Wave feminist linguistics is more concerned with variability and resistance than on making global statements about the condition of women in relation to language use.

While a Second Wave analysis might focus on the use of the generic pronoun *he* to refer to both men and women, or the derogatory terms used to describe women such as *bitch* or *slag*, a Third Wave feminist analysis might focus on the way that within a particular context, a certain hesitation and ironic intonation might be considered to be sexist when articulating the word *chairperson* to describe a female chair. It is clear that this local focus helps women to describe practices which discriminate against them, however, Third Wave feminists find it difficult to refer to global, structural and systematic forms of discrimination. Rather than meanings being imposed on women, Third Wave feminists consider meanings to be co-constructed. Thus, within particular contexts, women and men engage in the contestation and affirmation of particular types of practices and interpretations. What something means in a particular context is the result of the actions of all of the individuals

concerned, negotiating with the institutional constraints of status and institutionalized linguistic routines.

Second Wave feminists assumed that all women were more deferent, polite, more concerned with the welfare of others and more co-operative. Third wave feminist linguistics suggests that this type of speech style is perhaps only available to a very small number of white middle class women, and even then only within very specific contexts. Holmes (1997) and Coates (1998) also call for a re-evaluation of co-operative speech styles and question whether they necessarily denote powerlessness; both argue that concern for others in speech should be valued and that women's greater use of positive politeness within the work environment leads to more productive discussions.

However, while all women are not powerless, powerlessness and deference are stereotypically associated with women and, therefore, when women speak assertively; their speech will be considered presumptuous and aggressive because they are judged against a stereotypical norm of deference. This is why many women, as Crawford (1996: 68) shows, rather than being assertive, decide to temper their speech by using politeness strategically: *“unassertive” speech, rather than being a (female) deficiency in social skills, may reflect sensitivity to the social impact of one's behavior. Tentative and indirect speech may be a pragmatic choice for women. It is more persuasive, at least when the recipient is male, less likely to lead to negative attributions about personality traits and likeability, and less likely to provoke verbal attack”*.

Therefore, rather than asserting that women are more polite or indirect than men, Third Wave feminist linguists argue that women engage in a complex process whereby they assess others' stereotypical beliefs about gender and then strategically adopt strategies which will be most likely to achieve their ends. Some of those strategies may be ones stereotypically associated with feminine language.

The linguistic work which stemmed from Second Wave feminism focused on the stereotypical speech of these same women and made generalizations about all women's language on the basis of anecdotal evidence (Spender, 1980; Lakoff, 1975). Thus, women were assumed to be oppressed in similar ways by men and by a patriarchal social system; research drew attention to the way in which women's use of language exhibited powerlessness. Lakoff (1975) and Spender (1980) characterized women's speech as hesitant, deferent and polite and suggested that elements such as tag-questions and back-channel behavior were more likely to be found in the speech of women than in men, and that men interrupted women more.

Lakoff (1975), Spender (1980) and Tannen's (1995) Second Wave feminist research assumed that women's and men's languages are necessarily different even though they often disagreed as to the cause of that difference. This focus on global gender differences has been criticized by a number of feminist linguists who have suggested that what is needed is a form of analysis which is less focused on the individual woman or man and trends of speech in the society as a whole, and more focused on the way that context and individual mutually shape the way that interaction takes place (Troemel-Ploetz, 1998; Bergvall, *et al.*, 1996; Bucholtz, 1999).

Third Wave feminist linguistics assumes that women are a heterogeneous grouping and, in fact, stresses the diversity of women's speech. For example, Eckert (2000) analyses the differences between the language use of different groups of girls in a high school in America, drawing on the categories and groupings that they themselves use, such as *jocks* and *burnouts*. Bucholtz (1999) and Henley (1995) analyze the way that Black American women's speech does not necessarily accord with the type of speech patterns described by Lakoff (1975) and Spender (1980), since there are different linguistic resources available, signaling potentially different affiliations. They stress the way in which women's language differs

according to context and factors such as class, ethnic and regional affiliation. Even the notion of the status of the variable itself is questioned. For example, Bucholtz (1999: 8) argues that in Second Wave feminism “*locally defined groupings based on ongoing activities and concerns were rarely given scholarly attention; if they were, members were assigned to large scale categories of gender, race and ethnicity and class*”. In contrast, in Third Wave feminism, these large scale categories are now questioned, so that rather than gender being seen as a stable unified variable, to be considered in addition to race or class, gender is now considered as a variable constrained and constituted by them and, in turn, defining them in the context of local conditions.

Indeed, feminist linguistics now seems to have turned away from these more established identity categories to an analysis which focuses on “*a whole set of identity features (being a manager, someone's mother, a sensible person)*” (Swann, 2002: 49). Furthermore, identities are now seen as plural and potentially conflicting even within a specific individual in a particular interaction. Third Wave feminist linguistics does not make global statements about women's language but rather focuses on a more *punctual* analysis, that is, one which can analyze the way that one's gendered identity varies from context to context. However, Swann (2002) contends that this contextual focus in relation to variables has almost invalidated the notion of the variable. She argues (2002: 48) “*if gender identity is something that is done in context, this begs the question of how an analyst is able to interpret any utterance in terms of masculinity (or working class, white, heterosexual masculinity). How does an analyst assess whether a speaker is doing gender, or another aspect of identity?*” What Swann goes on to argue is that rather than seeing Third Wave (or as she terms it, ‘Postmodern’) feminism as a simple reaction to Second Wave feminist linguistics, people need instead to see the way in which Third Wave feminism depends on early feminism. She

adds that the contextualized studies are interesting “*partly because they qualify, or complexify, or introduce counter-examples*” (Swann, 2002: 60).

Much Third Wave feminist linguistics draws on the work of Butler, particularly the notion of performativity (*cf.* Butler, 1990; 1993; 1997). Gender within this type of analysis is viewed as a verb, something which you do in interaction, rather than something which you possess (*cf.* Crawford, 1996). Gender is constructed through the repetition of gendered acts and varies according to the context. The individual chooses what sort of identity they would like to have and simply performs that role. However, it is clear that institutional and contextual constraints determine the type and form of identity and linguistic routines which an individual considers possible within an interaction.

While Second Wave feminist linguistics assumed that gender pre-existed the interaction and affected the way that the interaction developed, Third Wave feminists focus on the way that individuals bring about their gendered identity, thus seeing “gendering” as a process.

### 5.3 Gender differences in cyberspace

According to Talbot (1998: 116-117), a striking property of computer-mediated communication is the physical anonymity of the people involved in it. The channel of communication is written language on online sites; there are neither cues to an individual’s appearance nor any clear identification of their class, age, sex or ethnicity, but it is possible for the reader to make deductions on the basis of the language being used.

There have been claims (*cf.* Talbot, 1998: 118) that anonymity in computer-mediated communication is liberating and that since women make up a third of Internet users, any kind of prejudice will be neutralized. Talbot (1998: 118) also cites from Bellman, Tindimubona &

Arias (1993) that Latin American women have been reported to be more outspoken in the net equivalent of classroom debate than in the traditional kind.

It is true that computer-mediated communication presents fewer boundaries to cross-sex talk and that interaction is less risky. *“Cyberspace has been hailed as a non-hierarchical and as a gender-free zone, in which women can participate on equal terms with men”* (Talbot, 1998: 119). Does the statement really apply as far as online dating profiles are concerned? Will linguistic choices virtually reflect significant gender and culture-oriented differences in the self and the other self descriptive segments?

The social practice under consideration and its inherent communicative purpose – that of finding a heterosexual partner – in theory, do not allow for gender anonymity. The need for a gendered identity forces women and men to see themselves through the other’s eyes and to cultivate characteristics that they expect the opposite sex to want from them. As a consequence, participants’ self-esteem is caught up in appearance and desirability to others. According to the randomly compiled data, this is more true of men in relation to women since in 24 out of the total of 40 male profile forms (11 filled by New Yorkers and 13 from *Cariocas*), it is required that female participants post their photos, otherwise, they may not qualify as potential partners and communication will not be initiated. On the other hand, only 11 female participants (4 New Yorkers and 7 *Cariocas*) urge the opposite sex to post photos on their profile forms before any kind of communication channel is opened.

The “aesthetic-factor hypothesis”<sup>12</sup> finds its confirmation in the words of Coward (1984: 78): *“Most women know to their cost that appearance is perhaps the crucial way by which men form opinions of women. For that reason, feelings about self-image get mixed up with feelings about security and comfort. Self-image in this society is enmeshed with judgments about desirability. And because desirability has been elevated to being the crucial*

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<sup>12</sup> I have coined the quoted term. While examining the related literature, such term was not located.

*reason for sexual relations, it sometimes appears to women that the whole possibility of being loved and comforted hangs on how their appearance will be received*". Therefore, the way women look (at least 'seem' to look on photos) becomes vitally important in this medium: the success of being desirable and finding a date in cyberspace seems to be highly connected with visual impact.

By adopting the aesthetic-factor hypothesis, it may also be expected that while describing their ideal match, men will tend to require more overtly marked attributes realized by means of 'physical adjectives', *i.e.*, attitudinal realizations of appreciation (*cf.* Martin and White, 2005), while women will more often resort to attributes in the realm of mental skills, knowledge and social status, *i.e.*, attitudinal realizations of judgment (*cf.* Chapter 7).

In Trudgill's words (1998: 21-28), women are more status conscious and this is due to the fact that they are less secure socially and more likely to be judged on appearances than men. Men, on the other hand, are judged by what they do, so that they do not feel under pressure to use the prestige variants. They are rated socially by their occupation, their earning power, and perhaps by their own skills – in other words, by what they do. Trudgill (1998) modeled his theory on Labov's (1990) distinction between overt and covert prestige. Women, in Labov's New York City survey, liked to think they used forms associated with the prestige Standard, and tended to report that they did more often than was actually the case. This showed their desire for overt prestige. Men, on the other hand, liked to think they used the vernacular more than they actually did. They found the non-Standard forms carried another, hidden kind of status, or covert prestige. Talbot (1998: 20) argues that if it is covert prestige which motivates men to use vernacular forms, then clearly men are also being status-conscious.

Concomitantly, drawing on gender research (*cf.* Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1998; Tannen, 1995; Cameron, 1992; Coates, 1993) the frequency usage of hedges in male (American and

Brazilian) and female (American and Brazilian) descriptions will be investigated. It is alleged that women make more extensive use of politeness strategies and emotional language categorized under Martin and White's framework (2005) respectively as "graduation", and its subcategories of "force" and "focus", and "affect" (*cf.* Chapter 7.3). Hedging and boosting devices are modal or affective elements, *i.e.*, elements that modify the force of a statement, either by weakening or intensifying the focus. Hedges are used to avoid stating things categorically, to avoid sounding too dogmatic, *e.g.*, *sort of*, *rather*, *a bit*, *kind of*, *about*, among others. Tag questions are also used as hedges. Holmes (2001) argues that tags can express either 'modal' or 'affective' meanings depending on the situation. According to her classification, the role of 'modal' tags is to confirm information that is uncertain to the speaker: "*You were missing yesterday, weren't you?*". 'Affective' tags have two roles: one is an 'attenuating' tag, referred to in Chapter 6.3 as "softeners", which is used to indicate concern for the addressee to mitigate a face-threatening act: "*Shut the door, could you?*". The other is a 'facilitative' tag which is used to offer the addressee a chance to start the conversation: "*This is a nice restaurant, isn't it?*".

After counting the frequency distribution of tags in a corpus by using the above classification, Holmes (2001) reports that women and men do not significantly differ in the total usage of tags, although men are more likely to use modal tags whereas women use more facilitative tags. Finally, boosting is realized by elements named boosters or "upgraders" (*cf.* Chapter 6.3), which are devices meant to add enthusiasm and/or express intense interest and emotion, *e.g.*, *really* and *so*.

This chapter did not intend to defend or refute a given model of sociolinguistic stylistic variation among men and women. It simply purports to contribute to the interactional gender comparisons that will be made in Chapter 7.4, by attempting to investigate the way language is used by both genders from two different countries to refer to themselves and to

one another. In this particular social context of use, any significant disparity in interpersonal perception of men and women is of paramount importance for social behavior so as to corroborate the proposition made by Coates (1993: 12) that “*sociolinguistics aims not only to describe linguistic variation and the social context in which such variation occurs, but also to show how linguistic differentiation reflects social structure*”. This kind of belief may shed some light on the interaction between language and society; more specifically, on how computer-mediated communication may forge one’s identity.

## 6. ARTICULATING THE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides an account of the broad dimensions along which the Context of Situation is organised with respect to social roles and interpersonal relationships. The mapping of the interface between tenor and interpersonal metafunctions (*cf.* Chapter 2.3) is still relatively undeveloped within SFL. Accordingly, the linguistic resources by which the various modes of social evaluation are realized continue to provide a focus for research.

The following chapters provide an account of recent work within systemic-functional linguistics directed at more fully understanding the constitution of interpersonal values and thereby developing a grammar of power and solidarity. As indicated previously, much of that work has focused on resources which construe various modes of social evaluation and inter-subjective positioning (Martin, 1996; Martin & Rose, 2003 and Martin and White, 2005).

I will base my discussion on frameworks adopted by the authors mentioned above and will adopt the term *APPRAISAL* to reference this overall dimension, constituted of three broad semantic domains, *ENGAGEMENT*, *GRADUATION* and *ATTITUDE*. The three categories will be discussed, respectively, in Chapters 6.1, 6.3 and 6.2.

I will try to demonstrate that such an analysis provides insights into the distinctive features of descriptions on online dating sites in terms of rhetorical functionality. The account of descriptive textuality references all three dimensions. Within this, several sections are devoted to the interpersonal dimension (resources for construing the social roles, relationships and attitudes of interlocutors). This focus follows naturally from the concern with rhetorical potential, since interpersonal stance and positioning are fundamental to the potential of texts to influence readerships and to reinforce or inscribe social values.

It is my purpose in this research to provide an account of rhetorical potential by means of a detailed and comprehensive analysis of recurrent patterns of grammar and lexis through

application of the descriptive tools provided by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Although the textual analysis is grounded in the SFL framework, research carried out by Martin & White (2005) revealed that aspects of SFL theory were not sufficiently elaborated to map certain interpersonal distinctions which proved fundamental to the interpersonal style of descriptive expositions. Such texts were found to be highly resourceful with respect to the various propositions and proposals conveyed. These resources include heteroglossia, intertextuality and modality. Therefore, a comprehensive account of these resources is presented by Martin and White (2005) under the heading of ENGAGEMENT.

## 6.1 Engagement

The framework adopted by Martin & White (2005: 94) introduces the notion of ‘engagement’ on the basis of locutions which provide the means for the authorial voice to position itself with respect to the other voices in play in the communicative context. White (1998) and Martin & White (2005) rely heavily on Fuller’s (1998) description of the grammar of discourse negotiation. Fuller applies the same perspective more fully to describing the resources the language makes available for construing and characterising the various voices, discourses and social positions which make up the complex intertextual surface of a text. She combines this Bakhtinian perspective with certain key insights from within SFL into the way the language organises semantic relationships. She develops her grammar of discourse negotiation by means of what is termed the ‘topological’ approach introduced into SFL by Lemke (1995) and developed more fully by Martin (1992) and Matthiessen (1992). Her approach enables her to demonstrate the common functionality of a diverse range of lexicogrammatical resources, including reported speech, circumstances of role, modal verbs, comment adjuncts, apposition in the nominal group, among others. She demonstrates that

these act to locate ‘utterances’ within the text’s heteroglossic diversity and to characterize propositional content as multiply sourced.

Three different systems are engaged to differentiate projection sources. The criteria regard level of projection (idea *vs* locution), mode of projection (hypotactic *vs* paratactic styles) and discoursal function (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 443). Firstly, the content of a projection may result from an idea, *e.g.*, what was thought, understood or known, or from locution, or what was said. In the textual analysis provided by Martin & Rose (2003:44-45), projections may also quote the exact words uttered by Helena, namely, ‘paratactic projection’, when speech marks are required; or they may report the general meaning of what was said, *i.e.*, ‘hypotactic projection’. Both ideational and locution levels are graded in terms of directness (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 443).

The third criterion, discoursal function, distinguishes whether project contents are constructed as assertions or propositions. Paratactic modes are regarded as simple projections, whereas hypotactic are those projections which occur both intra- and inter-sententially. They may also occur across whole texts and text phases (Martin & Rose, 2003:45). The projecting sentence is a verbal process of ‘saying’, while the projected sentence stands for what ‘is said’ (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 445). These authors further comment on the nature of the projected clause: “*What is the nature of the projected clause? The projected clause here stands for a ‘wording’: that is, the phenomenon it represents is a lexicogrammatical one*” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 447). They also present an extensive list of verbs used in projecting sentences to introduce citations. ‘Say’ is the most general in meaning, however, other verbs with more specific meanings are used such as ‘announce’, ‘indicate’, ‘observe’; verbs of questioning such as ‘ask’ and ‘order’; and verbs with circumstantial function such as ‘answer’, ‘protest’, ‘interrupt’, ‘insist’ Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 448).

