Anne Barron

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ANNE BARRON*

ABSTRACT: This article takes a variational pragmatic approach to investigating language use in Ireland by focusing on the speech act of 'offers' in Irish English as compared to those in British English. Using comparable Irish and British components of the International Corpus of English, the analysis centres on the offer strategies and strategy realisations employed in these offers. The study highlights the need for corpus analyses of speech acts to include a fine-grained qualitative analysis, particularly in light of the fact that findings reveal the distribution of offer topic to differ across the Irish and British corpora and also offer realizations to differ by topic.

Keywords: offers, variational pragmatics, Irish English, British English, corpus analysis, hospitable offers

INTRODUCTION

In 1991, Yamuna Kachru edited a collection of papers on *Speech Acts in World Englishes* which appeared in *World Englishes*. The papers dealt with conversational interaction in world Englishes, and focused in particular on Indian English. In this issue, there was a recognition that the study of world Englishes had long focused rather exclusively on the syntactic, lexical and stylistic levels of analysis (cf. Valentine 1991: 325). There was the general opinion that, as Valentine (1991: 333) states, '… much more attention needs to be paid to the conversational conventions in oral discourse in world Englishes. There remain many unanswered questions surrounding the pragmatics of language use in the new English varieties that need to be addressed.' The participating authors in the 1991 collection, influenced by research in cross-cultural pragmatics (Blum-Kulka *et al*. 1989), believed – and indeed also showed – that the way speakers 'do things with words' (Austin 1976) via speech acts, such as requests, offers, apologies – is influenced by the sociocultural conventions of language use. That is, speech acts and in particular speech act realization patterns differ not only across languages (as cross-cultural pragmatic research had shown), but also across the varieties of English. Some 15 years later, the same editor of the 1991 collection, Yamuna Kachru, authored a paper on speaking and writing in world Englishes for *The Handbook of World Englishes* in which she provided an overview of speech act research across the varieties of English. Her summarising statement in regard of the literature at that point in time continued to be 'Although there is a large body of research available on speech acts across languages, not much has as yet been published comparing speech acts across varieties…'(Kachru 2006: 366). Currently, some 25 years after the 1991 collection of papers and 10 years after the 2006 overview, the situation remains broadly the same as also reflected in some of the most recent textbooks on

* Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Institute of English Studies, Scharnhorststr. 1, 21335 Lüneburg, Germany. E-mail: barron@leuphana.de

global Englishes in which reference to variety-specific or variety-preferential pragmatic features is limited to non-existent (cf., e.g. Schneider 2011; Galloway and Rose 2015).

Supporting these discussions in world Englishes has emerged a branch of pragmatics, variational pragmatics, which has made intra-lingual pragmatic variation the focus of systematic analysis (cf. Schneider & Barron 2008; Barron & Schneider 2009; Schneider 2010; Barron in press). Influenced by cross-cultural pragmatics and modern dialectology, this line of research encompasses the study of pragmatic variation across geographical and social space. In other words, it is concerned with pragmatic variation according to such factors as region, gender, age, ethnic identity and socio-economic status. A basic premise of the field is that research should be empirical, contrastive and use comparable data since it is only such data that can highlight the relationships between varieties.

The study of pragmatic variation in Irish English (IrE), an inner circle variety and the focus of the present paper, has enjoyed increased interest in recent years in the context of variational pragmatics (cf., e.g., the edited volumes and special issues Schneider & Barron 2008; Barron & Schneider 2009; Barron 2015). In addition, there have been concentrated efforts to further research on language use in IrE, via the edited volumes *The Pragmatics of Irish English* (Barron & Schneider 2005), *Pragmatic Markers in Irish English* (Amador-Moreno, McCafferty & Vaughan 2015), as well as several chapters of Hickey (2011), Migge & Ní Chiosáin (2012) and Hickey (2016) dedicated to such research.

Within pragmatics, speech act research on IrE has focused predominantly on data elicited by means of production questionnaires (cf. Barron & Pandarova 2016). Analyses have investigated pragmalinguistic questions relating to speech act strategies and their linguistic realizations, and also sociopragmatic questions, concerning situation-appropriate use of speech acts, speech act strategies and their realizations. Variational pragmatic speech act analyses in IrE have focused on compliment responses (Schneider 1999), expressions of gratitude (Elwood 2010, 2011), offers (Barron 2005, 2011), requests (Barron 2008a, b) and responses to thanks (Schneider 2005) (cf. Barron & Pandarova 2016 for a more in-depth overview; cf. also O'Keeffe 2011; Vaughan and Clancy 2011 and Schneider 2012 for further overviews of language use in IrE).

