

The Role of References and Emotions in Creating Deceptive Messages on Online Dating Websites: A Case Study of English and Polish

Anna Kuzio

The Faculty of English, Department of Humanities, University of Zielona Góra, Zielona Góra, Poland

Email address

a.kuzio@in.uz.zgora.pl

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Abstract

Deception might be characterized by a variety of behaviors, both verbal and non-verbal, that are aimed at deliberately making a receiver believe in statements of a sender of a message. Particular techniques used by deceivers might be, however, detected because many researchers reveal certain cues that are characteristics of deception. Liars are believed to use pronouns in a particular way, but the amount and way personal information is provided is common among deceivers as well. Online communication seems to be a phenomenon that allows users to stay anonymous thanks to deception because detecting lying only through linguistic behaviors proves to pose more difficulties deprived of non-verbal communication cues. Nevertheless, the research that is presented and described in this paper aim at revealing deception that might be observable in profiles on online dating profiles. The two websites chosen for this research are: dating.telegraph.co.uk and swatka.pl. For the purpose of this paper, samples of short utterances presented in twenty male and twenty female profiles from one Polish and one English dating page were analyzed and some fragments selected from them will be presented and analyzed in more details in this paper.

Keywords

Deception, Online Dating, Deceptive messages, Emotions, References, Intercultural Communication

1. Introduction

Some studies indicate that every day people tell one to two lies a day [6] [8]. These include lies told either to a stranger, a peer, a colleague, a friend, a family member, or even a partner, what is more; these lies vary from so called “white lies”, through minor ones, even to serious lies. Due to significant development in communication between people on different levels, namely: text messages and online communications, including chatrooms, social media communicators and communicators in general, people, as well have “upgraded” their deception patterns, so they suit modern technology.

Deception might be described by a diversity of behaviors, both verbal and non-verbal, that are aimed at deliberately making a receiver believe in statements of a sender of a message [20]. Specific techniques exploited by deceivers might be, however, detected because many researchers reveal certain cues that are characteristics of deception.

Liars are believed to use pronouns in a particular way, but the amount and way personal information is provided is

common among deceivers as well [17]. Online communication appears to be a phenomenon that allows users to stay anonymous thanks to deception because detecting lying only through linguistic behaviors proves to pose more difficulties deprived of non-verbal communication cues. Nevertheless, the research that is presented and described in this paper aim at revealing deception that might be observable in profiles on online dating profiles.

2. Theoretical Overview

Communication in the Internet might take different forms and, as everything that is connected with the Internet, it might have its pros and cons. Due to the Internet people from various corners of the world might make friendships and have constant contact, but users of the Internet might also encounter real threats [11]. What is more, communication in the Internet is commonly called a “computer-mediated communication (CMC)” [15]. Nevertheless, the danger that might be a very frequent disadvantage of the communication online is deception that might be, however, discovered when using

certain techniques or sticking to the “interpersonal deception theory (IDT)” by Buller and Burgoon [3]. Masip, Garrido and Herrero [14] provide, however, the definition of deception. They [14] perceive deception as:

“the deliberate attempt, whether successful or not, to conceal, fabricate, and/or manipulate in any other way factual and/or emotional information, by verbal and/or nonverbal means, in order to create or maintain another or others a belief that the communication himself or herself considers false.”

According to the IDT, these are both sides of communication processes that might be using lying [3]. What is more, deception might appear on different levels and it might be observable in gestures, mimics, voice or even language used and the last aspect will be analyzed in this paper [12]. Although detecting deception is a difficult task, there are some features that indicate using lying by people who communicate with each other [10]. Picornell [17] claims also that deception in written texts is easier for deceivers but more difficult to be discovered.

Furthermore, these are rather longer and complex conversations that allow others to detect deception but single sentences might also reveal the attempts to lie [3]. What is more, exchanging messages constantly at the same time is a situation in which the sender and receiver interact frequently and deception is more likely to be observed [3]. The constant interaction between interlocutors gives a liar less time for analyzing a situation, thinking over and preparing a lying answer so a liar might make a mistake and his or her real intentions might be revealed [3]. Nevertheless, a receiver of a message has less time for the analysis of it as well, so an observer of a conversation is more likely to detect deception [3].

What is more, a person is more likely to identify a liar on the basis of his or her single speech or written text, but that ability is diminished when that person becomes a receiver of the message that a liar sends [3].

