

Gender Bias in Sharenting: Both Men and Women Mention Sons More Often Than Daughters on Social Media

Elizaveta Sivak & Ivan Smirnov



NATIONAL RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY

Gender preference for sons

Reproductive and marital behavior

Pastimes with kids

Investments

Parents report more happiness in families with sons

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How does gender preference shape online behavior of parents?

Data

62 millions public posts on VK made in 2016:

635 665 users from Saint Petersburg, 18-50 y.o.

Filtered all posts longer than 100 words and posts with links

collected information about the number of “likes” for each post

Identified posts with mentions of children:

posts that contained the words “daughter” or “son” along with their different forms, e.g. “dochenka” or “sooooooon”

Michail Ivanov 29 Apr at 08.05 ...
Daughter! 3500 g, 51 cm!!!

Maria Ermolaeva 10 Apr at 11.56 ...
10th of April... And only my cheerful little son was delighted with the snow

Konstantin Leonidov 4 Feb at 18.14 ...
Made a snowman with my daughter!

Olga Stepanova 13 July at 20.06 ...
The first medal! You are the best, son

Spending time with kids

Went on a bike ride with my son) #bike #biking #onbikes #GulfofFinland
#Balticboulevard #stp #weekend @ Ave. of Heroes

Our daughter can easily involve us in any of her games! We are never bored! 😄

Expression of positive feelings

If you knew 😊 how much I love him 🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰 #beloved #son #love #to #play
#the #ape #merry #christmas #everybody

The son took the 1st place 🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆 I'm happy with the result!!!

We got a silver medal yesterday! 🥈🏆🏆 Proud of you, my baby girl!! 🌸💋

Births and birthdays

Today, 9/10/2016 at 7:15 am, I was again assigned the status of "DAD".
My beloved wife gave birth to my daughter.

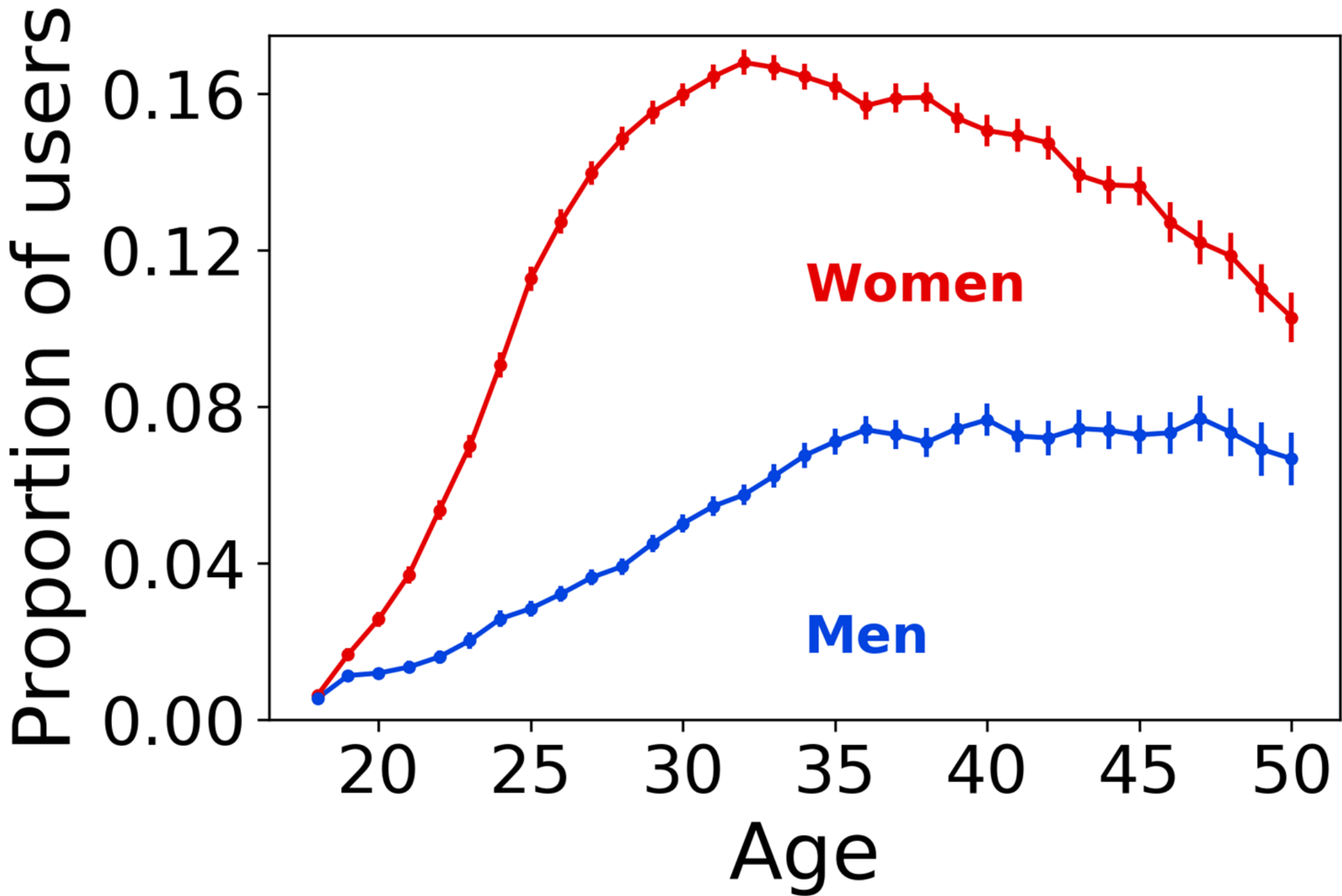
Time flies! My beloved son is three years old now! #happybirthday #beloved #son

