

“I take hot showers so I can practice burning in hell” A corpus analytical study of Tinder female profiles in the UK¹

Clara CANTOS-DELGADO & Carmen MAÍZ-ARÉVALO

Author:

Clara Cantos-Delgado
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0424-1672>
clarcant@ucm.es

Author:

Carmen Maíz-Arévalo
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0035-5296>
cmaizare@filol.ucm.es

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Carmen Maíz-Arévalo



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The focus of this article is the linguistic choices made by women-seeking-men (WSM) and women-seeking-women (WSW) on Tinder profiles in the UK, which builds on prior corpus-analytical research on dating profiles (Baker 2018; Collins 2019). Data was collected through TinderBotz, a scraping tool which gathered the information publicly displayed on Tinder profiles. Then, to ensure an ethical research praxis, it assigned each profile random identification numbers that guaranteed the anonymity of the users. The corpus consists of two subcorpora (WSM.C and WSW.C) each containing 405 profiles (average number of words=20.15) from women (18-24 y.o.) based in the UK. Given that profile creation on Tinder consists of two parts (the first being semi-guided and the second part, aka the ‘about me’ section, being fully creative), each sub-corpora (WSM.C and WSW.C) was in turn divided into two parts. UK.WSM.T.P.C.1 and UK.WSW.T.P.C.1 include the semi-guided part of the profile while UK.WSM.T.P.C.2 and UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 include the ‘about me’ section). Sketch Engine was used to search for significant n-grams and keywords in both sub-corpora and chi-square tests were conducted to determine the significance of our findings. Our results showed that WSM had less elaborate profiles, mentioned physical attributes (e.g., height) and often redirected potential matches to other platforms (i.e., Instagram). Meanwhile, WSW had more creative ‘about me’ sections in which they described their identity in greater detail (e.g., leatherdyke). Overall, both groups showed similar profiles in terms of work and relationship status.

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1. Introduction

According to Goffman (1959, 15-16), “when an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him [sic] to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which is in his interests to convey.” In everyday terms, it could be said that we all try to make a good impression when introducing ourselves to others. This need is also pervasive in digital communication. Arguably, online communicators may be even more aware of the image they project than in face-to-face interaction due to the ever-lasting nature of this context and the fact that there is greater control over the information provided, in contrast with face-to-face interaction (e.g., blushing).

Furthermore, users can ‘curate’ their image depending on the platform they are employing, and their main intentions (Boulianne and Larsson 2021; Yau and Reich 2019). In the case of mobile dating apps (MDAs henceforth), users’ intentions may widely vary and include different motivations like having casual sex, being merely entertained by using the app or finding a serious relationship (Sumter, Vandenbosch, and Ligtenberg 2017; Kallis 2020). Whatever their intention, users might choose to display different information about themselves on their profiles.

While some researchers, like Ingram et al. (2019), have explored certain aspects of Tinder profiles, such as pictures and external account linkages (Instagram), there is a noticeable gap regarding in-depth linguistic analysis of ‘about me’ sections. An initial attempt is the study by Fullick (2013), who conducted a discursive analysis of the e-dating profiles of heterosexual men and women. Her results summarise the positive attributes mentioned by both groups—e.g., creativity, intelligence, but her sample size was too small to generalise, and her approach was mostly qualitative.

In line with the present paper, Baker (2018) conducted a keyword analysis of Craigslist posts of women-seeking women (WSW henceforth) and women-seeking-men (WSM henceforth). His study reported three highly salient grammatical findings: (i) WSM appeared more likely to position themselves as the recipient of actions through the usage of the pronoun ‘me’, (ii) WSW often wrote more negative profiles, which concurred with the high occurrence of the negative adverb ‘no’, and (iii) WSM showed a greater likelihood to perceive the yet unformed desired relationship in terms of a ‘we’, before focusing on identity labels (e.g., stud, butch), which were much more frequent among WSW. This

collective is often overlooked by researchers (Miller 2019); therefore, this study constitutes an important contribution that fosters its visibility.

Baker’s (2018) data was collected in 2016 and it corresponded to Craigslist profiles of North American women of different ages. Although Craigslist’s popularity is still high (with 250.6 million monthly visits¹), it is a multi-purpose platform and we firmly believe that it is necessary to also study women’s profiles in the specific context of MDAs (see Collins 2019 regarding ‘men-seeking-men’, MSM henceforth). Furthermore, there are other reasons for contrasting WSW and WSM. WSW are likely to receive unrequited attention from men on platforms like Craigslist (Baker 2018) and may hence feel safer to explore their identity and sexuality on MDAs like Tinder (Castro and Barrada 2020; Hawkins 2022). Additionally, previous studies like Baker’s (2018) have not considered the variable of age, even though it might strongly influence how users construct their MDA profiles (Jönson and Siverskog 2012; Wada et al. 2019). Since emerging adults (18-25 y.o.) accounted for most Tinder users (Iqbal 2024²; Hawkins 2022), this was the age group selected for the present study. Finally, Baker (2018) focused on US women while our study provides a different cultural perspective by addressing profiles from users based in the UK.

