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"I'll get it": Payment offers, payment offer sequences and gender on *First Dates*

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ABSTRACT

Settling the bill is an integral part of a first date, with payment negotiation potentially involving a number of speech acts, not least payment offers. Research on payment offers and on payment negotiation sequences represents a desideratum. Furthermore, psychological and sociological research points to payment negotiation in dating as a site of gender construction. However, pragmatic research on gender variation and payment offer sequences is lacking.

We address payment offers and payment offer sequences across genders by exploring payment negotiation interactions broadcast in the United Kingdom on the reality television series, *First Dates*. Examining the sequential patterns around payment offers and pragmalinguistic realisations of payment offers and suggestions to share expenses, the analysis sheds light on media representations of how interactants negotiate the wider payment event and how this negotiation relates to gender. Findings highlight gender variation on a sociopragmatic and discoursal level in uses of both speech acts and in their sequencing. On a pragmalinguistic level, payment offers were typically realised directly; realisations of suggestions to share expenses were more varied, pointing to individual variation, changing conventions and to interactional dynamics in identity co-constructions. The study has implications for gender pedagogy and for the role of media discourse in the representation of gender.

1. Introduction

Payment offers, i.e. offers to settle a bill, represent a pivotal speech act in payment negotiation in dating interactions, and one which reveals gender variation. Such are the findings of psychological and sociological survey-based research on heterosexual payment interaction in the US (Eaton and Rose, 2012; Cameron and Curry, 2020; Lamont, 2021). The present paper takes a pragmatic perspective to payment interaction in the heterosexual first date context and investigates payment offers and payment offer sequences as they are produced across genders in the United Kingdom (UK) as depicted on national television (TV).

Pragmatic research on offers has focused on a range of offer topic types, namely on hospitable offers, offers of assistance, gift offers, offers of verbal goods and trade offers by shopkeepers (cf. Barron, 2017b on offer topic types; cf. also Koutlaki, 2002 on trade offers). The pragmatics of payment offers, in contrast, represents a research gap which this paper addresses. The importance of scholarship on payment offers is underlined by recent research contrasting offer topic types which has found offer realisations to vary by offer topic type (Barron, 2017a, 2017b).

The present study of payment offers in first date interactions takes as its database payment offer sequences in the UK reality TV series, *First Dates*. As a reality TV series, *First Dates* is narrativised, structured and edited. Informants are aware of

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the recording context and also of the series' target audience at home. Hence, daters may potentially construct a different identity of themselves for TV (cf. Mast, 2016). In addition, the series itself works with time constraints (Mast, 2016) and also aims for high entertainment value and viewer figures. Consequently, not all interactions are screened; rather it is the editing team who decides what sections of the discourse to screen. As such, the data represents a media product, and thus the payment interaction sequences are also media representations. At the same time, interaction in reality TV series is unscripted interaction, involving ordinary people in real situations (Mast, 2016; Chu, 2020). Thus, payment interactions in the series represent discursive reproductions of patterns of payment negotiation in their respective cultures (Garfinkel, 1967). The data, therefore, also provides an insight into payment negotiation patterns across genders in British culture.

The present analysis combines pragmatic, discourse analytical and variational pragmatic perspectives in investigating the use of payment offers in payment interactions across genders. We focus on the realisation of payment offers, their interaction with other speech acts within a speech act sequence, among these most primarily the speech act of suggestions to share expenses, and on pragmalinguistic realisations of suggestions to share expenses. In the following, offers are first discussed from a pragmatic, discursive and variational pragmatic perspective (2). Focus then turns to methodological and analytical issues (3). The analysis and findings (4), discussion (5) and conclusion (6) follow.

2. Offers: A pragmatic, discursive and variational pragmatic perspective

Research on payment offers represents a research gap in the linguistic literature. Our focus in the following research overview is thus on the superordinate speech act category of offers. We first describe the nature of offers from a speech act perspective and then address offer realisation strategies (cf. 2.1). Following this, we examine offer sequences (2.2) and offer topic types (2.3) before finally addressing offers and gender in a dating context (2.4). The section closes by highlighting the research gaps (2.5).

2.1. Offers: A speech act and speech act realisation perspective

Offers are conditional speech acts, taking the underlying form: "If you (the addressee) want it, I (the offerer) shall do it" (Wunderlich, 1977). Hence, the addressee is free to decide for themselves whether to accept a particular offer or not. Offers are a hybrid speech act belonging to the category of commissive-directives (Hancher, 1979). From a commissive perspective, offers commit the speaker to a future action, x (Searle, 1976:11; Edmondson and House, 1981:49 passim). That future action is costly to the speaker and believed to be beneficial to addressee. Hancher (1979) highlights, however, that offers also involve a directive force given that the speaker in offering is attempting to direct the addressee to declare themselves able and willing to engage in the proposed action (Searle, 1976). While Hancher (1979) sees offers as sharing commissive and directive force equally, others see the commissive force as dominant (Pérez Hernández, 2001:78). Indeed, Wierzbicka (1987) observes that offers may, but do not necessarily have to have directive force.

Offers in English have been the focus of extensive research using a wealth of data sources ranging from production questionnaires (Fukushima and Iwata, 1987; Barron, 2000, 2003, 2005; Anchimbe, 2018; Min, 2019; Gut et al., 2024), to corpus data (Aijmer, 1996; Barron, 2011, 2017a, 2017b; Schneider, 2003; Leech, 2014), fictional materials (Schneider, 2003), ethnographic data (Wierzbicka, 1985; Curl, 2006; Grainger et al., 2015; Staley, 2018; Chen and Hu, 2020; Mandelbaum and Lerner, 2023), roleplays (Edmondson and House, 1981; Bella, 2016) and retrospective verbal interviews (Barron, 2000, 2003; Bella, 2016).

Different coding schemes have been used for offers. Kasper's (1981:113–114) offer coding scheme, based broadly on that of House and Kasper's (1981) coding scheme for requests is an early coding scheme which was further developed by Barron (2003), also with reference to the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) scheme for requests (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Barron's (2003) coding scheme has been widely used (cf. e.g. Allami, 2012; Bella, 2016). This scheme categorises offer strategies on the basis of their level of directness using the broad categories of impositives (direct offers (D)), conventionally indirect offers (CI) and non-conventionally indirect offers (non-CI), accompanied by a range of subordinate strategies. Direct offers are those in which the illocution is made transparent via syntactic means and semantic content. An example is a locution-derivable strategy (e.g. I'll get you some tea). Conventionally indirect offers, on the other hand, are characterised by pragmatic duality: they include a literal interpretation which refers to contextual preconditions for offers, as well as functioning conventionally as offers. An example is a query-preparatory strategy, (e.g. can I get you some tea?). Such a strategy functions on a literal level as an interrogative utterance questioning the speaker's ability to get tea (one of the contextual preconditions of offers) and on a conventionalised level as an offer realised via a query-preparatory strategy. Finally, non-conventionally indirect offers are utterances framed as other speech acts but functioning as offers via inference rather than convention (e.g. There's still some coffee there can function as a representative on a literal level but by inference as a non-CI offer).

A further widely used coding scheme for verbal offers is the tripartite superordinate system put forward by Schneider (2003:183–185). This system distinguishes between execution, directive and preference offer superstrategies. Execution strategies echo the commissive nature of offers (e.g. I'll get you some tea; can I get you some tea?). They are speaker-oriented, focusing on the role of the speaker in executing the act at hand. Preference strategies underline the conditional nature of offers (e.g. Do you want some tea?). As such, they are hearer-oriented, and highlight the fact that the offer is dependent on the will or preference of the hearer. Finally, directive strategies reflect the directive nature of offers as attempts to persuade the addressee to accept the offer (e.g. Have a cuppa). These three broad categories of preference, execution and directives have

been further differentiated into subordinate strategies by Barron (2005) and widely used since (cf. e.g. Barron, 2017a, b; Anchimbe 2018). The strategies in the coding scheme can be differentiated for directness and further categorised into direct, conventionally indirect offers (cf. also Bella, 2016). In addition, Barron (2017b) identifies a category of other strategies involving non-conventionally indirect offers (hints) outside of the tripartite system.[1]

2.2. Offer sequences

Offers have not only been analysed as single-utterance speech acts; rather, they have also been analysed as speech act sequences (cf. Barron, 2003; Almusallam, 2023). From a sequential perspective, scholarship has primarily looked at adjacency pair offer sequences and at insistence sequences, but recently, sequential types, such as embedded offers, elaborated offers and collaborative offers have been identified. We turn to each.

From an adjacency pair perspective, offers represent a first pair part. They are followed by acceptances or refusals. The preferred sequence is generally recognised to be offer-acceptance. However, depending on the socio-cultural context, the preferred (initial) response may also be a refusal (Schegloff, 2007). The latter scenario may prompt use of offer insistence sequences (cf., e.g. Barron, 2003, 2005; Almusallam, 2023). Prominent in the analysis of these sequential offer types are the concepts of initiative offers and reoffers. Initiative offers represent initial offer moves in an offer sequence (e.g. coffee?) (Schneider, 2000:295). Reoffers, also termed insistent offers (cf. Almusallam, 2023), are “further attempts on the part of the speaker to reiterate a particular initiative offer within one offer sequence” (Barron, 2003:127). Reoffers follow an initial refusal. Depending on the situation and culture, both initial refusals and reoffers may be substantive (also termed genuine (Shishavan, 2016)) or ritual (also termed ostensible).[2]

The interactional structure of offer negotiations has also been analysed using the framework for discourse analysis presented in Edmondson (1981) and Edmondson and House (1981). Key concepts in this scheme are those of Initiate, Contra, Satisfy and Counter. An Initiate is an interactional move which initiates an exchange. A Contra move is as an attempt by a speaker to get one's conversational partner to withdraw the preceding Initiate and a Satisfy a move which produces an outcome, whether negative or positive. Counters “… counts as an attempt by a speaker to cause the content of the preceding move … to be amended, qualified, or withdrawn in the light of the content of the Counter” (Edmondson, 1981:89). They require a specific local response.