Furthermore, DePaulo et al. [7] claim that the stronger motivation to lie is the better predictable and observable the lying is. According to Burgoon et al. [4], a liar tries hard to be a controller of the message he or she sends and uses vocabulary that is analyzed by that person in advance of sending the message. There are certain linguistic behavior that might show deception. One of such behaviors might be trying hard to produce such an utterance that a receiver of the message might perceive as sincere and true, but a receiver or a reader of a message might become suspicious because of certain cues indicating lying [1] [2] [18].

What is more, a deceiver has to decide how many and what kind of details he or she might provide to make his or her texts truthful [5]. According to *leakage theory*, so called “leakages and clues” that are “verbal and nonverbal” are used by deceivers [3] [5]. Such cues might be, for example, producing shorter texts that are usually thought over and prepared carefully as well as using less positive expressions [1] [8].

DePaulo et al. [7] provide however further features of

deception and these are, for example, using “fewer details”, presenting less possible information, providing some contradicting elements in utterances or delaying answers in time. Burgoon and Buller [3] claim, that liars are believed by a majority of people to avoid immediate contact and produce utterances characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity. What is more, Burgoon and Buller [3] provide the characteristics of the language used by liars in description: “deceivers’ statements were characterized by brevity, vagueness, uncertainty, non-immediacy, and non-specificity (e.g., “everybody went drinking” versus “I went drinking”). This had the effect of minimalizing the amount of concrete and verifiable detail that deceivers supplied and of disassociating deceivers from what they were saying. Other linguistic patterns were contrary to predictions but also had the effect of making deceptive answers more pallid and less personal than truthful ones. [3]

Nevertheless, a liar might even just omit significant information [3] [10] [13]. What is more, a deceiver tries to avoid providing a receiver with too much information because that person is convinced that too much details might reveal the act of lying [13] [16]. Moreover, liars might even add further but unimportant information [9] [12] [15].

Further features that might be observable in the texts of liars and suspects are, for example, “levelers, modifiers, and group references” [3]. Deceivers might even use rather “present-tense verbs” instead of other tenses [3]. As far as references are concerned, Masip et al. [14] add, that liars prefer to refer to groups of people in general to divert a receiver’s attention from a lying person. According to Burgoon et al. [4], deceivers use pronouns referring to themselves less than third person pronouns that divert the attention from themselves as well.

What is more, the research conducted by Picornell [17] reveals as well, that deceivers use few pronouns like ‘I’, ‘my’ or ‘me’ and they build ‘short clause’. Deceivers might even switch gradually from first person pronouns to put the emphasis on other pronouns when they start lying and making up false stories [17]. Nevertheless, other researchers might have slightly different opinions on the use of words that make reference to deceivers themselves and to other people because Buller and Burgoon [1] add that liars might use fewer both ‘self-references’ and ‘group-references’.

Moreover, Vrij [20] claims that deceivers usually use terms that generalize the reality and these might be such expressions as, for example, ‘always, never, nobody or everybody’. These general terms might also help deceivers with diverting the attention from themselves and their deceptions and the example of a liar’s answer to the question “Do you smoke?” might be such an answer: “Nobody smokes in this house”, so a deceiver might make a group, not himself or herself, responsible for a particular action [20]. Deceivers are perceived to not only refer to groups and other people that themselves but also using so called “tentative constructions” like, for example, “may”, ‘might’, ‘could’, ‘I think’ and ‘I guess’ as well as ‘ritualized speech’ that might be exemplified by such expressions like ‘you know’, ‘well’, ‘really’, and ‘I

mean' [20].

What is more, statements made by deceivers might be indirect and deceivers might not refer directly to the aspects they mention or discuss [7] [16] [19]. Burgoon and Buller [3] add as well, that utterances of deceivers are not as "direct/relevant, clear, and personalized" as these of people who tell or write true information about themselves.

The opinions of researchers on the characteristic features of deceiving people might differ slightly in some aspects, but generally they overlap and give a quite consistent image of a deceiver. As not all features are possible to be detected when taking into account and examining the utterances of users of online dating websites, some of these features seem to be observable and the research conducted on the basis of profiles on these websites that is the aim of this paper that will be discussed.