Thus, this paper aims to quantitatively analyse the linguistic patterns employed in their Tinder profiles by two groups of women (ages 18-25) based in the UK: WSM and WSW. More specifically, we focus on whether users’ sexual orientation–i.e., whether they are looking for same-gender or different-gender matches on Tinder–influences the linguistic choices they employ to construct their profiles, i.e., functional parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verbs) and n-grams. Users’ orientation is expected to influence the choice and frequency of linguistic patterns (Baker 2018).

2. State of the art

The importance of the profile (especially on MDAs) cannot be underestimated. Indeed, on swiping-based MDAs like Tinder, users can only interact once they ‘match’³. Hence, great importance is placed on the design of appealing profiles as being disliked may difficult one’s chances of getting matches. Consequently, several scholars have made self-presentation on MDA profiles the focus of their

1 Available at <https://firstsiteguide.com/craigslist-stats/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20study%20from,14%20minutes%20exploring%20the%20website.> [last retrieved January 2, 2024].

2 Available at: <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/tinder-statistics/> [last retrieved February 3, 2024].

3 A ‘match’ occurs when users mutually swipe right (like) on each other’s profiles.

investigations; some have explored the issue focusing on users' personality, motives of use or personal preferences (Abramova et al. 2016; Ranzini and Lutz 2017), while others have tallied particular linguistic aspects; such as humour (Cantos-Delgado and Maíz-Arévalo 2023) or the multimodal nature of the profiles (Tong et al. 2020; Degen and Kleeberg-Niepage 2021).

Other studies have considered sociodemographic factors such as age (Jönson and Siverskog 2012; Wada et al. 2019), race (Alhabash et al. 2014), gender (Fullick 2013; Ingram et al. 2019) and sexual orientation (Collins 2019; Miller 2019;). Regarding the latter, however, studies are not so numerous. For example, Ingram et al. (2019) provided insightful findings in terms of the number and type of pictures, and linkage of Tinder profiles of heterosexual men and women to Instagram or Spotify accounts, but they did not seem to have conducted an in-depth analysis of the 'about me' sections of the profiles. Contrastingly, Fullick (2013) conducted an exhaustive discursive analysis of the profiles of heterosexual men and women and she established which attributes were considered by both men and women—e.g., “creativity, intelligence, passion; roughly defined as an enthusiasm for something, maturity, confidence, selflessness, honesty, morality, and a good sense of humour” (555)—but her sample size was too small to generalise. Baker (2018) carried out a keyword analysis on datasets of posts of individuals (WSW and WSM) searching for partners using the platform Craigslist, examining how linguistic patterns were linked to sexuality. His findings align with previous research by Baker (2005, 2015), who established that non-heterosexual users (WSW and WSM) make references to gender identity (e.g., stud, feminine, etc.) whereas heterosexuals do not. Additionally, he also reported relevant findings regarding the use of “me” (most often used by WSM) and “we” (more popular among WSW) and the tone of the advertisements (WSW attempted to pre-reject unsuitable candidates by using “no”). However insightful and enlightening, Baker's (2018) chapter solely focuses on keywords and collocations, but it fails to explore n-grams in the dataset. This gap was partially filled by Collins (2019) as his corpus analytic study of MSM's MDA profiles mainly focused on n-grams.

It is also worth mentioning that WSW studies have mostly focused on gender stereotypes associated with lesbian women (Annati and Ramsey 2022; Cahn 1993; Frederick et al. 2021; Gaard 2002; Geiger, Harwood, and Hummert 2006; Giesecking 2020; Kulick 2014).

Therefore, considering that few studies have consistently analysed WSW (see Miller 2019; Cantos-Delgado 2023) this article aims to contribute to the field by exploring WSW's and WSM's linguistic choices on Tinder profiles through a CADS approach, with the hope that its findings will provide a richer picture regarding the expression of gender on WSM's and WSW's Tinder profiles.

3. Methodology

3.1. Ethical Considerations

The *Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0* recommended by the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) and approved on October 6, 2019, were considered to design the data-gathering procedure and during the investigation. In addition, Townsend and Wallace (2016)'s main concerns when dealing with relatively small corpora were also taken into account. On the one hand, Tinder profiles were considered to be public enough to be used in research provided they are appropriately anonymised, and it is not possible to trace the content of the profiles back to the users. This conclusion was reached after considering other studies which had used similar data (see Collins 2019; Cantos-Delgado and Maíz-Arévalo 2023).