### 6.1.1 Heteroglossia

Halliday (1986) and Lemke (1992) argue that all communities operate with multiple, sometimes convergent, sometimes divergent, social realities or world views and that this process of convergence/divergence will be reflected textually. As Lemke claims (1992: 83),

*There are multiple social semiotic realities because all social communities are heterogeneous: there are multiple practices and systems of interrelated practices that do not agree. According to different semiotic codes of construal, there are always alternative ways to interpret what the “present context” is, and there are different patterns of redundancies between contexts and the actions deemed appropriate or meaningful in those contexts.*

Texts directly address or at least implicitly acknowledge a certain array of more or less convergent and divergent socio-semiotic realities. Thus, this is what Bakhtin (1986) terms ‘heteroglossic’ texts. They address those alternative realities as expressed in previous texts and what is expected to be realized in subsequent texts. As a consequence, every meaning within a text occurs in a social context where a number of alternative or contrary meanings are constructed, and this derives its social meaning and significance from the relationships of divergence or convergence into which it enters with those alternative meanings. As Lemke avers (1992: 85),

*A text is dialogical in the sense that the intertextual contextualization of its meaning includes or is likely to include intertexts from divergent social viewpoints. Lexical choices are always made against the background of their history of use in the community, they carry the*

*'freight' of their associations with them, and a text must often struggle to appropriate another's word to make it its own.*

The notion of heteroglossia is also reflected in Foucault's account of intertextuality. This may be seen when Foucault (1972: 98) argues that "*there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others*".

Under the heteroglossic perspective, rather than necessarily reflecting the speaker's state of knowledge, profiler's individual attitudes may be additionally or alternatively interpreted as signalling that the meanings at stake are subject to heteroglossic negotiation. This may have no connection at all with doubt or vagueness, being used, instead, to acknowledge the contentiousness of a particular proposition, the willingness of the speaker to negotiate with other site subscribers of the opposite sex.

The heteroglossic view highlights one feature which often acts to separate the written from the spoken. In the context of many spoken texts, all interactants are present for the act of communication, *i.e.*, the speaker addresses an actual individual or group of individuals who are often in a position to respond immediately to what is being said. The speaker/audience relationship, therefore, is dynamic and may involve immediate feedback and active renegotiation of speaker positioning in response to that feedback.

In the case of written texts of the type found on dating sites, however, a precisely defined audience is not involved. Rather, the writer of dating site ads anticipates a range of different audiences or readerships that are potential or projected rather than actual or present. These various projected readerships are expected to differ in their responses to the text according to differences in their own heteroglossic positioning, and the writer may choose to include meanings within the text which anticipate and, therefore, engage with some or all of those anticipated responses. Of course, while these texts acknowledge the possibility of heteroglossic divergence, they nevertheless typically act to establish one position as given,

agreed upon and natural, *i.e.*, the intentional presence as a subscriber, thereby establishing for the text a reading position of interconnected assumptions and evaluations.

### 6.1.2 Intertextuality and dialogism

Two closely related notions are fundamental to the investigation proposed in this study: intertextuality and dialogism. The notion of intertextuality encompasses the view that any text necessarily, assumes, references, and construes past texts. Under the notion of dialogism, interwoven with that of ‘intertextuality’, individual utterances in texts are seen to derive their meaning and acquire ideological contours by the establishment of relationships with the set of more or less divergent utterances operational in the culture. By this, Bakhtin (1986) stresses that intertextual relationships are not confined to actual texts. Rather, utterances enter into heteroglossic relationships with alternative utterances operational in the socio-cultural setting, not simply because they have been expressed in some other actual text, but because they *might* have been or *might be* expressed. The writer both reviews what has been said elsewhere but reviews what may be said, especially in response to her/his own utterances:

*...all real and integral understanding is actively responsive, and constitutes nothing other than the initial preparatory stage of a response (in whatever form it may be actualized). And the speaker himself is oriented precisely toward such an actively responsive understanding. He does not expect passive understanding that, so to speak, only duplicates his own idea in someone else's mind. Rather, he expects response, agreement, sympathy, objection, execution, and so forth (various speech genres presuppose various integral orientations and speech plans on the part of the speakers or writers). The desire to*

*make one's speech understood is only an abstract aspect of the speaker's concrete and total speech plan. Moreover, any speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. He is not, after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe. And he presupposes not only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances—his own and others'—with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another (builds on them, polemicizes with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener). Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances. (Bakhtin, 1986: 69)*

Bakhtin (1986: 67) also stresses that listeners are an essential and active component of the communicative act. He argues that language theories should not downgrade the listener to the role of passive observer and assume that communication can be understood as a relationship between the speaker and their content or message. Thus he warns against theoretical formulations which assume that the utterance is appropriate to the content of the uttered thought and to the person who is realizing the utterance.

A more general contribution by Bakhtin in terms of the notions of textuality, genre and rhetorical potential may be considered fundamental here. Bakhtin (1986: 63) insists that all linguistic phenomena can only be understood, explained and characterized in the context of the specific genre in which it operates:

*A clear idea of the nature of the utterance in general and of the peculiarities of the various types of utterances (primary and secondary), that is, of various speech genres, is necessary, we think, for research in any special [linguistic] area. To ignore the nature of the utterance or to fail to consider the peculiarities of generic*

*subcategories of speech in any area of linguistic study leads to perfunctoriness and excessive abstractness, distorts the historicity of the research, and weakens the link between language and life. After all, language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances as well. The utterance is an exceptionally important node of problems.*

Bakhtin's view of genre (or speech genre) as determining and being determined by social conditions parallels that developed under Martin's theory of genre and a stratified context of situation. Thus, for Bakhtin (1986: 60), every text reflects the "*specific conditions and goals of the area of human activity in which it operates, not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure*". All three of these aspects – thematic content, style and compositional structure – are inseparably linked to the whole of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication.

Chapter 7 of this thesis develops an account of textual organisation by reference to a detailed analysis of attributes and thereby to discover the rhetorical purposes which that organisation might serve. As a consequence, the analysis has attempted to discover several key patterns of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings which are regarded as fundamental to the overall mapping potential of online profile descriptions.

As previously mentioned, this analytical account has been developed within the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as formulated by Halliday (1985, 1994), Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Matthiessen (1995), and further developed by Martin & Rose (2003) and Martin & White (2005). It relies substantially on recent work within SFL directed towards developing a genre-focussed model of textual organisation and

towards developing a more comprehensive and integrated model of the way texts construe authorial attitude and perspective.

This chapter has partially demonstrated that the linguistic issues raised by the textuality of the descriptive expositions, *i.e.*, profile descriptions, traverse general theoretical domains. These include the SFL concepts of register and social context, the grammar of evaluation and inter-subjective positioning, lexical relations and textual cohesion/coherence, intertextuality and the social construction of discourse, and, finally, modelling and classifying the genre under discussion (*cf.* Chapters 3 & 4).

### 6.1.3 Modality

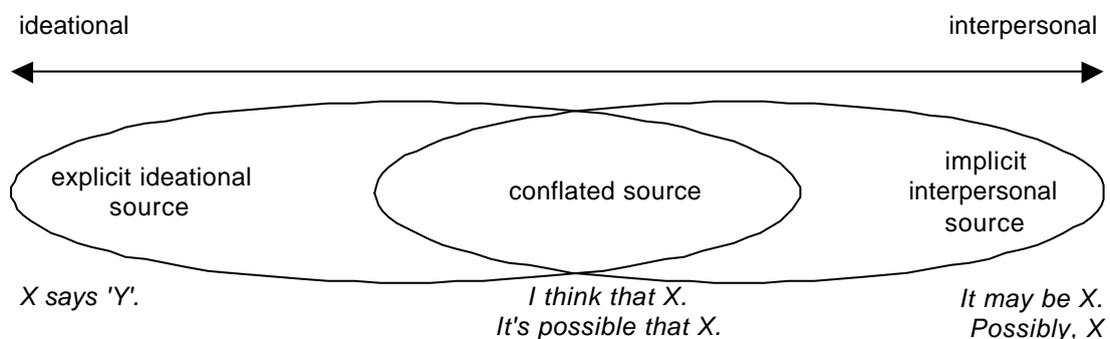
Values of modality as well as ‘counterexpectancy markers’, including conjunctions and continuatives (*cf.* Martin & Rose, 2003: 51-54), make explicit the authorial role as a source of one of the intertextual strands which constitute the text. This role stems from the subjectivity of modal values. To modalize propositional content is to re-interpret it in terms of inter-subjective position. However, as Fuller (1998: 186) claims, the authorial role may be even more explicitly represented through interpersonal metaphors of probability exemplified by ‘I think/suppose/guess’. The key point here is that such metaphors operate at two stratal levels – at both the level of the lexicogrammar and the discourse semantics. At the discourse semantic level, the meanings are interpersonal – coding an inter-subjective value of probability, as Halliday’s analysis (1994) of the tagging behavior of such structures indicates: tags target the Subject of the projected clause, not the projecting clause, indicating that modal responsibility is assigned to the mood element of the projected clause, not the projecting Sensor, *e.g.*, ‘I think he’s left already, hasn’t he’. At the lexico-grammatical level, in contrast, such structures exploit the ideational metafunction to make their meanings. The meanings are construed in terms of experiential mental processes which project the propositional content.

By this mechanism, the authorial role is explicitly represented in the text as the *Senser* who does the projecting. The intertextual role of the authorial voice as source is foregrounded.

Modal structures not only introduce the authorial voice more explicitly into the text, but also evoke the possibility of alternative voices. The voice describes the self, for example, and simultaneously evokes voices that make additional statements with respect to himself/herself. Values of positive and negative modality thus act to introduce not only author but also audience into the text.

Fuller’s account not only enables her to locate both attribution and probability within the semantics of discourse negotiation, but to precisely map the semantics of individual items. She argues for a topological cline along which values of attribution and probability may be located. That topology is set out below based on Fuller’s scheme (1998: 188).

Figure 6 – Fuller’s topology of ideational and interpersonal sourcing



Martin and Rose (2003: 50) argue that “*modality, like polarity, acknowledges alternative voices around a suggestion or claim. Unlike polarity, it doesn’t take these voices on and deny them; rather it opens a space of negotiation, in which different points of view can circulate around an issue, a space perhaps for mediation and possible reconciliation.*”

Various resources of dialogistic positioning assigned to the category of engagement are found in the corpus of online profiles. Some examples include meanings which, in many

ways, construe for the text a heteroglossic backdrop of prior utterances, alternative or conforming viewpoints and anticipated responses.

**a. Proclaim** - by representing the proposition as valid, plausible, generally agreed, reliable etc.:

*Aparento bem menos idade do que tenho.*

*Sou de uma época em que o mais importante não é ficar, mas sim gostar.*

*Mais do que a beleza, valorizo mais a simpatia e a inteligência.*

*Of course, we all want the sexiest, cutest, smartest, etc., but in the end it's all about chemistry...*

**b. Disclaim** - by rejecting some contrary position:

*Me visto de forma esportiva com sobriedade, **embora às vezes** curta com naturalidade um traje a rigor “comme Il faut”.*

*E, como ninguém é de ferro, **não tenho muita paciência** com mulheres que **não sabem** curtir as “pequenas imperfeições” próprias de toda pessoa que já passou da fase “sarada” da adolescência.*

***Não sou muito vaidoso, mas cuidadoso** com meu corpo e minha saúde.*

***Apesar da idade**, em bom estado de conservação.*

***Às vezes** um pouco turrão, **mas não tenho** problemas em me desculpar.*

***Não quero** dividir teto, **mas dividir** tudo mais.*

***Não posso dizer** que sou bonito, mas acho que o conjunto agrada.*

*A minha pele é branca, **porém normalmente** bronzeada.*

*...**mas não sou nenhum** “TRIBUFU”*

*Sou baixinha, **mas ainda dourada** do verão.*

***Não tenho** a vaidade de parecer um galã de novela.*

***Não tenho** barriga, **pois** faço 600 abdominais todo dia antes do banho.*

***Não procuro** super-homem...*

***Não sou** gorda nem magra, **mas** acho que tenho lá meus encantos...*

***Não sou** uma pessoa bitolada em malhação, **portanto não** sou sarada, **mas** acho que estou bem, obrigada...*

***I don't expect** the perfect match to live right down my street or even in my own state.*

*...all about working hard **but still** finding time for my personal projects*

**c. Attribute** - by representing propositions as grounded in the subjectivity of an external voice:

***Algumas pessoas dizem** que aparento ter menos de 30 anos.*

***Dizem** que tenho as pernas bonitas.*

*...pernas bonitas, **dito por** pessoas amigas.*

...quase não tenho pelos no corpo e **elogiam muito** o bumbum☺

**Dizem** que sou bonita... **melhor** do que ser só simpática...rs

**Os amigos dizem** que tenho presença, sorriso largo...

**Perhaps you are wondering why I am here, given that I am an attractive, single (albeit father of one), intelligent, wealthy and generally humble ( J ) catch.**

**Dark hair, slim body, brown eyes and lovely dimples (so I'm told...)**

**d. Entertain** - by explicitly presenting the proposition as grounded in its own contingent, individual subjectivity:

*Não posso dizer que sou bonito, **mas acho** que o conjunto agrada.*

*Sou um homem maduro, mas ainda no ponto.*

*Olha, sou um Homem Interessante, **beleza é muito subjetivo...***

*Gosto de mulheres bem humoradas, extrovertidas e sensuais.*

*Me considero uma pessoa alegre, madura, equilibrada e cheia de garra.*

*Considero-me uma mulher de carácter, responsável,...*

*Tenho a linha de conduta de não fazer aos outros, o que não gosto que façam comigo.*

*...**acho que tenho** lá meus encantos...*

*Acho também que aparento menos idade do que tenho.*

*Estou mais para escultura renascentista.*

*I am exceptionally selective in terms of a woman **I could** like, love, marry and raise a family with.*

*I consider myself a smart, attractive woman...*

*I am in shape and a little above average **I guess.***

*My body is like a Jennifer Lopez (JLo), very curvy and feminine.*

*You'll probably be pretty easygoing, friendly...*

## 6.2 Attitude

Systemic Functional Linguistics is directed towards explaining language as a mode of social action. Its theoretical formulations are organised so as to explain linguistic phenomena by reference to their use. It assumes that both the language and the social context in which language operates are systems of meaning and construes the relationship between the two as one of realisation. Language realizes social context (termed 'context of situation') but equally

acts to construe social context. That is to say, the social context of any communicative exchange is substantially constituted by that communication.

From this perspective, socially significant shifts in contextual configurations are understood to reweigh the probabilities of certain semantic and hence lexico-grammatical options being taken up. In other words, a register can be understood as a reweighing of the probabilities in favor of certain meanings and against others.

The above view will prove vital for characterizing the distinctive functionality of the language of self-promotion. I will argue that the language of evaluation here is distinctively marked by a set of semantic preferences that reweigh and amplify the semantics of appraisal and hence lexico-grammatical probabilities.

ATTITUDE, in the present research, covers a semantic space in which the language characterizes phenomena in either negative or positive terms. It includes values of emotional response (AFFECT), values by which human behaviour is socially assessed (JUDGEMENT) and values which address the aesthetic qualities of objects and entities (APPRECIATION).

According to Martin & Rose (2003) and Martin & White (2005), there is a wide range of resources to express attitudes, to amplify them and to attribute them to sources or voices. These same authors identify three types of attitude and their corresponding discursal resources: expressing emotions through **affect** resources, judging character through **judgment** resources and valuing the worth of things through **appreciation** resources. All three appraisal options are further categorized semantically as positive or negative, and direct or implicit. The three dimensions of evaluation – JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION and AFFECT – are grouped together under the heading of ATTITUDE.

### 6.2.1. Affect: evaluating emotional responses

AFFECT is concerned with emotional response and disposition and is typically realised through mental processes of reaction (*This pleases me, I hate forró, etc*) and through attributive relationals of AFFECT (*I'm kind of sad, I'm happy, I'm proud of my looks, etc.*) Martin's approach is holistic and culture specific, in contrast with the universalistic orientation of writers such as Wierzbicka (1986), who tend to focus on a single emotion and attempt to generalize across languages and cultures in order to discover universal semantic primitives.

In Martin and White's framework (2005), several axes are organized along the semantics of emotion. Feelings are typically construed as either positive (enjoyable, to be welcomed) or negative (unwanted, unenjoyable, to be avoided):

- positive AFFECT – *the boy was happy*
- negative AFFECT – *the boy was sad*

Emotions are also realized either as a surge of feeling (embodied in some paralinguistic or extralinguistic manifestation) or more prosodically as a mental state or predisposition:

- behavioural surge – *the boy laughed*
- mental disposition – *the boy liked the present/he felt happy*

Emotions are also construed as reacting to a specific stimulus or as an ongoing mood:

- reaction to other – *the present pleased the boy*
- undirected mood – *the boy was happy*

Emotions are graded along a cline from lowest to highest intensity:

- low – *the boy liked the present*
- median – *the boy loved the present*
- high – *the boy adored the present*

Emotions are further categorized along a realis versus irrealis divide. Realis values involve a reaction to a present or past stimulus – *the boy likes the present*. In contrast, irrealis involves intentions with respect to some prospective stimulus – *the boy wants the present*.