The present paper focuses on speech act variation in IrE and British English (BrE), and specifically on the use of offers. In contrast to much of the variational pragmatic research on IrE on the level of the speech act and also in contrast to previous research on offers in this context, the study employs corpus data, and in particular the spoken text types private face-to-face conversations of the Republic of Ireland (ICE-IRE(R)) and British (ICE-GB) components of the International Corpus of English (ICE) corpus. The paper opens with a brief description of the speech act of offers. Following this, an overview of research on offers across the Englishes, and in particular in IrE is given. Attention then turns to the data and methodology. In this context, considerations relating to the use of corpora for speech act research are detailed given in particular that the field of corpus pragmatics is still in its infancy and automatic pragmatic tagging represents a general desideratum in the area (cf. Barron in press; Weisser in press). The empirical analysis of offers in ICE-GB and ICE-IRE then follows and the paper concludes with a discussion and suggestions for further research.

The research questions posed are the following:

a. On a pragmalinguistic level, what offer strategies and offer strategy realisations are used to realise offers in ICE-IRE(R) and ICE-GB?
a. Are there any sociopragmatic constraints relating to offer topic which influence the realization of offers in IrE and BrE?
b. Do offers in IrE differ from offers in BrE on a pragmalinguistic and/ or a sociopragmatic level?

OFFERS

The nature of offers

The categorization of offers has been the focus of much debate, with different researchers having put forward different classifications over the years. Searle (1976: 11) and Edmondson and House (1981: 49 passim), for instance, categorize offers as commissives given that they commit a speaker (S) to some future course of action (A). Others, such as Hancher (1979: 6), argue that offers not only require S to honour his/her commitment vis-à-vis the hearer (H) (Searle's commissives), but also represent attempts by S to get H to declare him/herself able and willing to engage in the proposed action (Searle's directives). Hancher (1979) proposes the addition of a hybrid category to Searle's taxonomy termed commissive directives to deal with such speech acts which combine directive with commissive illocutionary force equally. More recently, Pérez Hernández (2001) has rejected the idea that the members of the commissive-directives category share commissive or directive illocutionary force to the same degree. Rather, she claims a continuum of speech acts between the two poles of prototypically commissive and prototypically directive and argues that offers are closer to the commissive end of the continuum, while threats are closer to the directive pole (2001: 78).

Other researchers have highlighted the conditional nature of offers. Wunderlich (1977: 43), for example, points out that the execution of an offer is always conditional on the reaction of H in which he/she indicates in some way whether he/she wishes S to carry out the deed in question or not. He points out that offers may be realized using a conditional form but irrespective of whether this is the case or not, offers have the standard form: 'If you want it, I shall do *a*.' Thus, the offer, *Do you want a sandwich?*, can be said to have the standard form *If you want a sandwich, I shall make you one*.

The conditional, the commissive and the directive nature of offers is reflected in the types of strategies which realize offers. Thus, Schneider (2003: 183-185) identifies three main types of strategies for realising initiative hospitable offers, namely preference strategies, execution strategies and directive strategies. Preference strategies, such as *Would you like some scotch?*, Schneider writes, point to the conditional nature of offers. Execution strategies, such as *Can I get you a drink?*, on the other hand, underline the commissive nature of offers. Finally, offers, given their part directive nature, may also be realized using what are typically directive forms (e.g. via an imperative, such as *Have a drink*) (cf. also Leech 2014: 68, 92). Within these strategy types we find a wide range of subordinate offer strategies (cf., e.g., Barron 2005 for an overview).

Offers across the Englishes

Variational pragmatic research on speech acts across the varieties of English focuses for the most part on the particular strategies and linguistic realizations of speech act strategies employed and on related politeness concerns. Questions posed include whether the strategies and forms identified are common across varieties, variety preferential, i.e. preferred in one speech community to a greater extent than in another, or variety-exclusive, i.e. exclusive to a particular variety. In addition, the relative diversity of the strategies and forms employed is a matter of interest (cf. Barron & Pandarova 2016 for an overview). These themes are also reflected in the study of offers across varieties, as seen in the following.

Research on offers across the varieties of English is limited. To the best of my knowledge, the only studies which exist are Barron (2005) and Barron (2011), both of which take a variational pragmatic approach. In the following, both studies are detailed. Barron (2005) is a study of offers in IrE and in English English (EngE) using data elicited by means of a production questionnaire involving five offer situations. The study shows offers in IrE and EngE to share many similarities. For instance, both speech communities are found to utilize the preference, execution and directive strategies to a similar extent and also with a similar distribution across situations. Differences in offering norms are also identified between the two varieties. On the pragmalinguistic level, relating to the realization of offers, divergences are recorded on the level of the strategies employed and also on the level of form. On the level of form, the realization *Will I* VP? of the *question future act of speaker* strategy is one of a number of realizations found in the Irish data only, and indeed, in general, a wider level of variation of form is seen in the Irish data. On the level of the strategy, the Irish informants employ more direct offers and a number of conventionalized direct offers of a more direct force than those used by their English counterparts. They also engage in a higher level of external mitigation than the EngE informants via the use of grounders in particular, but also explicit conditionals. However, these differences may relate to sociopragmatic variation, i.e. variation in the context in which offer strategies are employed. Irish informants are found, for example, to perceive a lower degree of face-threat relative to their British counterparts in a situation in which they were required to offer a beverage to an uncle passing by. It is suggested that the higher degree of forcefulness in the offers recorded in this situation may relate to a higher obligation to offer in such situations given the importance of hospitality in Irish culture.

