The role of gender in the processing of dating scripts

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Abstract

The issues under investigation were gender differences in either content or memory discrimination of dating scripts and general examination for differences in memory of typical and atypical events using the script pointer plus tag (SP+T) hypothesis. A total of 52 female and 54 male undergraduates participated. Subjects were enrolled in introductory psychology classes at a large midwest university and were primarily Caucasian, single, and between the ages of 18-21 years. In Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study, items that would possibly occur in 4 different dating scenarios were generated and then rated for typicality. Males and females both generated and rated items similarly in the first 2 phases. In Phase 3, the taped dating stories were presented along with a single-item recognition test which included many of these typical and atypical events. Analyses showed that memory discrimination varied significantly with gender, $F(1, 51) = 4.07$, $p < .05$, and typicality, $F(1, 51) = 395.80$, $p < .0001$, and a significant gender x typicality interaction was found, $F(1, 51) = 7.17$, $p < .01$. Females displayed better memory discrimination overall, especially on atypical items. It was concluded that further investigation on possible gender differences in role, meaning, attention, and social norm affectation of dating scripts may explain differences in memory discrimination.

An important consideration in the study of memory is the role of a schema based framework for representing knowledge. Schema is a term for the natural generic knowledge structures used while information is generalized, organized and integrated into memory. Schemas also aid in retrieval. Scripts are generic schemas that correspond to frequent or conventional activities. Each script contains an ordered sequence of events or actions. When enacting a script, a person calls to mind certain expectations or goals and then attempts to satisfy them (Graesser, Woll, Kowalski, & Smith, 1980). When considering a typical script for "going to the library", a person might expect to: look for reading materials, find reading materials, read or study, and chat with the librarian while checking out materials.

In order to study the specific representations constructed in memory during comprehension of a script, Schank and Abelson (1977) developed a "script pointer plus tag" (SP+T) hypothesis. Studies using this hypothesis (Bower, Black, & Turner, 1979; Graesser, Gordon, & Sawyer, 1979; Graesser et al., 1980) have confirmed the prediction of better memory discrimination for atypical actions in a script than for typical actions. The hypothesis also predicts no memory discrimination for very typical actions. This difference in memory discrimination due to typicality is also often referred to as the "typicality effect" (Bower et al., 1979; Graesser et al., 1979). The SP+T hypothesis was developed on the idea that there is a different basic cognitive representation for typical and atypical information (Woodworth & Schlosberg, 1954).

In order to interpret an activity, a memory representation is constructed. This representation is assumed to contain a "script pointer" to a generic script the person already has for the activity or event. Along with this script pointer, there are "tagged" actions that may be inconsistent, irrelevant, or unrelated to the individual's existing generic script. Each atypical tagged action is stored in memory "as a functionally separate organizational unit" (Graesser et al., 1979, p. 320), and they are more easily discriminated between than the typical aspects of the event that have been cognitively "pointed" toward the already existing generic script. Using the library script example, seeing a librarian or photocopier in the library would be common or expected, and therefore entered into memory with a pointer toward the generic script. However, tying your shoe would not be commonly included in this

hypothetical script. This action would be tagged as unusual and stored as a separate memory structure than the original script.

The SP+T hypothesis can be tested by having a person hear a script containing both typical and atypical items. The subject is then given a single item recognition test containing both typical and atypical items that were orally presented in the story, as well as items typical and atypical to the script but that were not orally presented. Upon searching the memory to recall whether or not a certain typical item was presented, the pointer will be directed to the generic script as a single unit. This will create difficulty in distinguishing between those typical items that were actually heard and those that were not. This, in turn, leads to a great deal of typical false alarms on the recognition test, (i.e., recognizing a typical item as being presented when in fact it had not), as well as many typical hits, (i.e., correctly identifying a typical item that was presented). This false alarm rate of the SP+T hypothesis has been demonstrated for short retention intervals (Bower et al., 1979), as well as longer intervals lasting up to 4 weeks (Graesser et al., 1980). The SP+T hypothesis also predicts better memory discrimination for the atypical events, resulting in more atypical hits and fewer atypical false alarms.