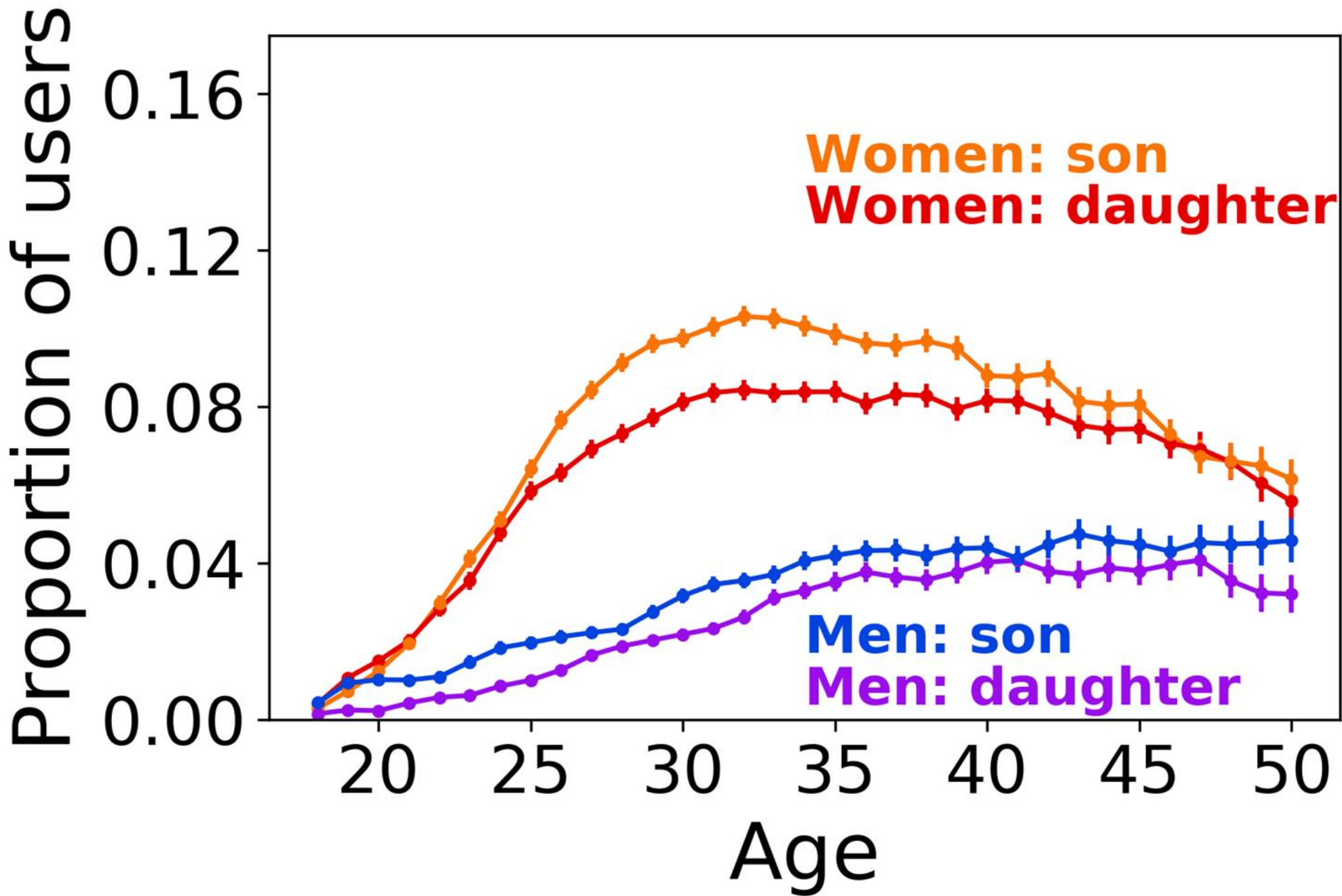
Only 9% posts – not about users own kids