The second study on offers from a variational perspective is Barron (2011). The paper is a variational pragmatic corpus-analysis of face-to-face conversation in ICE-IRE(R) and ICE-GB which focuses on the *question future act of speaker* strategy alone. The analysis finds the strategy to be employed in both varieties. However, the conventions of form used to realize this strategy reveal variety-exclusive pragmalinguistic variation. Specifically, the linguistic realization *will I +* agentive verb*?* is used in IrE but not in BrE, while *shall I* + agentive verb*?* is employed in BrE but not in IrE face-to-face conversation. A qualitative analysis shows both realizations to be used in situations in which the face-threat to H or S was relatively low.

IDENTIFYING OFFERS IN A CORPUS ANALYSIS

The present study adopts the methodological principles of empiricity, comparability and contrastivity in variational pragmatics. The analysis is, thus, contrastive, focusing on language use in Britain and Ireland. The data are comparable, being drawn from the British and Irish components of the International Corpus of English (ICE), a corpus in which all components of the corpus are guided by a common design structure. Data were gathered in the early 1990s and all speakers are educated speakers of English over the age of 18, where educated is defined as having at least a secondary school education.

The Irish component of the ICE is divided into two sub-components, one covering the Republic of Ireland (ICE-IRE(R)), the other the North of Ireland based on the hypothesis that political borders influence language use (cf. Kallen and Kirk 2008: 3-4). The present analysis focuses only on the data from ICE-IRE(R). The speakers of ICE-GB were born in England, Scotland or Wales except for a minority of cases where the informants were born elsewhere but moved to Britain early in life (cf. UCL Survey of English Usage). In addition, a limited number of speakers were exposed to continued influence from other cultures via a parent with a different mother tongue (e.g. a speaker with a Spanish father). These minority cases were excluded from the present analysis.

The present analysis focuses on the genre of face-to-face conversation. The texts represent a sub-group of private spoken dialogues from the ICE. In the ICE-IRE(R) sub-component, this meant a focus on 45 texts (94,579 words).[1] A close inspection of the data revealed that the face-to-face conversations of the British component posed some difficulty in comparability. Unlike the Irish component, which included only non-official conversations, the British face-to-face conversation component also included face-to-face conversations of an official nature (e.g. interviews, service interactions). In order to ensure comparability, only non-official conversations were analysed. The British sub-corpus, thus, amounted to 57 texts (116,179 words). A weighting ensured comparability between both sub-corpora. Analysis was based on the written transcripts rather than on the original recordings given that these are not publicly available for ICE-IRE.

Speech act retrieval in corpora
Corpus pragmatics, the use of electronic corpora for pragmatic research, is a recent development and one which offers many advantages for pragmatic research. Specifically, corpora provide a valuable source of naturally-occurring discourse; they allow researchers to investigate a particular question in a wide variety of (comparable) genres (cf., e.g., Adolphs 2008: 87-88) and they provide insights into the various situations in which a particular speech act is employed.

On the other hand, a number of drawbacks must be recognized. Firstly, data in corpora are naturally-occurring and so informants in many corpora, and also in the ICE corpora, are aware of being recorded. Hence, potential effects of the observer's paradox on language use are possible (cf. Geluykens 2007: 41). Secondly, a lack of situational information means that the discourse may be difficult to interpret. Thirdly, and most importantly for speech act analysis, the development of pragmatic annotation is still in its infancy and the vast majority of all electronic corpora do not currently tag speech acts (cf. Weisser in press) due to a) the lack of

form-function relations and b) inherent fuzziness and lack of distinct lines between speech acts (cf. *Offer retrieval in the International Corpus of English* below where both issues are taken up for the case of offers). In the present case, neither ICE-IRE(R) nor ICE-GB were tagged for offers. Large portions of ICE-IRE were available tagged for the broad illocutionary types identified by Searle's (1976) in the form of SPICE-Ireland (Kallen & Kirk 2012). However, given the fuzzy nature of offers as commissive-directives (cf. *Offers* above) and also the fact that pragmatic tagging was not available for ICE-GB, the present analysis took the level of form rather than function as its starting point. Indeed, due to the lack of pragmatic annotation at the level of the speech act, corpus pragmatic speech act analyses do generally start at the level of form (cf., e.g., Adolphs 2008: 9; Jucker *et al*. 2008: 273; Jucker 2009). Such form-based studies may involve a manual search of the corpus data via a close reading of texts or an electronic search of formulaic patterns or functional lexical segments. Others combine both form-based methods (cf. Garcia McAllister 2015 for an overview). The present analysis uses electronic form-based searches as reported in the following.