Script theory has recently afforded social scientists an important and useful tool for understanding people's attitudes and beliefs concerning events, primarily because they represent prototypes for how events normally proceed (Ryan, 1988). Reed (1984) found that scripts are easily developed when uncertainty exists about what behavior is appropriate, as it often does in a dating relationship. Roche (1986) described dating as a relatively recent social invention which became the accepted method of selecting a marriage partner in the US around 1920. He went on to claim that important gender differences existed regarding appropriate scripts in the early period of dating.

A person's gender has been thought to be an important influence on the development of his or her dating script. Whitley (1988) defined gender role scripts as "rules of interpersonal interactions that vary according to one's gender; certain behaviors may be required, permitted or forbidden depending on one's gender" (p. 620). People use gender role scripts as cognitive models to guide their behavior during social interactions (such as dating), and these scripts are personalized on the basis of one's individual beliefs about situationally appropriate behavior (Whitley, 1988).

A person's behavior, attitudes, and standards that are involved in the development of their script are also affected by social norms (Sherwin & Corbett, 1985), which can also reflect gender differences. For example, in Western societies there are often strong socialization pressures on young men to be sexually active and young women to be sexually restrained (Gagnon & Simon, 1986). However, the content of people's scripts do not necessarily have to be consistent with social norms, at times they can even be divergent from these norms. Whitley (1988) states that "the behaviors embodied in any one person's script are those that the person has found to bring, or anticipates to bring, the greatest reward in that situation" (p. 620). That which males perceive as a rewarding situation may differ from that which females perceive as rewarding. Other beliefs that affect situational behavior include: that which is appropriate or proper, what the individuals themselves would do, and what they think most other people would do. These are also all components of their dating scripts (Roche, 1986).

With the multidimensional construct of gender role involved, it is not surprising that dating scripts for men and women have previously been found to differ significantly (Rose & Frieze, 1989). Rose and Frieze (1993) found that dating script content reflected a proactive male role and a reactive female role, and that first dates are highly scripted. Regarding the sexual aspect of dating, Roche (1986) found that men were more sexually permissive than women and expect greater sexual intimacy in the early stages of dating. They also expect to be the initiators of sex, while women expect to be the

"gatekeepers" (Ryan, 1988, p. 238). Rechtien & Fiedler (1988) found that women expect men to conform to specific cultivated social rules, including courtesy, before they can be seen as a potential love interest. The same study also reported men scoring significantly higher on action norms representing romantic, obsessive love, while women placed a higher value on monogamy and consideration in a relationship.

The hypothesis regarding possible gender differences in script content was based on this previous research. Research regarding the possibility of gender differences in memory discrimination for scripts of an affective nature is a relatively new area. However, the idea of gender as an important influence on this type of script development lends itself to this possibility. The purpose of this study was to investigate the memory discrimination between typical and atypical events in dating scripts, as well as possible gender differences in memory discrimination and content of these dating scripts. The present study is divided into three phases.

Phase 1, the script generation phase, was used to generate a pool of possible actions that might occur during a 1st date, a 10th monogamous date, a date of an engaged couple, and a date with a spouse of 3 years. In order to increase external validity, these four different dating situations were used in all three phases. Phase 1 also lent itself to a preliminary investigation of qualitative differences between the content of males' and females' dating scripts.

In Phase 2, the typicality rating phase, participants were exposed to items generated for each date scenario by two or more participants in Phase 1, along with potential atypical items generated by the experimenters. The participants in this phase rated each item for typicality. The goal of this phase was to (a) obtain these ratings in order to create the final dating stories for Phase 3, and (b) use these ratings to determine any gender differences between what is considered typical and atypical in content for a given dating scenario.

In Phase 3, the recognition memory phase, materials generated from Phase 1 and Phase 2 were utilized in the creation of two passages for each dating script. Participants listened to one of the two stories for each script, which contained both typical and atypical items. Then they engaged in an intervention period in order to ensure an accurate measure of the memory trace. Finally, they were given a single item recognition test which included items from the passages, as well as items not presented in the passages.