The Irrealis values are summarised below:

#### DIS/INCLINATION

- fear – (low) *wary*, (mid) *fearful*, (high) *terrorised*
- desire – *miss*, *long for*, *yearn for*

The Realis values are set out in the following:

#### UN/HAPPINESS

##### Unhappiness

- misery – (low) *down*, (median) *sad*, (high) *miserable*
- antipathy – *dislike*, *hate*, *abhor*

##### Happiness

- cheer – *cheerful*, *buoyant*, *jubilant*
- affection – *fond*, *loving*, *adoring*

#### IN/SECURITY

##### Insecurity

- disquiet – *uneasy*, *anxious*, *freaked out*
- surprise – *taken aback*, *surprise*, *astonished*

##### Security

- confidence – *together*, *confident*, *assured*
- trust – *comfortable with*, *confident in*, *trusting*

#### DIS/SATISFACTION

##### Dissatisfaction

- ennui – *bored*, *fed up*, *exasperated*
- displeasure – *cross*, *angry*, *furios*

##### Satisfaction

- interest – *curious*, *absorbed*, *engrossed*
- admiration – *satisfied*, *impressed*, *proud*

From the corpus, under consideration, certain meanings may be depicted which are fundamentally attitudinal associated to emotion. The array of lexico-grammatical choices may indicate positive views (+) or negative (-), explicitly expressed (?) or indirectly or implicitly expressed (?), throughout the emotional descriptive expositions of the profiler. Some examples from online profiles illustrate emotional response:

*Hi. I am fed up of being a workaholic! I am getting a life. Time to get out of the office.*

*Well, I will say I'm ok with my body description. I just don't know what to say. But I'm alright.*

(+?)

*I don't expect the perfect match to live right down my street... (+ ?)*

*Experiente, viajado e muito carente no momento... (- I)*

*Não gosto que pisem no meu pé. (- ?)*

*Recém-chegado ao universo "on-line dating", sem expectativas impossíveis, mas acreditando que o acaso pode se beneficiar de uma pequena dose de livre arbítrio. (+ ?)*

*Quero uma mulher atraente e linda que me cativa, que me encante... (+ I)*

*Uma onda do mar ou o oceano, sedutor, profundo, enérgico, mas suave. (metaphor)*

*Procuro por vc em cada onda que vejo. Esperarei por vc em qq oceano! (metaphor)*

*Vivo cada momento com a intensidade de quem busca e me renovo a cada dia. (+ ?)*

## 6.2.2 Judgement: evaluating behavior

The attitudinal sub-system of JUDGEMENT encompasses meanings which serve to evaluate human behavior positively and negatively by reference to a set of institutionalised norms. The social norms at risk with JUDGEMENT take the form of rules and regulations or of less precisely defined social expectations and systems of value. Thus, under JUDGEMENT behaviour may be assessed as moral or immoral, as legal or illegal, as socially acceptable or unacceptable, as normal or abnormal and so on.

Two broad categories of social sanction and social esteem are proposed. JUDGEMENTS of social sanction involve an assertion that some set of rules or regulations, more or less explicitly codified by the culture, are at issue. Those rules may be legal or moral and hence JUDGEMENTS of social sanction turn on questions of legality and morality. From the religious

perspective, breaches of social sanction will be seen as sins and in the Western Christian tradition as ‘mortal’ sins. From the legal perspective they will be seen as crimes. Thus to breach social sanction is to risk legal or religious punishment, hence the term ‘sanction’.

JUDGEMENTS of social esteem involve evaluations under which the person judged will be lowered or raised in the esteem of their community, but which do not have legal or moral implications. Thus negative values of social esteem will be seen as dysfunctional or inappropriate or to be discouraged but they will not be assessed as sins or crimes.

Social esteem is divided into the following three subcategories: normality or custom (how unusual someone is, how customary their behaviour is), capacity (how capable someone is) and tenacity (how dependable someone is, how well they are disposed emotionally or in terms of their intentionality).

White (2000) suggests that there is an underlying semantics of modulation or obligation, in that JUDGEMENT is concerned with what people should and should not do. He further argues that, at a more fine-grained level of analysis, the five sub-categories of JUDGEMENT are motivated by the five sub-categories of MODALITY: usuality, ability, inclination, probability and obligation.

The following proportions will then apply:

- normality (JUDGEMENT) is to usuality (MODALITY) what
- capacity (JUDGEMENT) is to ability (MODALITY) what
- tenacity (JUDGEMENT) is to inclination (MODALITY) what
- veracity (JUDGEMENT) is to probability (OBLIGATION) what
- propriety (JUDGEMENT) is to obligation (MODALITY).

The full system of JUDGEMENT is set out in the table below, adapted from Martin & White (2005: 53):

Table 33 – Judgement: social esteem and social sanction

<b>Social Esteem</b>	positive [admire]	negative [criticize]
<b>normality (custom)</b> <b>‘Is the person’s behavior unusual, special, customary?’</b>	standard, everyday, average...; lucky, charmed...; fashionable, avant-garde...	eccentric, odd, maverick...; unlucky, unfortunate...; dated, unfashionable ...
<b>capacity</b> <b>‘Is the person competent, capable?’</b>	skilled, clever, insightful...; athletic, strong, powerful...; sane, together...	stupid, slow, simple-minded...; clumsy, weak, uncoordinated...; insane, neurotic...
<b>tenacity (resolve)</b> <b>‘Is the person dependable, well disposed?’</b>	plucky, brave, heroic...; reliable, dependable...; indefatigable, resolute, persevering	cowardly, rash, despondent...; unreliable, undependable...; distracted, lazy, unfocussed...
<b>Social Sanction</b>	positive [praise]	negative [condemn]
<b>veracity (truth)</b> <b>‘Is the person honest?’</b>	honest, truthful, credible...; authentic, genuine...; frank, direct ...;	deceitful, dishonest...; bogus, fake...; deceptive, ...
<b>propriety (ethics)</b> <b>‘Is the person ethical, beyond reproach?’</b>	good, moral, virtuous...; law abiding, fair, just...; caring, sensitive, considerate...	bad, immoral, lascivious...; corrupt, unjust, unfair...; cruel, mean, brutal, oppressive...

The insight here is that each of the five sub-categories of JUDGEMENT involves an institutionalized evaluation of one value of MODALITY. Thus, all values of capacity, for example, involve as an element of their semantics either ability or disability and that ability or disability acquires negative or positive value according to some institutionalised set of

standards. Thus, *clever*, *smart*, *insightful*, *powerful* involve a positive assessment of ability, while *cunning* involves a negative assessment of ability. Similarly, all values of normality involve negative or positive assessments of the MODALITY value of usuality. Thus, *peculiar* and *abnormal* reference behaviors are assessed negatively on the grounds of unusuality, while the *lucky* person is one who is assessed positively on the grounds of unusuality. In contrast, meanings such as *normal* and *everyday* typically acquire (depending, of course, on reader position), positive evaluations on the grounds of usuality. The same principle applies across the other values of JUDGEMENT.

White (2000), Martin & Rose (2003) and Martin & White (2005) further distinguish between what they term ‘inscribed’ JUDGEMENT and ‘tokens’ of JUDGEMENT. Under the inscribed category, the evaluation is explicitly presented by means of a lexical item carrying the JUDGEMENT value, thus, *skilfully*, *corruptly*, *lazily*. It is possible, however, for JUDGEMENT values to be evoked rather than inscribed by what the authors label ‘tokens’ of JUDGEMENT. Under these tokens, JUDGEMENT values are triggered by superficially neutral, ideational meanings which nevertheless have the capacity in the culture to evoke judgemental responses, *i.e.*, depending upon the reader’s social/cultural/ideological reader position.

Thus, a profiler may inscribe a JUDGEMENT value of negative capacity by establishing qualities not desired in the prospective partner. Such tokens, of course, assume shared social norms. They rely upon conventionalized connections between actions and evaluations. As such, they are highly subject to reader position — each reader will interpret a text’s tokens of judgement according to their own cultural and ideological positioning. They are also subject to influence by the co-text, and an important strategy in the establishment of interpersonal positioning in a text is to stage inscribed and evoked evaluation in such a way that the reader shares the writer’s interpretations of the text’s tokens.

In the corpus under analysis, judgment evaluations indicate a view of social acceptability of the human agents, evaluations made by reference to a system of norms moral and intellectual standards. Below, examples of judgement evaluations found in the corpus are presented.

*mas não tenho problemas em me desculpar. Sou **educado e cavalheiresco, não sou grosseiro, Às vezes, um pouco turrão...***

*Procuro uma garota esportiva, **companheira** e que goste de aventuras...*

*Busco uma mulher **inteligente, sensível, delicada, verdadeira...***

*Procuro uma mulher **reflexiva, inteligente, ousada, corajosa e... independente.***

*Eu estou querendo conhecer uma pessoa **culta, alegre, extrovertida.***

*Uma pessoa **sensível, inteligente, sensual, independente, enfim, uma boa companhia em qualquer circunstância***

***I'm a hard worker and have a great job here in the States.***

***I hold strong political views and a degree in Philosophy.***

***I prefer warm, romantic women, but those who are also intelligent.***

### 6.2.3 Appreciation: evaluating physical attributes

In the present research, an adaptation of the category ‘appreciation’, proposed by Martin and Rose (2003), seemed necessary. According to Martin & White (2005), humans may also be evaluated by means of APPRECIATION, rather than JUDGEMENT, when viewed more as entities than as participants who behave, *e.g., a beautiful woman, a key figure*. Thus, the concept encompasses values which fall under the general heading of aesthetics, as well as a non-aesthetic category of ‘social valuation’ which includes meanings such as *significant* and *harmful*. APPRECIATION may be thought of as the system by which human feelings, either positive or negative, towards physical attributes of the self or desired other are institutionalized as a set of evaluations. Thus, whereas JUDGEMENT evaluates human behavior, APPRECIATION typically evaluates physical attributes (*cf.* Figure 7).

Rothery and Stenglin (2000) propose three subcategories under which appreciations may be grouped: reaction, composition and valuation. According to Rothery & Stenglin (2000: 236-239), reaction is interpersonally tuned. It describes the emotional impact of the work on the reader/listener/viewer.' Thus, under reaction, the product/process is evaluated in terms of the impact it makes or its quality. For example:

- reaction: impact: positive - *arresting, stunning, dramatic,*
- reaction: impact: negative - *dull, uninviting, monotonous,*
- reaction: quality: positive - *lovely, splendid, attractive,*
- reaction: quality: negative - *ugly, plain.*

Under composition, the product or process is evaluated according to its makeup, according to whether it conforms to various conventions of formal organisation. Composition is textually tuned. It describes the texture of a work in terms of its complexity or detail. For example:

- composition: balance: positive - *unified, symmetrical, harmonious,*
- composition: balance: negative - *unbalanced, incomplete, discordant,*
- composition: complexity: positive - *simple, intricate, precise,*
- composition: complexity: negative - *convoluted, simplistic.*

In the present research, however, the concept of 'composition' will be adapted to specify and characterize the physical make-up of online dating participants rather than texture of a written work.

Under the subcategory coined as 'valuation', the product or process is evaluated according to various social conventions. This domain is very closely tied to field in that the social valuation of one field will not be applicable or relevant in another. Thus, it is expected that the set of social values which have currency in, for example, the visual arts, might not have extensive application in the world of politics.

It seems that the concept above would not apply to the corpus under analysis since verification and validation of physical and aesthetic qualities are beyond the scope of the reading mode of online dating questionnaires. This could only be accomplished after meeting each and every one of the participants and getting to know them well. The key values for descriptive texts under consideration are simply those of physical significance or salience; whether subscribers describe themselves as *handsome, sexy, tall, hairy, bald*, etc. Therefore, in the present study, the subcategory ‘valuation’, as proposed by Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005), is canceled since it is not feasible in the ongoing analysis.

Once the communicative event of finding a partner on the Internet is the focus of attention, description of physical attributes are the most frequent and the most detailed. Examples of physical attributes present in the corpus are the following:

*Uma mulher que não tenha vergonha de si mesma, de seu corpo e do seu jeito de ser. Que seja cheirosa, linda, deliciosa em todos os sentidos.*

*Bela e elegante ... Cuidado com o corpo e saúde é um "must".*

*Quero uma mulher atraente e linda que me cativa, que me encante.*

*Beleza é fundamental!!!*

*Physically, I prefer curvy busty figures and I ADORE Brazilian women!*

*I'm quite well built, not over thin, maybe could lose a pound or two, but certainly not fat. Manly would describe me.*

*I'm good looking: 6'1", blonde, brown eyes, dark skin, nice lips.*

*I have hazel green eyes, and short wavy light brown hair (but my profile picture is old and shows my hair long), no facial hair, some body hair.*

*Muscular body-shoulders, legs, bit of an extra stomach that I'm working on.*

*I'm told I have very nice eyes, nice smile and teeth, nice dimples, nice skin, and nice legs.*

*Well, I'm 5 11, weight 205, hazel eyes, light brown hair, nice lips and more!!!*

### 6.3 Graduation

The theory of interpersonal positioning adopted in this study involves a grouping of meanings to be labelled ‘GRADUATION’. According to White (2000), the category encompasses a

semantic of graduation or scaling, either in terms of the preciseness or sharpness of focus with which an item exemplifies a valour relationship, or in terms of the interpersonal force which the speaker attaches to an utterance. These two dimensions will variously be labelled ‘FOCUS’ and ‘FORCE’. The sub-category of FOCUS is exemplified by items such as *loosely speaking, sort’v, par excellence, true friend*, and FORCE by *slightly, very, really, a bit, again and again, bloody awful, desperate bid, prices skyrocketed* etc.

The description of this semantic domain builds on previous work by Martin (1997) in the semantics of what he has termed ‘amplification’. Within AMPLIFICATION Martin distinguishes between explicit intensification and infused intensification. Explicit intensifications are grouped under three headings:

- intensity – scalable lexical items such as adverbs which grade and intensify meanings (*slightly, really, very*)
- enrich – repetition (*again and again*) and a taboo set of meanings (*fuck’n awful*)
- measure – measurements of number and extent both in substance, space and time (*small, large; light, heavy; few, many; near, far; immediately, soon*)

Infused intensification involves implicit values, where the sense of intensity is fused with an experiential value.

### 6.3.1 Force

Force includes resources which have also been analyzed under the headings ‘intensifiers’, ‘emphatics’ and ‘emphasizers’. (cf. Quirk *et al*, 1985: 590-597). Labov (1984) offers a detailed account under the heading of intensity. He describes the semantics at issue as “*at the heart of social and emotional expression*” (1984: 43). He (1984: 43-44) argues that descriptions can not be confined to the set of adverbs which code intensity directly – *very, so,*

*really* – but must include linguistic forms which are normatively devoted to logical relations and conceptual categories.

For the sake of clarity, the concept of force will include two subcategories of intensifiers: ‘upgraders’, those with positive values, and ‘downgraders’, linguistic forms with negative, downgrading meanings.

Some examples of downgraders and upgraders found in the corpus of profiles are given below.

*Sou elegante, com rosto bonito e corpo esbelto sempre bronzado, **um pouquinho neurótico** com aparência...*

*Tenho um corpo que considero normal, apesar de malhar 3 vezes por semana ainda tenho um pneuzinho, mas **plenamente em forma***

*Adoro mulheres **verdadeiramente** inteligentes, bem humoradas, belas e cultas.*

*Deus me fez um cara um tanto fraco, meio desdentado e **quase feio**. **Pele e osso simplesmente, quase sem recheio.***

*I'm seeking someone nurturing, humble, kind, respectful, Honest, articulate, artistic and active, **basically** an all around good guy with a **great sense of humor**.*

*I have a pretty face, **striking** green eyes, pretty skin, thick legs but firm and shapely.*

*I am a level headed, down to earth person who is **totally** devoted to the one I love.*

### 6.3.2 Focus

Focus covers essentially the same domain as Lakoff's category of ‘hedges’ (1973). Lakoff (1973: 471) discusses ‘hedges’ in the following terms: “*For me, some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness – words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. I will refer to such words as ‘hedges’*”. The rhetorical effect of these features varies according to whether the value is sharpening or softening. Constructions such as *a real brat, a total movie freak, a true wonder* will be categorized as “sharpeners”. “Softeners”, on the other hand, indicate a lessening of the writer's investment in the value position, *e.g., kind of crazy, somewhat shy*.

*Não sou super em nada, apenas um cara comum. Bom, talvez até seja super em alguma coisa, mas isso é você quem deve descobrir..rs*

*Sou uma pessoa meio tímida*

*Sou amante inveterado da vida*

*Nada de muito especial. Só precisa ser especial aos meus olhos.*

*Deus me fez um cara um tanto fraco, meio desdentado e quase feio.*

*I'm a work hard play hard type of person*

*Because I can be a bit intense at times, I need someone to chill me out and bring out the best in me!*

*The simple things in life are the best for me, but a bit of pampering and luxury from time to time don't hurt either. Life is about balance.*

*Fun, loving, genuine happy person, caring nature ...*

*Cuido do corpo e da mente sem exageros, meio "destelhado", mas ainda não posso ser chamado de careca ou similar...*

Figure 7, on the following page, outlines appraisal resources for evaluating the semantics of the interpersonal in online dating profiles.