Offer retrieval in the International Corpus of English
The present analysis of offers in ICE-GB and ICE-IRE focuses on realizations of initiative offers, i.e. of offers which form the first move in an offer sequence (cf. Schneider 2000: 295; cf. also Barron forthcoming). The initiative offers were retrieved via conventionalized offer realizations without POS-taggings given the lack of POS-tags in ICE-IRE. The search strings were based on previous research on offers by Barron (2005) and also by Searle (1975), Schiffrin (1994), Aijmer (1996) and Leech (2014: 180-186). These included the performative verb *offer*, conventionalized realization patterns of offer strategies, frequent modification used in offers (*if you want*, *if you wish*), common linguistic features (*for you*, *for everyone*, *anyone*, *anybody*), descriptive comments, reoffer formulae, such as *are you sure?* or *I insist*, routine responses to offers, such as *thanks* or *please*, and also topic-oriented searches (e.g. *coffee*, *tea*). In addition, the Free CLAWS tagger was employed to search for imperative forms. All forms were combined with several wildcards in order to minimize the possibility of not retrieving offers due to the presence of features, such as self-repair, false starts, filled hesitations or other speech related phenomenon that leave the underlying pattern unaltered but may change the sequence of elements (cf. Jucker 2009: 1623). Nevertheless, we recognize that recall errors are still possible, i.e. that the forms and phrases guiding the research do not account for the full range of linguistic forms of offer (cf. Garcia McAllister 2015: 29). Thus, elliptical offers taking the form of noun phrases (e.g. *wine?*), indirect non-conventionalized offers or non-verbal offers could not be searched for directly, but rather had to rely on topic-oriented searches or searches for routine responses may have elicited such forms.

Overall, the precision rate was relatively low and demanded a high level of attention to the qualitative analysis. This resulted in particular from the fact that many offer formulae are not exclusive to offers. Hence, a particular structure will not necessarily yield the illocution required. The search for *will I* in the IrE data, for instance, yielded utterances such as *what will I do with it* (ICE-IRE(R), s1a-059), a request for advice. Similarly, the conventionalized forms *can I VP* or *would you like to VP* may realize offers but they are also used in request formulae (cf. also

Meijes Tiersma 1986: 194; Leech 2014: 136, 184) and suggestions and offers may both be realized using identical formulae, such as *How about VP?* (cf. also Leech 2014: 137). To deal with such overlapping cases and in general to guide differentiation of offers from overlapping speech acts, such as undertakings, invitations, promises and requests, three broad criteria were developed and used to disambiguate an utterance's illocution and to identify offers. These included the propositional content, the context of use and hearer uptake (cf. Sidnell 2009: 217-218; Copestake & Terkourafi 2010; Barron 2011, in press). We turn now to each of the three criteria employed in turn:

A) Uptake

According to this criterion, H's response is taken as proof that the illocutionary force is recognized by H (essential condition) (cf. Copestake & Terkourafi 2010). So for instance, in example (1), A's response to B's utterance *Do you want a cup* reveals that A recognizes B's utterance as an offer by B to get A a cup (commissive aspect) and also as an utterance demanding a response (conditional aspect).

(1) B> <#> <[> Look I'm sorry </[> </{> about my political ignorance <#> Do you want a cup cos it's bigger
A> <#> No that's fine <#> A glass is fine (ICE-IRE(R), s1a-084)

Uptake may be verbal or non-verbal. However, the latter is only taken into account in the present context, if there is some evidence of non-verbal uptake in the data, such as via related utterances from the offerer, such as *will you hand me your cup* following an offer to pour out water (ICE-IRE(R), s1a-073) or via comments from third persons. In one case, for instance, a third person responds to the offer for the offeree *no no he no he doesn't He doesn't want them both together* (ICE-GB, s1a-073).

In the present analysis, uptake is taken as an obligatory criterion (cf. Sidnell 2009). As such, the analysis captures the pragmatic effect of a particular utterance on the dialogue rather than focusing exclusively on a speaker's intention. This was the preferred procedure in the present study particularly given the conditional nature of offers (cf. above). It meant that infelicitous offers in which the illocutionary force is not recognized by H were not included in the analysis. In addition, according to this criterion, *Tea* in the initial line of example (2) is not included as an initiative offer as there is no uptake following it. Later in the interaction, A makes a further attempt to issue the offer of tea – this time using the form *Granny do you want tea*. Uptake *yeah yeah please* follows.

