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Offering Exchanges: From Research Data to Classroom Practice

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Abstract

This paper addressed the under-investigated question whether speech act moves can be identified and classified in conversation by examining the content, positioning, and strategic role of utterances in turns and turn sequences. To this end, offering exchanges were analysed in the transcripts of 31 open role-plays. These were elicited from American native speakers through written prompts, and exemplified dialogues between interactants differing in terms of social distance and degree of power. In the data examined, the offerers and the offerees produced conversation management moves for opening, closing, and sustaining the interaction (e.g., summoning vs responding to summons), and goal-furthering moves for negotiating the offering exchange in line with their complementary initiating vs responding discursive and speech-act roles (e.g., motivating the offer vs the reaction to it). The study revealed that: the strategies realizing offers and reactions to them were similar across interactional role-relationships; clusters of moves showed preferred sequencing patterns; the interlocutors actively cooperated towards the co-construction of their interaction; and function-detecting heuristic prompts were particularly useful for the identification of moves in turns. Pedagogical implications were drawn from the findings, showing how model scripts may help language learners become familiar with the interactional strategies called for in goal-oriented communication.

Keywords: *Offers, Speech Acts, Moves, Interaction, Dialogue*

Speech Act Exchanges

In dialogic interaction, participants are jointly responsible for the content, structure, effectiveness, and acceptability of the communicative event they are involved in. In goal-

oriented communication, in particular, cooperative participants contribute mutually relevant turns that develop and bring to a conclusion their inter-action. Such goal-oriented dialogic communication is often exemplified in oral speech acts: a spontaneous or elicited initiating act usually tips the balance of social debts and credits in favour of one interlocutor, and thus primes for a relevant reaction from the other interlocutor. Such a response either acknowledges the newly created imbalance or restores the balance of the relationship between the interlocutors, and ensures a mutually satisfactory conclusion of the exchange. The initiating and the reacting acts thus form a speech act complementary sequence. The exchange may develop into an even longer sequence as the goal orientation of the initiating speech act unfolds and comes to a close through multiple contributions of the reacting participant, who moves forward, sustains, and ratifies the previous bid for interaction. Such a two-party construction of communication also applies to offering exchanges.

An offering exchange is a sequence of verbal actions representing the speaker-offerer as the benefactor, and the addressee-offeree as the beneficiary, with regard to a future distribution of benefits and/or costs. In the initiating action, the offerer earns credits through volunteering to act in favour of the offeree (Couper-Kuhlen, 2014). This often involves referring to the recipient's interests, specifying who is to provide vs receive the offered item, expressing cost minimisations and/or other details of the future action (Clayman & Heritage, 2015). The offeree can then contribute to developing and bringing to a close that transactional bid for interaction by accepting the offered item, motivating their inability to accept it, and/or negotiating the terms of the proposed delivery of the offered good/service until an agreement is reached. Therefore, an offer opens a collaborative, interactionally negotiated project, or action plan, with a preparatory phase and a delivery phase (Levinson, 2013, p. 120), consisting of several "interdigitated" steps produced by the interlocutors (p. 126). Following Clayman and Heritage (2015, p. 3), it can be described as "a temporally extended work-in-progress that is managed through the serial interlocking of actions in a process of successive confirmation and specification." [1]

The elaboration of the offering speech act exchange mostly depends on the extent to which the reacting participant shares the initiating participant's perception (i.e., understanding and appreciation) of the terms of the initiating speech act: the more divergent the interlocutors' views are on the value, desirability, legitimacy and/or clarity of the orientation of the interaction, the longer their negotiation of those terms will be. In offers, convergence of views and actions may have to be negotiated in three respects. First, the offering illocution itself is a conditional promise, which verbalises the offerer's willingness to provide the offeree with a good/service that is *expected* to be desirable, but *pending* the offeree's approval: no offered item will be provided unless the offeree perceives it as desirable and declares it legitimate to deliver. Also, the actual delivery of the offered good/service requires both parties' cooperation so that they may come to agree on, for example, how, where and when to provide/access it, and how costly and beneficial it may be. Finally, there may be lack of congruity between who is formally framed as the benefactor vs beneficiary and the actual status of the participants in the projected action (Clayman & Heritage, 2014).[2] The discussion of the benefactive dimensions of the projected action through negotiation-oriented interaction may thus lead to a multi-turn exchange.

In this study, I describe how interlocutors negotiate the terms of the adequacy and provision/acceptance of goods/services in elicited dialogic interactions pivoting on the offering

illocution and the response to it. I illustrate the moves that both interactants contribute so as to initiate, advance, and conclude their exchanges, and present criteria for motivating the identification and classification of those moves. I first contextualise my research focus with a brief overview of the literature on speech act exchanges and offering speech acts. After outlining the data collection procedure, I describe my qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis and report on the findings. Finally, I discuss the pedagogical implications of the results and draw general conclusions from the study.