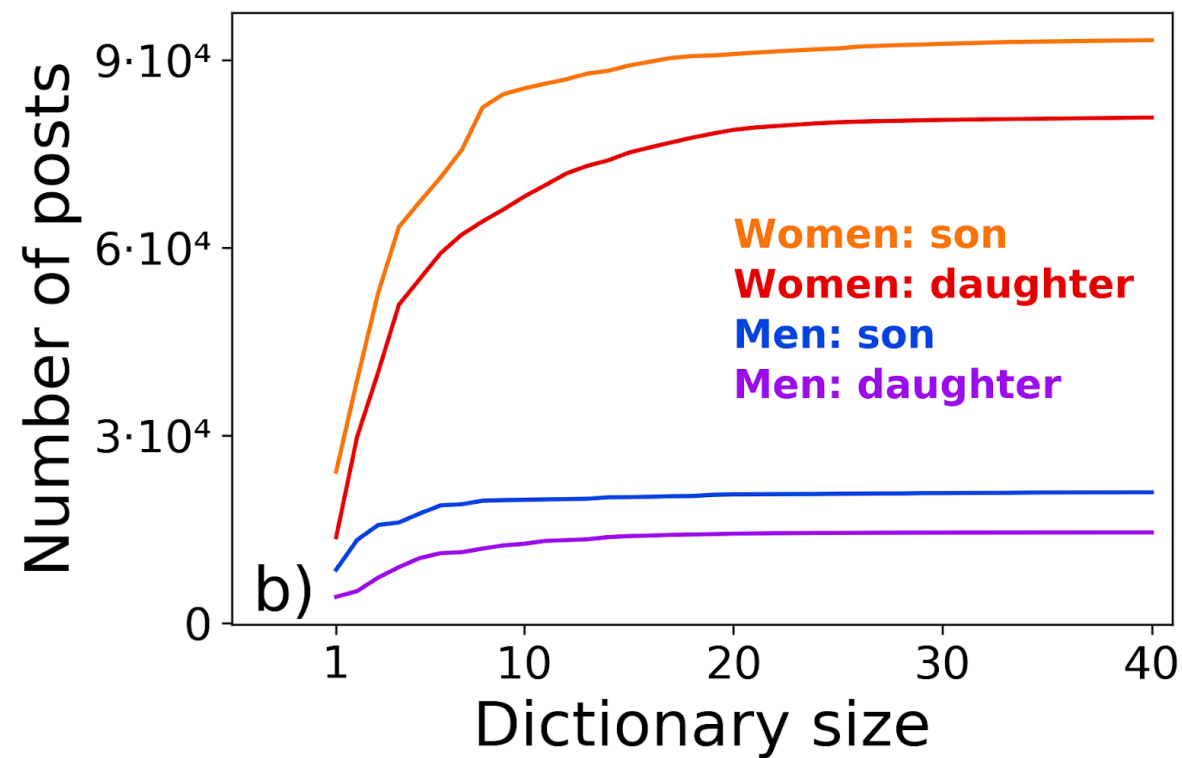
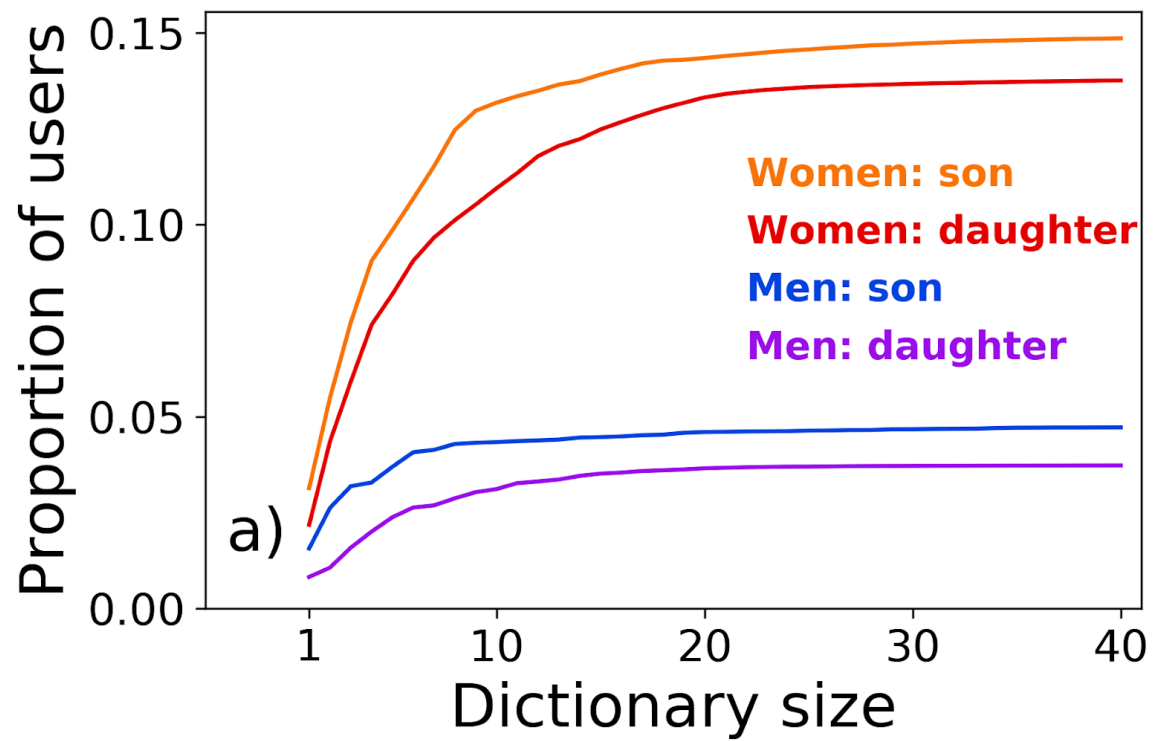
Method