An exchange in which an offer is accepted without further negotiation has the simple exchange form Initiate-Satisfy (e.g. Drink? (Initiate)-Yes, please (Satisfy)). With regard to offer refusal interactions, Barron (2003) differentiates between simple and more complex offer-refusal exchanges. Simple offer exchanges are those in which an initiative offer is not repeated, hence no intricate negotiation is involved. They take the form of Initiate – Contra – Satisfy, as, for instance, when an offer is refused (e.g. Drink? (Initiate) – No, thanks (Contra) – No problem (Satisfy)) (cf. also Edmondson and House 1981:38–39). Here the Contra, a refusal, serves to have the offer withdrawn and this is accepted in the Satisfy move. In contrast, complex offer refusal exchanges take the form Initiate – n(Contra) – Satisfy, where $n > 1$. They occur when an Initiate is followed by a number of Contras. This happens when an initial refusal, such as No, thanks in the preceding example, functioning as a Contra in an attempt to have the initiative offer withdrawn, is not accepted by the offerer. In this case, the offerer, instead of producing a Satisfy, produces another Contra, a reoffer (or insistent offer) (e.g. Go on, you will have a drink), which reinstates the initiative offer. This reoffer serves to persuade the interactant to withdraw the refusal. Should this reoffer be refused, another Contra would follow and should this second refusal be then accepted, the exchange structure in the present example would be represented by Initiate – 3(Contra) – Satisfy, with the first refusal representing the first Contra, the reoffer representing the second Contra, and the second refusal representing the third Contra. Recently, this interactional approach to offers has been further extended by Almusallam and Ismail (2022) and Almusallam (2023) to include further offers beyond initiative offers and reoffers (insistent offers). They put forward three newly proposed categories of offers, namely those of embedded offers, elaborated offers and collaborative offers. Embedded offers involve exchange structures in which an offer is replied to by another offer and this second offer itself usually functions as a refusal (e.g. Tea? (Initiate) – I'll get it (Embedded offer)). Elaborated offers are offers in which the initiative offer is reissued with the same speaker specifying the wishes of the addressee (e.g. Drink? (Initiate 1) – Yes (Satisfy) – Tea or coffee? (Initiate 2: Elaborated offer). Finally, collaborative offers involve offers which are constructed jointly by two or more speakers. They involve a series of Initiates (e.g. A: Can I get you some tea? (Initiate 1) – B: Go on have some (Initiate 2: Collaboration) – C: That sounds nice (Satisfy)).

2.3. Offer topics

Empirical pragmatic research on spoken offers has focused on a range of offer topics, including hospitable offers (Fukushima and Iwata, 1987; Chen, 1996; Barron, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2011, 2017a, 2017b; Terkourafi, 2001; Koutlaki, 2002; Bella, 2016; Allami, 2012; Grainger et al., 2015; Anchimbe, 2018; Staley, 2018; Min, 2019; Chen and Hu, 2020; Karafoti, 2021; Mandelbaum and Lerner, 2023; Gut et al., 2024), offers of assistance (Barron, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2011, 2017a, 2017b;

[1] Cf. also Anchimbe (2018), who in an analysis of Ghanaian and Cameroon offers, adds a fourth superstrategy, namely declarative superstrategies.

[2] Ostensible speech acts are defined as speech acts involving speakers' pretence of sincerity and the addressees' recognition of this pretence serving an off-record purpose (Isaacs and Clark, 1990).

Terkourafi, 2001; Curl, 2006; Allami, 2012; Bella, 2016, 2019; Anchimbe, 2018; Min, 2019; Karafoti, 2021; Gut et al., 2024), gift offers (Zhu et al., 1998, 2000; Feng et al., 2011; Allami, 2012; Min, 2019; Gut et al., 2024), trade offers by shopkeepers (Koutlaki, 2002) and offers of verbal goods (e.g. offering to tell a joke) (Barron, 2017a, 2017b). In addition, informational offers, offers of comfort and offers of a speaking turn have also recently been identified (Almusallam and Ismail, 2022), although these might potentially also belong in the verbal goods offers. Pragmatic research on the pragmatics of payment offers represents a research gap.

To date, there has been little attention to offer topic type variation from a pragmatic perspective. However, recent research by Barron (2017b) contrasting offer realisations across offer topic types suggests that different offer topic types may use different offer realisation strategies (cf. also Barron, 2017a). In a study of offers in the British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB), for instance, the study reports that execution strategies were not used in BrE for hospitable offers. Instead, preference strategies and, to a lesser extent, directive strategies were used. On the other hand, there was extensive use of execution strategies for offers of assistance in BrE.

2.4. Payment offers and gender in first date interactions

Variational pragmatic research highlights the potential impact of such social factors as region, age, gender, socio-economic status and ethnic identity, on pragmatic conventions within a single language (cf. Schneider and Barron, 2008; Barron and Schneider, 2009). Research on gender variation in a heterosexual context has revealed significant gender differences in BrE. Fuchs (2021), for instance, finds women to use more intensifiers than men in informal conversations in BrE. Speech act studies focusing on gender variation have also highlighted gender variation. Holmes (1995) is an early example focused on gender in compliments and apologies in New Zealand English. Research on gender variation in offers is limited. Haddad (2022) represents a recent study which investigates gender variation in Jordanian Arabic offers. It finds gender, as well as age and social status to have a statistically significant impact on offer strategy choices.

Scholarly insights into gender and payment offers and payment negotiation in the first date context comes from within Psychology and Sociology, and typically employ the concept of a dating script. Scripts are understood as cognitive templates for interaction behaviour which guide participants in knowing what represents appropriate behaviour and routines in a range of situations (Simon and Gagnon, 1986:98; Metts and Spitzberg, 1996; cf. also Emmers-Sommer et al., 2000). Informants in script studies, are asked to report typical action sequences in a fictional or past interaction. In addition, script studies on dating sometimes also elicit self-reported views and attitudes and evaluations of dating behaviour.

Rose and Frieze (1989) were the first to investigate first date scripts. Their informants, young, single research participants from American universities, were asked to name actions they would expect of women and men on a first date. Findings revealed a gender-based role differentiation, with men depicted as sexual initiators, planners of the date and financial providers, and women as emotional facilitators and sexual objects. In the specific context of payment, men were seen as adopting an active role, typically paying on a first date. Laner and Ventrone (2000:494), in a questionnaire-based study of heterosexual first date dating scripts among American students, also found overwhelming agreement between male and female respondents regarding the likelihood of a man paying on a date, with none of their respondents finding it probable that a woman would pay on a date. Similarly, Emmers-Sommer et al. (2010), in a study of how sexual expectations on a first date were affected by such factors as who initiates the date, who covers the expenses, location of the date, and gender, found that while there is a belief among men and women that it is equally acceptable for either party in a heterosexual date to pay, the majority state that the man should always foot the bill (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010:349). Finally, focused on dating rather than first dates only, Lever et al. (2015) investigated reported behaviours and attitudes by anonymous respondents in the US context with regards to paying behaviour on dates using an online survey. They found that, irrespective of age, education or income, men were seen by both men and women as generally paying more of the expenses on a date. However, "… a slight majority of women claim they always *offer* to pay some share, even on a first date (57 %) …" (2015:6, original emphasis). Such offers were less frequent among older women. However, even among those who said they would offer to contribute, 32 % claimed to prefer the man to refuse any contribution, with a further 34 % saying that they would resent any male expectations that they themselves should contribute to payment. The majority (64 %) of men, on the other hand, were of the opinion that women should contribute to paying the bill, particularly if they earn more. As such, this study points to a certain disruption of the concept of the active male financial provider or breadwinner. At the same time, these findings also show that women still associated contributing to the bill with a loss of "female privilege" (Lever et al., 2015:11). As such, women's resistance to changes in gender norms in a dating context is suggested to be higher than that of men.

2.5. Summary: Addressing a research gap in offer research

The present research, with its focus on payment offers and payment offer sequences in British English using reality television data, adds to the literature on offers from the perspective of offer type, data source, speech act representation perspective and gender variation. It represents the first pragmatic study of payment offers and payment offer sequences. As such, it also sheds further light on variation across offer topics and in this way also adds to the literature on pragmalinguistic and sequential analyses of offers. In addition, the study broadens the data sources underlying offer analyses to include media data, and specifically reality TV data, and in doing so also adds a further perspective on offers by depicting how offers are

represented in the public arena to a mass television audience. Finally, the focus on gender variation in payment offers and payment sequences adds to the variational pragmatic perspective which is currently largely lacking.

3. Method

The present analysis explores payment offers and offer sequences in the UK reality TV series, *First Dates*. In the following, we present details of the data (3.1), discuss speech act definition (3.2) and address identification and analytical procedures (3.3).

3.1. First Dates – A reality TV series

First Dates is a first date reality TV series which was first aired on Channel 4 in the UK in 2013 (First Dates). Participants in the reality TV series meet in the context of a blind date: they have applied for a place on the show, are single and are hoping to begin dating. No differentiation is made between daters potentially seeking short- or long-term relationships (Kramer and Mulgrew, 2018: 2).