The hypotheses of this study included the expectation of poor discrimination between typical presented and nonpresented items, as well as accurate discrimination between atypical presented and nonpresented items. This would support the typicality effect in the SP+T hypothesis. It was also predicted that there would be gender differences in both the content and memory discrimination of dating scripts.

Phase One: Script Generation

Method

Subjects. Eighteen female and 20 male students from Illinois State University voluntarily participated as subjects for extra credit in their psychology classes. Subjects were single, between the ages of 18-21 years, and primarily Caucasian. English was the primary language of all subjects. Participants were tested in groups of 6-10 and separated according to gender.

Materials. Each subject was asked to individually generate 20 typical actions that would occur during each of four dating scripts. The scripts examined in this study were (a) a 1st date, (b) a 10th monogamous date, (c) an engaged couple on a date, and (d) a couple, married 3 years, on a date. The instructions encouraged the generation of simple or basic events that would ordinarily occur during each of these scenarios. Avoidance of generation of predate and postdate activities such as physical preparation was stressed. Subjects were given a packet of four sheets of paper with a script title placed at the top of each page. Scripts were counterbalanced for order of presentation.

Results and Discussion

A total of 195 different items were generated by at least 2 subjects. Differences and similarities between the free-generation content of male-generated as well as female-generated items in Phase 1 can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Specific Items Generated by Two or More Subjects.

	Male only	Female only	Male & Female	Total
1st Date	01	10	33	44
10th Date	24	05	24	53
Engaged	12	29	22	63
Married	00	00	35	35
Total	37	44	114	195

The engaged couple script had the highest number of items generated (n = 63). This script also had the highest number of items generated exclusively by females (n = 29). It is interesting to note that, of the items generated more than once for the married date, none were generated exclusively by males or females. This could be a possible indication of females and males sharing a more generic, similar script for this scenario at this point in their lives. Taking into consideration the fact that the subject pool consisted of undergraduates, it is likely that this would be the script with which they would have the least episodic experience. However, generation data does not allow conclusions to be drawn regarding gender differences. There is always the possibility that the script contains more information than what was generated, especially since a limit of 20 items was placed on the subjects. The typicality rating phase of this study may reveal some gender differences for the different dating scripts. However, the purpose of the typicality rating phase is to identify those items that are truly typical and atypical (for both genders) of each script for the creation of the final scripted passages used in the recognition memory phase of the study.

Phase Two: Typicality Rating

The typicality rating task was designed to identify typical and atypical dating actions for the construction of phase three material. All actions that were generated by two or more subjects for a given dating scenario were used in this phase of the study and added to a pool of experimenter-generated possible atypical items.

Method

Subjects. Fourteen male and 14 female Illinois State University students who had not previously participated in the study voluntarily participated as subjects for extra credit in their psychology courses. Subjects were single, between the ages of 18-21 years, and primarily Caucasian. Again, English was the primary language of all participants and groups were separated according to gender.

Materials and Procedure. Packets were constructed containing potential typical and atypical actions for each script, grouped under the script title. Each packet contained 302 items, and the order of items was randomized within a script heading. Subjects were instructed to rate each individual action for typicality as related to the script using the following 6-point scale: 1 (*extremely atypical*), 2 (*atypical*), 3 (*unsure, but think atypical*), 4 (*unsure, but think typical*), 5 (*typical*), and 6 (*extremely typical*). Subjects were instructed to rate items as typical when the action "would happen most of the time" if engaged in that particular dating script. Instructions also stated that an action should be rated as atypical if it *could* happen or sometimes *did* happen but was not necessary or did not occur on *most* outings. Participants had an unlimited amount of time to complete this task.