On the other, Tinder's Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy⁴ specify that Tinder users “share information with other users when [they] voluntarily disclose information on the service (including [their] public profile)”, that “[they]’re comfortable [with this information] being publicly viewable” and that “[users] can share the profile of other users outside Tinder services through the sharing functionality.” Consequently, it can be argued that by agreeing to Tinder's Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy, users declare that they understand that their Tinder profiles may be shared outside the app.

Despite these considerations, participants' anonymity was preserved at all times to avoid compromising their vulnerability and privacy. All profiles were assigned an ID number and all person-identifying information that users may have included in their profiles (name, Instagram/Snapchat/OnlyFans username) was blinded.

3.2. Data Gathering

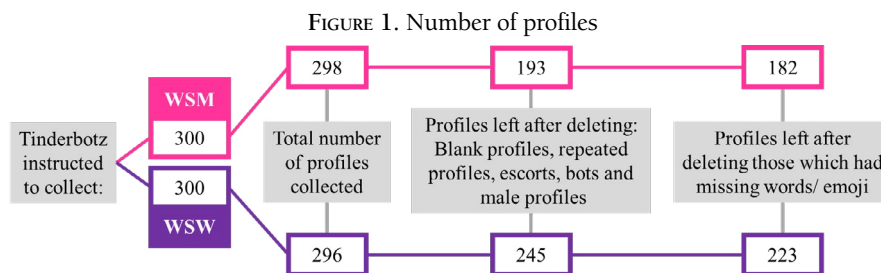
The scraping tool *TinderBotz*⁵ was used to collect profiles to build the corpus. It was designed to identify the linguistic elements publicly displayed on Tinder profiles (i.e., biography), compile them, and export them as a CSV file. To allow a greater homogeneity of the sample and to minimise data contamination by nuanced variables, *TinderBotz* was instructed to collect profiles in the London area. To collect data from both WSW and WSM, the bot's gender and that of the

4 Available at <https://policies.tinder.com/privacy/intl/es-es/#how-we-share-info> [last retrieved January 2, 2024].

5 Available at <https://github.com/frederikme/TinderBotz> [last retrieved February 5, 2022].

profiles it ought to scrape were modified accordingly. On March 14, 2022, the bot was programmed to scrape 300 profiles from WSW and WSM respectively, in their early twenties (18-24). All the users were based in London (average age=23.52).

The process took 8.3 hours. Due to some glitches and connection problems, the data sample scraped by the bot consisted of 298 profiles of WSM and 296 of WSW. Then, the sample was cleaned with the help of a fellow researcher⁶ by deleting blank or incomplete profiles (unfinished sentences), repeated profiles, profiles belonging to male users and profiles advertising escort services. The final sample was constituted by a total of 405 profiles; 182 from WSM and 223 from WSW, as illustrated by Figure 1.



The sample size was deemed fitting having considered Baker's (2018) study on personal adverts and Jones (2021) remarks on the suitability of smaller corpora to analyse greatly homogeneous texts—women's (18-25 y.o.) Tinder profiles in the London area.

In his study, Baker established both theoretically (through the definition of restricted language in Halliday, MacIntosh and Stevens 1964), and empirically (piloting a 4000-word subcorpus) that using smaller-than-average corpora to approach texts such as personal adverts is appropriate. Dating app profiles and personal adverts have similar motivations (written by people seeking a sexual or relationship-oriented connection) and are both published by the authors on a digital platform. Considering the character limit to which Tinder profiles (but not Craigslist personal adverts) must adhere, it is not surprising that the average number of words in Tinder profiles is smaller by 78.45% than that of personal adverts (23.57 vs. 109.5 w/profile). Consequently, the ratio is also maintained regarding corpus size (11,235 vs. 43,308 words). This considered, Baker's (2018) arguments that justify the utilisation of smaller corpora to address restricted

⁶ We would like to extend our gratitude to Julio San Román Cazorla for his help in this step of the data gathering method.

language texts (i.e., recipes, knitting patterns, obituaries and, naturally, personal adverts) and the representativity of its results are equally applicable to Tinder profiles. Therefore, the present corpus, constituted of 11,235 words, is deemed appropriate and sufficient to explore the most salient tendencies.

3.3. *Corpus Description & Methodological Approach*

As part of their account creation, Tinder users follow two interconnected steps. First, they are given the possibility to describe different aspects of themselves (e.g., gender, work, pets, etc.) in a semi-guided fashion. In other words, users are presented with closed-ended questions whilst also being given the possibility to add their information in a final open-answer option. For instance, to describe their gender, users can choose between: ‘man’, ‘woman’ and ‘beyond binary’ but are also given the possibility to add further details if they desire to do so (e.g., cis woman, trans woman). Users can skip questions and control the information that is publicly displayed in their profiles, hence being intentional choices on their part.