(2) A> <#> <[> Tea </[> </{>
D> <#> But sure if Daddy and Grandad could put <{> <[> it up <#> It can't be too hard to do </[>
C> <#> <[> <unclear> several sylls </unclear> </[>
A> <#> <[> What </[> </{> <#> Oh <,> when was that put up
B> <#> Last week
A> <#> You've two teabags in this cup on purpose
D> <#> What was put up there

B> <#> <unclear> 4 sylls </unclear>
A> <#> Granny do you want tea
C> <#> Yeah yeah please
D> <#> I'll have a cup too thanks (ICE-IRE(R), s1a-067)

One aspect to keep in mind in this context, however, is that some of the offers included in the analysis may be more forceful than offers which do not yield uptake. Davidson (1984: 103-104) notes that the presence of silence directly after an offer may be a signal of an (upcoming) rejection. Given this potential/actual rejection, S may examine the initial formulation for any inadequacies that may be adversely affecting its acceptability, and then repeat or reformulate the offer in such a way as to deal with the possibility of rejection. Indeed, this is the case in example (2), where the original elliptical offer *Tea?* is rephrased as *Granny do you want tea*. Hence, offers which do not yield a verbal uptake may possibly be less forceful and less explicit than such subsequently issued initiative offers.

B) Propositional content

Propositional content is a further criterion which is employed in the present analysis (cf. also Copestake and Terkourafi 2010). Offers concern a future action A to be carried out by S which requires some effort on the part of S and which is assumed to be beneficial to H (cf. *The nature of offers* above). Hence, the utterance *We wondered whether you would like to have a go at your jigsaw puzzle* (ICE-GB, s1a-057) is not classified as an offer despite the conventionalized routine *would you like to VP* given that the action proposed involved H rather than S as the agent. As such, the future action appears to be of no cost to S and is, thus, not an offer. At the same time, it is recognized that due to the blurriness of speech act differentiations, this may theoretically be an indirect offer by the S to get the jigsaw puzzle for H.

C) Further context

Apart from uptake, clues available in the co-text signalling the possible presence of an offer include offer negotiations, pre-offers or indeed references to addressee trouble. The utterance *shall I lock him up* in ICE-GB (s1a-052), for instance, was preceded by the utterance by the H of the form *Sorry I'm not a great lover of dogs*, informing the offerer that the future act A, to lock up the dog, would be welcome (cf. also Curl 2006; Sidnell 2009: 218; cf. also, e.g. Jucker *et al*. 2008: 282-283 on the presence of references to addressee trouble).

The combination of these three criteria allows offers to be identified and also differentiated from other speech acts to a large extent Nonetheless it is inevitable that there will be some unclear cases (cf. Jucker *et al*. 2008; Leech 2014: 183). Such instances were excluded from the present analysis.

OFFERS IN IRISH ENGLISH AND BRITISH ENGLISH

In total, 37 initiative offers were identified in ICE-IRE and 59 in ICE-GB. Given differences in corpus size, the GB number of offers was weighed to a total of 47 offers. In sum then, a weighed total of 84 were analysed.

Table 1 gives an overview of the offer types employed in the British and Irish corpora grouped by type. In contrast to Barron (2005), in which no differences in the strategy types employed in British and Irish offer strategies were found, significant differences are seen in the use of the preference and execution strategies in the present data. While the preference strategy, that strategy underlining the conditional nature of offers, is the preferred strategy in both datasets, it is employed to a significantly higher extent in the Irish corpus (IRE: 89.2% *vs.* GB: 52.5%). The execution strategy, on the other hand, that strategy underlining the commissive nature of offers, is used only to a limited extent in the Irish corpus, but used rather extensively in the British data (IRE: 5.4%, GB: 30.5%).

An overview of the strategies within these overriding categories allows a more in-depth analysis of the strategies employed (cf. also Table 1). Within the preference category, all of the five strategies present in the corpus were employed in both corpora. Despite these shared strategies, however, one important difference in use stands out, namely that as many as 43.2% of the offer strategies in the Irish corpus are realized via a *question desire* strategy. In contrast, only 16.9% of the British offer strategies were realizations of this strategy (Fisher's exact test, p= 0.014).

Moving to the execution strategies, it is not surprising, given the limited use of this strategy type in the Irish data that the range of strategies is much narrower than in the British corpus. Indeed, the *question future act of speaker* is the only strategy recorded in the ICE-IRE(R). Notably, the *state speaker ability* strategy, a strategy employed extensively in the British data, is not present in the Irish corpus (Fisher's exact test, p= 0.015). Finally, the directive category does not exhibit any significant differences although it can be noted that there is a somewhat wider variety of strategies present in ICE-GB.