Results and Discussion

After being rated for typicality on the 6-point rating scale, the mean and mode was calculated for the ratings of each subject- and experimenter-generated item. These measures of central tendency provided a way of assessing items similar

in typicality for the construction of the four stories used in the recognition phase. Items with $M \geq 5$ and mode = 6 were pulled and labeled as typical items. Items with $M \leq 2$ and mode = 1 were considered atypical. From this pool of typical and atypical items, actions were matched according to exact mean typicality rating. A total of 64 items (16 matched pairs of typical items and 16 matched pairs of atypical items) were then used to construct two versions of a story. Each story contained descriptions of four couples participating in four different scripted activities. Each couple's activity contained four typical items and four atypical items.

When these data were considered, there were essentially no differences between gender typicality ratings for most items. Only one item on the list could be considered gender specific from the rating results. This item was "Waiting to be picked up", which was rated very typical by females and very atypical by males. The similar ratings of all other items indicate no differences in cognitive dating script content regarding the items in question.

Phase Three: Recognition Memory

The recognition memory phase of this study examined how the existence of a cognitive structure for knowledge of events (script) effects memory of typical and atypical activities. This was done by using the methodology of signal detection theory. Although more typical information is correctly remembered as being present than atypical information, more typical information is also incorrectly remembered as being present. Employing the d' statistic in recognition studies corrects for guessing and has shown that memory for atypical information is actually more accurate than for typical information. This methodology also allows us to look at any gender differences in memory discrimination.

Method

Subjects. Twenty male and 20 female Illinois State University students who had not previously participated in the study were recruited from the subject pool and voluntarily participated in this final phase of the study. Participants were between the ages of 18-21, single, and primarily Caucasian. They had normal or corrected to normal vision and hearing, and English was their primary language. Subjects were separated into four groups: two groups of males and two groups of females.

Materials. There were a total of 32 dating events, 16 typical and 16 atypical, from Phase 2 used in each of two stories (Version A and B). Each version of the story (see Appendix) contained four dating scenarios where couples participated in scripted activities in the following order: (a) John and Mary on a 1st date; (b) Bill and Barb on a 10th monogamous date; (c) Tom and Sue, an engaged couple, on a date , and (d) Jack and Jane, a couple married for 3 years, on a date. Each scenario of Version A contained four previously rated typical items and four previously rated atypical items. Each scenario in Version B contained four previously rated typical and atypical items whose ratings matched those items in the appropriate Version A date. Each version was highly similar in length and structure.

Procedure. Each group of participants was presented with one version of the scripted activity passages. Males and females were exposed to each version of the story. Versions A and B were presented by audio tape at the approximate rate of 110 words per minute. In order to insure participants' attention during the study, they were told that they would be asked questions about the characters in the stories because the study was investigating impression formation based on the interaction of others. After the taped presentation, participants completed a questionnaire regarding irrelevant passage information, in accordance with the cover story described above. They were allotted 6 min for this task. Subjects then engaged in a 10 min intervening task in order to prevent rehearsal of the dating scenarios.

A single-item recognition test was then administered to each subject. Each test contained 16 items for each date, 8 (4 typical and 4 atypical) from Version A and 8 (4 typical and 4 atypical) from Version B. Hence, half of the information was

presented and the other half was not presented to a particular group. The participants had an unlimited amount of time to rate each item on their confidence associated with the recognition that the item had been presented in the passage or not. To that end, they were to assign a rating corresponding to the following 6-point scale: 1 (*very sure item not presented*), 2 (*sure item not presented*), 3 (*not sure, but think item not presented*), 4 (*not sure, but think item presented*), 5 (*sure item presented*), and 6 (*very sure item presented*). The set of items were randomized within each script and the four scripts were presented in order of presentation in the tape.