Literature Review

As Geis (1995) showed through his Dynamic Speech Act Theory, a satisfactory account of speech act behaviour needs to proceed from a conversation analytic perspective. In spontaneous (face-to-face) communication, interactants co-construct their speech act discourse with initiating and sustaining/responding moves – sometimes over several turns – meant to satisfy transactional and interpersonal needs within a specific situational domain. Each micro contribution to discourse furthers the goal(s) of the interaction in its domain-specific, face-work-related, or exchange-related aspects.

Corpus-based studies of conversational speech act behaviour have indeed revealed how oral interaction is gradually developed by the participants. Edmondson and House (1981) examined the strategies, formulations, prosodic features, and conversational sequencing of the moves realizing apologies, complaints, congratulations, offers, requests, and thanks, and the verbal reactions to them. The authors showed how speech act moves are variously realised, and how these systematically and relevantly co-pattern with the conversation partner's turns. Similarly, Aijmer (1996) described conversational speech act behaviour along such discursive dimensions as (non)implicit, (non)emotional strategies; lexico-grammatical and prosodic formulations; combinatorial patterns of strategies and formulations; and correlations between formal and situational features of speech acts, and their interactional, social, and textual functions. Her analysis illustrated responding speech acts (e.g., gratitude acknowledgements) and multi-turn speech act sequences.

Other scholars have investigated how specific responding speech acts complement the initiating illocutions they react to, thus accounting for apology responses (Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Murphy, 2016), compliment responses (Cirillo, 2012; Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020; Golato, 2003; Hornoio, 2017; Ishihara, 2010; Shaibani & Zeinali, 2015; Sa'd, 2015; Sarkhosh & Alizadeh, 2017; Schröder & Schneider, 2018), criticism responses (Nguyen, 2017), health inquiry responses (Chen, 2018) request responses (García, 1993; Ifert & Roloff, 1996; Rauniomaa & Keisanen, 2012; Rendle-Short, 2015; Verzella & Tommaso, 2020), invitation responses (García, 1996; Rendle-Short, 2015), threat responses (Geluykens & Limberg, 2012), gratitude responses (Bieswanger, 2015; Curikova, 2008; Farenkia, 2012, 2018; Gesuato, 2016; Rüegg, 2014; Schneider, 2005), complaint responses (Eslami-Rasekh, 2004; Ekström & Lundström, 2014; Hopkinson, 2017) and refusals of requests, invitations and offers (Saud, 2019). These studies showed that responding speech acts are not routinized “knee-jerk” reactions to initiating speech acts. Instead, they vary both in their pragmalinguistic and in their sociopragmatic manifestations.

Researchers have also examined the components and sequencing of offering sequences in English interactions. (For a partial review of the literature on offers, see Gesuato, 2015.) Some studies have highlighted the interactional *context* where offers are produced. For instance,

Edmondson and House (1981) observed how offers could initiate exchanges or serve as reactions to requests, complaints, offers or the granting of permission. Curl (2006) illustrated how offering head acts might be found: after conversation openings or the reference to the issue the offerer wants to address, in the closing sections of conversations, or be produced right after talk about problems. Davidson (1984, 1990) explained how revised versions of offers, and thus possibly new offering sequences, could occur after offers are perceived as problematic because followed by, for example, silence, hesitations, weak agreement forms, or rejection.

Other studies have focused, in particular, on the *structure* of offering exchanges. Aijmer (1996) exemplified routines consisting of a pre-sequence, a response to it, a direct offer, and a step toward the accomplishment of a social commitment. Barron (2003) illustrated how offering sequences may comprise an Initiate move, which initiates an exchange; a Counter move, an attempt to get the interlocutor to modify or qualify the preceding offer; a Reoffer, an attempt to reiterate an offer; a Contra, an attempt to get the interlocutor to withdraw the offer; and a Satisfy, which produces an outcome. Similarly, Rabinowitz (1993) identified the following offering sequences: i) offering, accepting, giving, and thanking; ii) offering, refusing, and switching to a new topic; iii) offering, weakly agreeing repeating the offer, accepting, and giving; iv) offering, refusing, elaborating on the offer, refusing again, and re-elaborating on the offer; v) offering, requesting clarification, repeating the offer, and refusing; and vi) offering, and failing to acknowledge the offer. Finally, Hofstetter and Stokoe (2015) examined offers of assistance in institutional settings, that is, those made spontaneously by British Members of Parliament to their constituents. Using a conversation analytic approach, they identified three types of offers in offering sequences: proposal offers, which appeared first in a sequence, were formulated as want queries, ability statements or permission requests; announcement offers, which appeared second, were formulated as will statements indicating that decisions had been made; and (3) request offers, which appear third, were typically expressed as imperatives like “Let me do X”, occurring when the offeree appeared dissatisfied with the ongoing interaction.