Table 1. Offer strategies in ICE-IRE(R) and ICE-GB [2]

	ICE-IRE(R) (n=37)	ICE-GB (n=47)	
Grammatically elliptical	8.1% (3)	8.5% (4)	
Question future act of hearer	16.2% (6)	10.2% (5)	
Question desire	43.2% (16)	16.9% (8)	Fisher's exact test, p= 0.014
Question need	2.7% (1)	1.7% (1)	
Question wish	18.9% (7)	15.3% (7)	
TOTAL PREFERENCE	**89.2% (33)**	**52.5% (24**	Fisher's exact test: p=0.001
Question future act of speaker	5.4% (2)	10.2% (5)	
State speaker ability	-	15.3% (7)	Fisher's exact test, p=0.015

State speaker desire	-	1.7% (1)	
State speaker obligation	-	1.7% (1)	
State speaker willingness	-	1.7% (1)	
TOTAL EXECUTION	**5.4% (2)**	**30.5% (14)**	Fisher's exact test: p= 0.005
Imperative	5.4% (2)	6.8% (3)	
State permission	-	5.1% (2)	
Suggestory formulae[3]	-	3.4% (2)	
TOTAL DIRECTIVE	**5.4% (2)**	**15.3% (7)**	
OTHER		1.7% (1)	
Hint	-	1.7% (1)	

Table 2 gives an overview of the grammatical patterns realising the offer strategies recorded in the Irish and British corpora. Many similarities are apparent here. However, it is noteworthy, that the realization of the *question future act of speaker* strategy differs across the Irish and British data, as also noted and discussed in detail in Barron (2011). While the pattern employed in realising this strategy is *AUX I VP?* in both databases, the auxiliary *WILL* is employed in the Irish data for all realizations (cf. also Barron 2005: 153), whereas the auxiliary *SHALL* is employed in the British data, a significant difference (Fisher's exact test, p=0.048). In addition, it is noteworthy that realizations of the *question future act of hearer* in the British data include the use of the present progressive, as in *are you having NP?* and *What are you having?*, as well as a *going-to* future form also involving *have* (*Are you going to have NP?*), none of which are recorded in the Irish corpus. Given the small number of realisations, further research is required on the use of such forms across the varieties.

Table 2. Realization patterns of offer strategies in ICE-IRE(R) and ICE-GB

	Conventionalized pattern	ICE-IRE(R)	ICE-GB
PREFERENCE			
Grammatically elliptical	NP?	√	√
	NP anybody?	√	
	NP for everyone?		√
Question future act of hearer	Will you have NP?	√	√
	Is it X for everyone?	√	
	Are you going to have NP?		√
	What are you having?		√
	Are you having NP?		√

Question desire	Do you want NP?	√	√
	Do you want VP?	√	√
	Who wants NP?	√	
	Does anybody want NP?	√	
	You don't want NP.		√
Question need	Will anyone need NP?	√	
	Need NP?		√
Question wish	Would you like NP?	√	√
	Would you like VP?	√	
	If anyone would like NP?		√
	Would anybody like VP?		√
	What would you like?		√
EXECUTION			
Question future act of speaker	Will I VP?	√	
	Shall I VP?		√
State speaker ability	I can VP		√
	I could VP		√
State speaker desire	I want to VP		√
State speaker obligation	I better VP		√
State speaker willingness	I don't mind if S		√
DIRECTIVE			
Imperative	VP	√	√
	You VP (e.g. *you try NP*)		√
State permission	You can VP		√
Suggestory formula	Why don't you VP?		√
	If …, let's just VP		
OTHER			
Hint	There is NP (e.g. *There 's grapefruit juice as well …*)		√

Thus far, we have recorded a higher use of preference strategies in the Irish data coupled with a lower use of execution strategies relative to the offers identified in the British corpus. In addition, a significantly higher use of the *question desire* strategy in particular in the Irish corpus and a significantly lower use of the *state speaker ability* have been recorded. We now turn to an analysis of the future action offered in the corpora at hand in the search for a possible explanation of these differences.

An in-depth analysis reveals a high use of hospitable offers in both corpora. In the present context, these include offers of food, drink and cigarettes and also offers relating to consumption (e.g. offer of a cup for water). The topics of the remaining offers are broad and include gift offers (e.g. offers of posters, clothes, jewellery),