The daters meet for the first time on the show and have a meal together. Interactions are video-recorded, with cameras hidden around the restaurant and individuals aware of the recordings. At the end of the meal, the restaurant bill has to be settled by the couples themselves. Daters are given a £25- token allowance each towards the cost of their meal. However, meals are considerably more expensive, with some mains costing as much as £39 (steak) (Broster, 3.12.2018; Gayle, 29.04.2022). Thus, taking meals and drinks together, a considerable bill is to be covered at the end of the restaurant visit.

The database underlying the present analysis consists of a total of 60 episodes of *First Dates* broadcast between April 2020 and November 2020 on Channel 4 and 4seven.[3] Each episode included several dating interactions. Those dating interactions which included a payment scene were transcribed. For the present paper, this data was controlled for a) gender and b) success of date.

Gender was operationalised as sexual orientation and only heterosexual couples selected. Sexual orientation was established by the fact that the couples, by applying to the program for a heterosexual blind date, were potentially physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to members of the opposite gender in a binary construct and those applying for a homosexual date rather attracted to members of the same gender. We thus assumed that an individual's gender identity will frequently be cisgender in a heterosexual context. At the same time, it is recognised that sexual orientation is not necessarily the same as gender, and that not only cisgendered individuals may go on a heterosexual date. The data may, for example, include bisexual individuals who may be attracted to individuals of the same or other gender than their own (cf. GLAAD Media Reference Guide). This control left us with a sample of 105 dates (210 persons) in our corpus (cf. Table 1).

Table 1
First Dates payment corpus.

	First Dates data
Total heterosexual dates with payment interaction	105
Total successful heterosexual dates (further romantic date) with payment interaction	50 (100 individuals)

Secondly, this corpus was further controlled for date success. A successful date was defined as interest in a further romantic date with the same person at the end of the date. Although to the best of our knowledge, there is no research on the influence of date success on payment interactions, the success of the date appears to potentially influence behaviour. In an article on payment and dating in the *Irish Times*, etiquette expert Tina Koumarianos, for instance, comments "And I think a man should really pay, particularly if he was the one doing the asking out, however, if it is someone I'm not remotely interested in and didn't want to see again, I wouldn't insist on him paying as it would be unfair" (Harris, 21.01.19). She thus reinstates the traditional expectation that a man should pay (cf. 2.4), but at the same time recommends that women might reconsider their expectations should they not be interested in a further date. The same might be said to hold for men – if a date did not go well, they might not be inclined to pay. Previous research, for instance, has shown that, depending also on context, some men's first date sexual expectations are higher when they pay for the date (Emmers et al., 2010; Lever et al., 2015); in addition, some men claim to spend more when confident that the evening will lead to sexual activity (Lever et al., 2015). The present focus on payment interactions in successful interactions thus served to control the influence of such potential confounding variables. The successful heterosexual date sub-corpus consisted of 50 dates (100 persons) (cf. Table 1). The focus of the analysis is on the unscripted interaction between the daters.

3.2. Speech act definition: Payment offers and suggestions to share expenses

A bottom-up analysis of the *First Dates* data identified attempts to pay for the complete bill and attempts to share expenses to be core to payment negotiation. In the following, we consider the speech acts involved. In light of the illocutionary force of

[3] 4seven is a free-to-air UK TV channel which shows repeats of Channel 4's top rated programmes.

offers, an attempt to pay for the complete bill can be categorised as a payment offer as the future action is carried out by the offerer; the act is costly to the offerer and assumed to be beneficial to the H (cf. 2.1). In contrast, attempts to share expenses would rather appear to be suggestions to share expenses, a category of suggests-for-us given that in suggests-for-us a directive illocutionary force is to the fore, future action is beneficial to both, and is to be carried out by both parties. However, in the literature on payment and dating from other disciplines outside the realm of speech act theory (cf. 2.4), attempts to pay for the complete bill and attempts to share expenses are sometimes both termed offers. Lever et al. (2015:6), for instance, speaks of an "*offer* to pay some share" of the bill (original emphasis). This ambiguity about what an offer means in the payment context is also seen in the lay interactions in the corpus. Thus, the woman (W) in Example (1) explicitly mentions the social convention which she followed in the interaction, stating that her Dad told her to remember to offer ("my dad was like <-> like "remember to offer" (line 3)). If we, however, examine the interaction, this "offer" in W's Dad's lay terms, is not a payment offer to settle the complete bill; rather it concerns halving the bill. ("Do you want to go like halves on it?" (line 1)) as in b) above.[4]

(1) ((M seems to be looking at the bill))[1]

W: Do you want to go like halves on it

M: I appreciate (.) honestly (.) but-

W: (Inc.) my dad was like <-> like "remember to offer"

M: I'd be relaxed and say you had (.) [so]

W: [Yes]

M: Yeah

W: Thanks

(FDEng_LuOl)

We attempt to tease out the complexities of speech act identification within social tradition in the following. These are intricately related to gender roles, and involve above all for whom the action is costly and for whom it is beneficial.

According to traditional role conventions, it is the man's role to pay (cf. 2.4). A traditionally-oriented woman attempting to share expenses would be committing herself to a joint future costly action which is beneficial to the hearer, the man, but not to the speaker. Hence, in this case, the commissive point is to the fore, and the focus is on the woman's act of contributing to costs rather than on the joint action. The utterance might thus be meant as an offer (cf. 2.1) (as in the lay interpretations above). However, if the same woman was constructing herself as non-traditional, sharing expenses might be seen as beneficial for both, the man being relieved of a financial burden and the woman being constructed as an equal. The joint benefit and joint action would point to the status of such an utterance as a suggestion. Furthermore, a case is also possible, in which a man attempts to share expenses in the same traditional context. In such a case, the woman would not understand such a proposition as an offer, strongly commissive and costly to the speaker. Rather, quite the opposite, this situation would be potentially viewed as the man shirking his social responsibilities. In this situation, the directive force would be to the fore. As the future act would be desirable to the speaker (lower financial burden), but not to the hearer, we might categorise this speech act as a request. Here we see that the differing perspectives discussed point to different speech acts, whether offers, suggests-for-us or requests. However, in the absence of metapragmatic data, it is difficult for the analyst to know which speech act pertains in a particular situation.

One possible approach to the data is to code the attempts to share expenses using a bottom-up procedure and then examine the overall speech act realisation patterns. This was the approach taken in the present data (cf. 4.2). Such analysis revealed a wide-range of strategies, the majority of which signaled joint action. As further detailed in 4.2 and seen in 4.1, such strategies were not found in previous offer coding schemes (cf. also 2.1). Current analyses of suggestions are form-based and do not examining the pragmatic strategies underlying suggestions. However, the strategies underlying attempts to share expenses did reflect many form-based codings of the speech act of suggestions. Overlaps were seen in the use of first person plural structures, such as we could VP or we're going VP (cf. Edmondson and House, 1981; Koike, 1994; Leech and Svartvik,

[4] The abbreviations used here and in the following are: W stands for woman and M for man. FDEng stands for the English-language *First Dates* series broadcast in the UK. The letters following FDEng refer to the ID given to the individual anonymised payment interactions.

1994; Carter and McCarthy, 2006; Adolphs, 2008), and in the use of suggestory formulae (e.g. let's) (cf. Sadock 1974; Edmondson and House 1981; Koike 1994; Jiang 2006). In addition, directive strategies involving wh-questions which have been noted in previous suggestion codings (cf. Edmondson and House 1981; Martínez-Flor, 2005; Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor, 2006) were also recorded in the data.

Overall then, attempts to share expenses were overridingly realised as suggests-for-us in the data. The speech act of suggestions is thus the speech act description given to the data in the current paper. It is also the description which fits best with the focus on joint action and it prevents having to assume a traditional division of roles and traditional identity constructions in the data from the outset. At the same time, it is noted that metapragmatic data throwing light on speakers' illocutions might have shown individual differences, with some offers and some requests included.

3.3. Identifying and analysing offers and suggestions

Payment offers were identified in the data using the criteria of propositional content, topic, position and uptake. They concern a future payment action carried out by the offerer for the offeree. The topic of offers was an offer to settle the bill (cf. 3.2). With regard to position, utterances identified as offers represented initiative offers, embedded offers and reoffers. Reported offers were excluded. All offer types were included in the sequential analysis in 4.3, but only initiative offers were coded pragmalinguistically (cf. 3.1). Finally, uptake, i.e. the pragmatic effect of an utterance on the dialogue, also supported the identification of offer status. Uptake was identified via the presence of a second pair part of the adjacency pair (offer – acceptance/refusal). In Example (2), for instance, uptake of the offer "that's on me" is signaled in the expression of gratitude which communicates acceptance of the offer in line 3 ("thank you very much indeed"). In addition, explicit communication of the illocution sometimes also signaled uptake and/or illocutionary force.

(2) W: ((reaches for the bill)): Let's have a look at this

M: No (.) no, no (.) that's on me

W: Thank you very much indeed

(FDEng_PaAl)

Similarly, in the case of suggestions to share expenses, propositional content, topic, position and uptake were also the underlying criteria used in speech act identification. Suggestions to share expenses concerned a future payment action carried out by both parties. The topic dealt with was jointly share expenses. Position-wise, suggestions may stand alone or precede or follow offers. As for payment offers, uptake was also important in speech act identification. In Example (2) for instance, M's utterance "no (.) no (.) no (.) that's on me" signals uptake of a suggestion for joint action in line 1. Also, explicit communication of the illocution, as in Example (1) ("remember to offer") also signaled uptake or illocutionary force (but, as discussed in 3.2, sometimes had to rephrased to take scholarly definitions into account).