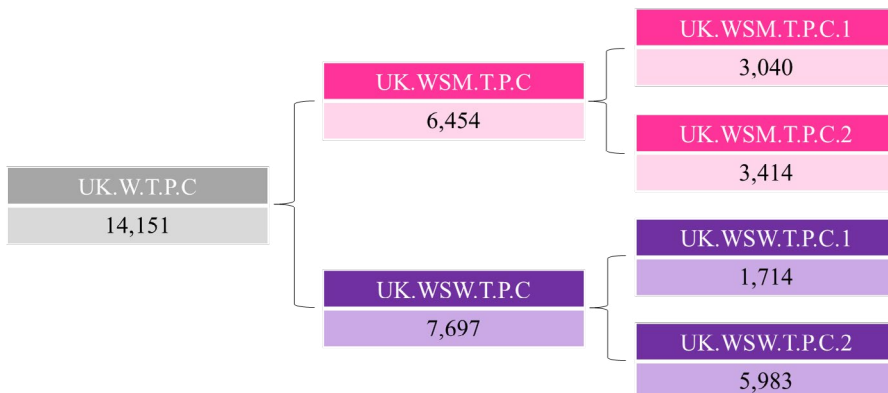
The second step allows participants more creativity as it consists of an open-ended text box (max. 500 characters) known as the ‘about me’ section. Both parts constitute the Tinder profile, together with the profile image. In any case, users are completely in control of what information they display and how they do so. To gather the corpus, both steps were considered as they are closely interrelated. Given the nature of the present study, other key elements such as the profile picture are beyond its scope.

Profiles were subdivided between the semi-guided section and the free text one, and they were mainly analysed independently. Consequently, the UK Women Tinder Profile Corpus (UK.W.T.P.C henceforth) which included 405 Tinder profiles, was constituted by four sub-corpora⁷. As shown in Figure 2, it was composed by 14,151 tokens⁸ (11,235 words; 23.57 words on average per profile). The subcorpora which correspond to the semi-guided section of the profiles were UK.WSM.T.P.C.1, constituted by 3,040 tokens (2,413 words) and UK.WSW.T.P.C.1 which included 1,714 tokens (1,360 words). The subcorpora which included the information found in the ‘about me’ section of the profiles was compiled in UK.WSM.T.P.C.2, constituted by 3,414 tokens (2,710 words) and UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 which included 5,983 tokens (4,750 words).

7 The UK Women Tinder Profile Corpus (UK.W.T.P.C) will be made available upon request, to be utilised for legitimate academic purposes.

8 On Sketch Engine, ‘tokens’ refer to all the words and non-words (punctuation, digits) found in a text.

FIGURE 2. Corpus description



This study follows a quantitative approach, focusing on users' linguistic choices when presenting themselves. For that purpose, UK.W.T.P.C. was compiled and uploaded to the software program Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014). The program choice was motivated by its versatility and the fact that it allows comparison with other ready-to-use corpora such as EnTenTen⁹. Three main functions were employed to explore the UK.W.T.P.C.: Keywords, wordlist and n-grams. Finally, Chi-squared tests and Fisher exact tests were conducted to statistically assess the significance of our findings.

4. Results

UK.WSM.T.P.C.1 and UK.WSW.T.P.C.1 were shorter than UK.WSM.T.P.C.2 and UK.WSW.T.P.C.2. However, this difference was more pronounced in WSW.C. (3,390 words) compared to WSM.C. (297 words).

As illustrated by Figure 3, the keywords tool was used to compare UK.W.T.P.C. with the enTenTen21¹⁰ to identify the most salient discursive characteristics of women's Tinder profiles.

⁹ An English corpus made up of texts collected from the Internet which belongs to the TenTen corpus family available on Sketch Engine.

¹⁰ English Web 2021 corpus.

FIGURE 3. Keywords results

Lemma	Lemma	Lemma	Lemma	Lemma
1 ig-name ...	11 hookup ...	21 omnivore ...	31 swipe ...	41 lover ...
2 non-smoker ...	12 monogamous ...	22 netflix ...	32 carnivore ...	42 heterosexual ...
3 so-name ...	13 spotify ...	23 virgo ...	33 sagittarius ...	43 tinder ...
4 texter ...	14 gastronomy ...	24 flexitarian ...	34 karaoke ...	44 cuddle ...
5 insta ...	15 libra ...	25 smoker ...	35 picnic ...	45 cocktail ...
6 foodie ...	16 pisces ...	26 intj ...	36 t4t ...	46 bisexual ...
7 pubs ...	17 gemini ...	27 aquarius ...	37 pescatarian ...	47 ba ...
8 nightlife ...	18 infp ...	28 ig ...	38 capricorn ...	48 smmap ...
9 aries ...	19 tattoo ...	29 taurus ...	39 astrology ...	49 kapper ...
10 pet-free ...	20 brunch ...	30 scorpio ...	40 entp ...	50 hmu ...