offers of assistance (e.g. offers to buy products abroad, offers to tape something, offers to lock up the dog) as well as offers of verbal goods (as in the offer to tell a joke or story) (Barron forthcoming). As seen in Figure 1, the Irish corpus includes considerably more hospitable offers than the British corpus (Fisher's exact test, p=0.001). As many as 89.2% (33) of all of the offers identified in the Irish corpus (n=37) were hospitable offers, compared to only 52.5% (24) of those in the British corpus (n=47). On the other hand, the number of other offers in ICE-GB, including all other offer categories, exceeded those in ICE-IRE(R) (Fisher's exact test, p= 0.0008).
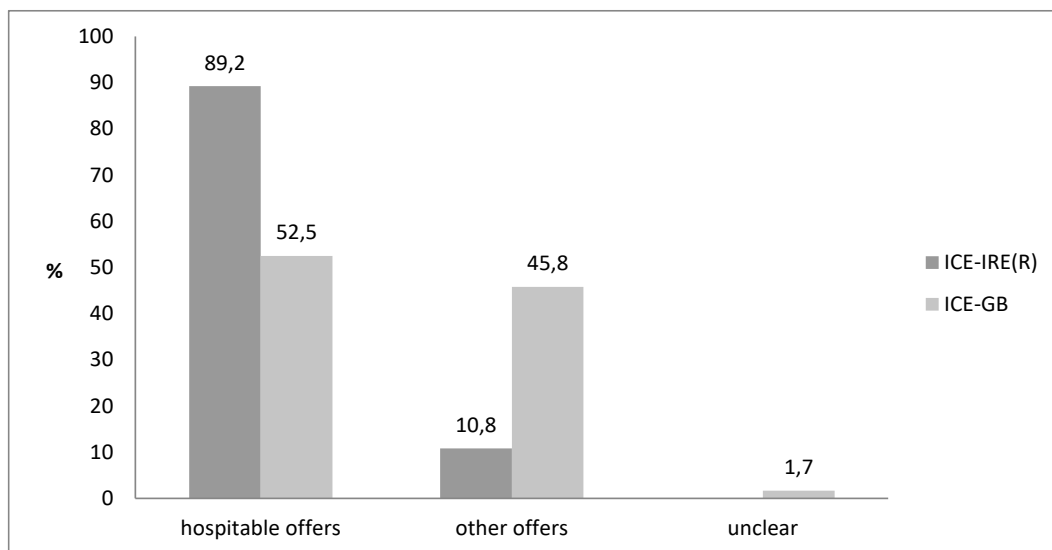

Figure 1. Offer types in ICE-IRE(R) and ICE-GB

If we look now at the strategies realising these different offer types (cf. Table 3), we see how topic may explain some of the cross-corpus differences recorded above. The differences between the British use of the preference strategy across hospitable and other offers are significant (Fisher's exact test, p= 0.0001), as are also those for the use of the executive strategy (Fisher's exact test, p=0.0001). Specifically, a preference strategy is more frequent in the British data for hospitable offers (GB: 83.9%) and an execution strategy for other offers (GB: 66.7%). In the Irish data, as in the British data, a preference strategy is also the clear choice for hospitable offers (IRE(R): 87.9%). The number of other offers in the Irish data is too limited to gain any conclusive findings on strategy type.

If we examine the strategies used within these overriding categories in Table 3, we see that there is a large range of preference strategies employed in the hospitable data. The *question desire* strategy is clearly the most popular strategy in the Irish context (IRE(R): 36.4%) and enjoys a higher use than in the British context (GB: 19.4%). However, the differences recorded relative to the British data are not statistically significant. Little can be said of the higher use of the desire strategy in the other offers in the Irish data given limited figures of use.

Table 3. Offer strategy type and offer strategies across hospitable offers and other offers in ICE-IRE(R) and ICE-GB

	HOSPITABLE OFFERS		OTHER OFFERS	
	ICE-IRE(R) (33)	ICE-GB (24)	ICE-IRE(R) (4)	ICE-GB (21)
Grammatically elliptical	9.1% (3)	16.1% (4)	-	-
Question future act of hearer	18.2% (6)	19.4% (5)	-	-
Question desire	36.4% (12)	19.4% (5)	100% (4)	14.8% (3)
Question need	3% (1)	3.2% (1)	-	-
Question wish	21.2% (7)	22.6% (6)	-	7.4% (2)
TOTAL PREFERENCE	**87.9% (29)**	**83.9% (21)**	**100% (4)**	**22.2% (5)**
Question future act of speaker	6.1% (2)	-	-	22.2% (5)
State speaker ability	-	-	-	33.3% (7)
State speaker desire	-	-	-	3.7% (1)
State speaker obligation	-	-	-	3.7% (1)
State speaker willingness	-	-	-	3.7% (1)
TOTAL EXECUTION	**6.1% (2)**	**-**	**-**	**66.7% (14)**
Imperative	6.1% (2)	9.7% (2)	-	3.7% (1)
State permission	-	3.2% (1)	-	7.4% (2)
Suggestory formulae	-	3.2% (1)	-	-
TOTAL DIRECTIVE	**6.1% (2)**	**16.7% (4)**	**-**	**11.1% (2)**
Hint	-	3.2% (1)	-	-
TOTAL OTHER	**-**	**3.2% (1)**	**-**	**-**

As to the execution strategies, Table 3 reveals that the *state speaker ability* is the most frequently used strategy in the British data (GB: 33.3%). It is notable that this strategy is not used at all in British hospitable offers, a statistically significant difference (Fisher's exact test, p=0.0026). In the aggregated analysis above (cf. Table 1), the differences in use of this strategy were statistically significant between the Irish and British corpora. The present analysis shows that this difference – similar to the analyses of strategy types – can be explained with reference to offer type.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The present analysis reveals first and foremost the importance of combining quantitative corpus pragmatic analyses of speech acts with in-depth qualitative analyses. The initial scrutiny revealed a range of statistically significant differences, including a higher use of preference strategies in ICE-IRE(R), a higher use of execution strategies in ICE-GB, and a number of differences in strategy use (ICE-IRE(R): higher *question desire*; ICE-GB: higher *state speaker ability*) across both corpora which might have been interpreted as cross-cultural differences. However,

an in-depth qualitative analysis of offer topic revealed these differences to relate to a large degree to offer topic.