Still other studies have explored the *formal and functional manifestations* of offer strategies. Barron (2005) examined Irish English and British English offers elicited through a production questionnaire. These illustrated occurrences of the Preference Strategies, which pointed to the conditional nature of offers; Execution Strategies, which underlined the commissive nature of offers; and Directive strategies, which highlighted the directive nature of offers. The higher frequency of direct strategies, often accompanied by external mitigators, in the Irish data, was accounted for with reference to the sociopragmatic norms of the Irish informants, who apparently perceived a low degree of face threat in offers, attributing importance to an obligation to demonstrate hospitality.

Using a variational pragmatic approach, Barron (2017) also examined offer strategies and their realisations in transcripts of face-to-face British English and Irish English conversations, considering the propositional content, context of use, and hearer uptake of initiative offers. Her findings showed differences between the two varieties in the frequencies with which they instantiated the Preference, Execution, and Directive strategies, and their more specific sub-strategies, in the wording of the specific strategies, and in the frequency of hospitable vs other offers. Although using different terms, Couper-Kuhlen (2014) similarly described offers as encoded in one of three formats: “a polar interrogative querying the recipient’s need or desire for some future act; the recipient’s possible need or desire for the future act [...] expressed conditionally; a positive imperative” (p. 639). A more focused analysis appears in Barron

(2011), who illustrated how the Execution strategy *question future act of speaker* in face-to-face offer exchanges was relevant to situations in which the face-threat to one or the other interlocutor was relatively low, and how it tended to be encoded as *will I* + agentive verb in Irish English vs *shall I* + agentive verb in British English. Finally, Yaqubi, Saeed and Khaksari (2016) considered the dimensions of politeness, costs-benefits and (in)directness in Persian offers exemplified in Iranian films. Their results showed that the reasons motivating direct and indirect offers were the maxims of tact and generosity à la Leech, and that the politeness implicatures originating from these speech acts could be motivated by taking into consideration the cost-benefit scale involved in the proposed transaction rather than violations of the Gricean Cooperative Principle.

Offers have also been analysed in their multimodal dimension, that is, in terms of how they are constructed through the use of language, the body, and the interactional and material context. For instance, Kärkkäinen and Keisanen's (2012) study reports how, in the face-to-face conversations considered, offers made available to the interlocutor a concrete object present in the situation through two interlinked actions, the identification of a referent and the offer proper. When the offered item had not been oriented to in prior discourse, both actions were fully verbalised, typically through a complex sentence; instead, when the offered item was salient to participants' consciousness, the first action was done through a gesture, while the offer proper was expressed in a simple clause.

Additionally, some studies have examined the *content, strategies and formulation of responses to offers*. Hartuti (2014) investigated declinations of offers elicited from teachers through DCTs, observing how indirect strategies (esp. excuses) were favoured over direct ones when addressing interlocutors of higher, equal or lower status, and that they were often accompanied by expressions of gratitude. Saud (2019) showed how, when Saudi EFL students declined offers in a DCT, they produced indirect refusals more often than direct refusals or adjunct refusals (i.e. avoidance strategies), when addressing interlocutors of higher, lower or equal status. Karafoti (2021) analysed offer sequences in a corpus of spoken Greek from a conversation analytic perspective, classifying offer responses in terms of their alignment to, or deviation from, structural and social expectations. She noticed how offer responses could be formulated as typical preferred or dispreferred second pair parts, but also that they could both appear in a dispreferred format, depending on the interplay between the sequencing, function and design of given turns. Haugh (2017) examined transcripts of naturally occurring conversations, exploring the role of hinting in request-offer sequences. The analysis showed how requestive hints prompted offers of assistance, and how both the hints and the responses to offer prompts, when provided, were "recurrently formatted in ways that *avoid* speakers being held accountably committed to having *intended* to prompt the offer in question" (p. 186; original emphasis). The study also showed that the design of offer responses mainly made it possible to distinguish between "offers accomplished as *prompted* by a prior reporting, and offers accomplished as *pre-emptive* of an incipient request" (p. 188; original emphasis).