Turning to the pragmalinguistic analysis of both payment offers and suggestions to share expenses (4.1, 4.2 respectively), the approach is based broadly on the concept of the head act, defined as the minimal unit which can realise a speech act (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Thus, in the offer in Example (3), "I'll eeh happily pay this" is identified as representing the head act. The non-essential background justification which follows is an external modifying supportive move and not further analysed in the present context. Similarly, the internal mitigating hesitation seen in "eeh" is not further analysed.

(3) M: **I'll eeh happily pay this (.)** I wanted (inc.) to come up with a joke (.) you know

going Dutch (.) I wanted to say have you heard of going (0.2) umm you know (.)

some other nationality German (0.4) and suggest that you pay all (0.3) but umm I

thought that's what I'd do to a mate (.) it's not that funny

(FDEng_MaDa)

In the case of multiple realisations of a speech act, the most explicit realisation was coded. Other realisations of the same speech act are coded as repetition and understood as upgrading. Similar to the case of modification identified in Example (3), the coding of upgrading is beyond the constraints of the present analysis.

4. Analysis and findings

In the following, the analysis of payment offers and payment offer strategy choices (4.1), of suggestions to share expenses and their realisations (4.2), and of payment offer sequences (4.3) is presented.

4.1. Payment offer use and strategy choices

Initiative payment offers are present in 95.7 % of the interactions. Of these, the majority were verbal offers (cf. Table 2). There were also two non-verbal offers (e.g. where the bill is simply paid). Although such actions may appear as completed actions and thus not conditional on the hearer, they leave options open for the hearer. They may still negotiate the offer, protest at the action or reimburse the offerer retrospectively (cf. also Almusallam, 2023 on non-verbal offers).

It was men who typically produced the offer (95.6 %). There were only two interactions which included an offer by a woman to settle the bill. One of these two offers represented an embedded offer in which the woman's offer followed that of the man's (cf. Table 3). It is the offerer (and thus, the man), who overridingly foots the final bill (86.7 %) (cf. Table 4).

Table 2
Frequency and mode of initiative payment offers in successful interactions in *First Dates*[5].

	(n = 47)
Total offers	95.7 % (45)
	(n = 45)
Verbal offers	95.6 % (43)
Exclusively non-verbal offers	4.4 % (2)

Table 3
Frequency of initiative payment offers by gender in successful interactions in *First Dates*.

	(n = 45)
Man offers	95.6 % (43)
Woman offers	2.2 % (1)
Man offers; woman: embedded offer	2.2 % (1)

Table 4
Frequency of bill settlement by offerers as a percentage of total payment offers in successful interactions in *First Dates*.

	(n = 45)
Offerer settles the bill	86.7 % (39)
Offerer does not settle the bill	13.3 % (6)

The tripartite coding scheme developed by Barron (2005) for hospitable offers and offers of assistance encompassing the superordinate execution, directive and preference categories, each encompassing subordinate strategies, served as an initial basis for analysis (cf. 2.1). The subordinate strategies were also analysed for directness levels (cf. Barron, 2003; cf. 2.1). The three categories of execution, directive and preference categories were supplemented with the category of non-conventionally indirect offers (hints) as in Barron (2017b) (cf. also Bella, 2016). Table 5 shows the superstrategies and strategies recorded with examples from the data. On the superordinate level, execution, directive and non-conventionally indirect offers were recorded. Preference strategies were not a feature of the data. Nonetheless, this superordinate category is also listed in Table 6 to support comparisons of strategies across offer topics.

We turn now to the subordinate strategies identified in the data. The categories of execution strategies and directive strategies included both direct (D) and conventionally indirect (CI) strategies (cf. Table 5). The data dictated the need for two newly identified offer strategies, namely speaker-oriented payment offer routines and a directive refusal strategy (cf. Table 5). On the other hand, a number of strategies identified in the original offer coding schemes were not present in the data at hand.[6] Turning to the newly identified strategies, the speaker-oriented payment offer routine strategy encompasses routine formulae which realise a payment offer via a speaker-oriented routine. “That's on me” in Example (2) illustrates this strategy. These routines are illocutionary force indicating devices which realise an offer directly. The refusal strategy realising an offer is also newly identified. It is a conventionally indirect strategy from the directive category. On the literal level, the refusal strategy functions as a refusal of a prior suggestion to share expenses. From a move perspective (Edmondson, 1981), it functions as a Contra to an Initiate which takes the form of a suggestion to share expenses (cf. 4.3). However, in a dyadic context, such a stand-alone refusal is automatically also an offer to settle the bill. Example (4) shows a

[5] It should be noted that due to film cuts, the total of successful interactions with payment interactions displayed in Table 1 above may deviate slightly from the total number of potential payment interactions in which an initiative payment offer may be present. This relates to the fact that in a small number of cases a recording included a payment transaction but not any potential payment negotiation between the daters or only incomplete negotiation.

[6] Some of the original strategies, such as the directive imperative (V NP) strategy or the state-permission strategy (you can VP) did not occur. Similarly, from the execution category, the state speaker's obligation (I should VP; I better VP), question (speaker) ability (can I VP?), question future act of speaker (Will I VP?) or state speaker desire (Barron, 2017b) or state (speaker) wish (Barron, 2005) were not present.

stand-alone refusal, “no (.) no (.) no (.) no (.) it's fine”, functioning as an offer in answer to a suggestion to share expenses (“I am so happy to go Dutch”).

(4) W: ((starts looking for her purse; the server is waiting with the card machine))

I am so happy to go Dutch

M: No (.) no (.) no (.) no (.) it’s fine ((hands the server his card))

(FDEng_LoCh)

Similarly, in Example (1), the offer in line 2 by M is realised via a refusal of a suggestion to share expenses (“I appreciate (.) honestly (.) but-”). Generally, such refusals would work via implicature and would thus have the status of an indirect offer. However, the extensive use of refusal strategies in the data functioning as offers to settle the bill, as illustrated in Table 5, and also the frequency of the suggestion-offer (S–O) sequence reported in 4.3, suggests that in payment interaction a refusal following a suggestion to share expenses actually realises a conventional offer to settle the bill.

Tables 5 and 6 show the distribution of use of directive, execution, preference and non-conventionally indirect strategies in the data. Table 5 also shows the frequencies of use of each subordinate strategy. Within each category, strategies are organised in terms of increasing indirectness. The pragmalinguistic analysis focused only on offers directed to the date themselves; offers to pay directed at a third party, the waiter, are not included in this analysis. In addition, the analysis focuses only on initiative offers and thus excludes the embedded offer recorded in Table 3 and any reoffers identified in 4.3.

Table 5
Distribution of initiative verbal payment offer superstrategies and strategies directed at date in successful interactions in *First Dates*.

Superstrategies	Directness level (D; CI; non-CI)	Strategies	Example(s)	(n = 38)
Execution	D	Speaker-oriented payment offer routines	It's on me tonight	7.9 % (3)
	D	Request permission	Let me get this	5.3 % (2)
	D	State future act of speaker	I'll get it	36.8 % (14)
	CI	State speaker willingness	I'll eeh happily pay this	5.3 % (2)
	CI	State speaker ability	I can get it if you want	2.6 % (1)
Directive	CI	Refusal	W: I've got half of this, just [just fyi (0.5)] M: [No (.) you're not]	36.8 % (14)
Indirect	Non-CI	Strong hint	Put <-> put that wallet away[7]	5.3 % (2)

Table 6
Distribution of initiative verbal payment offer superstrategies directed at date in successful interactions in *First Dates*.

Superstrategies	(n = 38)
Directive	36.8 % (14)
Execution	57.9 % (22)
Preference	0 %
Indirect	5.3 % (2)

As seen in Table 6, execution strategies are most frequently used (57.9 %). These are followed by directive strategies (36.8 %). Indirect strategies are not used extensively (5.3 %). Preference strategies are not used at all. On a subordinate level, five strategies are employed within the execution superstrategy (cf. Table 5). Three of the five are direct strategies, revealing a strong overall preference for forceful offers. Of these, the data shows a clear preference for a direct state-future-act-of-speaker strategy (36.8 % overall or 63.6 % of the execution strategies). Directive offer strategies in the data are exclusively realised via a

[7] Non-conventionally indirect offers are utterances functioning as offers via inference but framed as other speech acts (cf. 2.1). Examples include “put that wallet away” (FDEng_AmSa). The utterance “Put that wallet away” is a response to a non-verbal attempt by the other dater to get her wallet. The non-verbal attempt is coded as an initial suggestion to share expenses. Although a command, via inference, the hearer recognises “Put that wallet away” as a payment offer because if the addressee of the command is to put away their wallet, then they cannot contribute towards the bill. Hence, the command issuer, one infers, must be offering to settle the entire bill. In the interaction, the bill is paid by this dater. Given this analysis, “put that wallet away” is coded as a non-conventionally indirect offer. Given the low occurrence of this utterance and the absence of orders/requests potentially functioning as offers in the data, it was not recognised as a conventionally indirect strategy (cf. also Anchimbe, 2018 on declaratives which function as indirect offers).

conventionally indirect refusal strategy. As mentioned above and as will be seen in 4.3, the extensive use of this strategy is the result of payment negotiation conventions which involve an extensive use of suggestions to share expenses, and thus the need for a forceful directive offer in the light of such suggestions.

4.2. Suggestions to share expenses

Suggestions to share expenses were the other pivotal speech act besides payment offers identified in the initial turns of the payment negotiation data. They are an important speech act in payment negotiation in the data (72.3 %). It is the woman who overridingly issues the suggestions to share expenses (cf. Table 7). The majority of suggestions identified are verbal (94.1 %) (cf. Table 8). Non-verbal suggestions are realised when individuals reach for wallets, purses or bags and there is verbal uptake of this action as a suggestion.