Specifically – and a second notable finding – a higher use of hospitable offers were recorded in ICE-IRE(R) relative to ICE-GB. As such, the corpus analysis sheds light on some of the sociopragmatic contexts in which offers are realized in Ireland and Britain and enables analysis of the strategies used in comparable situations – here in hospitable offers in Ireland and Britain. The higher use of hospitable offers in the Irish data supports non-academic descriptions of Irish society. Hayes (1998: 51), for instance, writes that in Ireland, '[h]ospitality in the home is not an act of kindness; it is a duty'. In addition, previous research points to hospitality as a characteristic of Irish politeness (Kallen 2005: 132). Indeed, Kallen goes so far as to posit hospitality as one of three poles of Irish politeness, the other two being reciprocity and silence (indirectness). Some examples Kallen gives include:

> Non-verbal indices of everyday hospitality in Ireland include the regular sharing of 'free goods' with relative strangers (e.g. sharing an orange in a canteen or workplace lunch, ...); laying out a relatively formal spread of tea, brown bread, butter, jam, and biscuits for a casual drop-in visitor ...; and an elaborated practice of buying 'rounds' for others in the pub. These practices are not necessarily ways of solidifying existing friendships, but of adhering to the values of hospitality even among relative strangers (Kallen 2005: 132).

Thus, a higher emphasis on hospitality in Irish society is one possible explanation of the data.

The higher use of other offers in the British data requires further research. One possible explanation relates to the interactional circumstances, and to the possibility that there were more descriptions of speaker-trouble in the British corpus than in the Irish corpus and hence more other offers in the British context (cf. Sidnell 2009: 218 on offers produced frequently following descriptions of speaker-trouble). Given that such descriptions of speaker-trouble cannot be searched for electronically in corpora, further investigation would demand a line-by-line reading of the transcripts of both corpora.

Other explanations of the differences in offer type across the British and Irish data also include the possibility that the recording settings in the Irish and British contexts differed – possibility affecting the number of hospitable offers realized. Other less likely possibilities relate to possible differences in uptaking patterns (given that only offers with uptake were included in the present data). In other words more British than Irish hospitable offers may be, for instance, followed by non-verbal uptake not visible in the data. However, given that offers are conditional speech acts, the numbers involved are likely to be small and inconsequential. A further explanation might relate to a lack of recall of offers realized in an indirect manner via hints. However, this scenario also appears unlikely given that Barron (2005), using questionnaire data, shows that indirect non-conventionalized means were not used even when interactants were aware that a refusal was going to follow in situations in which the obligation to offer was low. Further research is required to investigate the exact source of offer type differences across the two cultures.

Leaving the discussion of the differences of offer type across the corpora, the analysis also thirdly reveals the effect of offer type on offer strategy realisation.

Specifically, hospitable offers in ICE-GB and ICE-IRE(R) were found to be prototypically realized using conventionalized preference strategies. These findings support those by Barron (2005) in which preference strategies were also revealed to be prototypical across EngE and IrE in the hospitable offer situation included in the production questionnaire analysis. Other offers were rare in ICE-IRE(R), but those recorded in ICE-GB were shown to prefer an execution strategy. Similarly, in Barron (2005), execution strategies, particularly the state ability strategy, were prototypical in many non-hospitable situations. Further research is, however needed to determine the particular situational circumstances which favour an execution or a preference strategy given that a) all four other offers in ICE-IRE(R) were realized using a preference-type *question desire* strategy and given b) situational differences recorded in Barron (2005) among other offers. In addition, a logical next step in the analysis of offers in ICE-IRE(R) and ICE-GB is an analysis of offer modification in the offers at hand given the role of modification in increasing or decreasing directness levels (cf. Barron forthcoming). We look forward to such future analyses.

NOTES

1. Any service sequences involving offers within these inofficial texts (e.g. offer sequences by waiters/waitresses in a pub setting) were excluded from the study.
2. The total figures for each strategy type diverge very slightly from the figures when added together. This can be explained by the weighting employed.
3. In Barron (2005), *suggestory formulae* were coded as preference strategies given that the realizations recorded were of the form *how about NP?* (2005:152). However, all of the *suggestory formulae* in the present corpus are of a directive nature, taking rather the form of requests or suggestions (*Why don't you VP?*, *Let's VP*) (cf. also Leech 2014:138). (cf. Table 2).

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