Still other investigations have considered offers also *from a pedagogical or cross-linguistic/cultural perspective*. One study, by Bella (2016), examined developmental patterns in the production of offers, among Greek foreign language learners of three different levels of proficiency, on the basis of role-play data and retrospective verbal reports. The author noticed grammatical and pragmalinguistic development in the learners' use of offer strategies and their syntactic modifications, but also that this was not accompanied by similar levels of

sociopragmatic development. Astruc and del Mar Vanrell (2016) compared and contrasted oral offers elicited from English learners of Spanish and native speakers of Spanish. The authors observed how the learners produced a more limited range of morpho-syntactic politeness strategies compared to the native speakers, and also that they often transferred intonational patterns from their L1. Grainger et al. (2015) qualitatively examined the formulation, content and sequencing of offers and refusals produced in Arabic and English during naturally occurring hospitality encounters. They noticed general similarities in Arabic and English offering behaviour in terms of strategies and their sequencing, but also greater conventionalisation and emphasis in the moves of insisting and refusing in Arabic. This revealed orientation more toward equity vs association in the English vs Arabic data, respectively. Finally, an instructional unit on how to accept offers is presented in Chang and Su (2018). Prepared for learners of Chinese as a second or foreign language, on the basis of (semi-)authentic materials, the lesson focused on the negotiation of speech acts across turns, and more specifically on how to produce acceptance sequences in role-plays. The lesson included awareness-raising, noticing and practicing activities, and was reported as being both generally effective and appreciated when field-tested.

The above studies have demonstrated that a range of alternative responses may follow an offering illocution, and that offering sequences may occupy several turns, and be interspersed with additional prompts and reactions from the offerer. The studies have also provided detailed descriptions of what offering sequences are like when interaction is not oriented towards the achievement of a pre-determined communicative-transactional goal. However, there is a gap in the literature in that they have not addressed the issue of move identification in offering sequences.

Research Questions

In this study, I investigate how offering exchanges are carried out when the overt focus of the interaction is the initiating participant's offering illocution. I address the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What moves make up offering exchanges in elicited oral interaction?

Research Question 2: Which ones are produced by the offerer vs the offeree, and which ones by both interactants, and what are their shared and unshared traits?

Research Question 3: How can these moves be identified in conversations?

Research Question 4: What research-informed guidelines can be developed for teaching practice?

Method

In this section, I present my qualitative and quantitative approach to the analysis of offering exchanges.

Participants

The study participants were six pairs of university students, native speakers (NSs) of American English, aged 17-24 (six males and six females). They were recruited by means of an invitation to contribute to what was referred to as a half-hour-long linguistic experiment in exchange for a small monetary reward. The invitation was posted on the bulletin board of the lab where the data were going to be collected and also circulated via email among the students attending two

undergraduate linguistics courses. It specified only one requirement, namely that candidate participants be NSs of English.

Data Collection Instrument

The elicitation material included 39 descriptions of situations in which one interactant was in a position to provide the other interactant with a potentially highly desirable good or service: the great value of the item in question was expected to favour the instantiation of offering exchanges. The scenarios comprised distinct prompts for the target participant roles of offerer vs offeree and were grouped into six sets, relevant to socially different types of potential offerees: intimate and equal (i.e., -D, =P; Set A: seven scenarios); distant and equal (i.e., +D, =P; Set B: nine scenarios); intimate and subordinate (i.e., -D, -P; Set C: six scenarios); distant and subordinate (i.e., +D, -P; Set D: three scenarios); intimate and superior (i.e., -D, +P; Set E: three scenarios); and distant and superior (i.e., +D, +P; Set F: one scenario). The communicative situations outlined in them were adaptations of real-life events experienced by me, as a participant or witness, or related to me by others, which accounts for the different number of scenarios included in each set.

In the following illustrative scenario, Speaker A and Speaker B identify, respectively, the roles of the potential offerer and offeree:

Scenario OF-O1-C1

Speaker A (offerer):

You run a small shoe factory that employs half a dozen people. You have noticed that one of your employees has been suffering from backache for some time. You are on familiar terms with a famous local orthopaedist you went to school with. Since you know that you can easily talk your doctor friend into finding time in his/her busy schedule to see your employee, you think you can arrange an appointment for your employee with that doctor next week. You go over to his/her workspace. What do you say?

Speaker B (offeree):

You are a worker in a small shoe factory. You have been suffering from backache for some time now. Your employer has noticed this. He/she comes over to your workspace.

Data Collection Procedure

After signing up online for a convenient date and time slot, pairs of participants showed up at the lab, where they were accommodated in a sound-proof booth. There, they were shown the six sets of scenarios, from which they chose the six scenarios they would base their role-plays on. More specifically, one participant chose the scenarios from sets A, B and C, after silently reading the prompts for the offerer role, and the other was asked to confirm or reject those choices after reading the complementary prompts for the offeree role, until an agreement was reached. They then switched roles for sets D, E and F. The participants were shown one set of scenarios at a time, and after making each selection, they were left alone in the booth to record their role-play. They were asked to imagine themselves in the situations outlined in the chosen scenarios and interact accordingly, for as long as they wished, and were given the opportunity to opt out of the task. They were also instructed on how to turn on and off the recording equipment and how to delete their recordings if they so wished.