Women’s Tinder profiles, in comparison to other types of digital discourse, prominently feature social networking practices (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, texting), smoking habits (non-smoker, smoker, 420-friendly¹¹), culinary culture and eating habits (e.g., foodie, flexitarian), interests and free time (e.g., pubs, picnic), astrology terms (i.e., astrological signs), personality (e.g., INFP), relationship preferences (e.g., hookup), references to studies (e.g., BA¹²), and computer-mediated linguistic elements (e.g., hmu, xo¹³). Most of these items were found in the semi-guided section of profiles, as expected, since this section guides discourse creation in the profiles.

Minimal differences were observed regarding the keywords in both corpora (UK.WSW.T.P.C & UK.WSM.T.P.C). Keywords such as astrological signs, ‘hookup’, diet and physical activity mentions were listed in both subcorpora. This challenged extended stereotypes of WSW such as ‘the astrologist queer woman’ (Giesekeing 2020), ‘lesbian bed death’ (Frederick et al. 2021), the ‘vegetarian lesbian’ (Gaard 2002), and the ‘sporty lesbian’ (Cahn 1993). The salience of these words/topics in UK.WSM.T.P.C presents WSM as health and fitness-conscious–i.e., concerned about physical appearance–both a stereotypical depiction of WSM, and a mating trait valued by MSW (Lippa 2007).

Finally, although relationship preferences (e.g., hookups, monogamy) were listed in both subcorpora, there was more interest by WSW in polyamory and physical non-sexual intimacy (e.g., “cuddles”), perpetuating the contradictory stereotypes of the ‘hypersexual lesbian’ (Geiger, Harwood, and Hummert 2006) and lesbians’ fondness for non-sexual physical intimacy practices (Frederick et al. 2021).

11 A code used on Tinder to indicate that a person consumes cannabis.

12 Bachelor of Arts University degree.

13 ‘Hmu’ stands for ‘hit me up’ and ‘xo’ for ‘hugs and kisses.’

This is not surprising as these elements are central to e-dating. First, it is reasonable to believe that e-daters will want to meet in person, hence, specifying their hometown is practical. The specification of occupation and/or studies signified mating traits such as present or prospective socioeconomic status (Vanneman and Campbell 1977), intelligence and ambition. These results are in line with previous studies such as Lippa (2007), according to whom lesbian women placed greater significance on their partner’s intelligence compared to heterosexual women. In contrast, heterosexual women prioritised their partner’s ambition, dependability, prosperity, and financial status more than lesbian women did. Heterosexual men valued intelligence in their prospective partners, but they did not prioritise ambition and wealth to the same extent. Finally, providing elements which can be linked to a common context may foster users’ authenticity, as it links their online personas to their real selves.

In terms of hobbies and interests, some differences were observed between UK.WSM.T.P.C.1 and UK.WSW.T.P.C.1, as “music” ($p=.0001$) and “travel” ($p=.00001$) appeared significantly more often in the profiles of UK.WSM.T.P.C.1, whilst “art” or “foodie”, despite being among the top twenty most frequent words in UK.WSW.T.P.C.1, were not mentioned by WSM. Additionally, UK.WSM.T.P.C.1 included significantly more mentions of dogs than UK.WSW.T.P.C.1 ($p=.00001$), whilst the frequency of cat references was similar in both subcorpora ($p=.250$). UK.WSM.T.P.C.1 also included more mentions than UK.WSW.T.P.C.1 of alcohol intake (drink, cocktails, wine, beer, drinking) ($p=.00001$), and smoking habits (smoker, non-smoker) ($p=.00001$). In this regard, WSM seemed to associate themselves more often with the drinking culture than WSW, but they were also significantly more likely to self-describe as “non-smokers” ($p=.0009$) while WSW were equally likely to describe themselves as “smokers” as “non-smokers” ($p=.398$).

Finally, in terms of gender, WSM were significantly more likely to describe themselves as “woman” than WSW ($p=.00001$). Contrastingly, there were some mentions of other gender identities (e.g., transfemme, non-binary) which were only found in UK.WSW.T.P.C.1. Building on Baker (2018), this phenomenon was further explored. It was observed that most gender-marked self-references in WSM were found in UK.WSM.T.P.C.1 subcorpora. However, the majority of gendered self-references in WSW.C were included in UK.WSW.T.P.C.2. Moreover, these elements were more creative, as can be seen in (1):

- (1) [WSW] Genderqueer, butch, neurodivergent leatherdyke.

This can be interpreted as WSM having less gender identity awareness as a result of being heteronormative. Parallely, WSW show their empowerment

through their usage of a wide range of gender identity terms which allows them to self-describe and be seen in a way they feel is authentic. UK.WSM.T.P.C.2 and UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 were explored in greater detail in the following subsections, as they included the most creative section of the profiles.