3. Analysis

3.1. Method

This research is aimed at analyzing descriptions placed in profiles of users of online dating websites in two websites that have purpose to help people meet their future partners. The two websites chosen for this research are: dating.telegraph.co.uk [21] and swatka.pl. [22]. For the purpose of this paper, samples of short utterances presented in twenty male and twenty female profiles from one Polish and one English dating page were analyzed and some fragments selected from them will be presented and analyzed in more details in this paper. What is the main interest in the descriptions put in users' profiles is the amount of detailed information, negative words as well as the use of references to

oneself and to others. This research is also conducted to check the way users of online dating websites provide personal data in descriptions of themselves and the results are to be compared with the theoretical part and the opinions of previous researchers. Significant elements like placed in these profiles will also be taken into consideration as the ones that might help with the identification of truthfulness of these profiles.

3.2. Results

After the analysis of all the profiles chosen for this research, a common feature might be observable in all the profiles that is the table containing basic information about the users. Every user might choose pieces of information that are available in the profile and fill up the table, so this data is not provided by users themselves and cannot be treated as the samples of the utterances produced by users themselves and will not be analyzed in this paper. Nevertheless, there is an option available on these dating websites that every user might describe his or her personality or favorite activities in his or her own words as well as every user might provide the information about what or whom that person is looking for on a particular website. All the users of analyzed profiles filled in the gaps but not all of them provided more information about themselves by describing them with their own words. The analyzed profiles contain long as well as short descriptions of their users and in most cases the shorter the description is the more deceptive the user of the profile seems to be.

The below Table 1. presents the results of the research and the numbers of profiles in which particular elements that might indicate deception as well as the ones used rather by truth tellers are taken into consideration.

Table 1. The number of profiles in which linguistic elements that indicate deception were used (PW. - profiles of Polish Women, EW. - profiles of English-speaking Women, PM. - profiles of Polish Men, EM. - profiles of English-speaking Men).

| No. | Observable use many self-references | Avoidance of the use of self-references | No self-references | References to the others | Personal data and details | Generalizations, no specific data, enumerating | Lack of personal data or almost no personal data | Words indicating negative emotions, anger, etc. |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1. PW. | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| 2. EW. | 3 | 4 | - | 4 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| 3. PM. | - | 4 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 1 |
| 4. EM. | 3 | 4 | - | 7 | 4 (or 3) | 6 (or 5) | 5 | - |

4. Discussion

4.1. The Use of References

The attention shall be firstly paid to the Polish online dating website. What differs the utterances made by Polish users of dating websites from English-speaking users is the fact that the Polish language is constructed in such a way that Polish users often do not refer to themselves only by the use of pronouns because the construction of Polish sentences allows interlocutors to omit pronouns and express the first person singular by using verbs in proper forms themselves.

Consequently, the references of the Polish users to themselves are made in their profiles mostly by verbs but in some profiles there were significantly more such references than in others.

The Table 1 presents the data concerning the references to oneself and others as well. According to the research, the users of 19 profiles out of 40 all used pronouns and other words that refer to other people, while the users of 17 profiles avoided the use of self-referring pronouns. In contrast, only 8 users of the dating websites referred to themselves without any problem and hesitation, whereas 8 Polish users used no references at all or only few references to themselves. What is more, no Polish men used self-references in an obvious way and the largest number of them did not use first person pronouns at all. The

largest number of English-speaking men used many third person pronouns or other words that referred to various entities just to divert the attention of women, who might have read their profiles, from themselves.

Moreover, these were all of the users of the English website who uses at least single pronouns or other references, while a few users of the Polish website did not use references at all.

The examples derived from the selected profiles will be now presented and discussed. Taking into account the first example:

(1)

"O mnie:

poznasz mnie to się dowiesz

Szukam:

poważnego związku".

[About me:

if you meet me you will get to know me

I am looking for:

a serious relationship]

This example is taken from the female profile and the owner of this profile uses only one reference to herself indicated by the pronoun *mnie* that has its English equivalent *me*. What is more, this person refers to other users by the verb *poznasz* in *poznasz mnie to się dowiesz* that might be spoken in English as *if you meet me you will get to know me*. The pronoun *you* that is spoken in Polish as *ty* is not needed in Polish because it is included in the verb *poznasz*. Nevertheless, a person that owns the exemplified profile makes just one reference to herself and one to others but she also does not provide any additional information about herself despite the fact that she is looking for a serious relationship. This profile seems to be rather enigmatic and might be treated as the example of deception.