Overall, 36 dialogues were collected, later transcribed by a NS and proofread by me. Five transcripts had to be discarded because it appeared that, occasionally, the participants had failed to follow instructions (i.e., disregarding the participants' role-relationships); instantiated alternative kinds of speech acts, although in line with the scenarios (e.g., a request pre-empting an offer, a promise replacing an offer); or produced implausible turns, turn units or turn combinations (e.g., intra-speaker inconsistent utterances; inter-speaker illogical turn sequences; interlocutors' temporarily stepping out of their roles). As a result, the material considered consists of the transcripts of 31 role-play conversations (about 9,000 words). Below are two sample transcripts relevant to the above scenario, where square brackets signal overlapping part utterances:

Transcript OF-O1-C1-01

A. Hi Katie, how are you doing today?

B. Oh man, hey boss, I'm not doing so well honestly.

A. Oh, what's wrong? I, I kind of noticed that your back is like...

B. Yeah, I, I've, I've been having a lot of back pain recently.

A. What happened?

B. Um, well, I don't know, I just, I've been straining from the work I guess, um, I don't know...

A. Well, I mean, like, if it's come to the... like, is it hurting a lot?

B. Yeah, it's hurting a... big time, like I don't, I'm not sure what I should do.

A. Well, I mean, I know... I have a friend who's a doctor and he's really good at this kind of stuff. He's kind of busy, he's been really busy lately but, um, I mean I could try to, like, set up an appointment. Would you like that?

B. Wow, that'd be great, yeah.

A. Ok. I'll, I'll call him right away.

B. Oh, thanks, (laughs) thanks, boss!

Transcript OF-O1-C1-02

A. Hey Matt, er, I've been noticing that you... have some trouble with your back, is that ... true?

B. Yeah, it's been really hurting recently, I think it's, just been overworking it or something, [not s]ure.

A. [I] I understand that. I actually, er, went to school with er, a local ocu, orthopaedic here and... if you want me to I can definitely set up an appointment for you.

B. Yeah, I, that'd be great if you don't mind. I think that would work wonders for it. I definitely need some attention soon if I wanna keep working here at this rate so...

A. Yeah, no problem, er it definitely would benefit both of us so I'll give him a call and, er, I'll get him to set up a time with you then.

B. Great, appreciate it.

A. No problem.

Analysis

My qualitative analysis consisted in an inductive, bottom-up procedure aimed at comparing and contrasting the offerers' and the offerees' contributions to discourse. My quantitative

analysis was meant to describe the frequency of occurrence, dispersion, and sequential patterns of their interactional-transactional moves across the data.

Qualitative analysis. I first familiarized myself with the content of the transcripts through repeated readings; then, I identified the offerers' and the offerees' moves in 10 transcripts on the basis of functional and semantic criteria (see below). Next, I applied the coding criteria to the remaining data, adapting and refining the descriptors of the coding criteria, where necessary, so as to accurately account for all the data. Finally, I examined the functional, sequential, and content-related properties of the offerers' and the offerees' moves, describing their mutual relevance, and outlining their role in the interactions.

To account for the offerers' and offerees' interactional behaviour, I provided both definitions of the moves making up their discourse, so as to indicate the communicative roles that turns (or turn segments) played in the interaction, and identification criteria showing on what grounds such communicative roles could be applied to given turns (or turn segments). (For a discussion of the notion of 'move', see Gesuato, 2018.) I thus specified the following for each move:

- a short label for ease of reference;
- a definition stating its communicative role;
- a function detector, that is, a (usually interrogative) heuristic prompt for identifying the type of interactional-transactional action being performed;
- a content classifier, that is, a general description of the kind of information conveyed;
- a content indicator, a more specific indication of the entities, situations or events mentioned;
- the interlocutor role associated with it (offerer vs offeree);
- and, wherever possible, its sequential and content-related relevance to the other interlocutor's moves: exchange-initiating (i.e., priming for a response), exchange-developing it (i.e., sustaining or negotiating the other party's contribution), or closure-achieving (i.e., ratifying, rejecting or disregarding the other party's contribution).

To recognise move tokens in the data, I checked whether the application of the identification criteria relevant to a given move type provided convergent evidence towards the identification of the same text segment. That is, I regarded a given turn unit as the token of a given move:

- if it provided a fitting response to the heuristic prompt of that move;
- if this was in line with the illustrative kind of information relevant to that move;
- if it exemplified content associated with that move;
- if it was uttered by an interlocutor playing the interactional role indicated for that move;
- and, where applicable, if its position in the conversational exchange and its content showed its relevance to another move by the interlocutor.