4.1. *Parts of Speech*

This section includes the results from the wordlists generated in Sketch Engine for UK.WSM.T.P.C.2 and UK.WSW.T.P.C.2; that is, the most frequently occurring terms in each subcorpus. Table 1 contains the total frequency of items present in the subcorpora, and that of the four main parts of speech. UK.WSM.T.P.C.2 was constituted of 953 items (which appeared a total of 2,675 times), and UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 was constituted of 1,510 items (which appeared a total of 4,508 times). Then, the minimum frequency was set to 3, to clean the sample of residual cases, which constituted a significant reduction in terms of items in both subcorpora (by 82.37%, 168 items and 80.93%, 288 items), but a much less marked reduction regarding the total frequency of occurrences (34.47%, 1,753; 32.14%, 3,059). This reduction was consistent for nouns and adjectives but not so much for pronouns and verbs. This can be because nouns and adjectives admit more creativity whilst pronouns are a closed category and verbs generally show less variety (Ringbom 1998).

TABLE 1. Parts of speech' frequency (UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 vs. UK.WSM.T.P.C.2)

Part of speech	Subcorpus	Items (T)	Total frequency	Items (min. 3)	Total frequency (min.3)
Nouns	WSW	829	1,466	108	629
	WSM	497	926	63	430
Pronouns	WSW	18	423	12	415
	WSM	12	289	8	285
Adjectives	WSW	254	421	34	166
	WSM	148	215	14	64
Verbs	WSW	214	825	55	631
	WSM	156	473	36	333

4.1.1. Nouns

Expectedly, nouns were the most frequent parts of speech in the corpus.

In both subcorpora, the 15 nouns with the highest frequencies (see Table 2) included references to social media (ig-name¹⁴, sc-name¹⁵, Spotify), places (London) and height. However, their distribution in both subcorpora significantly varied (social media engagement: $p < .005$; height: $p < .00001$; London: $p = .0003$).

As previously mentioned, physical appearance seemed more relevant for WSM than for WSW (Lippa 2007). Similarly, WSM’s frequent allusions to other social media platforms could signal their interest in fishing for followers, ultimately boosting their self-esteem (Diefenbach and Anders 2022). Contrastingly, WSW’s frequent mentions of London may reflect their high value of geographical proximity due to the scarcity of queer individuals compared to heterosexuals, which difficulties finding nearby matches (Duguay 2019).

TABLE 2. Wordlist of top 15 most frequent words in UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 and UK.WSM.T.P.C.2¹⁶

	WSW	WSM	<i>p</i> value
height	25	45	<.00001**
ig-name	20	47	<.00001**
London	34	4	.0003**
someone	21	12	.916
insta ¹⁷	9	21	.0002**
sc-name	10	17	.005**
time	12	11	.292
love	11	12	.137
friend	16	6	.332
people	15	5	.355

14 “ig-name” stands for ‘Instagram name’ and it was used by the researchers to substitute users’ user name on Instagram.

15 “sn-name” stands for ‘Snapchat name’ and it was used to substitute users’ user name on Snapchat.

16 Chi-squared tests were used to test the statistical significance of the results. In those cases in which the sample was too small (less than 5 items), Fisher exact tests were employed instead.

17 ‘insta’ stands for ‘Instagram.’

	WSW	WSM	<i>p</i> value
life	15	5	.355
fun	8	7	.449
message	4	11	.005*
spotify	1	14	<.00001**
day	11	3	.276
thing	8	6	.663
bit	6	8	.122
swipe	4	12	.003*
music	10	3	.394
instagram	7	6	.502
x	4	8	.067

**=highly significant; *=significant

4.1.2. Pronouns

Pronoun use is especially relevant as “pronouns are, arguably, the single most appropriate linguistic system for the analysis of social identity construction and representation” (Webster 2019, 134). First-person singular pronouns, particularly “I”, “me”, and “my” were most common in both subcorpora, as indicated by Table 3:

TABLE 3. First-person singular pronouns

	WSW	WSM	<i>p</i> value
I	168	108	.507
me	68	43	.742
my	52	42	.133

This is partially unexpected given the trend of omitting first-person subject pronouns in informal digital communication (Biber and Egbert 2020), likely due to character limitations and contextual inference (Yus 2021), as in (2), where the user consistently drops such pronouns:

(2) [WSM]

Kiwi in the UK. About to move to London 🌍
 Uninjured gym rat. Love powerlifting and strongman. 🏋️

Little bit of a mess, but that comes with living on the other side of the world right? Swiftie, coffee fiend feminist and travel lover. Not a huge part here but enjoy a bevvie or two at the pub.

Subject dropping as the norm makes the use of singular first-person pronouns notable, as in (3), where “I” is used in eight out of nine clauses.

- (3) [WSW] I have a good sense of humour, I like to go for walks at the park, go to museums, see movies (except drama, I cry too much) and I love dogs, specially my baby girl, Frida.