The next user who is also a woman uses few references to herself but also refers to receivers, that is visible in this fragment:

(2)

"Jeśli chcesz mnie poznać to napisz, jeśli odwzajemnię zainteresowanie twą osobą to dam o tym znać"

[If you want to know me then write, if I reciprocate your interests I will let you know.]

The reference to the owner of the profile to herself is indicated by the pronoun *mnie*, the English equivalent of which is *me*, but this person uses also verbs in a nominative case that are: *(jeśli) odwzajemnię (zainteresowanie)* and *dam (o tym znać)*. The same meanings might be expressed in English as: *if I reciprocate your interests* and *I will let you know*. Pronouns are default in Polish and that is why they are difficult to define but they are still used in a kind of invisible way. If a person omits them even when they might be used that behavior might be similar to the behavior of a deceiver. Furthermore, the author of this fragment provides also in her profile some information about her interests but they are just enumerated and no references are used. This might be proven by the example copied from this profile:

(3)

"Moje Zainteresowania:

GOTOWANIE

PSYCHOLOGIA

PRZYRODA

WETERYNARIA

WOLONTARIAT

ZDROWIE

ORGANIZACJA PRZYJEC ITP".

[My hobbies:

COOKING

PSYCHOLOGY

NATURE

VETERINARY MEDICINE

VOLUNTEERING

HEALTH

ORGANIZING PARTIES etc."]

The user of this profile provides only single slogans but builds no sentences. Such a behavior might be explained as avoiding responsibility for own words and keeping distance with other users of the dating website.

Another fragment taken from female profile is the example of rather truthfulness and it can be found in the following way:

(4)

Uwielbiam gotować, polubiłam również małe wyprawy górskie, jazda na rowerze, spotkania ze znajomymi...oj znajdzie się trochę tego ;)

[I love to cook, I liked the small mountain trips, cycling, meeting friends ... oh, there are more things like that]

This woman refers to herself when she describes her interests, but she also uses verbs that create positive atmosphere. The sender of the message seems to send positive emotions to every reader as well. Such a linguistic behavior is the exact opposite of deception.

Nevertheless, Polish men tended to avoid references all the time and this might be proven even by these example:

(5)

"Prosty Facet z wadami i zaletami jak każdy, bardzo nieśmiały niestety:)" and "normalny, spokojny, odpowiedzialny, troskliwy, zapracowany i szczerzy gość".

[A simple guy having good and bad sides like anybody, unfortunately very shy:] "and" normal, quiet, responsible, caring, hard-working and honest guy]

Both users provided features of their characters but they omitted self-references as if they did not identify themselves with these features and wanted to distance themselves from these characteristics.

The attention should be given to the English dating website on which there were users who give longer and often more detailed descriptions of themselves in their profiles. The first user that was taken into account is a woman who uses large number of references to herself like, for example, *I, my, me, myself* as well as *we* is used to refer to her and her children, while *he* and *him* is used to refer to a man whom she might meet on this dating website. Although she uses references to others and to a group, the number of them might not be even compared to the number of self-references. Consequently, this profile is definitely opposite to profiles that might be owned by deceivers.

Other profiles on the English websites are not so truthful as the one described above. The next profile the owner of which is also a woman might be rather deceptive because this woman avoids the use of self-references. She starts her description from these sentences:

(6)

A friend asked me, tell me who you really are. I am not interested in adjectives. I want to know what make you stand out from the rest of the girls out there.

Although she uses pronouns like *me* and *I*, she tries to divert the attention from herself and makes her friend responsible for her own words. That is why she uses her friend's words, she introduces a citation from a movie: "I am just a simple girl, standing in front of a man, asking him to love me" and later on she uses pronouns that refer to a group and generalizes common truths:

(7)

Basically I believe before we can find love, we need to love ourselves first. We cannot truly give love abundantly to someone else, until we have learned how to love ourselves..

The use of the pronoun *we* outnumbers the pronoun *I* but the group reference is made also by the pronoun *ourselves*. The user of this profile adds also further references to a group and to life that are observable in this fragment:

(8)

We are living on borrowed time, so let's laugh and enjoy the journey. Life does not have to be complicated, it is usually the simple things in life that make us laugh, and we remember the simple things in life because of who we experienced it with. Someone wrote: 'It's not who I can live with...it's who I can't live without', and that really says it all!

This woman avoids giving the information about herself and uses the word *someone* that is used very frequently further in her profile. She obviously aims at the emphasis of other people so the owner of this profile might be treated as a deceiver.