This is in line with Levinson (2013), who argues how actions in talk-in-interaction are recognised by "a range of factors: format (linguistic shape), content (e.g., mentioning of conditions on another action), position in a sequence, the nature of the prior sequence, by detecting the underlying project from the current and preceding turns, and by tracking epistemic authority and other aspects of context." (p. 127).

The identification of move tokens revealed occasional mismatches between the syntactic and/or typographic vs the functional characteristics of the data.

- Some turns, or turn units, were compatible with the descriptive criteria of two move types, and in such cases, I coded those stretches of discourse for both functions; for instance, in OF-O1-A3-01, “because you guys are family,” uttered by the offerer, encoded both an Illocution Motivator move and a Face Enhancer move: it justified the offer, but also made the offeree feel good.
- At other times, a turn segment encoding a given move occurred nested in a larger turn segment encoding a higher-order move, and in such cases, I coded both; for example, in OF-O1-D3-04, the Head Act Response segment “so if [sic] could give me some help that would be greatly appreciated,” which encoded a conditional reactive acceptance of the offered item, also included reference to a Pre-condition Check move, namely “so if [sic] could give me some help”.
- On other occasions, a turn segment encoding a given move overlapped in part with a turn segment encoding another move, both of which I therefore coded; for instance, in OF-O1-A4-02, the Background move describing the offered service “Ok, so, um, shouldn’t take too long. Once my neighbour, er my friend and I have finished our weekly correspondence then I should be free,” overlapped with the Pre-condition Assert move referring to the pre-condition for its possible provision, that is, “then I should be free, because I don’t have anything.” (Cf. Levinson (2013, pp. 118, 127), who observes how turns may perform more actions simultaneously, by combining turn-constructive units fitting into a larger schema.)

To aim at intra-rater reliability, I classified the data three times, the second and third of which took place 2 and 3 months after the first classification, respectively. When I noticed inconsistencies between the first and the second time, and between the second and third time, I further analysed the relevant text segments and their preceding and following discourse, until I arrived at a final classification.

Quantitative analysis. In the quantitative analysis of the data, I determined the frequency of occurrence of the moves outlined above and their dispersion across the datasets. To account for formally or functionally complex turns or turn segments (see *Qualitative analysis*), I adopted the following count criteria:

- when I identified two or more adjacent instances of a given move in the same turn, I regarded them as one token of that move;
- when I identified a repeatedly-occurring move in non-adjacent segments in the same turn, I counted each turn segment as a distinct move token (e.g., two Head Act Response moves in OF-O1-A3-01: “Yeah, um I’ll definitely consider it. [...] but I appreciate the offer”);
- when I identified multiple occurrences of the same move over multiple turns by the same interlocutor (i.e., separated by turns produced by the other interlocutor), I counted each turn segment as a distinct move token (e.g., in OF-O1-04-02, the offerer realised the Closing move twice (i.e., “See you tomorrow” and “Bye”), before and after, respectively, the Closing move by the offeree (i.e., “Bye-bye”));
- when an utterance by one interlocutor displayed minimal overlap with the other interlocutor’s backchannel, I classified it as one token of a given move, even if in the transcript it occupied two non-consecutive turns (e.g., in OF-O1-B4-03, B’s Other move was encoded in “Ha,” which

appeared inside (i.e., minimally simultaneously with) Speaker A's Other move: "A: Oh, ok. I was making a fruitcake and, it was a practical joke for one of my fellow workers who happens to be a complete fruit B: Ha A: except that I, I got the dosage of baking soda wrong and (laughs) used an extremely sour grapefruit instead of the recommended oranges");

- when a turn segment was tagged for two moves simultaneously (see *Qualitative analysis*), I counted it once for one move and once for the other;
- when a turn segment encoding a given move occurred nested in a larger turn segment encoding a higher-order move, I counted each turn segment separately for the distinct moves;
- when a turn segment encoding a given move overlapped in part with a turn segment encoding another move, I counted each turn segment separately for the distinct moves.

Findings

In this section, I report the findings of my qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Move Types

The corpus exemplified 18 move types, which could be divided into two sets: those relevant to the management of the interaction (i.e., framing moves; Savić, 2018) and the relationship with the interlocutor, and those furthering the offering interaction-transaction (i.e., illocution-relevant moves). The first set of moves all fulfilled interpersonal and/or communicative needs that were independent of the illocutionary goal of the interactions. The second set of moves took care of contextual and exchange-related aspects of the interaction. The moves are presented in Tables 1 to 13. Where applicable, pairs or sets of moves describing mutually relevant verbal actions are shown side by side.