proportion of female and male users from each cohort who mentioned sons or daughters in their posts at least once

average number of “likes” that posts featuring sons/daughters obtained, on average







N = 40

Women: 15% more posts about sons

Men: 43% more posts about sons

False positives and false negatives:

- false positive: e.g. “Gazprom’s daughter company” or “Don’t son me!”
- false negative: e.g. people might use the generic term “child”
- Dealing with false positives:
 - coded 10 000 posts (whether they are about users own kids or not)
 - for posts about own children: compared the number of posts about daughters and sons, bootstrap test, still more posts about sons, $p < 10^{-4}$
- Dealing with false negatives:
 - identified words other than “daughter” or “son” that might be used as a reference to children, e.g., “my little one”. **In Russian, most of these words have distinct masculine and feminine forms:** we identified whether they are mentions of daughters or sons. The inclusion of these additional words in the lists of synonyms did not affect the results.
 - the only gender neutral word – “child”. A “child” was accompanied by the reference to a daughter for 25.9% of users, by the reference to a son – for 28.9% of users. Contradicts the assumption that people may more often refer to the daughters as to the generic "child" compared to sons

Written by women

Average number of likes
by women by men

featuring daughters

6.7

1.1

featuring sons

10.7

1.8

Written by men

Average number of likes
by women by men

featuring daughters

5.3

2.6

featuring sons

6.7

3.7

Thank you!

Elizaveta Sivak
esivak@hse.ru