The frequency of “me” is lower than that of “I”, contrary to Baker’s findings (2018), suggesting a preference for active roles among both WSW and WSM, with WSW stressing their “individualised identity and practice” (Webster 2019, 143).

Regarding second-person pronouns, WSM used “you” more frequently than WSW. As in (4), the use of “you” often collocates with “if...” as they frequently constitute *sine qua non-conditions* a potential match should fulfil:

- (4) [WSM] If you have a dachshund please swipe right 📍 [T:H] Ig: IG-name

Both groups primarily used “we” and seldomly employed “us” or “our,” partially aligning with prior research showing higher “we” frequency among WSW (see Table 4). However, unlike Baker’s (2018) findings, in this study, “we” was only occasionally used to suggest a relationship with potential responders as in (5), where the user mentions a prospective friendship:

- (5) [WSW] Studying psychology, I don’t know anyone the city, so im looking for someone to show me around a little, hopefully we could be friends.

TABLE 4. First-person plural pronouns

	WSW	WSM	<i>p</i> value
We	12	5	.62
Us	3	1	1
Our	1	3	.148

Gender-identifying pronouns, like “she/her” and “they/them”, were more prevalent in UK.WSW.TPC.2 ($p=.0008$), suggesting WSW’s inclination to specify gender identity and preferred pronouns, unlike WSM; as in (6).

(6) [WSW] nb¹⁸ lesbian, they/them, call me kay

4.1.3. Adjectives

UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 had 254 unique adjectives compared to 148 in UK.WSM.T.P.C.2. Only 34 adjectives in UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 and 14 in UK.WSM.T.P.C.2 appeared three times or more. The three most frequent adjectives in UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 were “new”, “good” and “open”, presenting WSW as ‘open to new experiences.’ Parallely, the most common adjectives in UK.WSM.T.P.C.2 were “good”, “more”, and “funny”, highlighting the importance of humour for WSM as noted by Cantos-Delgado and Maíz-Arévalo (2023). Differences among subcorpora were not significant.

4.1.4. Verbs

The most recurrent verb in both subcorpora is “to be” (183 tokens in UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 and 97 in UK.WSM.T.P.C.2). This was expected as it serves as a relational process (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) for expressing self-defining attributes, as in (7), but also because it is the most frequent auxiliary verb in English (Quirk et al. 2004).

(7) [WSM] I am a foodie and I love my beauty sleep

Interestingly, “to be” is significantly more common in WSWC.2 than in WSMC.2 ($p = <.00001$). Its use as a copulative link between the subject pronoun and the attribute is similar in both corpora. Nonetheless, WSW used it more frequently as an auxiliary verb in more active tenses (like present continuous) than WSM, presenting them as more active. Other auxiliary verbs like “have” or “do” appeared in a lower but practically equal frequency in both subcorpora. Both were also used lexically, as in (8), although not as often:

(8) [WSM] I have kids and I’d like to have more

Auxiliary verb usage was similar in both corpora (excluding “to be”). WSW utilised the lexical verb “like” more frequently than WSM ($p = .028$), suggesting a greater tendency for WSW to express preferences explicitly, as in (9):

¹⁸ “nb” stands for ‘non binary.’

- (9) [WSW] Im new to this and I’m looking for someone to take control. I like to be a submissive but want to feel a vibe with someone before we get to the bedroom. I am married and a mum to two boys. So I’m not super skinny.

WSW also employ the verb “tell” significantly more than WSM ($p=.021$), typically in the imperative form (61% of the cases), to assess compatibility with potential matches, as in (10). Contrastingly, WSM rarely use this construction:

- (10) [WSW] Tell me your favourite book so I can judge you.

4.2. N-grams

The n-gram function in Sketch Engine retrieved sequences of items found in the corpora.

4.2.1. UK.WSW.TPC.1 vs. UK.WSM.TPC.1

The longest n-gram in these subcorpora were 4-grams (see Table 5). The UK.WSM.TPC.1 (items:95; $f^{19}=386$) included more 4-grams than the UK.WSW.TPC.1 (items:40; $f=136$).

TABLE 5. N-grams in UK.WSW.TPC.1 and UK.WSM.TPC.1

4-grams	WSW	WSM	p value
Social media engagement (T)	9	37	.379
Active in social media	9	30	.659
not on social media	0	7	.198
Relationship goals (T)	13	15	.024*
want to have kids	0	2	1
Looking for a relationship	8	7	.081
looking for something serious	0	2	1
looking to make friends	3	0	.017*
looking for someone to	2	4	.653

*=significant

19 ‘f’ stands for ‘total frequency.’

References to social media engagement (whether promoted or vindicated) occurred most often in UK.WSM.T.P.C.1. Parallely, WSW were significantly more likely to indicate their relationship goals than WSM, extending prior research suggesting that WSM use Tinder for various purposes (Sumter, Vandenbosch, and Ligtenberg 2017; Kallis 2020) to WSW as well. However, they reported different goals; WSM favouring long-term romantic relationships and WSW also seeking community-building through the app (Pym, Byron and Albury 2021), rather than solely pursuing rapid romantic involvement, a stereotype known as “U-haul” (Annati and Ramsey 2022).