Table 7
Suggestions to share expenses in successful interactions across genders in *First Dates*[8].

	(n = 47)
Suggestion	72.3 % (34) n = 34
Man suggests	–
Woman suggests	100 % (34)

Table 8
Verbal and non-verbal suggestions to share expenses in successful interactions in *First Dates*.

	(n = 47)
Total suggestions	72.3 % (34) n = 34
Verbal suggestions	94.1 % (32)
Exclusively non-verbal suggestions	5.9 % (2)

Table 9 displays the superstrategies and subordinate strategies identified in the data as well as the underlying patterns realising each subordinate strategy. The superstrategies are divided into four main types, namely joint action strategies, preference strategies, execution strategies and directive strategies. Within these four superordinate categories are direct and frequently also conventionally indirect realisations (cf. Table 9) (cf. 2.1). As in the case of payment offers (cf. 4.1), a refusals strategy is also identified in the present context as a conventionally indirect directive suggestion strategy. Refusal strategies realising suggestions to share expenses always follow payment offers (cf. 4.3). A refusal of an offer of payment automatically realises a suggestion to split costs. Generally, this refusal would work via implicature and would thus have the status of an indirect suggestion. However, there are a number of refusal strategies in the data functioning to have costs shared; in addition, the strategy is a familiar one in offer realisations (cf. 4.1). Hence, this is viewed as a conventionally indirect strategy. In Example (5), for example, M issues a payment offer in line 1 which M refuses with “No” in line 2, and thus, here simultaneously suggests to share expenses.

[8] The number of successful interactions in which a suggestion might have occurred differs somewhat from the total number of successful interactions given in Table 1 due to film cuts which showed a payment scene but did not include the complete payment interaction. Thus, a dater may have been shown paying but no payment interaction between the daters was shown. In such an incomplete interaction, there was no possibility of a suggestion being recorded (cf. also footnote 11).

Table 9
Verbal suggestion to share expenses categories, patterns, examples and distribution across stand-alone (S), initial (S–O) and subsequent position (O–S) suggestions in successful interactions in *First Dates*.

Superordinate strategy	Directness (D, CI, non-CI)	Strategy	Structure	Example	n = 32
Joint action	D	Propose joint action via suggestory formulae	Let's VP	Let's split	9.4 % (3)
	D	State joint future action	We're VP	We're going half and half	15.6 % (5)
	D	Question joint future action	Are we VP? Do we VP?	Are we going halves? Do we split?	12.5 % (4)
	D	Question joint obligation	Should we VP?	Should we just go halfies?	3.1 % (1)
	CI	Question joint ability	Can we VP?	Can we do splitsies, plea<:>se?	3.1 % (1)
	CI	State joint ability	We could VP	We could [go both ways])	3.1 % (1)
TOTAL JOINT ACTION					46.9 % (15)
Preference	D	Grammatically elliptical	NP	A half each	3.1 % (1)
	CI	Question hearer desire	Do you want to VP? Do you want me to VP? You don't want NP?	(Do you) want to go halves on it? Do you want me to? You don't want any money towards the meal?	12.5 % (4)
TOTAL PREFERENCE					15.6 % (5)
Execution	D	State future act of speaker	I VP	I'll put [towards it]	9.4 % (3)
	CI	Question speaker ability	Can I VP?	Can I pay half?	3.1 % (1)
	CI	State speaker ability	I can VP	I can go halves (.) with you	3.1 % (1)
	CI	State speaker willingness	I am/would be (intensifier) happy to VP	I am so happy to go Dutch	6.2 % (2)
	CI	Request permission	Are you going to let me VP	Are you going to let me pay for some of this?	3.1 % (1)
TOTAL EXECUTION					25 % (8)
Directive	CI	Indirect – refusal	No	No	9.4 % (3)
	CI	Question payment via question word interrogatives	What do I VP?	What do I owe you?	3.1 % (1)
TOTAL DIRECTIVE					12.5 % (4)

(5) M: Would you do me a favour and let me pay for it

F: [No]

M: [Come on]

F: No

M: As far as I am concerned (inc.) a lovely night out (inc.) really

F: Okay (.) thank you

(FDEng_SiTy)

The suggestion to share strategies recorded in the present data reveal some commonalities with descriptions of payment offers (cf. 4.1). On the superordinate level, the categories of execution, preference and directives strategies are reminiscent of offer strategies. On the subordinate level also, suggestion to share expenses strategies show overlap with the payment offer strategies (cf. 4.1). Examples include the state future act of speaker, the state-speaker-willingness strategy, the request-permission strategy and the refusal strategy. In addition, the overview also includes strategies not seen in payment offers but recorded in previous overviews of hospitality offers and offers of assistance strategies, such as a question-desire strategy, a state-(speaker)-ability strategy (Barron, 2005) as well as suggestory-formulae and grammatically-elliptical strategies (Barron, 2017b).

Despite such commonalities with payment offers, the data also reveals many key strategies not recorded in descriptions of offer strategies. Instead, these strategies reflect many commonalities with previous descriptions of suggestions. One of the primary differences is the occurrence of the joint action superstrategy. This superstrategy encompasses many substrategies all focused on joint action by speaker and hearer. Examples include the question-joint obligation strategy (should we VP?), the question joint future action strategy (are we VP?/do we VP?), the question-joint-

ability strategy (can we VP?), the state joint future action strategy (we're VP) and the state joint future ability strategy (we can VP). The use of the first-person plural is a commonality across these strategies. The focus on common action is very reminiscent of suggestion realisations. Edmondson and House (1981) list a range of "we" forms, such as "we'd better VP, "we VP", "shall we VP?", "can't we VP?", "we could VP" (cf. also Carter and McCarthy, 2006:688), "couldn't we VP?", "we ought VP", "we're going VP". In addition, "we can VP" is mentioned by Carter and McCarthy (2006:688) in their description of suggestions, as is the pattern "should we?" (cf. Flöck, 2011; cf. also Leech and Svartvik 1994; Adolphs 2008). Similarly, the new propose action via suggestory formulae (e.g. let's), also part of the joint action superstrategy, is also one recorded for suggestions (cf. Sadock, 1974; Edmondson and House, 1981:126; Koike, 1994; Jiang, 2006) and also recorded in offer descriptions, where it is termed suggestory formulae (Barron, 2017b). All of these joint action strategies underline the focus on joint action by speaker and hearer in suggests-for-us and differs considerably from offer strategies with a focus on speaker action. Finally, a further commonality with previous descriptions of suggestion strategies is seen in the directive use of interrogative question forms, such as "what". This is not a feature of offer strategies. However, such interrogative forms have been recorded to realise suggestions (cf. Edmondson and House, 1981:126; Martínez-Flor, 2005; Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor, 2006).

Table 9 shows the distribution of the strategies realising suggestions to share expenses. Overall, joint action strategies are the most widely used suggestions to share expenses in the data (46.9 %), motivating, as discussed in 3.3, the present discussion in terms of suggestions. The other strategy types are used to a similarly lesser degree (preference: 15.6 %; execution: 25 %; directive 12.5%). On the subordinate level, there is a wide range of suggestion strategies used. Whereas the payment offer data in Table 5 revealed only seven strategies overall, the suggestion to share expenses data revealed 15 different strategies (cf. Table 9), revealing a considerable amount of variation across speakers. The distribution of direct and conventionally indirect suggestion to share expenses strategies is approximately similar, with 53.1 % (17/32) of payment suggestion strategies realised directly, and 46.9 % (15) realised indirectly.

An additional perspective on the data is provided by an analysis of the relative explicitness/implicitness of the suggestion to share expenses (cf. Table 10). The categories put forward combine the criteria of the level of transparency, the type of bill sharing suggested and the position of suggestions. Both of the suggestions a) suggestions to split the bill ("halfsies") and b) suggestions to pay for own meal ("go Dutch") were explicit suggestions, with only the manner of splitting differing (half/half or pay for own meal). The remaining three suggestion types, c), d), e), were more ambiguous, suggesting a contribution to the bill but not including details as to how the bill should be shared. The suggest giving-contribution-to-the-hearer (H) strategy (c) assumed that the bill was to be potentially shared but put the onus on the H to state what should be shared (e.g. "What do I owe you?"), whereas the ambiguous-initial-suggestion-to-share expenses or-offer-to-settle-the-bill strategy (d) (e.g. "Let me just -]]") and the rebuttal-of-payment-offer-ambiguously-suggesting-to-share-expenses-or-offer-to-settle-the-bill strategy (e) ("no you won't"), served to communicate willingness to contribute to the bill, but no details as to how, whether in whole or in part. Unlike strategy c), strategies d) and e) did not explicitly mention giving money to H. Strategy d) occurred at the beginning of a payment negotiation sequence whereas the rebuttal strategy (e) occurred after an offer to cover the bill. On the surface, e) appeared to function as a refusal. However, as mentioned above with regard to the directive category, it simultaneously functioned as a conventionally indirect suggestion to share expenses as it is clear that refusing an offer to settle the bill implies either that the speaker wants to pay for their own meal or that they want to pay for both meals.

Table 10
Realisations of suggestions to share expenses in successful interactions in *First Dates*.