## 7. ATTITUDINAL MAKE-UP OF EVALUATIVE SEGMENTS: READING MODE

The corpus of online dating ads used for this thesis motivates a further investigation of the nature and frequency of attributes used by New York and Carioca females and males in describing themselves and their desired partners. By adjusting the categories previously used in analyzing moves (*cf.* Chapter 4.2.2.2), *e.g.*, physical features, personality traits and mental attributes, to the system of meanings referred to as ‘attitude’ by Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005), attitudinal qualities construed in online dating descriptive segments in the form of adjectivals will be mapped out according to the three semantic regions covering what is traditionally referred to as emotion, ethics and aesthetics.

Attitudinal values (*cf.* Chapter 6.2 for a detailed discussion of the appraisal system) to be considered here range from the emotive dimension of meaning – ‘affect’ to attitudes toward behavior – ‘judgement’, and evaluations of purely aesthetic parameters – ‘appreciation’. This last dimension, given the corpus under consideration, encompasses assessment of the physical make-up of the self and of the desired other.

The ‘affect’ dimension is concerned with adjectivals registering positive and negative feelings/emotions on the part of the descriptor in relation to the self or the other self (*i.e.*, dispositional and reactional):

*Sou alegre, de bem com a vida...*

*...um coração adolescente cheio de desejos e surpresas...*

*Sou pura de sentimentos.*

*Busco um cavalheiro romântico... apaixonado pela vida como eu...*

*Sou uma mulher feliz e realizada.*

*Um homem... que seja parceiro e amoroso.*

*I am a fun loving person.*

*I am confident, calm and happy.*

*You are passionate...*

*Warm and affectionate...*

*I'm searching for a **true loving** lady...*

*Looking for a good-natured and **warm-hearted** woman...*

'Judgement' deals with attitudes toward behavior on three general levels: relational, social and mental. These three levels include judgements oriented to either 'social esteem' (i.e., normality, capacity, tenacity) or 'social sanction' (i.e., veracity and propriety).

***Extrovertida, simpática, carinhosa, tolerante, paciente, fiel, sincera...***

*Gostaria de encontrar alguém de **espírito jovem, bem-humorado, sincero, fiel...***

*Considero-me uma mulher **de caráter, responsável, sincera e carinhosa...***

*Gosto de homens **bem humorados, tratáveis, sinceros, discretos, atenciosos e educados...***

*Sou **politizado**, sem ser xiita, **rebelde** com causas, **obstinado** e bem **antenado**.*

*Não sou muito **vaidoso**, mas **cuidadoso** com o meu corpo e minha saúde.*

*Sou **educado** e **cavalheiresco**, não sou **grosseiro...***

*Não sou uma pessoa **bitolada em malhação...***

*Sou um sapo **honrado...** **jovial** e **saudável...***

*Um pouquinho **neurótico** com a aparência...*

*Procuro uma mulher **reflexiva, inteligente, ousada, atrevida, corajosa e independente.***

*...uma mulher **verdadeira, carinhosa, amiga, sensível, cúmplice** e principalmente **DESCOMPLICADA !!!!***

*I'm a very **caring** and **sensitive** person.*

*I consider myself a **smart, attractive** woman **with a big job...***

*I'm seeking someone **nurturing, humble, kind, respectful, honest, articulate, artistic and active...***

*I am a **level-headed, down-to-earth** person...*

***Honest, truthful, caring** and **easy-going...***

*I am **intelligent, sporty...***

***Positive professional** lady with 2 children...*

*I'm **bright, energetic...***

*...you are **kind, clever, interesting** and **interested in everything, with a sharp sense of humor.***

*Always smiling, **impulsive and daring!***

With ‘appreciation’, meanings construe personal and interpersonal evaluations of physical make-up. Such meanings are divided into ‘reactions’ produced by physical traits (*i.e.*, how they are evaluated) and ‘composition’ of bodily features (*i.e.*, how they are described). Instances of appreciation present in the corpus are the following:

*Sou elegante, com rosto bonito e corpo esbelto sempre bronzeado... malhado sem exageros...*

*Possuo um corpo firme e jovem.*

*Apesar da idade, em bom estado de conservação... meio “destelhado”, mas ainda não posso ser chamado de careca ou similares...*

*Quero uma mulher atraente e linda...*

*Meu corpo é normal. Não posso dizer que sou muito bonito,... dizem que tenho as pernas bonitas...*

*Corpo harmônico, pele macia, pernas, braços, etc. bem desenhados... pele clara com pelos loiros nos braços e coxas...ombros largos.*

*Uma mulher de estilo, cativante...*

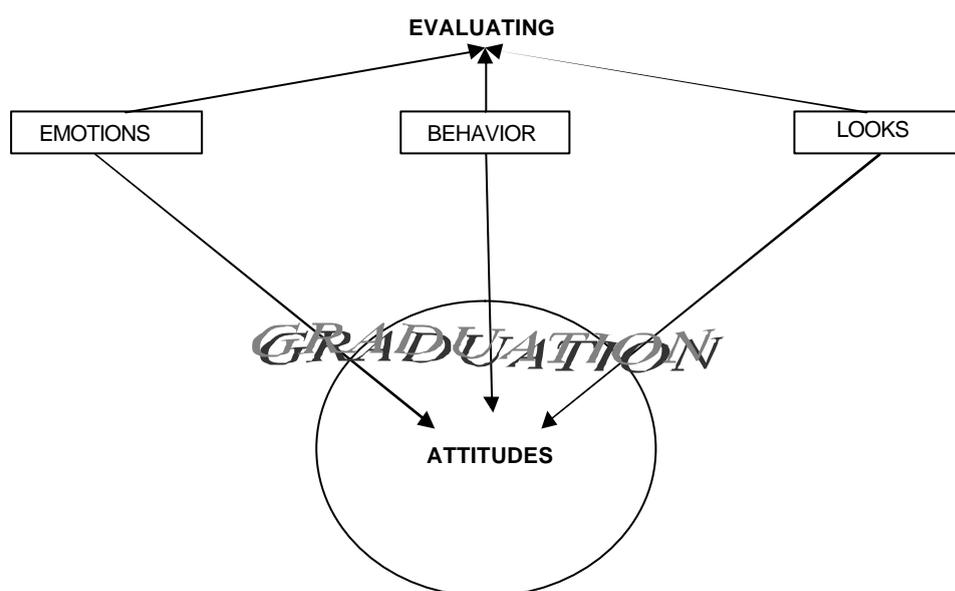
*Sou alto, sou forte, sem ser musculoso, ... mãos grandes, bem tratadas e bonitas, ...pernas grandes e musculosas, barriguinha discretíssima de quem já passou dos 30 – mesmo – ...*

*Charmosa, com um charme só dela, pode ser no olhar, na maneira de sorrir ou ajeitar o cabelo. Afinal, sensualidade e beleza (é claro) seduzem bem mais. Mas muito importante tb é ser boa amante!!!*

*Nada de ser mignon ou light. Sou grande, substancial, tipo violão. Aliás, sou toda “ãõ”!*

Figure 8, below, illustrates the scope of analysis to be applied to attributes contained in descriptive segments of online dating questionnaires.

Figure 8 – Attitudinal evaluation



In the following sections, I will first analyze the data from a predominantly qualitative perspective, and then I will present frequency tallies for attributes (*cf.* Chapters 7.1 and 7.2) and graduation resources (*cf.* Chapter 7.3) in American male/female and Brazilian male/female texts. The comparative analyses will consist of four between-group comparisons (*cf.* Chapter 7.4).

### 7.1 Evaluation of the self

After the quantification of qualifiers found in descriptions of the self by the four groups, the findings are parallel to those found in relation to strategies used in M2 and M4 in Chapter 4.2.2.2 (*cf.* Tables 30-41). Cariocas employ 239 qualifiers to describe themselves along the ‘affect’, ‘judgement’ and ‘appreciation’ parameters. The number of descriptors produced by male ( $N = 120$ ) and female ( $N = 119$ ) Cariocas is almost identical. Appreciative descriptors are the ones most frequently found ( $N = 116$ ) in the Carioca Corpus Segment. The most frequent ‘affect’ attribute among males is *romântico* ( $N = 3$ ) and among females *alegre*

( $N=4$ ). Regarding ‘judgement’, the favorite attribute among Carioca males is *sincero* ( $N=3$ ) while females describe themselves more frequently by means of the adjectives *sincera*, *simpática* and *carinhosa* ( $N=4$  for each). As for ‘appreciation’, males resort more often to the use of the descriptors *pernas bonitas*, *mãos bonitas* and *cabelos grisalhos* ( $N=3$  for each) while the female segment displays the highest frequency for 11 different descriptors: *corpo em forma*, *charmosa*, *seios médios*, *coxas grossas*, *corpo proporcional*, *pernas grossas*, *mignon*, *tipo violão*, *bronzeadada*, *cabelos compridos*, *olhos castanho mel* ( $N=2$  for each).

Among New Yorkers, profiles include a total of 205 descriptors. Gender differences are significant at this point. While males produce a total of 85 attributes, females are much more detailed in their self-descriptions by employing a total of 120 descriptors. Differently from the Carioca Corpus, ‘judgement’ descriptors are the ones most frequently found ( $N=98$ ) in the New Yorker Corpus. The most frequent ‘affect’ attribute among males and females alike is *loving* ( $N=3$  for males and  $N=4$  for females). Frequent ‘judgement’ descriptors in the NY male segment are *active* and *faithful* ( $N=3$  for each) while in the female segment, the favorite attribute is *caring* ( $N=4$ ). In the ‘appreciation’ category, *athletic* ( $N=4$ ) is the most frequently used descriptor by males and *attractive* ( $N=4$ ) by females.

Tables 34-45 below present the semantic distribution of attributes for each set of profiles. Attributes related to physical, personality and emotional traits, in general, will be subdivided into three main categories: “affect”, “judgement” and “appreciation” to encompass qualifiers that specify feelings and emotions (dispositional vs. reactional), social interaction types (social esteem vs. social sanction types), and physical make-up (reaction vs. composition).

Table 34 – Attributes of the self – Affect – Carioca males

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
jovial (2)	apaixonado (2)
alegre (2)	romântico (3)

TOTAL: 9 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

Table 35 – Attributes of the self – Affect – Carioca females

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
alegre (4)	romântica
de bem com a vida (3)	<i>coração</i> adolescente
alto astral	
pura de sentimentos	
feliz (2)	
realizada	
<i>espírito</i> adolescente	

TOTAL: 15 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

Table 36 – Attributes of the self – Affect – New York males

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
<i>emotionally stable</i>	warm
	affectionate
	romantic
	passionate
	loving (3)

TOTAL: 8 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

Table 37 – Attributes of the self – Affect – New York females

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
happy (3)	tentative <i>heart</i>
	loving (4)
	romantic
	passionate
	intense

TOTAL: 11 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

Table 38 – Attributes of the self – Judgement – Carioca males

<b>SOCIAL ESTEEM</b>	<b>SOCIAL SANCTION</b>
inteligente	honrado
culto	generoso
maduro (2)	educado
bem humorado (2)	cavalheiresco
antenado	(-) grosseiro
obstinado	sincero (3)
(-) turrão	carinhoso (2)
neurótico	compreensivo
extrovertido	discreto
cheio de garra	sensível
pé no chão	"livro aberto"
calmo (2)	(-) rebelde
espontâneo	
observador	
saudável	
atento (2)	
determinado	
dinâmico	
focado	
imperfeito	
contemporâneo	
imperfeito	
cuidadoso (2)	
curioso	
criativo	
são	
equilibrado	
<i>mente</i> arejada	
politizado	
divertido	
legal	
leal	
companheiro (2)	
amigo (2)	
agradável	
esportivo	

TOTAL: 58 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

Table 39 – Attributes of the self – Judgement – Carioca females

SOCIAL ESTEEM	SOCIAL SANCTION
extrovertida	carinhosa (4)
paciente	simpática (4)
bitolada	fiel (2)
"easy going" (2)	sincera (4)
fácil de levar	<i>mulher</i> de caráter
prática	responsável
<i>carreira</i> a pleno vapor	franca
decidida	(-) cruel
versátil	<i>mulher</i> de bem
simples	verdadeira
<i>personalidade</i> forte	sensível
bem humorada (2)	autêntica
<i>papo</i> 1000	sem vícios
leal	
meiga	
cúmplice	

TOTAL: 41 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

Table 40 – Attributes of the self – Judgement – New York males

SOCIAL ESTEEM	SOCIAL SANCTION
great <i>American guy</i>	humble
special	true <i>gentleman</i>
intelligent (2)	old fashioned <i>values</i>
wealthy	honest
busy	trusting
selective	kind
secure <i>businessman</i>	caring
active (3)	compassionate
successful	generous
<i>financially</i> secure	well-mannered
funny	
(-) clumsy	
fun (2)	
creative	
outgoing	
sociable	
nice	
faithful (3)	
loyal	
adventurous	
ambitious	
wonderful <i>attitude</i>	
wonderful <i>sense of humor</i>	
articulate	

TOTAL: 40 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

Table 41 – Attributes of the self – Judgement – New York females

<b>SOCIAL ESTEEM</b>	<b>SOCIAL SANCTION</b>
smart	kind (2)
woman with a big job	caring (4)
fun (2)	sensitive (2)
accomplished	devoted
level-headed	genuine
down-to-earth	open
shy	honest (2)
confident	
calm	
quiet	
structured	
organized	
gentle	
fun (3)	
intelligent (2)	
sporty	
busy	
adventurous	
loyal	
faithful	
optimistic	
(-) overbearing	
intuitive	
hard working (2)	
articulate	
sparkly	
bubbly	
positive	
professional	
well-traveled	
independent	
bright	
energetic	
successful	
self-motivated	
fun loving	
impulsive	
daring	
outgoing (2)	

TOTAL: 58 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

Table 42 – Attributes of the self – Appreciation – Carioca males

REACTION	COMPOSITION
bonito (2)	elegante
pernas/mãos bonitas (3)	esbelto
interessante	bronzado
(-) tribufu	harmônico
<i>corpo</i> legal	<i>pele</i> macia
<i>corpo</i> em forma	<i>ombros</i> largos
<i>corpo</i> saudável	<i>mãos</i> bem tratadas
<i>corpo</i> normal	harmonioso
	magro (2)
	(-) gordo
	alto
	forte (2)
	musculoso (2)
	<i>mãos/pernas</i> grandes (2)
	<i>pernas</i> bem desenhadas
	<i>barriguinha</i> discretíssima
	alongado
	definido
	<i>traços</i> finos
	(-) “destelhado” (= careca)
	<i>corpo</i> firme
	<i>estatura</i> mediana
	sem barriga nem pneus
	<i>cabelos</i> castanhos (2)
	<i>olhos</i> castanhos
	<i>pele</i> bronzada
	<i>pele</i> clara (2)
	<i>cabelos</i> grisalhos (3)
	<i>cabelos</i> brancos
	<i>olhos</i> verdes
	<i>peito</i> cabeludo
	moreno
	<i>cabelos</i> curtos
	<i>cabelos</i> pretos

TOTAL: 53 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

Table 43 – Attributes of the self – Appreciation – Carioca Females

<b>REACTION</b>	<b>COMPOSITION</b>
<i>corpo em forma (2)</i>	<i>seios médios (2)</i>
<i>sorriso cativante</i>	<i>coxas grossas (2)</i>
interessante	(-) baixinha
sarada	dourada
bonita	<i>corpo proporcional (2)</i>
especial	<i>corpo bem feito</i>
<i>aparência jovial</i>	<i>corpo bem cuidado</i>
<i>rosto atraente</i>	<i>pernas grossas (2)</i>
<i>sorriso largo</i>	elegante
<i>olhos felizes</i>	mignon (2)
saudável	tipo violão (2)
atraente	<i>cintura fina</i>
charmosa (2)	bronzeadada (2)
sensual	<i>pele macia</i>
boa <i>aparência</i>	<i>cabelos sedosos</i>
fofinha	magra
cheirosa	(-) gorda
<i>olhar convidativo</i>	grande
feminina	substanciosa
	<i>olhos amendoados</i>
	estilo carioca
	<i>quadril</i> largos
	<i>pernas bem feitas</i>
	<i>pele clara</i>
	<i>olhos castanhos</i>
	<i>cabelos loiros pintados</i>
	<i>cabelos castanhos</i>
	<i>cabelos compridos (2)</i>
	<i>olhos castanho mel (2)</i>
	<i>pele morena clara</i>
	<i>cabelos negros</i>
	<i>cabelos curtos</i>
	<i>cabelos loiros</i>
	<i>olhos verdes</i>
	<i>olhos azuis</i>

TOTAL: 63 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

Table 44 – Attributes of the self – Appreciation – New York males

REACTION	COMPOSITION
in shape (2)	muscular (3)
athletic <i>build</i> (4)	(-) skinny
attractive <i>facial features</i>	big
solid <i>build</i>	(-) flabby
nice <i>smile</i>	<i>very white skin</i>
attractive (2)	tall (2)
fit (2)	curly <i>hair</i>
cute looking (2)	wavy <i>hair</i>
young (2)	long <i>hair</i>
charming	brown <i>hair</i> (2)
	blue eyes
	dark eyes
	strong <i>legs</i>
	handsome
	slim

TOTAL: 37 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

Table 45 – Attributes of the self – Appreciation – New York females

REACTION	COMPOSITION
attractive (4)	firm <i>body</i> (2)
in shape (2)	soft <i>skin</i>
pretty (2)	pretty <i>skin</i> (2)
charming	thick <i>thighs</i>
average <i>person</i>	penetrating eyes
lovely <i>face</i>	silky <i>hair</i> (2)
sexy <i>look</i>	curvy <i>body</i>
feminine <i>body</i>	green eyes (2)
exotic <i>look</i>	thick <i>legs</i>
striking eyes	firm <i>legs</i>
good looking	shapely <i>legs</i>
sexy	slim (3)
good <i>shape</i>	tall
sensual	long <i>hair</i>
tactile	curly <i>hair</i>
	auburn <i>hair</i>
	light brown <i>hair</i>
	greenish eyes
	long <i>legs</i>
	blond <i>hair</i>
	dark <i>hair</i>
	brown eyes
	lovely <i>dimples</i>
	slender
	petit

TOTAL: 51 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

As mentioned before, by comparing the tables above, it becomes clear that the larger variety of attributes falls into the category ‘appreciation’ *i.e.*, physical make-up in the Rio de Janeiro corpus segment, while in the New York segment a larger number of descriptors belong to the ‘judgement’ semantic region, *i.e.*, behavioral attitudes (*cf.* Chapter 7.3 for between-group comparisons).