Among the interaction-management moves, Alerter, Alerter Reply (see Table 1) and Closing (see Table 3) served a phatic function. Opener (see Table 2), Face Enhancer and Face-Enhancing Reciprocation (see Table 4) addressed the interlocutors' positive face needs, in line with the offering illocution, which was meant to favour and sustain good relationships. The Alerter, Alerter Reply and Opener moves occasionally shared part of their propositional content; that is, they contained self- or interlocutor-identifying information. Two pairs of moves (Alerter and Alerter Reply, and Face-Enhancer and Face-Enhancing Reciprocation) distinguished between the interactional roles of exchange-initiator or exchange-responder: while similar in function and content, they differed in their orientation towards the following vs the preceding discourse, respectively.

Table 1. Alerter and Alerter Reply Moves.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Label | Alerter | | Alerter Reply | |
| Definition | Establishing contact with the interlocutor | | Confirming contact with the interlocutor | |
| Function detectors | How does one interlocutor call for the other's attention or establish contact with them? Who are the interlocutors? What is the interlocutors' likely social relationship? | | How does one interlocutor reply to the other interlocutor's attempt to establish contact? | |
| Content classifiers | Greetings, address terms, attention-getters, phatic queries Names, social/professional roles Formal vs intimate relationship | | Confirmation of achieved joint attention | |
| Content indicator | Greeting the interlocutor and/or drawing their attention | | Responding to the interlocutor's summons | |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for a response | | Providing a response and/or soliciting a further response | |
| Examples | <i>Excuse me sir?</i> <i>Hi Katie</i> | <i>Hey, Christine</i> <i>Hey Miss Benevidas</i> | <i>Hello?</i> <i>Oh hi there, this is Jelila</i> | <i>Yes?</i> <i>Oh, hello Professor Jen</i> |

Table 2. Opener Move.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Label | Opener | |
| Definition | Creating an interactional bond with the interlocutor | |
| Function detectors | How does the interaction get underway? How does one interlocutor get it started? How does the other keep it going? | |
| Content classifiers | Discussion of safe topics Health inquiries | |
| Content indicators | Introductions Small talk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcing the start of an exchange • Engaging in ice-breaking small talk • Confirming the willingness to engage in small talk • Mentioning a shared experience • Inquiring about the interlocutor's health • Informing the interlocutor about one's well-being | |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for a response or providing a relevant response | |
| Examples | <i>I'm good, how are you?</i> <i>How was work?</i> <i>Could I stop and talk to you for a little bit?</i> | <i>You're here for your last day?</i> <i>Sure, of course</i> <i>Yeah, I'm, I'm a neighbour</i> |

Table 3. Closing Move.

| | | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
| Label | Closing | |
| Definition | Winding down the interaction and bringing it to a close | |
| Function detector | How do the interlocutors take their leave? | |
| Content classifier | Signalling the conclusion of a topic or the reaching of an agreement | |
| Content indicators | Expressing good wishes Reciprocating pleasantries Expressing thanks or farewells | |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for, or providing, a response | |
| Examples | <i>See you tomorrow</i> <i>Love you too</i> <i>Alright, have a good day</i> | <i>You have a good day</i> <i>Thank you</i> <i>Well, hopefully you'll come back some time</i> |

Table 4. Face-Enhancer and Face-Enhancing Reciprocation Moves.

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree | Offerer | Offeree |
| Label | Face-Enhancer | | Face-Enhancing Reciprocation | |
| Definition | Building or stressing solidarity and closeness with the interlocutor | | | |
| Function detectors | How does one interlocutor let the other know they are understood, accepted, appreciated? How does one interlocutor prevent the other from feeling bad, excluded, disapproved of or criticized? | | How does one interlocutor acknowledge and/or reciprocate the other's solidarity-sustaining verbal action? | |
| Content classifiers | Expressing affection or appreciation towards the interlocutor | | Expressing a positive reactive attitude towards the interlocutor Reassuring the interlocutor about the negative effects of a given situation | |
| Content indicators | Expressing affection, liking, gratitude, compliments, positive comments, good wishes, concern | | Expressing reactive gratitude, positive comments, good wishes | |
| | | | Minimising the interlocutor's social debts | |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for a response | | Providing a response | |
| Examples | <i>Just feel better, ok?</i> <i>So, um, well, you're pretty cute</i> <i>Good luck</i> | <i>Appreciate it</i> <i>Well, it was very nice to meet you</i> <i>I'm glad we get to spend time together</i> | <i>No problem</i> <i>Any time</i> <i>All right, er, that's wonderful</i> | <i>And thank you for coming and just helping me supervise and stuff</i> <i>I love you too, honey</i> <i>Ok. I'm looking forward to speaking with you soon</i> |

The illocution-relevant moves furthered the goals of the offering exchanges – the offerer's bid for interaction, the offeree's reaction to it, and both interlocutors' complementary supportive strategies. They included three offerer-specific moves, namely Head Act, Illocution Motivator, Acceptance Maximiser (see Tables 5, 6, 7), three offeree-specific moves, namely Head Act Response, Reaction Motivator, Need Minimiser (see Tables 5, 6, 7) – which paired up in likely complementary sequences – and six moves uttered by both interlocutors; that is, Introducer (see Table 8), Pre-condition Assert, Pre-Condition Check (see Table 9), Background (see Table 10), Negotiations (see Table 11), and Next Steps (see Table 12).