Suggestion types	Realisations[9]	(n = 34)
a) Suggestion to split bill (halfsies)	Go/do halves, Go halfsies, I've got half of this, Do/go half and half, Go a half each, Pay half, split, do splitsies	58.9 % (20)
b) Suggestion to pay for own meal (go Dutch)	go Dutch	5.9 % (2)
TOTAL EXPLICIT		64.7 % (22)
c) Suggest giving contribution to H	Do you want some money towards it?, What do I owe you?	17.6 % (6)
d) Ambiguous initial suggestion to share expenses or offer to settle the bill	Let me just]], what's the damage dude?, How do you want to do it?	2.9 % (1)
e) Rebuttal of payment offer ambiguously suggesting to share expenses or offer to settle the bill	no you won't	8.8 % (3)
Non-verbal		5.9 % (2)
TOTAL IMPLICIT		35.3 % (10)

Table 10 shows the frequencies of the strategies realising suggestions to share expenses. The use of an explicit suggestion to go halfsies is the most common type of suggestion (explicit: 64.7 % vs. implicit 35.3 %). We may conclude then that there is a preference for explicit suggestions to share which state clearly the intention to share the bill. These are realised by a range of strategies, mostly communicating joint action in a conventionally indirect manner.

4.3. Speech act sequences in payment negotiation

Payment offers and suggestions to share expenses are the pivotal speech acts present in the initial turns of payment interaction. In addition, requests for payment played a minor role. In the following, we sketch the main sequential patterns involving these speech acts in the payment interaction in the *First Dates* data and analyse the interactional structures underlying each pattern using Edmondson and House's (1981) discourse model. Six patterns were recorded, namely:

- Payment offer (O)
- Suggestion to share expenses (S)
- Payment offer – suggestion to share expenses (O–S)
- Suggestion to share expenses – payment offer (S–O)
- Payment offer – payment offer (O–O)
- Request for payment (RP)

Fig. 1 displays the distribution of these patterns. Here we see that all interactions included either a payment offer (O) or a suggestion to share expenses (S) with one exception where rather a request for payment (RP) was recorded (cf. Example 12).

Fig. 1 shows that stand-alone offers (O) are the offer pattern recorded in 23.4 % of the successful interactions. Offer exchanges of this pattern included simple exchanges in which offers functioned as Initiates and were followed by Satisfys, all leading to positive outcomes (accepts). Example (6) is a typical example where an Initiate taking the form of an offer is directly accepted. Many stand-alone offers (O), however, also included a Counter move in which the offeree attempted to have the sincerity of the offer qualified. This sincerity check was always clarified by the offerer, so that such exchanges took the interactional structure Initiate-Counter-Satisfy and closed with a positive outcome (accept). In Example (7), for instance, the sincerity of the offer "I've got this" is checked via a Counter taking the ritual form of "Are you sure?". This Counter is then Satisfied by the offerer with "Yeah (.) absolutely" and the Initiate then Satisfied by the woman non-verbally.

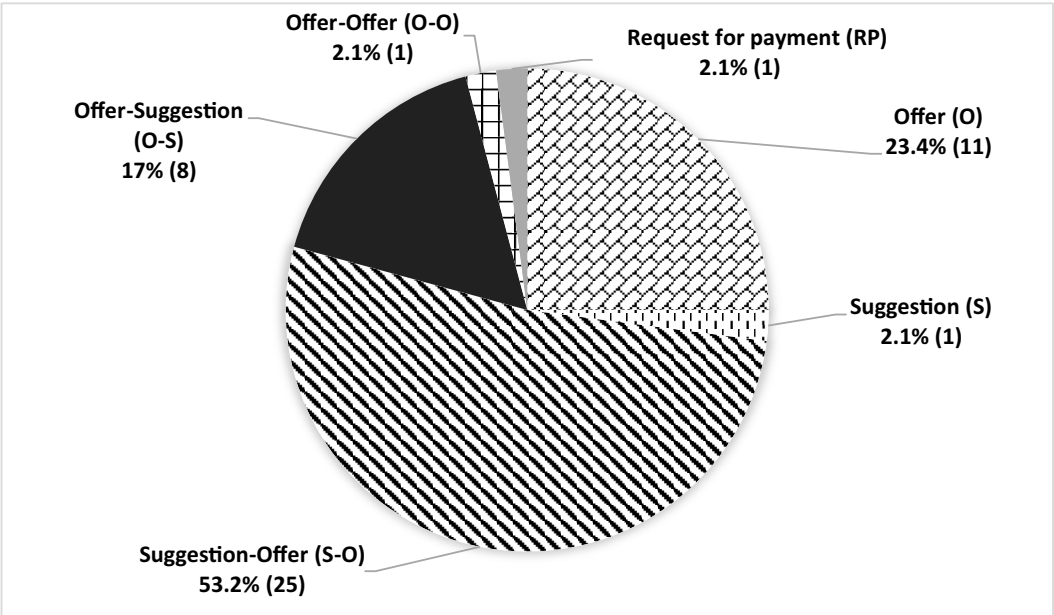

Fig. 1. Initial payment negotiation exchange structure in successful interactions in *First Dates* (n = 47).

(6) Offer (O)

M: ((bill is already lying on the table)): I'll get this by the way OFFER (INITIATE)

W: Thank you very much ACCEPTANCE (SATISFY)

(FDEng_FaBe)

(7) Offer (O)

((Waiter comes to table; W has right hand raised to hair))

Waiter: I'll put it down there ((Waiter places bill in middle of table))

M: Thank you (.) I've [got this](.) I've got this ((takes bill)) OFFER (INITIATE)

W: [Thank you] (.) Are you sure REQUEST CONFIRMATION OF HEARER SINCERITY (COUNTER)

M: Yeah (.) absolutely CONFIRM HEARER SINCERITY (SATISFY COUNTER)

W: ((broad smile)) ACCEPTANCE (SATISFY INITIATE)

M: ((waiter hands payment device to M)) Thank you very much ((M keys in code))

(FDEng_ZoDa)

Suggestions to share expenses pattern in different ways. They may be realised on their own (S), precede (S–O) or follow (O–S) a payment offer. Suggestions to share expenses without an offer (S) to cover the complete bill were dispreferred (2.1 %) (cf. Fig. 1). These take the form Initiate-Satisfy in the data. In Example (8), the woman (W) suggests to split the bill, saying "Are we going halves?". Her suggestion is accepted by her date and both contribute to payment. This is one of the few interactions in which there is no payment offer (cf. also Table 2).

(8) Suggestion (S)

W: Are we going halves SUGGESTION (INITIATE)

M: ((looking for his wallet)): Sure we do (.) [The mo<]>dern <-> the modern way ACCEPTANCE (SATISFY)

W: [Yeah] (1.0) The modern thing ((looking for her purse)) ALIGNMENT

(FDEng_AbEd)

The S–O and O–S patterns were more frequent than the S pattern. As will be seen in the following, these interactions always include a Contra move by which an attempt is made to have the Initiate withdrawn. There may also be a series of Contras. We turn first to suggestions to share expenses followed by a payment offer: this S–O pattern is recorded in 53.2 % of interactions. Interactionally, these represent an Initiate-Contra pattern, with potentially several Contras. Example (9) illustrates such an S–O interaction. The interaction starts with a suggestion to share expenses ("Are we going to go Dutch?") functioning as an Initiate. This is followed by a refusal functioning as a conventionalised offer ("[No (.) we're not] going to go Dutch."). Interactionally, the refusal Contras the Initiate and attempts to get W to withdraw her suggestion to share expenses. W does not Contra this Contra but instead withdraws her Initiate and instead realises a Counter to check the sincerity of M's

offer. When this is confirmed ("Yeah (.) I'm sure"), the exchange ends with a Satisfy which involves W's agreement to withdraw her original suggestion to share expenses and instead to agree to the offer in line 2.

(9) Suggestion – offer (S-O)

W: Are we going to go Dutch (.) [We're going to]		SUGGESTION (INITIATE)
M:	[No (.) we're not] going to go Dutch	REFUSAL/ OFFER (CONTRA)
W: Are you sure		REQUEST
		CONFIRMATION OF HEARER SINCERITY (COUNTER)
M: Yeah (.) I'm sure		CONFIRM HEARER SINCERITY (SATISFY COUNTER)
W: Okay (.) this made me really happy		ACCEPTANCE (SATISFY)

Uses of the O–S pattern is also recorded (17 %). Example (10) exemplifies this pattern. Here, the Initiate is an offer ("I'll<–> I'll deal with that") which is followed by a suggestion to share expenses ("You don't have to (0.4) [I'm happy to go halves (.) with you]" functioning as a Contra. It is followed by a further Contra, in an attempt by M to reinstate he offer (reoffer). The interaction closes with the Initiate Satisfied and the offerer paying.

(10) Offer – suggestion (O-S)

M: ((with the bill in his hands)) I'll<-> I'll deal with that		OFFER (INITIATE)
W: You don't have to (0.4)	[I'm happy to go halves (.) with you]	REFUSAL/ SUGGESTION (CONTRA)
M:	[↑No (.) no (.) no (.)↓] no (.) when you got good food (1.0) fantastic company (0.8) what more could you want	REOFFER (CONTRA)
W: Can't complain (.) can you		ACCEPTANCE (SATISFY)

(FDEng_JeTo)

Similarly, in Example (5), we have an O–S structure with M producing an Initiate offer ("… let me pay for it") and W producing a suggestion to share expenses taking the form of a conventional refusal (cf. 4.2) as a Contra. A series of Contras by M and W follows, with M, attempting to reinstate his payment offer and W attempting to reinstate her suggestion to share expenses. M's offer is finally accepted by W and the interaction closes with the Initiate Satisfied. Compared with Example (10), the level of negotiation is higher in Example (5), with a higher level of sincerity recorded on behalf of the suggester.