## 7.2 Evaluation of the desired other

The tallying of qualifiers used in descriptions of the other self yielded some very interesting and unexpected results. As was seen above, in relation to descriptions of the self, there were variations in terms of choice of attributes according to pre-established categories. Nevertheless, the grand totals were very similar, *i.e.*, RJ -  $N=239$  and NY-  $N=205$ . With regard to the number of attributes or descriptors used in describing the desired other there was a shift of emphasis on the part of Cariocas. While describing themselves they made more use of appreciative descriptors whereas New Yorkers resorted to judgement attributes. In the description of the desired other, however, Cariocas include many more judgement descriptors as compared to the number employed by New Yorkers: RJ-  $N=136$  and NY-  $N=92$ !

Tables 46-57 below show the distribution into semantic categories of attributes used to describe the other self.

Table 46 – Attributes of the other self – Affect – Carioca males

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
alegre (2)	deliciosa
de bem com a vida	romântica
	*boa amante

TOTAL: 6 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

The qualifier *boa amante* may be interpreted as both affect/reactional (= passionate while making love) or as judgement/social esteem (=skilled in lovemaking) attributes. *Deliciosa* in this context is categorized as affect/reactional rather than appreciation/reactional since, in Brazilian Portuguese, it is commonly regarded as connoting the attribute of being emotionally receptive to sexual desire.

Table 47 – Attributes of the other self – Affect – Carioca females

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
alegre ( 2)	romântico (3)
de bem com a vida	<i>amante</i> gostoso
sonhador	amoroso
<i>espírito</i> jovem	

TOTAL: 10 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

Table 48 – Attributes of the other self – Affect – New York males

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
	romantic (2)
	passionate (4)
	loving
	affectionate
	warm-hearted
	with a beautiful <i>heart</i>

TOTAL: 10 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

Table 49 – Attributes of the other self – Affect – New York females

DISPOSITIONAL	REACTIONAL
happy	romantic (2)
	loving (2)
	affectionate
	passionate (2)
	warm-hearted

TOTAL: 9 INSTANCES OF AFFECT

Table 50 – Attributes of the other self – Judgement – Carioca males

SOCIAL ESTEEM	SOCIAL SANCTION
inteligente (7)	cúmplice (3)
culta (4)	generosa
independente (2)	carinhosa (3)
extrovertida (2)	delicada
bem humorada (4)	franca
equilibrada	sincera (2 )
descomplicada (2)	verdadeira (2)
simples	autêntica
reflexiva	discreta (2)
ousada	sensível (3)
*atrevida	amável
corajosa	de bom caráter
sedutora	
bem resolvida	
boa <i>cabeça</i>	
companheira (2)	
compreensiva	
tolerante	
parceira	
amiga (4)	
simpática	
cheia de energia	
esportiva	
com senso de humor (2)	
boa amante	

TOTAL: 66 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

Negative polarity is not to be assigned to the qualifier *atrevida* above. In the context, it implies being sexually “naughty”.

Table 51 – Attributes of the other self – Judgement – Carioca females

SOCIAL ESTEEM	SOCIAL SANCTION
bem humorado (5)	carinhoso (2)
leal	educado (3)
inteligente (4)	fiel
culto	sincero (7)
paciente	tratável
compreensivo	discreto
determinado	de bom <i>caráter</i> (3)
companheiro (4)	sensível
cúmplice	trabalhador
(-) dorminhoco	franco (3)
(-) cansado	gentil
rico	atencioso
simples (2)	verdadeiro (2)
ambicioso	de boa <i>índole</i> (2)
leal (2)	honesto
maduro	* <i>olhos transparentes</i>
(-) grudento	* <i>olhos profundos</i>
versátil	
amigo (3)	
disposto	
competente	
parceiro	
corajoso	
bem vivido	
(-) crítico	

TOTAL: 70 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

The above expressions *olhos transparentes* and *olhos profundos* at first glance seem to belong to the category appreciation/composition. However, both of them in Portuguese refer to personality traits rather than physical ones. The first – *olhos transparentes* – expresses the notion of honesty and truthfulness whereas *olhos profundos* is somewhat ambiguous. It may refer to either sensitivity, thus pertaining to the class ‘judgement/social sanction’, or it may evoke sensuality and power of attraction (*i.e.*, an appreciation/reaction attribute).

Table 52 – Attributes of the other self – Judgement – New York males

SOCIAL ESTEEM	SOCIAL SANCTION
good-spirited	honest (3)
good-natured	truthful
great/good <i>sense of humor</i> (3)	considerate
intelligent (4)	caring
friendly	respectful
the smartest <i>girl</i>	open
nice	polite
confident	direct
active (2)	
fun	
exciting	
spiritual	
faithful	
mature	
down-to-earth (2)	

TOTAL: 33 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

Table 53 – Attributes of the other self – Judgement – New York females

SOCIAL ESTEEM	SOCIAL SANCTION
nurturing	humble
easy-going (4)	kind (5)
articulate	respectful (2)
artistic	honest (6)
active	truthful
“all around good guy”	caring (3)
good <i>sense of humor</i> (5)	genuine
fun loving (2)	responsible
out-going	sincere
creative	open
great <i>kisser</i>	
intelligent (3)	
independent	
confident (3)	
great <i>company</i>	
sharing <i>personality</i>	
supportive	
clever	
interested	
friendly	
well spoken	
funny	
naughty	
practical	
impulsive	

TOTAL: 59 INSTANCES OF JUDGEMENT

Table 54 – Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – Carioca males

REACTION	COMPOSITION
bela	elegante (2)
sensual (3)	<i>mulher de estilo</i>
atraente (3)	lindo <i>sorriso</i>
linda (2)	<i>olhos brilhantes</i>
bonita (2)	
charmosa (2)	
cativante	
sarada	
cheirosa	

TOTAL: 21 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

Table 55 – Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – Carioca Females

REACTION	COMPOSITION
charmoso (2)	<i>unhas bem cortadas</i>
interessante (3)	<i>unhas limpas</i>
sadio	elegante
bem cuidado	sofisticado
perfumado	alto
<i>olhos profundos</i>	<i>boca cheirosa</i>

TOTAL: 15 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

Table 56 – Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – New York males

REACTION	COMPOSITION
charming	thin
attractive	Marilyn Monroe <i>type of figure</i>
beautiful (2)	elegant
the sexiest <i>girl</i>	slender
the cutest <i>girl</i>	
in good health	
in shape	
lovely <i>smile</i>	
sensuous	
glamorous	
alluring	

TOTAL: 16 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

Table 57 – Attributes of the other self – Appreciation – New York females

REACTION	COMPOSITION
attractive (4)	classy
handsome (3)	nice eyes
athletic (2)	tall
charming	deep voice
sexy	
interesting	
lovely	

TOTAL: 17 INSTANCES OF APPRECIATION

The frequency tally of the Carioca corpus indicates the following results: ‘affect’ ( $N=16$ ), with 6 descriptors produced by males and 10 by females; ‘judgement’ ( $N=136$ ), with 66 attributes employed by males and 70 by females; and ‘appreciation’ ( $N=36$ ), with 21 attributes provided by males and 15 by females.

The New York corpus yields the following frequencies: ‘affect’ ( $N=19$ ), with 10 emotional descriptors produced by males and 9 by females; ‘judgement’ ( $N=92$ ), with 33 qualifiers chosen by males and 59 by females; and ‘appreciation’ ( $N=33$ ), with 16 descriptors from males and 17 from females.

### 7.3 Graduation resources: force and focus

It is generally alleged (*cf.* Chapter 5) that hedging and boosting devices are more frequently employed by women. However, it is also agreed that language shapes gender rather than being a reflection of it. Therefore, individuals forge their identities through language according to the contexts they find themselves in. Dating sites are particularly interesting in this respect for two reasons: identities are anonymous and the interactional purpose is that of persuading, seducing and enticing the desired other. As a consequence, the language used is crucial in forging the persona involved in the social practice of online dating. And it is in this

specific context that graduation resources will be quantified and analyzed in order to provide answers to two of the questions raised in Phase 2 of this research (*cf.* Chapter 1.5):

- Do women make more use of force-enhancement resources than men?
- Are there culture-oriented differences with regard to frequency in the use of graduation resources?

Tables 58-66, below, display the frequency and the distribution of graduation resources employed by profilers.

Table 58 – Graduation resources – Force – Carioca males

<b>UPGRADERS</b>	<b>DOWNGRADERS</b>
bem (3)	pouquinho
plenamente	sem exagero
verdadeiramente	pouco
muito (4)	quase
normalmente	simplesmente
fundamentalmente	
inteiramente	

TOTAL: 17

Table 59 – Graduation resources – Force – Carioca females

<b>UPGRADERS</b>	<b>DOWNGRADERS</b>
bem (5)	quase
realmente	
hiper	
super	
muito (5)	
suficientemente	

TOTAL: 15

Table 60 – Graduation resources – Force – New York males

UPGRADERS	DOWNGRADERS
generally	a little
exceptionally	basically
very (7)	
wildly <i>adventurous</i>	
highly <i>glamorous</i>	

TOTAL: 13

Table 61 – Graduation resources – Force – New York females

UPGRADERS	DOWNGRADERS
very (4)	a bit
totally	a little
striking	slightly
completely	
pretty (2)	
extremely	

TOTAL: 13

Table 62 – Graduation resources – Focus – Carioca males

SHARPENERS	SOFTENERS
irremediável	meio
inveterado	um tanto <i>fraco</i>
em todos os sentidos	
<i>charm</i> só dela	

TOTAL: 6

Table 63 – Graduation resources – Focus – Carioca females

SHARPENERS	SOFTENERS
<i>crítico</i> destrutivo	<i>baixinha</i>
	<i>fofinha</i>

TOTAL: 3

Table 64 – Graduation resources – Focus – New York males

SHARPENERS	SOFTENERS
true <i>gentleman</i>	kind of
true <i>loving</i>	

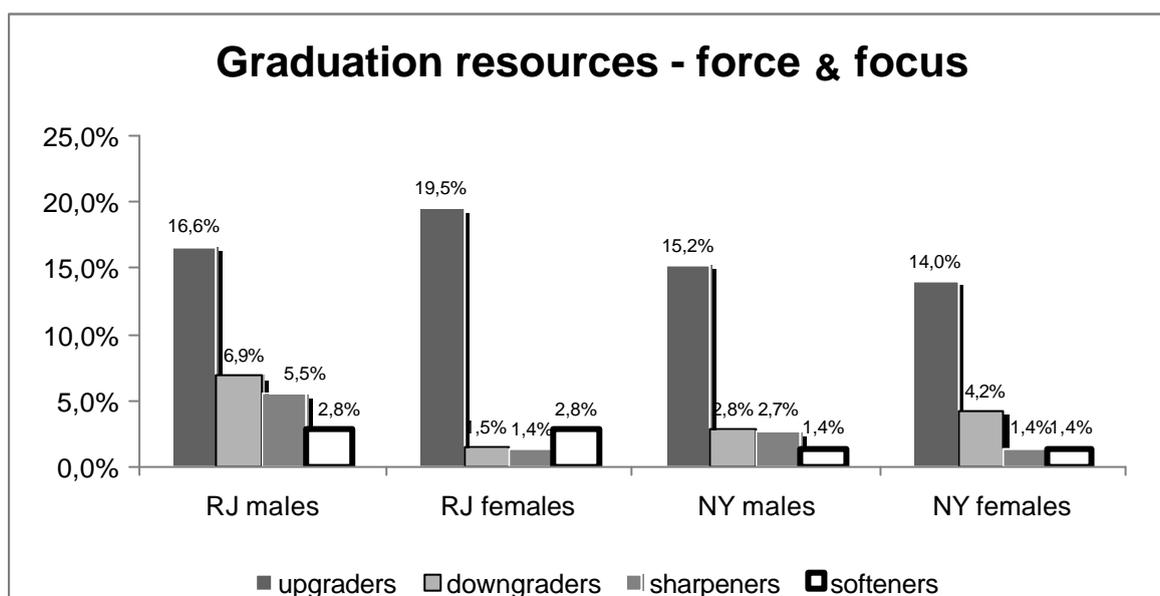
TOTAL: 3

Table 65 – Graduation resources – Focus – New York females

SHARPENERS	SOFTENERS
all around <i>good guy</i>	<i>greenish</i>

TOTAL: 2

Table 66 – Graduation resources: overall distribution



Contrary to traditional and current views (*cf.* Chapter 5), female online dating members do not employ more force-enhanced language *i.e.*, upgraders and downgraders, as compared to members of the opposite sex. In the Carioca male segment, there is a total of **17** linguistic devices (12 upgraders and 5 downgraders), and in the female segment the score is **15** (14 upgraders and 1 downgrader). The New York male and female segments have the same grand total of **13**: for males, 11 upgraders and 2 downgraders; and for females, 10 upgraders and 3 downgraders. Therefore, online dating language does not seem to be gender-marked from the perspective of hedging and boosting phenomena.

With regard to upgrading resources, it was expected that the overall number of upgraders in all corpus segments would be superior to that of downgraders due to the type of text under consideration. Since the texts are genuine samples of the promotional genre,

positive qualities (+ attributes) would certainly receive a boosting force whereas negative attributes would be either attenuated or simply undisclosed. The above findings confirm this tendency: the grand total for upgraders is **47** and downgraders have the low frequency of **11**.

In relation to the Focus Dimension, present findings seem to confirm Tannen's assertion (1995) that gender differences are neutralized by cross-cultural differences and that men in general tend to focus on report *i.e.*, the informational function of the interaction. That is to say that when interpreting the cultural information encoded by language, men and women rely on different subcultural norms.

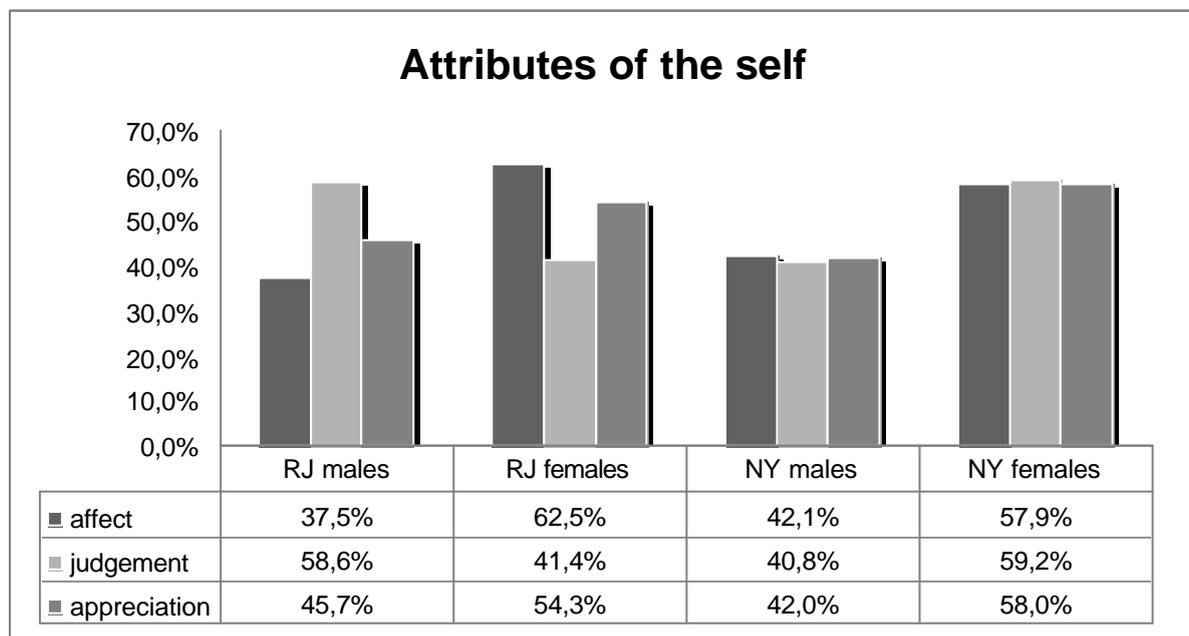
In fact, this may be verified by the higher frequency of sharpeners in both Carioca and New York male segments ( $N=6$ ) as compared to the frequency of sharpeners produced by females. Only one Carioca and one New Yorker in the female segments employ sharpeners ( $N=2$ ). As for softeners, males and females in each geographical segment (New York and Rio de Janeiro) produce parallel frequencies: Cariocas produce double the amount of softeners as compared to New Yorkers: Cariocas ( $N=4$ ), 2 softeners per gender category, and New Yorkers ( $N=2$ ), 1 softening device produced by each sex. In conclusion, male descriptions, as predicted by Tannen (1995), tend to involve exhibitions of knowledge and skill to get attention from female participants: "*men are focused on report rather than rapport*" (1995: 241).