Another female user of a profile on the dating website avoids using pronouns in general and she might prefer to produce a kind of everyday speech this way, but such a linguistic behavior might also indicate a deceptive behavior. That person might simply try to avoid responsibility for her words, which makes lying easier:

(9)

Kind of an artsy fartsy girl at heart, albeit not much time to indulge in aforesaid artsy fartsyness. Love music but don't listen to enough. I do love people with the ability to make me laugh and put the twinkle in my eyes.

Pronouns that indicate self-reference are used just three times while there might be used more of them. There pronouns to refer to herself are *I*, *me* and *my*. Worth mentioning is also the fact that in the fragment: "I do love people with the ability to [...]" the word *do* is used to make a strong claim and assure a reader as well as the sender of the message herself about the truth of this statement. Such a behavior is characteristic of deceptive people who do not believe in their statements but they try to make themselves believe in it and feel more authentic in eyes of receivers of their messages.

The following fragment also presents some deceptive behaviors:

(10)

Who knows if the attractive stranger has in fact their partner around the corner in the wine section? So here I am, though of course I think I'm a great catch, it's all down to the feeling two people have when they meet. Is there that frisson which promises so much more.

This man seems to avoid making self-references because he uses only three first person pronouns in this fragment. He seems to be uncertain or doubtful by asking a rhetoric question. Nevertheless, he also uses the statement *I think* that might indicate uncertainty characteristic of deception as well. Avoiding self-references is another proof of deceptive behavior.

The author of another fragment that will be presented is also a man. The statement made by him reads like this:

(11)

I hope I would be considered as kind, emotionally intelligent, reflective, amusing, irreverent, cheeky and good company I do however like to have time to myself.

Although this man uses first person pronouns and enumerates his features, he seems to be not sure about them because he uses the statement *I hope* before providing these features. He might try to feel secure and irresponsible for providing these features and he does not want to feel like a liar if these features are untrue.

The above examples are just a part of the whole script that was analyzed in this research and all of them will not be presented here because there were many tendencies of the users of these profiles that repeated in a few profiles. Nevertheless, references are not the only characteristic features that help with detecting deception and that appeared in many profiles but providing personal information is also the aspect that will be taken into consideration in the following subsection

4.2. Personal Information and Emotions

The analyzed profiles might differ in the amount of information provided by their users as well as in the way the pieces of information are presented. It is already known that if a person avoids revealing some details about himself or herself that person behaves like a deceiver. One of the female users of the Polish website does not add any further information about herself despite the fact that she cannot stand lying. This statement might send very negative emotions not only because of the verb that is used, but this user puts also many exclamation marks at the end of the sentence:

(12)

nie trawię kłamstwa !!!!!!!!!!!!!

[I hate lying!!!!!!!!!!!!].

A person who claims that he or she does not like lying and who does not provide any other information about himself or herself might be perceived as a deceiver.

Another woman does not provide any significant information about herself despite a few very general features that in fact do not reveal anything significant, but she makes a

statement that is characterized as negative. This statement is:

(13)

nie lubię chamskich chłopaków
[I don't like brutish boys]

which means that she does not like brutish boys. This woman not only uses negation that reveals her emotional attitude, but she also uses the adjective that is negative in its meaning. The use of such words and negative forms reveals anger and frustration that accompanies deception. Even though this woman does not directly interact with other users of this website, negative emotions are emitted from herself.

Furthermore, the next female user of the dating website avoids providing personal information as well because she only writes this:

(14)

jestem osobą miłą i bardzo wesołą ale mam problem co do poznawania nowych osób

[I am polite and cheerful but I have problems with making new acquaintances]

which means that she is polite and cheerful but she has problems with making new acquaintances with somebody. Any deception is not obvious here but the fact that she writes little about herself might be a characteristic of deceivers.

Nevertheless, a male profile in which the user does not provide any additional information about himself might be also treated as the profile of a deceiver. That person leaves just a short piece of information:

(15)

Napisz a odpowiem
[I will answer if you write to me.]

which means I will answer if you write to me.

There are also users who provide some information that is just general or they make someone else responsible for the statements they make. One of these examples reads like this:

(16)

I am a worldly, engaging, travelled, cultured, well-mannered, funny, intelligent, sensitive, attractive, sexy, adventurous, twenty words is a lot don't you think, do hyphens count, err. that's it

The above example is characteristic of avoiding detailed information and the user seems be afraid of revealing too much.