The O–O pattern is a very rare pattern in the data (2.1 %). This offer structure is equivalent to Almusallam's (2023:171) embedded offer type (cf. 2.2). It involves a payment offer as an Initiate and a payment offer as a Contra. This is illustrated in Example (11). The man (M) has the bill in his hands, when the woman (W), with a broad smile on her face, issues the offer "I'll get tha<:>t". There is uptake of W's payment offer but M interprets it as out of the question ("You're not getting (.) you wished you'd get it") and issues his own offer ("I'll get i<:>t"). In this example, the exchange continues with a series of Contras in which a series of reoffers are issued by both parties. The interaction closes with W laughing loudly. M's conviction that he is destined to settle the bill is seen in his comments "you wished you'd get it" and "Of course you're not getting it". These also serve to underline the dispreferred nature of the O–O pattern. W's loud laughter suggests that she was potentially playing with gender conventions, secure in the knowledge that M was going to pay.

(11) Offer – Offer (O-O)

W ((while M is looking at the bill)): I'll get tha<:>t OFFER (INITIATE)

M: You're not getting (.) you wished you'd get it (.) I'll get it OFFER (CONTRA)

W: I'll get i<:>t REOFFER (CONTRA)

M: Of course you're not getting it (.) "I'll (.) I'll do the getting"REOFFFER (CONTRA)

W: ((loud laughter)) ACCEPTANCE (SATISFY)

(FDEng_LaMa)

The final pattern, RP, was also very rare (2.1 %). Example (12) is the only instance in the database. We see that the woman's Initiate is a request "Are you getting this?". It is met by a Contra move in which the request is refused. The dispreference of this refusal is seen in W's reaction ("No"), issued with rising intonation, which questions the sincerity of the refusal.

(12) Request for payment

W ((sees M with his wallet ready to pay)): Are you getting this (0.4) O<::>h

REQUEST FOR PAYMENT (INITIATE)

M: Not tonight ((laughter)) REFUSAL (CONTRA)

W: No QUESTION HEARER SINCERITY (COUNTER)

(FDEng_KaMi)

Overall then, stand-alone suggestions (S), reciprocal offer (O–O) patterns and the request for payment (RP) were dispreferred in the data. Patterns including a suggestion were most frequently used, and among these the suggestion-offer (S–O) pattern was the most frequently used pattern. O and S pattern types took a simple Initiate-Satisfy structure. In addition, Counters serving to confirm hearer sincerity were a feature of some of these interactions. The patterns S–O, O–S, S–S and RP patterns in contrast were more complex, involving sequences of Contra moves, sometimes interspersed by Counter moves testing sincerity. Finally, variation was recorded in negotiation levels within one structure, with a higher number of Contras indicating more intense negotiation.

5. Discussion

The analysis of payment interactions in the UK blind date series, *First Dates*, showed payment offers to settle the bill and suggestions to share expenses to represent important speech acts. The speech acts produced in payment interaction have not been a focus of research to date. In addition, and turning to offers in particular, research on offers has frequently focused on offers as a broad category, ignoring the differences between offer topic types. Hence, with few exceptions (cf. Barron, 2017a, 2017b), hospitable offers, offers of assistance and other offer types have been treated as one. Payment offers have not been examined at all. The present study is, thus, the first to shed light on payment offers. It shows payment offers to be primarily realised via speaker-oriented execution strategies. As such, they contrast clearly with hospitable offers, the latter realised primarily via hearer-oriented preference strategies (cf. Barron, 2017a, 2017b). Indeed, preference strategies were not employed at all to realise payment offers. Also, the data dictated the need for a number of newly identified strategies, namely a direct execution strategy (speaker-oriented payment offer routines) and a CI directive strategy, refusal.

The study also shed light on the study of suggestions, and particularly on suggests-for-us (Edmondson and House, 1981), as attempts to direct future joint action assumed to be beneficial for both speaker and addressee (Leech, 2014:137). Previous research on suggestions has frequently focused on suggests-for-you (e.g. Martínez-Flor, 2005) rather than suggests-for-us, and has frequently adopted a form-based approach only, and not examined the pragmatic strategies underlying suggestions, but rather concentrated on common formal realisations. The present study puts forward a coding scheme for suggestions to share expenses, itself a category of suggests-for-us. Many of the strategies identified reflect a focus on joint action and thus are reminiscent of formal-based categorisations of suggestions which highlight a frequent use of the first person plural (cf. e.g. we could VP, we're going VP, let's) (cf. Sadock, 1974; Edmondson and House, 1981; Koike, 1994; Leech and Svartvik, 1994; Carter and McCarthy, 2006; Jiang, 2006; Adolphs, 2008).

The study examined the pragmalinguistic realisations of the suggestions and offers employed in *First Dates*. In payment offers, the execution superstrategy was used to a large extent, in line with the commissive nature of offers which underlines

the future action of the addressee. Within this superordinate category, a state-future-act-of-speaker strategy (e.g. I'll get it) was used most extensively. It reflects a preference in the data for forceful offers, underlining the hearer-supportive nature of payment offers and the low levels of negative face threat associated with their realisation potentially a factor reflected by strong traditional gender conventions (cf. below). Suggestions to share expenses were realised most frequently using a joint action strategy. Overall, the range of strategies employed was broader than those realising payment offers suggesting more variation in conventions or interactional differences (cf. below).

From a methodological perspective, the study of the strategies underlying payment offers and suggestions to share expenses offered new insights showing that an analysis of interactional structure allows identification of conventionally indirect speech act strategies which may go unnoticed in analyses of isolated speech acts. Specifically, refusals were identified as conventionally realising a directive offer strategy in payment interaction. Such offer strategies occurred after an initial suggestion to share expenses. Similarly, a conventionally indirect refusal strategy was found to also realise suggestions to share expenses. This strategy was recorded where a suggestion to share expenses occurred after an offer to settle the complete bill.

From an interactional perspective, the analysis also sheds light on the interactional structure of payment exchanges and thus adds to current research on the interactional structure of offer sequences (cf. 2.2). Using Edmondson and House's (1981) interactional approach, payment offers and suggestions to share expenses are shown to be employed as both Initiates and Contras. Structurally, six main patterns were identified in the data, a stand-alone payment offer (O), a stand-alone suggestion to share expenses (S), an initial suggestion to share expenses followed by a payment offer (S—O), an initial payment offer followed by a suggestion to share expenses (O—S), two payment offers (O—O) and a stand-alone request for payment (RP). S, O—O and RP represented dispreferred patterns in the data set. The suggestion-offer (S—O) pattern was the preferred payment negotiation pattern. The overview of patterns shows the speech act of suggestions to share expenses to hold an important status in the data. These add to the interactional and negotiational complexity of the dialogues. This is reflected in the extensive use of Contras. However, it is, at the same time, noticeable that in interactions such as Example (9) which begins with an Initiate taking the form of a suggestion to share expenses, that once the suggestion is Contraed, there is no further attempt to reinstate the original suggestion. A similar situation in seen in Example (10) where the Contra to suggest sharing expenses is not reinstated once Contraed by a reoffer. This fact, coupled with the fact that the production of the speech act of suggestion to share expenses does not have any effect on the outcome from a financial perspective, points to the speech act of suggestions to share expenses as one which primarily serves a role in polite negotiation. In such cases, it can be suggested to have the status of a ritual suggestion, and as such to represent an ostensible speech act. In other words, the speech act frequently involves speakers' pretence of sincerity and the addressees' recognition of this pretence serving an off-record purpose (Isaacs and Clark, 1990). On the other hand, however, the analysis of interactional structure, and in particular Example (5), also shows interactions in a series of Contras in which there are several attempts made to reinstate a suggestion to share expenses. Such examples show the broad variation in the interactional structures present and also considerable variation in uses of suggestions to share expenses.

The discussion of interactional structure relates closely to the discussion of gender. The data clearly shows that the speech act of payment offers is linked to masculine identity construction. Women only very rarely produce payment offers in the data (cf. 4.1, 4.3) and when they do their attempts are strongly rejected (cf. Example 11). In constructing masculine identity, men on the show offer to settle the complete bill and do so in an emphatic manner via a strong tendency to use direct offers. In doing so, they emphasise their generosity and thus enhance the positive face of the addressee. Any potential negative face needs that the addressee may have (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987) appear minimal, a fact that in itself reveals strong gender conventions. In other words, the social obligation for a man to produce a payment offer is strong, as also suggested by previous research in the US context (cf. 2.4), and the face-threat associated with this directive action low. Associated with the presence of such norms is also potentially the influence of the media and the associated high degree of face threat which a lack of compliance to traditional conventions in the public arena may entail.

The chosen path women prototypically take in the data is to signal their willingness and ability to share the cost of the meal. In doing so, they engage in negotiation involving suggestions to share expenses to restore the imbalance of a strong offer (in interactions initiated by an offer) or an anticipated strong offer (in interactions initiated by a suggestion to share expenses), and to thus save their negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987). Interactionally, the S—O pattern in particular, but also the O—S pattern, are common. Furthermore, the analysis also shows that Counters questioning hearer sincerity were a feature of women's productions in a number of interactions following offers (cf. 4.3). Such Counters functioned to signal an appreciation that the offerer may be simply offering out of politeness. They also attempt to minimise the benefit to self that the offer brings and thus allow the offeree not to appear greedy (Generosity Maxim). The offerer, on the other hand, not wishing to appear ungenerous confirms the offer, once again attempting to maximise benefit to the hearer (Tact Maxim) and maximise cost to self (Generosity Maxim) (cf. Leech, 1983: 111f; cf. also Shishavan, 2016). Variation in the use of suggestions is however also a feature of the data. As mentioned above, there is variation in the degree to which suggestions are reinstated when Contraed, pointing to the fact that some women are more willing to push a suggestion to share expenses than others and are thus more sincere in producing the speech act. In addition, the strategies realising the suggestions to share expenses in the data, though overridingly explicit, show wide variation in strategy type and degree of

directness, some indirect strategies communicating a strongly tentative realisation. Potential explanations underlying such variation include individual differences, changing gender conventions and also the fact that identity is co-constructed with individual interactants. On national television, some interactants may not welcome challenges to their masculinity, as potentially appears to be the case in Example (11) above in which M comments "You're not getting (.) you wished you'd get it (.) I'll get it" and "Of course you're not getting it (.) I'll (.) I'll do the getting" (cf. Barron and Wolfers-Pommerenke, forthcoming).