Results and Discussion

Only items rated as 4, 5 , or 6 (positive responses) were scored. Hits, items rated as having been presented when they had indeed been presented, and false alarms, items rated as having been presented when they had not been presented, were calculated. The d' measure, used to determine memory discrimination, was calculated directly from the hits and false alarms. Analyses were first conducted on d' statistics and, because d's were calculated from hits and false alarms, subsequent analyses were conducted on hits and false alarms to further identify where the source of any effects on d's lie. The hit, false alarm, and d' means for typical and atypical items for each sex are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

d´ Scores, Hit Rates and False Alarm Rates for Typical and Atypical Items.

| | Females | | | Males | | |
	d'	HR	FA	d'	HR	FA
Typical	1.10	13.88	9.88	1.03	13.35	9.38
Atypical	3.94	14.58	0.50	3.25	13.00	1.14

A 2 (Sex) x 2 (Typicality) mixed ANOVA was performed on the d' measure in order to examine any differences for memory discrimination. A main effect for Sex was found, $F(1, 51) = 4.07, p < .05$.

Overall, females showed significantly better memory discrimination than males, mean d's of 2.52 and 2.14, respectively. There was also a main effect for Typicality, $F(1, 51) = 395.80, p < .0001$, indicating better memory discrimination for atypical items than for typical items, mean d's of 3.56 and 1.055, respectively.

In addition to the main effects for sex and typicality, there was a significant Sex x Typicality interaction, $F(1, 51) = 7.17, p < .01$. Females showed a greater increase in memory discrimination from typical to atypical items when compared to males. That is, females demonstrated a stronger typicality effect shifting from typical to atypical items (1.100 and 3.944, respectively) than males (1.026 and 3.247, respectively). This interaction is illustrated in Figure 1.
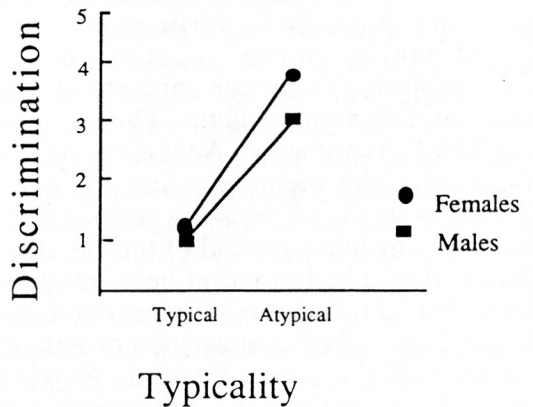

Figure 1. Gender differences in memory discrimination.

In order to uncover the source of the differences in the d's, analyses were conducted on the hits and false alarms as well. A 2 (Sex) x 2 (Typicality) mixed analysis of variance was performed on hits and revealed no effects for Typicality, as expected. However, there was a significant main effect for Sex, $F(1, 51) = 4.18, p < .05$. Females had higher hit rates than males, 14.23 and 13.17, respectively. There was no significant Sex x Typicality interaction.

A 2(Sex) x 2(Typicality) mixed ANOVA was performed on the false alarm data. As predicted by the SP+T hypothesis, there was a significant main

effect for Typicality on the number of false alarms $F(1, 51) = 579.06$, $p < .0001$. The average false alarm rates reported in Table 2 show that both males and females were significantly more likely to false alarm on typical items than on atypical items, 9.63 and .82, respectively. However, there were no significant differences between male and female false alarm rates nor was there any interaction present.

General Discussion

Examination of the results obtained in the recognition phase regarding how participants generally rely on their scripts while comprehending remains consistent with the typicality effect. Overall, participants had difficulty distinguishing between ordinary, typical events presented in the stories and those typical events that were not presented. Participants were significantly more successful in discriminating between presented and nonpresented atypical items. This supports the SP+T hypothesis. According to the hypothesis, the memory traces include a pointer to an already existing generic script that contains items typical of the situation. This makes discrimination between these items difficult, because all items contained in the script, whether presented or not, are included in the representation. Atypical items, on the other hand, are interpreted, tagged, and stored in memory as "a functioning separate organizational unit" (Graesser et al., 1979, p. 320). Therefore, discrimination for these atypical items should be an easy process. This was seen in the high rate of accuracy for discrimination between atypical presented and nonpresented items. These results also suggested accuracy of the typicality ratings obtained in Phase 2 of the study.