What is more, the following example reveals description that might be characterized as very general:

(17)

A friend asked me, tell me who you really are. I am not interested in adjectives. I want to know what makes you stand out from the rest of the girls out there. Seems like a fair enough question, but it took me over 45 minutes before I came up with something as lame as "i am just a simple girl, standing in front of a man, asking him to love me", and that is not even original as it's a quote from the movie Notting Hill. But for it to pop into my head when I was digging deep to answer his question, it got to count for something surely.

This person writes in a complex and indirect way. She uses a quotation from a movie and avoids responsibility for her words. She makes her friend responsible for her own words

and the cited fragment from the movie as well. That might be treated as the behavior of a deceiver.

Another person reveals even that he does not like talking about himself that is stated in this sentence: "Going to keep this short though as I don't particularly like talking about myself either!". This person finishes his utterance with an exclamation mark that reveals strong and probably negative emotions in this case. A person who does not like talking about himself or herself might have something to hide and be likely to deceive others.

The below quotation from one of the profiles is also marked by avoiding responsibility for the provided information because the user makes her friends responsible for the features that she reveals here:

(18)

Asked a few friends... and they say, I'm happy, sociable, caring and a great listener! I enjoy entertaining at home, going out to eat and the Theatre. I love to be by the sea, especially out of season.

In contrast, the following fragments are rather characteristic of truthful users because they send very positive emotions, like in this quotation:

(19)

I am a woman who is Full of Life, Loving, and Loyal and Loves family, & Travel, Ballet, Theatre and cities London is amazing. Loves hot beaches and Bikinis. I'm a positive person and would Love and support the right man.

But they also provide detailed information about themselves, that might be exemplified here:

(20)

I run my own Business and have a hard working ethic. I know the importance of keeping that work-life balance right! I am caring, competitive and thoughtful and very tactile. Whilst conservative in so many ways, I enjoy having an adventure. I love doing the simple things in life like walking along the beach / in the countryside, cuddling up on settee watching a film and talking. I love Majorca and have a Marriott villa just outside Palma which I love visiting in June - can't beat the heat and long sunny evenings. I am looking for someone who can share my interests and just have a great time together.

As it is observable in the above analysis, even though people trust one other and users of dating profiles try to meet new people with whom they might make valuable relationships, many people use techniques that are specific to deception. Nevertheless, these behaviors might not be obvious at the first sight but after a careful analysis one might be suspicious of a particular user that behaves like a deceiver.

To sum up, the largest number of users of online dating websites avoided the use of self-references and many of them referred in their utterances to other people or entities. Just few users included very personal data in their profiles but the majority of people preferred to generalize facts and features or they even resigned from providing any information about themselves at all. What is more, the use of negative expressions and making statements filled with anger characterized mostly female profiles. The reason for this might be the fact that women do not trust men and they react

with aggression to them because they perceive them as liars who hurt them. Nevertheless, even this research proves that men used more techniques specific to deceivers that are generalizations and avoiding giving detailed information about themselves as well as using many references to others in their sentences. The tendency to avoid providing too much personal data was characteristic of comparable numbers of both male and female profiles.

5. Conclusion

The sources that constituted the support for this paper contain the descriptions of cues that are characteristic of deception. These cues might be the avoidance of the use of the first person pronoun *I* as well as providing only general and unimportant information about oneself. What is more, deceivers use tentative expression, the example of which might be the expression *I think*, but they also send such messages that they do not feel responsible for so they might provide false information in them more easily.

Another characteristic feature of deception is using negation, negative expressions and trying to assure receivers that a particular statement is true. The research conducted on the basis of selected profiles from the Polish and English online dating websites reveals many examples of the uses of particular techniques characteristic of deception and discussed in the theoretical part. The majority of the users of these profiles avoid the use of self-references that are visible in the use of the first person pronoun and many of the users tried to use references to others by using third person pronouns or references to a group to divert attention from themselves. Furthermore, the avoidance of providing detailed personal information by the users about themselves was also widely observable in the analyzed profiles as well as using generalizations and unclear explanations or descriptions. Although these features did not appear in all profiles, they were observable in a significant number of them. Consequently, the claim that people seem to widely use deception in online communication might be made, despite the fact that the deception might be not proven only on the basis of the descriptions included in profiles of the users.

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