4.2.2. UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 vs. UK.WSM.T.P.C.2

A selection of the most relevant results are displayed on Table 6.

TABLE 6. N-grams in UK.WSW.T.P.C.2 and UK.WSM.T.P.C.2

n-grams	WSW	WSM	<i>p</i> value
6-grams (T)	items:1; f=2	items:0; f=0	-
Let' s go for a drink	2	0	1
My goal in life is to	2	0	1
5-grams (T)	items:4; f=8	items:2; f=4	-
way to win me over	0	2	.09
I do n't use this	0	2	.09
an easy way into my	2	0	.51
4-grams (T)	items:16; f=34	items:7; f=15	-
looking for something serious	0	2	.089
looking for someone to	4	2	1
bonus points if you	2	0	1
I like to go	2	0	1
with a passion for	2	0	1
3-grams (T)	items:73; f=170	items:29; f=79	-
I like to	6	0	.180
I do n't	4	14	.00*
Tell me your	4	0	.310

*=significant

The UK.WSW.TPC.2 included two 6-grams. “My goal in life is to” was used jocularly (11), challenging the stereotype of the ‘humourless lesbian’ (Kulick 2014). Also counter stereotypically, “Let’s go for a drink” was used to show initiative (Rose, Zand and Cini 1993).

(11) [WSW] My goal in life is to lose every game of never have I ever

WSM used the 5-grams “way to win me over” and “I don’t²⁰ use this [Tinder]+much/often” to stress their unavailability while WSW self-presented more cooperatively (e.g., “an easy way into my+heart/contacts”).

WSM’s tendency to highlight relationship goals observed in UK.WSM.TPC.1 was also found in UK.WSM.TPC.2—e.g., “looking for something serious.” Contrastingly, those in UK.WSW.TPC.2 were more varied, including some focused on ‘the other’ (“bonus points if you”) and others alluding to themselves (“I like to go”, “with a passion for”).

More 3-grams were found in UK.WSW.TPC.2 than in UK.WSM.TPC.2. “I like to” was used by WSW to indicate hobbies (15), but also as a figure of speech, or to indicate personal preferences.

(15) [WSW] I like to walk endlessly or just watch movies all day whatever u like

“I don’t” was employed by WSM to redirect potential matches to other social media as in (12):

(12) [WSM] IG-name Message me 🙅 I don’t check this much

This might be interpreted as users presenting as ‘hard to get’, aligning with the stereotype that men should initiate romantic relationships (McCarty and Kelly 2015), as in (13):

(13) [WSM] I don’t message first! 🙄🙄

Contrary to prior studies (Baker 2018) and stereotypes portraying lesbian women as angry, humourless and defensive (Geiger, Harwood, and Hummert 2006; Kulick 2014), the “I don’t” 3-gram was significantly less recurrent in UK.WSW.TPC.2, and always used humorously (14):

20 Sketch Engine processes “n’t” and “s” as independent tokens.

- (14) [WSW] I swear I don't wear cowboy boots as often as my profile suggests. I take hot showers so I can practice burning in hell.

5. Conclusion

The corpus-assisted analysis of WSW's and WSM's Tinder profiles has contributed to and expanded previous studies on e-dating profiles (Baker 2018) by providing a more complete portrait of women's self-presentation strategies, interests and motivations for using MDAs.

The corpus used to explore WSM's linguistic strategies was smaller than that of WSW's. However, WSM included more information in the semi-guided section of the profile than WSW did. This may be due to a combination of different factors. First, the male-female ratio is imbalanced and WSM get more matches (and messages) than they can sometimes handle (Tyson et al. 2016), hence the relevance of having an attractive or original profile is reduced. Contrastingly, in the interaction among WSW, gender roles are renegotiated and both (or rather, neither) party is expected to behave as the initiator; hence, more elaborate 'about me' sections may be expected to provide more cues for interaction. Additionally, careful self-presentation may also be preferred so as to mitigate possible misunderstandings (Smith 2022).

All in all, not many differences were observed in the profiles of WSW and WSM (e.g., work, relationship status, astrology). However, WSW had a greater sense of identity, not only concerning gender (e.g., "nb lesbian") but also by frequently alluding to themselves (e.g., "I") and their interests (e.g., "I like"). They also seemed to resort to Tinder not only as a platform to find romantic/sexual relationships but also to find a (local/online) community and in search of friendships. Contrastively, WSM frequently alluded to their social media engagement and redirected users to Instagram or Snapchat either as a way to filter matches or to fish for followers. They also tended to highlight beauty/fitness-related attributes (e.g., gym rat, vegetarian, height).

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