

Abstract

Online media takes on an increasingly prominent role in contemporary society in shaping the initiation and structuring of romantic contacts. However, little is known empirically about how such processes actually plays out. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the linguistic, semiotic, and interactional creation and negotiation of romantic intimate relationships in heterosexual online dating activities. Within the framework of sociocultural linguistics and feminist linguistics as well as the rather new field of language, gender, and sexuality the dissertation works to empirically ground theories of desire and sexuality. Based on a dataset consisting of naturally occurring user-to-user email and instant messaging interaction, friends' shared readings of online dating profiles, participant observation, and interviews the dissertation presents four journal articles that shed light on different aspects of desire formation.