Despite social change in the equality of the genders then, the *First Dates* series portrays the man in the active role of settling the bill. The picture drawn of interaction between the genders thus shows a "payment romance gap",[10] with men depicted as payment offerers and bill payers, and women as passive receivers with at most a ritual role in payment negotiation. Whether these findings reflect everyday language use in the UK remains an open question which further research might address. However, they do support those of previous psychological and sociological survey-based research based in the US context highlighting an active male role in payment negotiation (cf. also Laner and Ventrone, 2000; Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010; Lever et al., 2015). Either way, media representations of such traditional communication patterns might be criticised in the light of goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender equality (United Nations n.y.), which has gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls as an explicit aim. Traditional roles make it potentially difficult to engage in and develop equal partnership relationships. Indeed, Bumble, a dating internet platform which aims to empower women by having them make the first step in dating arrangements, suggest in this regard, that "The bedrock of a relationship is formed in the first few months, and if it isn't a level playing field at the start then, as time evolves, areas such as money, childcare and the division of emotional labour are also at risk of being unfairly influenced by gender expectations" (https://thebeehive.bumble.com/the-romance-gap).

At the same time, it must also be noted that some interactions are also broadcast in *First Dates* which challenge gender conventions, as in the case of the O—O interaction in which an offer to settle the bill is issued by both daters or indeed the RP interaction in which a woman requests payment of the man (cf. 4.3) (cf. also Barron and Wolfers-Pommerenke, forthcoming on gender challenges broadcast on *First Dates*). It is such gender challenges which are frequently the subject of discussion and also potentially initiate awareness of and a discussion on traditional gender conventions. Such is seen, for instance, in an article published in *The Mirror* in the United Kingdom in the aftermath of the first date interaction between Bianca and Daniel broadcast on *First Dates* (O'Sullivan, 29.12.2018). The interaction is not part of the present data base as it was unsuccessful but the reaction to it illustrates the discussion potential of broadcasting patterns which challenge the status quo. The interaction involved a suggestion made by Daniel that Bianca contribute to the bill. This suggestion violated the female privilege principle of suggestions (cf. 2.4). The article leads with the heading "First Dates viewers angry as woman sparks row by expecting man to pay for dinner". The article reports on online discourse focused on Daniel's suggestion that Bianca contribute to the bill by paying for her own dinner. Bianca did not herself proffer a suggestion to pay her half but rather expected that Daniel would foot the entire bill. Some of the tweets mentioned include

(13) "This video has annoyed me, women fighting to be treated with respect and equality ect. Yet she expects the guy to treat her the old fashioned ways. Can't have it both ways love. Equality is for everyone"

(14) "As a woman, it annoyed me too. We can't cherry pick what we want equality about," added another.

A third agreed:

(15) "This annoyed me how she expected that he should have paid and pulled faces and made comments. I would always offer to pay my half" (O'Sullivan, 29.12.2018).

Thus, while media representations of dating in *First Dates* may reproduce traditional gender conventions, they can also lead to a discussion which lead to an increased awareness of the role gender conventions play in one's own life and in turn to potential challenges of conventional norms.

6. Conclusion

The present study examined pragmatic conventions in payment negotiation across genders as depicted in the UK reality TV show, *First Dates*. It represents the first speech act analysis of payment offers and of suggestions to share expenses, as well as the first interactional analysis of payment offer sequences. In addition, the study is the first pragmatic study to

[9] Realisations come from the full corpus, including successful and unsuccessful dates.

[10] The term "romance gap" is coined by Bumble, a dating internet platform which aims to empower women by having them make the first step in dating arrangements. They define the romance gap as "the discrepancy in behaviour expected from male/masculine presenting people and female/feminine presenting people when dating and in relationships". They warn that adopting traditional gender roles in a dating setting has potential repercussions for gender equality.

investigate gender conventions across payment interaction. The payment offer was found to be linked to male identity construction; whereas the suggestion to share expenses and request for confirmation of sincerity ("are you sure?") was linked to female identity construction. The suggestion to share – payment offer (S–O) pattern was found to be the preferred payment negotiation strategy. Offers were typically realised in a direct manner, with suggestions to share frequently realised explicitly, but with more internal variation than offers. Such variation was suggested to relate to individual variation in sincerity levels, changing conventions and to interactional dynamics in identity co-constructions. The analysis also supports previous findings by Barron (2017b) who finds different offer types to be realised using different strategy types (cf. also Barron, 2017a).

The study has implications for discussions of gender depiction in the media and also for gender awareness pedagogy. The topic of dating is a very relevant one for young people. A pilot follow-study of a research-driven approach to gender pedagogy which involved presenting *First Dates* transcripts to students, for instance, proved insightful. Students were asked to identity conventions and to discuss the social repercussions of these conventions today. The task revealed that many students are blinded by the conventionality of gender conventions in the genre and not aware of the extent to which social conventions dictate linguistic action. Discussion of the status of the speech act of suggestion to share expenses, of interactional face threats and of potential long-term benefits to challenging conventions were particularly critically debated.

Finally, the analysis is not without its limitations, many of which might be addressed in future research. Firstly, the analysis integrates non-verbal payment offers and non-verbal suggestions to share expenses by paying attention to hearer uptake. Further research might, however, take up the non-verbal perspective to a greater extent and focus on the role of multimodality in payment interactions and on the interaction between verbal and non-verbal means in payment negotiation. In Example (7), for instance, the woman in the interaction is seen with her right hand raised to her hair. There is no verbal uptake of this action by her date partner in the scene. However, such non-verbal communication techniques may potentially extend the opportunity for men to issue an offer. These therefore represent a research gap worth focusing on (cf. Frobenius and Gerhardt, 2023 on such communication in *First Dates: ein Tisch für Zwei*, the German version of *First Dates*).

Secondly, the present study provides insight on speech act interaction and on gender variation in a dating context. However, variational pragmatic research highlights the potential impact of not only gender, but also of further social factors, such as region, age, socio-economic status and ethnic identity, on pragmatic conventions (cf. 2.4; cf. Schneider and Barron, 2008; Barron and Schneider, 2009). Consequently, such factors may have influenced findings. Hence, further research on intralingual pragmatic variation in payment offers and in payment sequences across region (e.g. rural and urban, North vs. South), age groups, socio-economic class or ethnic groups is needed. In addition, a variational pragmatic analysis of payment negotiation focused on region on a national level represents a desideratum. The present analysis focuses on *First Dates* in Britain. Future regionally-focused variational pragmatic studies might focus on payment negotiation in *First Dates* and *First Dates Ireland* (cf. Barron, forthcoming a) or on *First Dates Australia*. In addition, cross-cultural research on payment offers and payment sequences remains a research desideratum (cf. Barron, forthcoming b on payment negotiation in the German *First Dates – Ein Tisch für zwei*).

Thirdly, metapragmatic insights on how gender roles interact with payment sequences would complement the present analysis. Indeed, some of the examples employed include explicit metapragmatic references to linguistic gender roles in first date interactions. The woman (W), in Example (1), for instance, explicitly states that she has been brought up so as to "remember to offer" (cf. 3.2). Further research might focus on metapragmatic insights into payment roles and gender using a range of data, such as focus interviews. Such metapragmatic insights might also be integrated to inform speech act identification processes, and to help ascertain whether a future act, such as paying one's share of a bill, is viewed as costly to a speaker or not. Such insights would shed light on the question as to whether attempts to share the costs of a meal are suggestions or offers for the speakers themselves (cf. 3.2). Finally, the *First Dates* corpus is a rich source of metapragmatic comments on payment interactions given that, as well as unscripted dater interaction, each episode also includes experiential interviews (Corner, 1999), which sometimes involve interviews with the daters on their expectations of and retrospective comments on the first date. Barron and Wolfers-Pommerenke (forthcoming) sheds light on the insights such data yields with regard to the metapragmatics of payment interaction in a German *First Dates: ein Tisch für zwei* corpus.

Transcription conventions

Transcription conventions

Yeah [no worries] [Thanks]	Overlapping speech
Over<[>lap	If overlap begins or ends in the middle of a word, the square bracket must be enclosed
(0.5)	Indicates the length of a pause, measured in tenths of a second
(.)	Indicates a pause in the talk of less than two tenths of a second.
(inc.)	Incomprehensible speech
(tomorrow)	Transcriber uncertain of wording
((sigh)) ((cough))	Non-lexical noises. Can also enclose transcriber's comments on contextual or other features
soun-	Indicates sharp cut off of prior word
It <-> it	Rapid repetition of words, stuttering, or sudden change in thought (breaking off one sentence to start a new one)
sou<:>nd	Sustained enunciation of a syllable. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching
↑↓	Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift
soun-	Indicates sharp cut off of prior word

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Anne Barron: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

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Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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