Those aspects of memory discrimination that appeared to be the same for both males and females are a) they both often recognized typical events as something presented when they had not been presented (many typical false alarms), and b) they both rarely recognized an atypical event as something presented when it was not actually presented (few atypical false alarms).

However, the most interesting aspect of the results were the gender differences found in memory discrimination. The main effect and interaction that constituted the gender differences in memory discrimination occurred in the calculation of the d' statistic. The source of the interaction appears to be based on the number of items correctly recognized as being present (hits). Females recognized significantly more typical items than males, and they exhibited an even greater accuracy rate over the males for the atypical items.

A possible explanation for overall better memory discrimination by females revolves around the idea that females paid closer attention to the dating stories than males did. This explanation would be consistent with the previously seen proactive male role and reactive female role found in both actual and hypothetical dates (Rose & Frieze, 1989).

If a female is more reactive, she is generally in the role of a respondent in a dating situation. Rose and Frieze (1993) also found men to be more concerned with proactively controlling or directing the date, exercising more power. This offers females a greater opportunity to pay attention to what is actually occurring in the date. Rose and Frieze (1993) reported that women appeared to view the events during their dates as being "highly dependent on their male partner" (p. 507), while men were much more focused on their own actions. A female's tendency to focus on the male's actions, as well as the extra time they have to think about these actions, could mean that females are attributing much more of a predictive value to events that occur in a dating situation, especially ones initiated or accomplished by the male.

A search for predictive value in the events that occur on a date may lead to a female attribution of more meaning or importance to these events, especially unexpected or atypical events. Associations would be made regarding whether or not a specific action indicates the partner's positive or negative feelings about how the date is going. In situations such as the 1st or 10th date, events may lead to associations concerning the probability of

going out again. Assigning a predictive value such as this would lead to a deeper level of processing upon comprehension, leading to better memory discrimination for both typical and atypical items (as shown in these results).

The fact that females demonstrated a greater increase in memory discrimination between typical and atypical items than males constitutes an interesting interaction in the results. The idea that script development is affected by social norms and gender differences (Sherwin & Corbett, 1985) may offer insight into this phenomena. Through socialization pressure and norms, it is possible that females are socialized to rehearse dating scripts more often, leading to a greater female interest in an account of a relationship. This could occur through more frequent female participation in activities that revolve around dating or relationships. Pryor and Merluzzi (1985) report that general knowledge of social activities such as dating can be acquired through means other than direct experience, such as movies, television programs, novels, and everyday conversation. They go on to state that people who more frequently partake in such activities are capable of using a cohesive script more efficiently than novices.

The social norms for gender-related leisure activities present females with many more opportunities for rehearsal of dating scripts (e.g., romantic movies, dating/relationship focused games, and romance novels). While this more cohesive script organization may afford them better memory discrimination overall, extensive rehearsal of dating scenarios may also enable females to more easily recognize items in a given dating situation as atypical. This easier recognition could then lead to better discrimination between atypical items that were and were not presented in a given situation. Females would be more adept at tagging the atypical items.

Regarding the gender differences of a proactive male role and reactive female role found by Rose and Frieze (1993), they suggest that

Further research might assess the degree to which these gender differences are a function of gender role expectations shared by both sexes and to what extent they represent differential perceptions of males and females about what happens on their dates. (p. 508)

It is also possible that our demonstrated gender differences in memory may be related to gender differences in the initial perception of dating events, although the current study does not address this issue. While the typicality rating phase attempted to assure equality between the sexes in how typical they saw an action to be, similarities in typicality rating do not necessarily indicate identical perceptions regarding the meaning of each item. Perceptions may change by virtue of the context in which items are presented regardless of their typicality.

Though little research has been done to support this idea in a dating environment, one possible explanation for how the same item could have different meanings for males and females is related to general attributional style. If males attribute oddities or mishaps that occur on a date as being due to chance or the environment, they might not give these items as much attention or significance (decreasing the number of atypical hits). However, if females tend to attribute these atypical or memorable events to something directly related to themselves or that they have caused, they may see it as a significant or representative vent in the meaning of the relationship. Again, they may look for some sort of predictive value in the event. They would then be likely to place more importance or meaning on the event and thus remember it better. While this theory would not account for an increase in female's typical hits, it may aid in explaining the demonstrated female increase of atypical hits.