#### 7.4 Comparative analyses: attitudinal evaluations

The purpose of this chapter is to present a quantitative analysis of attitudinal evaluations used across genders and cultures so as to confirm or reject the inquiries related to Phase 2 of this study (*cf.* Chapter 1.5). They are the following:

- Are there gender-marked differences with regard to variety and frequency in the use of attributes? For example, women being more rated on appearances (physical attributes) than men?
- Are there culture-oriented differences with regard to variety and frequency in the use of attributes?

Table 67 – Attributes of the self: overall distribution

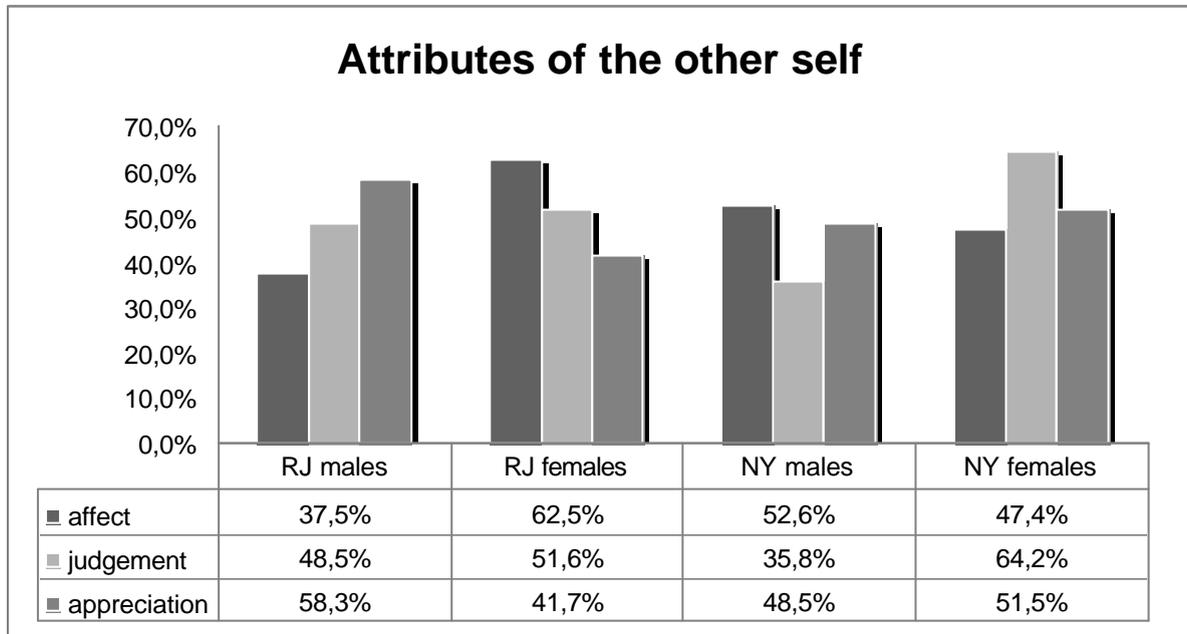


At a first glance, it is clear that attributes along the three parameters (affect, judgement and appreciation) in the NY segments (males and females) are distributed rather evenly, with females employing a larger number of descriptors as compared to males. However, whereas females resort to more judgement attributes, males, contrary to what one would expect, use more affect than appreciation attributes.

The RJ segments, on the other hand, produce an uneven distribution for all three categories. By far, females use more affective language than males, thus confirming findings of previous research (*cf.* Chapter 5). As for judgement and appreciation, there is an inverted relationship regarding choices made by males and females. Males resort to more judgement

evaluation while describing themselves, whereas females focus on their own physical attributes *i.e.*, appreciation descriptors.

Table 68 – Attributes of the other self: overall distribution



In the description of the desired other, the analysis of RJ segments produce interesting findings indeed. By observing the table above, there is an inversion in the quantification of affect and appreciation distributors employed by males and females. While the former group seeks more appreciation attributes in prospective partners, the latter emphasizes affect values.

Regarding judgement evaluations, both segments express similar desires. Once again, females resort to more affective evaluations than men while describing their desired others. Males, on the other hand, describe their ideal daters more thoroughly in terms of physical attributes. Therefore, the aesthetic-factor hypothesis (*cf.* Chapter 5.4) is confirmed in the Carioca corpus segment.

In the NY corpus, male participants praise more highly affect attributes in their ideal partners as compared to their female counterparts. NY females emphasize judgement attributes in their desired others almost twice as much as their male counterparts. Interestingly

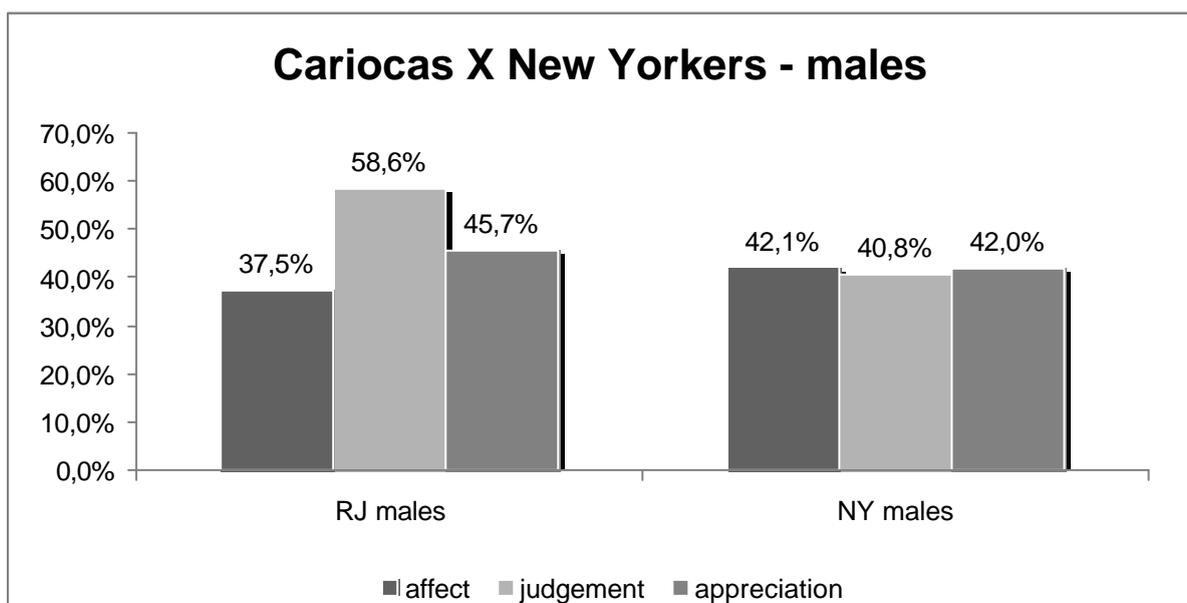
enough, female New Yorkers (contrary to the frequency tally of the Carioca segment) are the ones who display more interest in the physical attributes of their partners.

In other words, for Carioca males, appreciation evaluations rank first, followed by judgement appraisals; the reversed order is found in the NY female segment. By comparing the data from RJ females and NY males, there is a similar tendency: both segments value affect attributes the most. However, the second most frequently used attributes by RJ females fall into the judgement category, whereas for NY males appreciation attributes are next in line.

#### 7.4.1 Carioca vs. New Yorker male attitudinal evaluations

This section is devoted to the comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self and the other self made by males in both RJ and NY corpus segments. Tables 69 and 70, below, present the percentage distribution for the affect, judgement and appreciation variables.

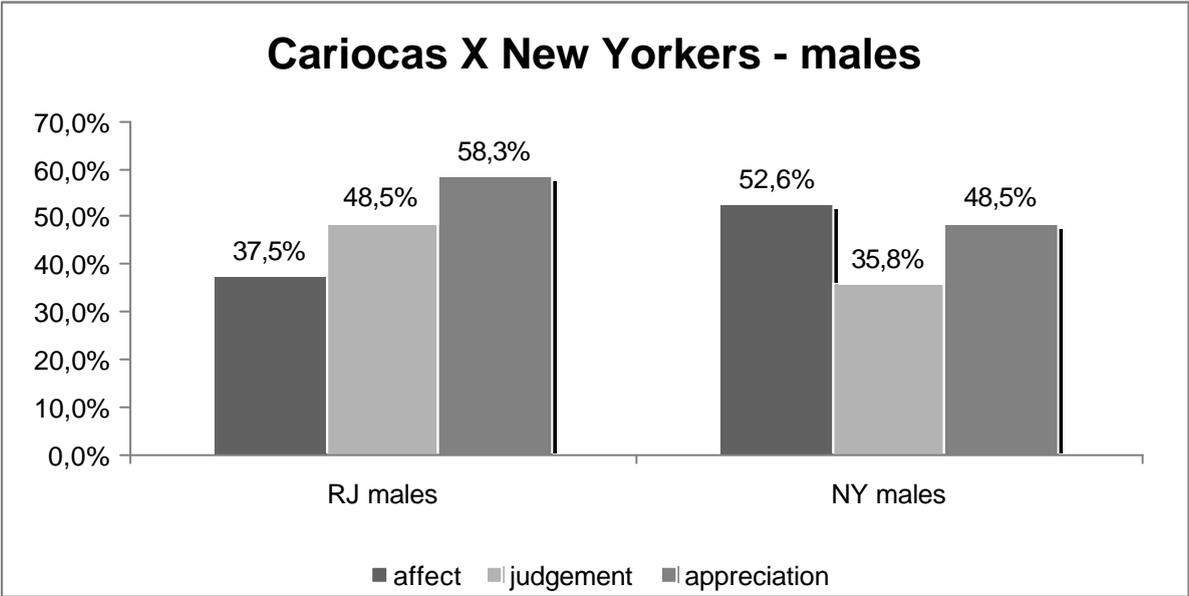
Table 69 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: males



As can be noted from the above, New York males, while describing themselves, produce a similar number of attributes with respect to affect, judgement and appreciation. Cariocas, on the other hand, emphasize in their self-descriptions attributes of ethical-behavioral nature – ‘judgement’. Next, physical attributes are given secondary attention, and the category with the lowest frequency tally comprises affective-driven evaluations.

Table 70, below, displays the percentage distribution of attitudinal evaluations made by males with regard to their ideal partners.

Table 70 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: males



As observed, the shift in emphasis on the part of Cariocas while describing the other self is striking. While prioritizing judgement evaluations in their self-descriptions, Cariocas are now mostly concerned with the physical attributes of their partners. Judgement evaluations rank second, followed by affective attributes.

New Yorkers, on the other hand, do not exhibit any change in criteria to the assessment of their ideal match. They employ more affect attributes while describing

themselves and the desired other. Appreciation evaluations are next in frequency, followed by the least frequent class of attributes, those of the judgement semantic valuation.

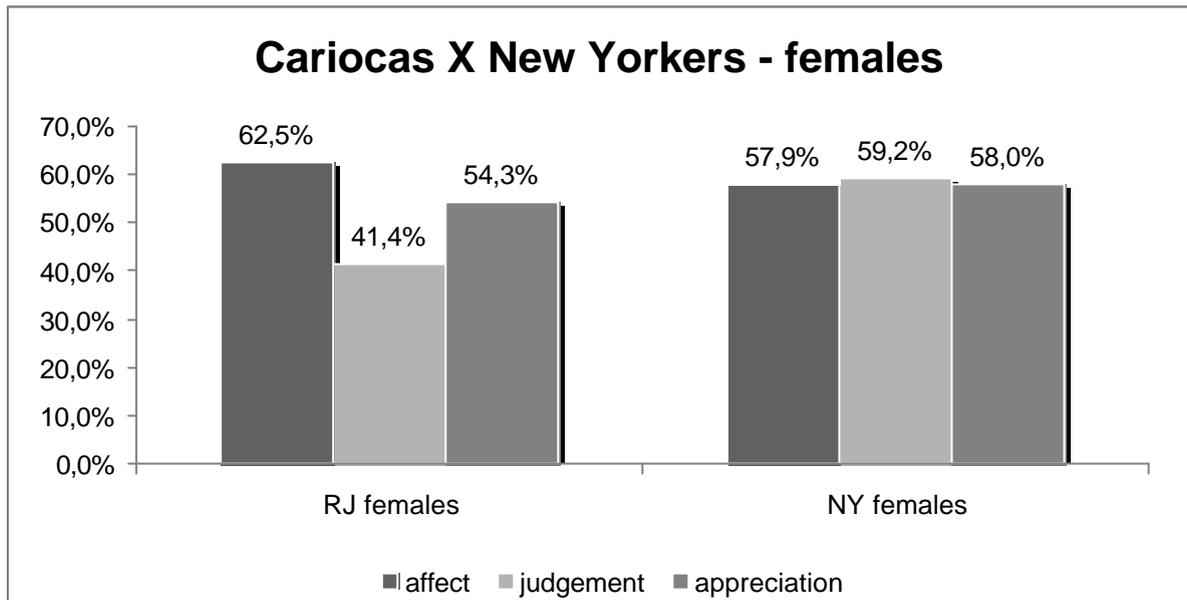
Thus, it may be concluded that Carioca males resort to attributes in the realm of mental skills, knowledge and social status, *i.e.*, attitudinal realizations of judgment, while describing themselves. However, when targeting at attributes of their prospective partners, the aesthetic-factor hypothesis is confirmed since physical attributes are the ones most highly praised. They primarily want their mates to be attractive to the eye. Their ethical-behavioral attributes are also valued and, finally, the affect is given the least attention.

In the opposite direction, New York males enhance their descriptions with affective attributes and also idealize their prospective partners by adopting the same kind of criterion – greater emphasis on their emotional disposition, medium relevance to their physical attributes and less interest in mental skills, knowledge and social propriety.

#### 7.4.2 Carioca vs. New Yorker female attitudinal evaluations

This section is concerned with comparisons of female evaluations of the self and the idealized other in the RJ and NY segments. Tables 71 and 72, below, illustrate the percentage distribution of attitudinal evaluations made by females pertaining to the two cultures.

Table 71 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: females



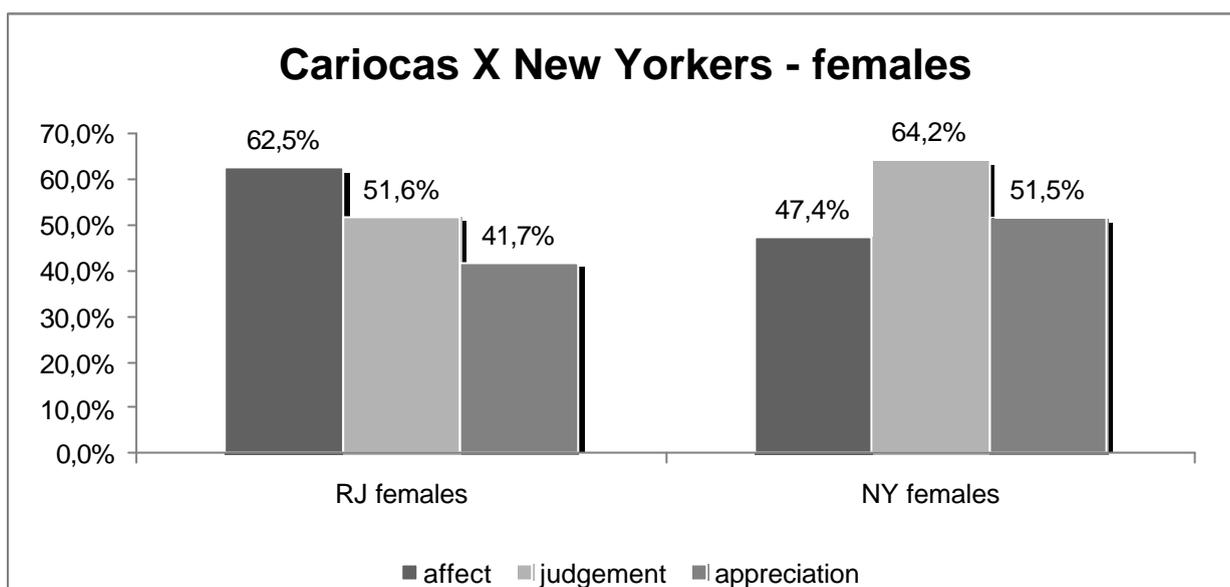
Parallel to the NY males’ distribution, New York females, while describing themselves, produce a rather even distribution with respect to frequency of attributes related to affect, judgement and appreciation. Judgement evaluations are most frequently presented, followed by appraisal of physical characteristics, which are almost at par with attributes configuring emotion disposition.