Overall, the results provide further support for the typicality effect of the SP+T hypothesis based on the assumption that memory for frequently enacted or conventional activities is a script-based knowledge representation. Regarding gender differences in (overall) memory discrimination for different dating scripts,

it is possible that superior female discrimination is a result of differences in attention to the perceived events, due to the different roles males and females are comfortable assuming in a dating situation. Furthermore, the influence of social norms on the development of females' dating scripts may explain the greater increase in memory discrimination shown by females between typical and atypical items.

When discussing gender-roles and social norms as possible explanations for the differences in memory discrimination, it is important to note that the gender-related activities generated in these scripts were relatively culture-specific to the subject pool used. Subjects were single, undergraduate students at a large midwestern university, and primarily Caucasian. If gender role expectations are culture-specific it is possible these results may not generalize to other cultures. Further research may investigate the relationship of culturally-based gender roles with memory discrimination of social scenarios such as dating. Also, these results do not indicate better memory discrimination by females for scripts in general. The social aspect of the cognitive representation under study lends itself to constraints upon interpretation of results; the script under study was one of an affective or emotional nature and is not analogous to all scripts.

After establishing the possibility of gender differences in memory discrimination of dating scripts, expanding the study in the direction of differences in meaning lends itself to the possibility of interesting social implications. Better understanding of how males and females perceive dating events differently (whether they be of a sexual nature or otherwise) could eventually a) decrease mis-interpretations of intentions or actions of the opposite sex in dating situations, and b) aid in conflict resolution during these situations. Along with further investigation of gender differences in memory discrimination, additional studies regarding differences in perception, attention, and meaning that males and females may place on the same dating events may provide more meaningful information concerning dating script development.

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Appendix

Listed below are the two versions of the dating passages used in the recognition phase of this study. Items that were used on the recognition test are in italics. Those italicized items that are followed by (A) are atypical items; items simply in italics are typical items. Each version contains four paragraphs involving four different dating scenarios in the following order: 1st date, 10th monogamous date, date of an engaged couple, and date with a spouse of 3 years.

Version A

John and Mary met through a mutual friend and decided to go out together. After talking for a while, they decided to have dinner and then go to a movie for their first date. *John's roommate drove* (A) them to the restaurant where they entered the door and *were seated* by the host. They looked over the menu and then *ordered their food.* When dinner arrived, *John spilled his plate in his lap and they both laughed* (A). After the spill was cleaned up they *ate dinner* and left the restaurant. As they got into the car, Mary dropped her wallet and was unaware that *John had picked it up and put it in his back pocket* (A). In the car, *John read the newspaper* (A). At the end of the evening, *they said goodnight* as John walked Mary to the door.

Bill and Barb had been going out together for several weeks when they decided not to date anyone else. On their 10th date after going steady, they decided to get something to eat and then see a movie at the local movie theater. Bill drove over to Barb's house to *pick her up* even though *he was an hour late* (A) and had not called her to explain. On their way to the restaurant, *they held hands* in the car. After driving for a while, *Barb felt sick to her stomach and vomited* (A). When she felt better they went to the restaurant and then went to the theater. *They entered the theater* and bought some popcorn before finding their seats. Bill saw his roommate and *started flirting with his roommate's date* (A) while Barb was in the ladies room. When the movie was over, they left the theater and decided to *look at furniture* (A). At the end of the evening, Bill walked Barb to the door and they *gave each other a long kiss* before Barb went into the house.

Tom and Sue had been engaged for three months when they decided to get together one evening for dinner at Sue's house. Tom arrived at Sue's house early and they went into the den and *snuggled on the couch* for a while before dinner. They talked for a while before Tom told Sue that he had *brought his dog along with him on the date* (A). They *held hands* during dinner and then left the table when they had finished. They *walked to the car*, got in and then drove around town for a while. Tom and Sue decided to *visit a pawn shop* (A) to look around. When they were walking through the parking lot to get into the car they decided to *watch a movie* on television. Before they got to the car, *Tom was mugged* (A) and Sue yelled for help. After help had arrived they got back into the car and drove to Sue's house where they *shook hands and said good night* (A).

Jack and Jane had recently celebrated their third wedding anniversary. They decided to go out one Saturday night for a nice dinner and see a movie, so they *left their children with a baby-sitter.* They talked in the car on their way to the restaurant. While at the restaurant, they *ordered their favorite bottle of wine.* While Jack was in the men's room, *Jane gave the waiter her phone number* (A). When Jack came back to the table *he embraced his wife.* Jane had accidentally stuck out her foot and *a waitress tripped on the heal of her shoe* (A). They ate dinner and talked about their children. Then they got into the

car and went to the theater. As they were buying popcorn, they *had to evacuate the theater* (A) because a fire had started in the film room. On their way home they decided to take the back roads and *hit a deer* (A). Jack pulled the deer off of the road and they continued on their way home. They arrived at home and Jane *paid the baby-sitter* an appropriate amount.

Version B

John and Mary met each other through a mutual friend and decided to go out together. After talking for a while, they decided that for their first date they would *watch a movie* and go to a restaurant. *They began to fight* (A) when John picked Mary up at her house. They drove to the restaurant and entered through the door. After they found a table and looked over the menu, *they had a nice conversation*. When they had finished, they left the restaurant and *traveled to the movie theater*. On the way, Mary asked John to *stop at the dry cleaners* (A) to pick up her laundry. John and Mary watched the movie and then got into the car. While driving through town the *car ran out of gas* (A). At the end of the evening they *drove back to Mary's house*. *Her dog bit John* (A) when they walked to the door.

Bill and Barb had been going out together for several weeks when they decided not to date anyone else. On their 10th date after going steady, they decided to *go out for dinner* and then see a movie. He surprised Barb by *showing up in a limo* (A) and on their way to the restaurant they *had a nice conversation* in the car. After driving for a while, they decided to *go to a drag show* (A) after the movie. They entered the restaurant and were seated by the host. Bill and Barb *ate their dinner* as they talked about their jobs. After dinner they left the restaurant, and after getting into the car, the limo driver *backed into another car* (A) in the parking lot. Before the movie started, they bought some popcorn. Bill saw his roommate with a date. When the movie was over they left the theater and discovered that the limo driver had left and that *they were stranded* (A) there. When they arrived back at

Barb's house, *they said good night* and Barb went into the house.

Tom and Sue had been engaged for three months when they decided to get together one evening for dinner at Sue's house. Tom arrived at Sue's house early and they went into the den where they *relaxed and got comfortable* before dinner. They talked for a while before *Tom started insulting Sue's family* (A). Tom apologized to Sue while they sat down for dinner. While they were eating, *Sue did her nails at the table* (A). *They talked about their days activities during dinner*. While still at the table, a *TV repairman knocked on the door* (A) and Sue let him in. After dinner they went back into the den and began to *hug and hold each other* on the couch. After holding each other for a while they decided to *take a ride out to the airport* (A) and then drove around town for awhile. At the end of the evening Tom drove Sue home.

Jack and Jane had recently celebrated their third wedding anniversary. They decided to go out one Saturday night, and so they thought they would go out for a nice dinner and to see a move. *They said good-bye to their kids* and left the house. They got into the car and on their way to the restaurant they *listened to heavy metal music* (A) on the radio. When they arrived at the restaurant, they *gave each other a kiss*. When Jack was in the men's room, *the waiter flirted with Jane* (A). They ate dinner and talked about their children. After dinner, they left the restaurant and went to the theater. After buying popcorn and finding their seats they watched the movie and then *went home*. When they arrived home, Jane *paid the baby-sitter $50.00* (A) for watching the children. Once the baby-sitter had left, Jack decided to *pay some bills* (A). When he had finished, Jack and Jane *had sex*.

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