Carioca females, unlike NY females, are much more detailed while describing their emotional responses through mental processes of reaction rather than evaluating their ethics or behavior. Description of physical attributes is given secondary emphasis, which is parallel to what their NY counterparts do.

Therefore, it may be inferred that while New York females express a desire for overt prestige, trying to be equated to men by being rated socially by their own skills, occupation and earning power, by what they do, carioca females place more emphasis along the semantics of emotion by construing their feelings of affective disposition.

Table 72, below, displays the percentage distribution of attitudinal evaluations made by females with regard to their ideal partners.

Table 72 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: females



Comparisons between RJ and NY females' evaluations with respect to their prospective partners are indeed surprising. In describing their desired others, NY females follow the same criteria adopted while describing themselves. That is to say, they favor judgements of social esteem and social sanction while presenting an evaluative account of their desired other. The second most frequently used category of attributes relates to physical features, and descriptors of emotional dispositions and/or reactions are the ones they give the least attention to. As can be seen, NY females seem to yearn for the fulfillment of traditional role expectations regarding their male partners.

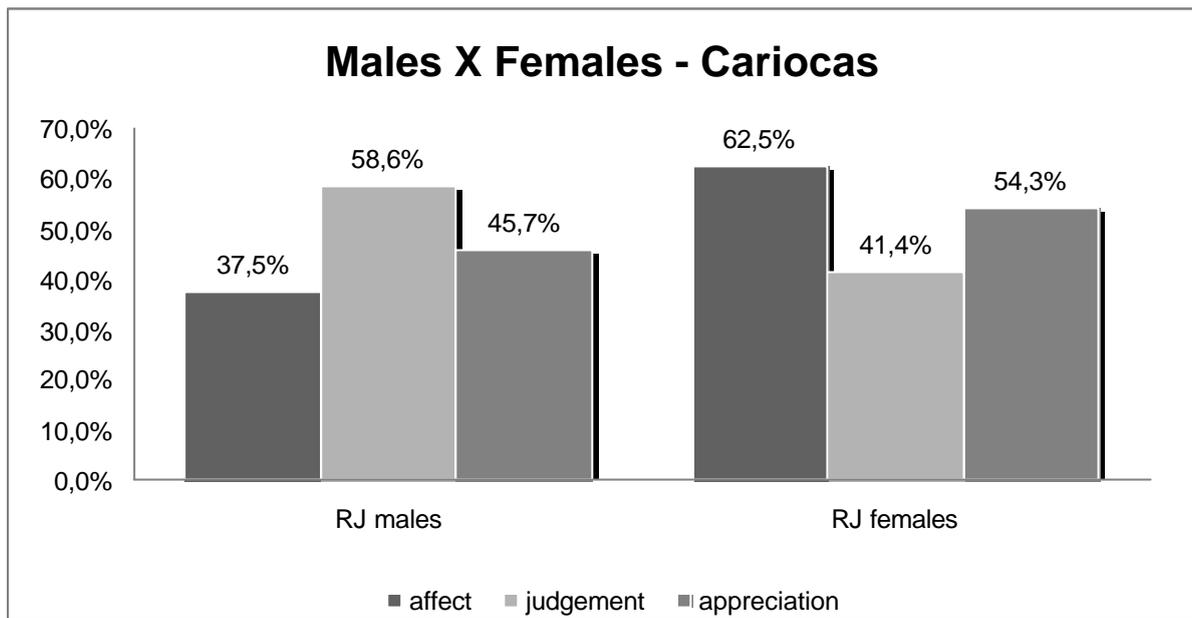
Surprisingly, Carioca females steer away dramatically from the evaluative axis that permeates their self-appraisals. While describing themselves, Cariocas seem to abide by traditional conventions and norms of the 'feminine', giving central attention to their feelings and emotions. Now they are the ones to present more progressive appraisals of their desired partners. The qualities that are most highly praised in their idealized others are also related to the affect. They seem to embrace the ideals of Third Wave Feminists (*cf.* Mills, S., Third Wave Feminist Linguistics and the Analysis of Sexism, in Discourse Analysis Online, [<http://www.shu.ac.uk/daol/>]) who want their partners to be affectionate companions who are

willing to display emotions overtly and who are committed to sharing with them the once typical female roles in society. Following the same line of reasoning, the second category of attributes that are most frequent in their claims for the ideal man is related to ethical and behavioral parameters, including mental skills, knowledge and social propriety. The least sought-after qualities among Carioca females are related to physical composition. Actually, they represent less than 50% of the attributes employed in their descriptions. The ideal male is no longer expected to have a rugged face, sturdy build or strong constitution; females are primarily looking for loving, dependable, sympathetic ‘emotional partners’ who are also responsible, hard working and successful regardless of their physique.

#### 7.4.3 Carioca male vs. Carioca female attitudinal evaluations

Attitudinal evaluations by male and female Cariocas are compared in this chapter in order to verify the existence cross-gender appraisal-oriented differences. Tables 73 and 74, below, display the percentage distributions of attributes used in self-descriptions and descriptions of the other self.

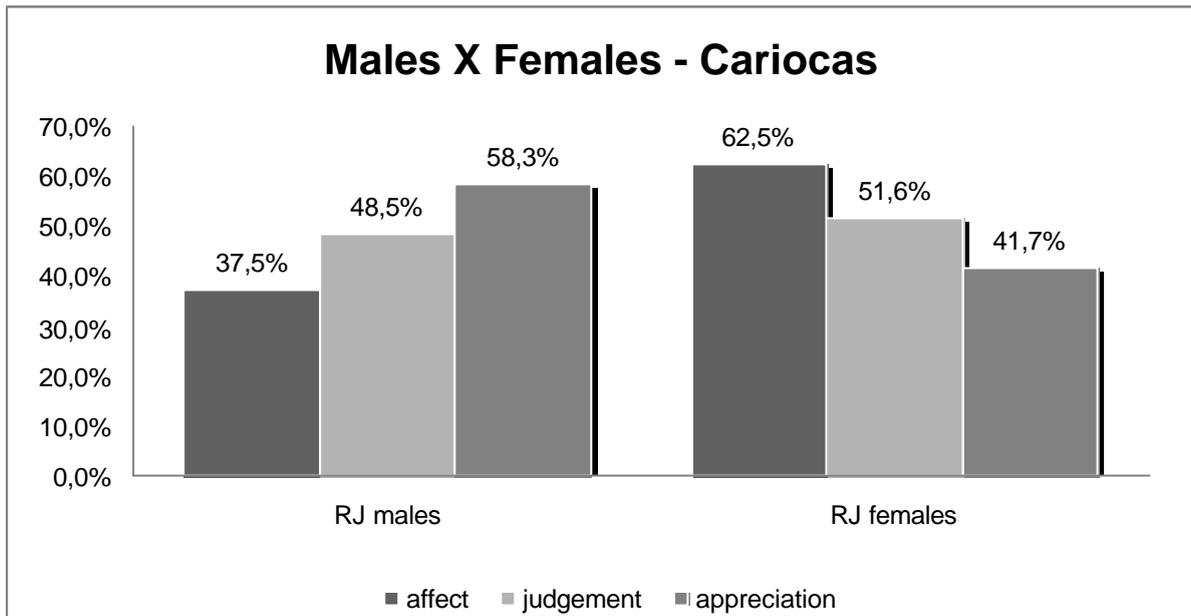
Table 73 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: Cariocas



The table above corroborates strong evidence for an inverted relationship between frequency of attributes per category and gender in the Carioca corpus. The largest number of attributes to describe the self by RJ males falls into the category ‘judgement’, whereas for females the affect is the semantic zone from which most attributes derive. In other words, men describe themselves in terms of ethical and behavioral attitudes that promote social esteem and social sanction. Women, on the other hand, resort more frequently to attributes of the affect – reactional constructs of emotion. The second most frequently used attributes in the male and female descriptions characterize physical appearance. And, finally, there is an inversion between the categories ‘affect’ and ‘judgement’ across genders, as predicted.

Another distributional inversion is observed with respect to attributes of the desired other. This time the semantic implications differ from the ones above. Table 74, below, illustrates this phenomenon very clearly.

Table 74 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: Cariocas

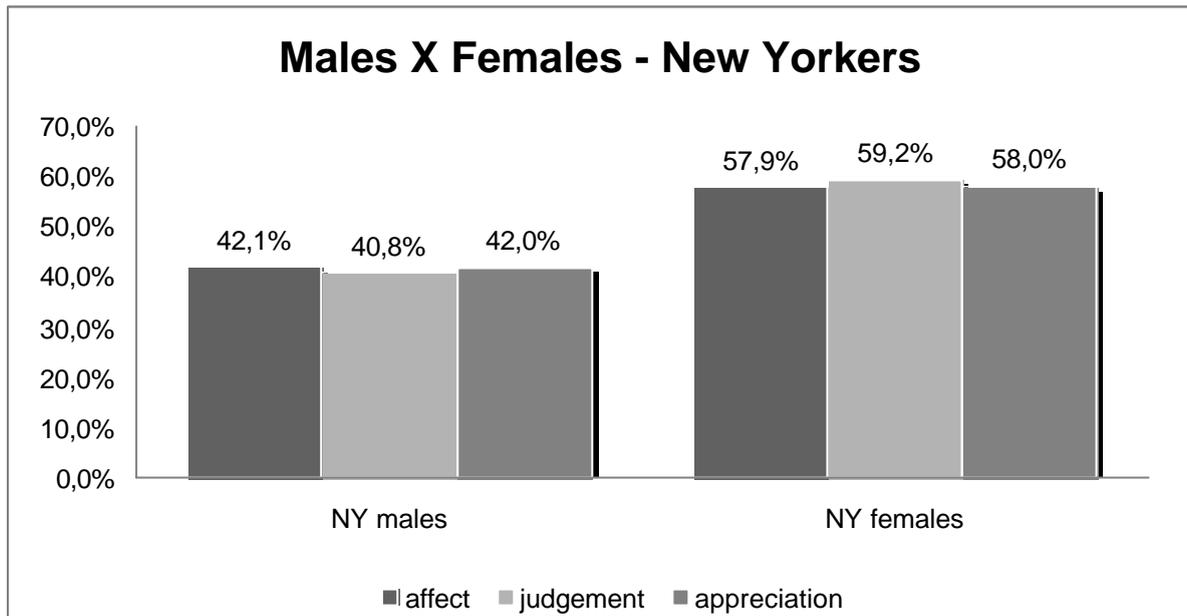


Carioca males, in accordance with the aesthetic-factor hypothesis, are very demanding in relation to the physical make-up of female daters – 58.3% of the attributes are appreciative of the body. Females resort more frequently to affective adjectivals (62.5%). The percentage distributions for judgement evaluations are very similar. And the least frequent attributes produced by females belong to the category ‘appreciation’ and, among men, the least frequent category of evaluative attributes is that of the affect.

#### 7.4.4 New Yorker male vs. New Yorker female attitudinal evaluations

In the NY corpus, within group distributions of attitudinal evaluations are quite even. Although females employ many more attributes as compared to males, variations in the use of attributes per category per gender group are very low. Tables 75 and 76, below, illustrate percentage distributions of attributes for the NY segments.

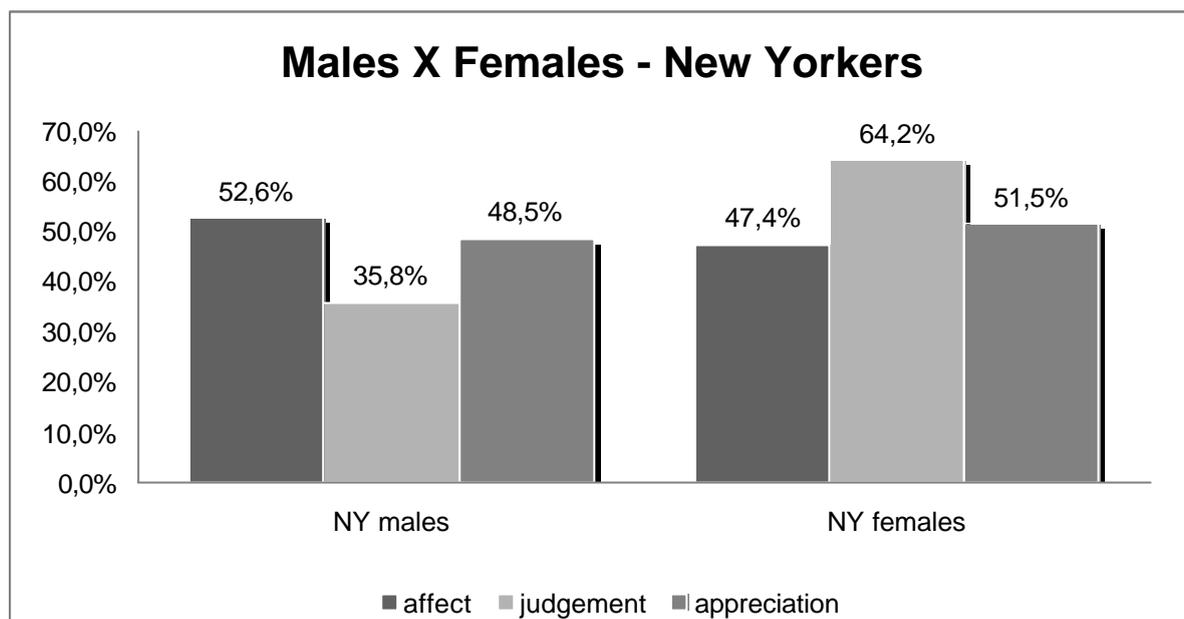
Table 75 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the self: New Yorkers



Descriptions of the self involve more affective attributes in the male segment and more judgement attributes in the female segment. Immediately behind, appreciation evaluations come second and are produced by both NY males and females. And the least frequent attributes for NY males belong to ‘judgement’, whereas females make use of emotional descriptors in their evaluations.

Table 76, below, presents percentage distributions of attitudinal evaluations of the other self by NY males and females.

Table 76 – Comparison of attitudinal evaluations of the other self: New Yorkers



Distributions of attributes in the description-of-the-other segments for both males and females display no variation as compared to self-descriptions. While describing the idealized other, NY males resort more frequently to affective attributes, and females, to judgement evaluations. Appreciative evaluations come second on the part of both NY males and females. And, again, there is an inversion in relation to the least frequent categories of attributes by gender. NY males resort less frequently to attributes of ‘judgement’ and females do not emphasize emotion/affect-related descriptors in the idealization of their partners.

It has transpired from the analyzed data that carioca males and females in their own self-perception readily present themselves as conforming to society’s definitions of appropriate masculine and feminine behavior. They seem to be overwhelmed by the linguistic devices they exploit to make their self-image an attractive one to the others, thus complying with social stereotypes. The image women want to convey capitalizes on beauty, physical appeal and attraction (appreciation entries: 63 x 53). Men, on the other hand, capitalize on skills, capacity and tenacity. (judgement entries: 58 x 41). The most frequent entries for each category in the Carioca corpus are illustrated in the table below.

Table 77 – Most frequent attributes of the self – Cariocas

RJ FEMALES	RJ MALES
Appreciation	Judgement
<i>corpo em forma</i>	inteligente
<i>sorriso cativante</i>	honrado
<i>seios médios</i>	culto
<i>charmosa</i>	educado
<i>coxas grossas</i>	cavalheiresco
<i>corpo proporcional</i>	pé no chão
<i>pernas grossas</i>	equilibrado
<i>tipo violão</i>	cheio de garra
<i>cheirosa</i>	observador
<i>bronzeadada</i>	focado
<i>olhar convidativo</i>	atento (2)
<i>mignon</i>	determinado
<i>cabelos compridos</i>	Dinâmico

New Yorkers deviate from the appropriate and stereotypical behavior. Females employ more judgment evaluations than men, thus capitalizing on virtues that are typically assigned to the opposite sex. New York males, on the other hand, present similar number of entries for both Judgement and Affect. Typical corpus entries from both genders are illustrated below.

Table 78 – Most frequent attributes of the self – New Yorkers

NY FEMALES	NY MALES
Judgement	Affect
smart	<i>emotionally stable</i>
hard working	warm
accomplished	affectionate
successful	romantic
intelligent	passionate
professional	loving
self-motivated	caring

On the other hand, in interpersonal perception all four segments: Carioca males and females (judgement entries: 66 x 70) and New York males and females (judgement entries: 33

x 59) capitalize on features associated with judgement values. New York females, quite unexpectedly, also capitalize to the same extent on the beautiful side in men – their physical build. What is interesting in this perspective is that both genders in both cultures tacitly agree that judgement features rank highest among their social priorities.

Table 79 – Most frequent attributes of the other self – Cariocas

RJ FEMALES	RJ MALES
Judgement	Judgement
bem humorado	inteligente
leal	culta
inteligente	independente
culto	extrovertida
paciente	bem humorada
trabalhador	descomplicada
determinado	com senso de humor
companheiro	cúmplice
cúmplice	reflexiva
educado	sensível
fiel	discreta
sincero	corajosa
de bom <i>caráter</i>	companheira

Table 80 – Most frequent attributes of the other self – New Yorkers

NY FEMALES	NY MALES
Judgement	Judgement
intelligent	good-spirited
independent	good-natured
confident	great <i>sense of humor</i>
sharing <i>personality</i>	intelligent
supportive	friendly
clever	confident
interested	faithful
friendly	honest
well spoken	active
creative	respectful
kind	mature
respectful	truthful
honest	considerate

In this chapter, an appraisal analysis was conducted to explore attitudes of online daters toward themselves and the desired other and how these attitudes were expressed in the use of evaluative lexis. Appraisal was drawn on for understanding interpersonal meanings

realized in the descriptive segments under examination in this part of the study. It was possible to map out the kinds of attitudes that were negotiated in the texts, the strength of feelings involved and the ways in which values were sourced and readers aligned. The appraisal system, as a multi-dimensional model, was ideal to address the research questions of Phase 2 of the study. It accounted for impressions that were construed along different social representations of gender and aspects of culture by incorporating the expression of values as categories of attitude, and the manipulation of the strength of value as graduation.

## 8. CONCLUSION

There are a number of ways looking into textual patterning in genre studies. The approach that was found to be relevant to the present study was the demarcation of genre and text type (Biber, 1988; Swales, 1990, 1998, 2002, 2004; Bhatia, 1993, 2004), which is differentiated as macro-genre and elemental genre or micro-genre in Martin's text (1997).

According to Biber (1988), texts within the same genre can be very similar or very different in terms of linguistic features. From this perspective, dating sites are examples of macro-genres that are highly marked by metafunctionality, encompassing replies to close-ended questions of questionnaires, descriptive segments (creative writing), photographs, instant messaging, online chats and in-site e-mailing. On the other hand, micro-genres characterize texts in terms of rhetorical functions such as exposition, description and problem-solution. Thus, dating sites result from the convergence of many texts with various metafunctions, incorporating a number of micro-genres.

*Micro-genre* in this study, thus, referred to the descriptive segments produced by subscribers which realized the function of exposition and description. *Generic structure* in this study referred to the way that particular texts develop typical and recognizable textual structures in relation to the particular genre under investigation; that is, the stages the texts moved through in order to achieve their particular goal. *Rhetorical structure* referred to textual structures which account for the stages or steps for realizing rhetorical functions of the texts.

The major characteristic of the descriptive segments concerns persuasive evaluations. The linguistic evidence explored in this thesis is based mainly on interpersonal systems of interaction and evaluation developed within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Martin, 1985, 1992; White, 2000; Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005). Evaluation was based on appraisal theory, which is concerned with the linguistic inflection of the subjective

attitudes of writers, and also their evaluative expressions and intersubjective positioning. In order to explore the use of interpersonal resources from a perspective of writer and reader interaction *i.e.*, the reading mode, this study also incorporated a social interactive model derived from ‘Interaction in writing’ alongside Bakhtin’s (1981, 1986) dialogic literacy. Under this broad interdisciplinary approach, the interpersonal aspects in self-descriptions and descriptions of the other are examined from two main perspectives: interactive (schematic structures) and interpersonal meanings (the three main appraisal systems: attitude, engagement and graduation).

In brief, engagement mapped choices for engaging with various alternative social positions operating in cultures (resources for adjusting modal responsibility). Attitude covered values of emotional response (Affect), values by which human behavior is socially assessed (Judgement), and values which, in this particular case, address aesthetic and socially valued physical qualities of people (Appreciation). Graduation covered values by which writers raised or lowered the interpersonal impact, force or volume of their utterances (resources for grading).

Through an appraisal analysis, a picture was established of how online dating members evaluate, grade and give value to social behavior and physical traits. At the textual level of analysis, only ‘attitude’ and ‘graduation’ were considered.

One of the goals of this study was to explore the self-descriptive profile on dating sites as a construct that functions as an offer/product (*cf.* Bhatia, 1993) and to show that its designer produces incentives by means of self-promotion, seduces through words and requests either directly or indirectly some kind of response from the audience.

The combination of tools of corpus analysis, focusing briefly on lexical features of texts, with the functional and rhetorical approach of genre analysis, has confirmed its effectiveness in providing qualitative detail and opportunity to answer questions about how

texts are structured and organized, what rhetorical moves or lexical features are common to them, and, finally, how different arrangements of such features become genre-triggering macro-patterns.

By working with corpus and genre analysis in this study, the conclusion arrived at is that the subgenre of online personal ads does indeed represent a very dynamic form of language use that offers many creative options. Although the subgenre under consideration, not yet fully accepted and investigated, offers more flexibility in structure than many others, there is clearly an intrinsic coherent structure that shapes it. This can be easily noticed regardless of the size limitation of the corpus.

The flexibility seems to be generated by internal features such as variability in move sequencing between well-recognized promotional texts and informal promotional descriptions of the type under scrutiny. As for external features, it should be born in mind that the “man seeking woman” audience is inherently heterogeneous due to the very nature of the interaction. Consequently, the genre structure proposed here together with its lexical interface seem to readily account for the wide variety of multi-patterned descriptive texts that make up this new version of the promotional subgenre.

The first part of the research (Phase 1), involving a theoretical exploration of the genre model in general, brought forth evidence that even though online dating sites share several features with already existing genres and discourses from printed media, they are not simply digital versions of printed classified ads. They indeed constitute a new subgenre of the promotional constellation born with the NET. The fact that dating sites draw on a new kind of medium, namely the WWW, adds to it a distinctiveness hitherto unseen in traditional genres. Therefore, the hypotheses of Phase 1 (*cf.* Section 1.5.2) are confirmed:

- Online dating sites constitute a promotional sub-genre of the digital family.
- Typical macro-patterning characterizes the subgenre.

- Promotional-oriented rhetorical moves apply to online dating profile production.

Drawing on Swales' genre exploration (1990, 1998, 2002, 2004), Biber's multidimensional analysis (1988), Martin's functional model (1985, 1992) and Bhatia's analysis of discourse as genre (1993, 2004), constituents of the genre model fed into the online dating subgenre by capturing the essence of web-mediated genres – the hypertext. Thus the WWW as a medium conveyed unique properties to dating sites as a promotional subgenre and this co-existence of genre and medium, which seems to be ignored in traditional genre theory proved to be fundamental to web communication and determined typical genre-specific metafunctionality and rhetorical patterning.

Analyses of the promotional genre macro-patterns and moves in discourse structure yielded rich insights into genre categorization of online dating sites. Macro-patterns, as proposed by Hoey (1997, 2001), conformed with the promotional genre family. Problem-Solution and Goal-Achievement patterns were easily identified since males and females whose ads are posted on the site are single – the problem – and, therefore, want to find a partner – the solution. Concomitantly, they have a clear goal in mind: finding prospective partners, communicating with them, and eventually meeting them in real situations. The promotional subgenre in this study by all means promoted the interaction of Problem-Solution and Goal-Achievement patterns, lodged within the larger Desire-Arousal pattern. All three macro-patterns are implicated in the structural organization of the subgenre and they often have indistinct borderlines.

Furthermore, rhetorical moves, identified and described by Bhatia (1993, 2004), were found to be intertwined with the promotional subgenre macro-patterns and, in addition to being easily distinguished, proved to be obligatory in the general structure of online dating sites with the relevant adaptations. Macro-patterning and discourse moves are amalgamated in

the *ambience* of dating sites which is inherently filled with seduction and desire. Whenever one describes the self and the other self, incentives and encouragement for action are inevitably being offered by means of persuasive language, either sensual or humorous, to meet the overall goal of desire-arousal and a final achievement.

Phase 2 of the present study considered the subjective presence of profilers in personal advertising as they evaluate their emotions and impressions. It dealt primarily with lexical choices made by Rio de Janeiro and New York male and female subscribers and how these forms articulated within the Appraisal system (Martin, 1996; Martin & Rose, 2003 and Martin and White, 2005).

The appraisal analysis consisted of: (i) identifying appraisal-bearing propositions in the profiling process and labeling the constituents according to the attitude and graduation typologies, and (ii) quantifying graduation resources and attitudinal evaluations, *i.e.*, affect, judgement and appreciation, so as to depict gender-marked and culture-oriented differences.

The quantification of graduation resources yielded findings that contradict the widespread belief that women, rather than being assertive, temper their language by using tentative, indirect and mitigating linguistic devices. Female online dating members in both New York and Carioca segments failed to employ more force-enhanced language *i.e.*, upgraders and downgraders, as compared to members of the opposite sex. Therefore, online dating language does not seem to be gender-marked from the perspective of hedging and boosting phenomena.

With regard to upgrading resources, findings confirm the hypothesis that the overall number of upgraders in all corpus segments would be superior to that of downgraders due to the type of text under consideration. Since the texts are genuine samples of the promotional genre, positive qualities (+ attributes) did receive a boosting force, whereas negative attributes were attenuated or dismissed.

In relation to the Focus Dimension, present findings confirm that gender differences are parallel to cross-cultural differences *i.e.*, men and women rely on different subcultural norms. This tendency was verified by the higher frequency of sharpeners in both Carioca and New York male segments as compared to the frequency of sharpeners produced by females. In short, male descriptions, as predicted by current research, tend to involve enhanced self-promotion such as blatant exhibitions of knowledge and skill to get attention from female participants.

The quantification of attitudinal evaluations of the self produced some very interesting results with respect to gender and cultural differences. To begin with, as expected, Carioca females used more affective language as compared to males. Carioca male profilers resorted more often to judgement evaluations while females focused on their own physical attributes *i.e.*, appreciation descriptors. Both genders preserve features of their native style, *e.g.*, with men often preserving a more critical stance and women a supportive one at the macro-message level.

In the NY segment, the results were quite surprising. Females were the ones to employ more judgement attributes in their self-descriptions whereas males, contrary to what one would expect, used more affective/emotional attributes! This clearly suggests that Brazilian gendered styles are more deeply rooted (not surprising) than those of North Americans. One possible justification for this is that since “feminine” styles are learned early in life and subsequently reinforced, certain features are more resistant to conscious reflection and modification than others, among Brazilian females. As for the results yielded from the NY corpus segments, emphasis on judgement values rather than on affect or appreciation evaluations by females may be justified on the grounds that both genders end up style-mixing, that is, the non-dominant gender takes on some attributes of the so-called dominant style and vice-versa.

In the description of the desired other, the aesthetic-factor hypothesis was verified in the analysis of the RJ male segment. While describing their ideal match, men requested more overtly marked attributes realized by means of ‘physical adjectives’, *i.e.*, attitudinal realizations of appreciation. As observed, the shift in emphasis on the part of Carioca males while describing the other self is striking. While prioritizing judgement evaluations in their self-descriptions, Carioca males display sheer sexism toward females since they show greater concern with the physical attributes of their prospective partners. This was confirmed after comparing their attitudes to those of NY males. At this point, differences in cultural orientation were definitely marked. In the NY corpus, male participants favored affect attributes in their ideal partners rather than physical attributes. The results of this investigation reveal patterns of interpersonal perception significantly at odds with one another and at variance with research whose proponents have argued for dominance as a sociolinguistic framework for speech variation among men and women.

Comparisons between RJ and NY females’ evaluations, with respect to their prospective partners, were those to yield more unexpected results. In describing their desired others, NY females followed the same criteria adopted while describing themselves. That is to say, they favored judgements of social esteem and social sanction while presenting evaluative accounts of their desired other. Surprisingly, Carioca females chose a radically different path by valuing emotional disposition more highly than social esteem and social sanction. Therefore, it may be inferred that while New York females expressed a desire for overt prestige, trying to be equated to men by being rated socially by their own skills, occupation and earning power – by what they do, Carioca females placed more emphasis along the semantics of emotion by construing their feelings of affective disposition.

Summing up, New York females conform to the models of Second Wave Feminism in that they are more status conscious. This may due to the fact that they have achieved social

and financial security and refuse to be judged on appearances. Carioca females, on the other hand, still rely on their looks to attract the opposite sex. However, while listing their partners' desired attributes, New York females rate them socially by their occupation, their earning power and their capacities and skills while Carioca females target at their affective configuration.

New York males seem to have freed themselves from the pressure of prestige variants. They seem to be open to express their emotional traits. In other words, they seem to have the potential to fulfill the needs of Carioca females. Conversely, Carioca males value in themselves the very same stereotypical attributes of judgement that New York females seek in their mates!

The reasons for such disparity may be due to differing online styles rather than cultural or gender differences including, for example, the assumption that Americans have long been engaged in the practice of online dating and as such do not idealize prospective partners as much as Brazilians, or the fact that they simply do not anticipate things in general as often as male and female compatriots do. Moreover, the process of "customization" is surely an American invention, but contrary to what one would expect and, according to the findings of this study, Brazilian single men and women seeking prospective dates seem to have become avid followers of the stereotypical American trend!

Rather than assuming that men and women necessarily express themselves in different ways, men being direct and forceful, women being hesitant, polite and apologetic, what is really relevant is the analyses of the complex negotiations undertaken by women and men with gendered domains, and gendered stereotypes of what is assumed that women and men should do. In this way, it is possible to analyze the language use of women and men, without assuming that all women are powerless, all males are powerful, or that gender always makes a difference.

The application of the Appraisal analysis, confirming hypothesis d of Phase 2 (*cf.* Section 1.5.3), therefore, was concerned with moving the relationship between gender and language away from the individual alone towards an analysis of the individual in relation to the social practice of online dating and also in relation to hypothesized gendered stereotypes. However, this study did not intend to defend or refute the adoption of a given model of stylistic variation between men and women. It seems that, within this type of analysis, online gender differences become difficult to analyze or challenge, and, for this, I suggest that rather than seeing Second and Third Wave feminist linguistics as chronological, they need to be seen more as approaches which may be more or less appropriate depending on the context and social situation. In the case of deeply rooted sexism, a Second Wave feminist approach is more applicable, whereas in others, a more locally-oriented and context-specific Third Wave approach is preferable. Thus, Second Wave feminism needs to be integrated into Third Wave feminist linguistics, so that both local and global issues can be addressed.

The indisputable truth is that women and men display different and characteristic online styles, thus answering questions e-h of Phase 2 (*cf.* Section 1.5.3). By characteristic styles, I do not mean that all or even the majority of online daters of each sex exhibit the behaviors of each style, but rather that the styles are recognizably stereotypically gendered but not specifically assigned to men or women. The male style is characterized by adversariality: strong, often contentious assertions, lengthy and/or frequent postings, promotion of skills; and the female style is marked by empathy: indirect statements, mitigating strategies and cooperative disposition. Do female and male online daters act out these evaluative styles in real life? Or is it all about propaganda? The answers to these puzzling questions remain elusive.

One possible way to approach the dilemma is through exploring the domains of advertising. Advertising involves a discourse type where the role of main protagonists is

played by people with specific ideas in mind, seeking to cause a larger group of potential participants to change their beliefs and buying habits, by creating in them the impulse to buy. This impulse is wrapped up, among other things, in “*a language of finely engineered, ruthlessly purposeful messages*” (O’Neill, 2002: 118). The main social function of advertising is “*always to persuade people to buy a particular product although it may also amuse, inform, misinform, worry or warn*” (Cook, 1992: 5).

Thus, self-promotion on online dating sites is not so different from commercial advertising, in that: (i) it may be thought of as elaborately and consciously worded by its senders as the rest of advertising; (ii) it owes its wording to the sender, who is presumably the source of the message; (iii) its intended recipient is of the opposite sex of the sender. One of the objectives of this study was to investigate patterns of heterosexual perception of women by men and vice-versa. Like the rest of advertising, online personal ads are closely linked to persuasion.

As a final remark, I would like to stress the importance of monitoring and analyzing new kinds of practices that are pervasive in the seductive space called the Internet. Borrowing from Ze'ev's reflections (2003) on the potential interactional possibilities of this medium: computers have changed not just the way we work but the way we love. Falling in and out of love, flirting and even cheating have all become part of the modern way of living and loving. This study provided insights into the overall make-up of the rules of engagement relative to online dating sites. However, social-anthropological research is called for to scrutinize the new types of relationships that may flourish *a posteriori*.

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