Table 5. Head Act and Head Act Response Moves.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Label | Head Act | Head Act Response |
| Definition | Expressing the illocution and its object, or a pre-condition for the illocution | Reacting to the offering illocution |
| Function detectors | What does the offerer aim to make available to the offeree? What do they want to do, or what can they do, for the offeree? | Is the offeree willing to accept the offered item? How do they feel about it? What good/service does the offeree want? |
| Content classifiers | Reference to a good/service Reference to the offerer's attitude towards the good/service Reference to the offeree's possible attitude towards the good/service Reference to the options regarding the good/service | Confirmation/refutation of the acceptability of the offered item Interested, appreciative or indifferent attitude to the offered item |
| Content indicators | Stating the availability of the good/service (expressing the readiness, intention or ability to provide it) Inquiring about the desirability of the good/service | Expressing gratitude, tentativeness or enthusiasm about the offer Expressing reactive emotional impact Evaluating the offered item |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for a response | Providing a response |
| Examples | <i>I'll grab some ice-cream</i> <i>I mean, I could navigate there for you</i> <i>Er, wondering if you're interested in it?</i> | <i>Yeah, um I'll definitely consider it</i> <i>That sounds fantastic!</i> <i>Oh, no, don't worry about it</i> |

Table 6. Illocution Motivator and Reaction Motivator Moves.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Label | Illocution Motivator | Reaction Motivator |
| Definition | Justifying the offer as appropriate, reasonable or feasible | Justifying the reaction to the offer as appropriate and logical |
| Function detectors | What makes the offer attractive? What benefit does it bring? | What circumstances justify the acceptance of the offer? What circumstances justify the rejection of the offer (i.e., why is the provision of a benefit unnecessary)? |
| Content classifiers | The offered item is relevant to a circumstance of the offeree A positive effect can be achieved to the offeree's benefit | An issue can be tackled, a goal achieved or a preference satisfied, possibly with someone's help There is no specific problem to solve or goal to achieve, which might require someone's help |
| Content indicators | Mentioning a problem faced, a need experienced, or a goal pursued by the offeree Acknowledging an issue/situation previously mentioned by the offeree Mentioning the offeree's previous generous, commendable behaviour | Mentioning or confirming circumstances (e.g., expectations, problems experienced, goals) that make the offer appropriate |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for a response | Providing a response |
| Examples | <i>So that you don't have to borrow money from anybody else</i> <i>Cause we really enjoy having you here</i> <i>Just in case the cake doesn't turn well and then at least the kids will have ice cream</i> | <i>So that you could help my structure and that it would be a better thesis</i> <i>Yeah, you know, er, you know I hate borrowing money from you guys [...]</i> <i>I think that would work wonders for it [...]</i> |

Table 7. Acceptance Maximiser and Need Minimiser Moves.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Label | Acceptance Maximiser | Need Minimiser |
| Definition | Offering incentives to accept the offer | Offering reasons for pre-empting the provision of a good/service |
| Function detectors | Why is it important, useful or beneficial to have the offer accepted? How beneficial, valuable or agreeable is the offer to the parties involved if compared to its cost? How sincere is the offerer in making the offer? | How sincere is the offeree in rejecting the offer? |
| Content classifiers | The offered item serves a given purpose The value of the offered item makes the act of providing it worth it The offerer really intends to be of help to the offeree | The offered item is not necessary or fully appropriate |
| Content indicators | Stressing the benefit/value of the offered item Pointing out the negative consequences of the failure to accept the offered item Pre-empting objections to acceptance (i.e., reassuring the offeree about the envisaged positive effect of the offer or its negligible cost, or the offerer's sincerity, ability or positive attitude) Persevering with the offer by repeating it or soliciting acceptance Ascertaining the offeree's sincerity in expressing reluctance to accept the offered item | Explaining why no need has to be met (e.g., limited magnitude of the problem faced, lack of problems, stating self-sufficiency, reference to social norms) |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for or providing a response | |
| Examples | <i>I got you, don't worry about it</i> <i>Yeah, it's fine, you know</i> <i>It's just a little temporary helping-you-out kind of thing</i> | <i>Oh, I'm fine thank you</i> <i>But I feel bad if I er, don't make you dinner</i> <i>But I, I feel like, I, I can't take anything from you</i> |

Through the other six moves, the interlocutors sustained the offering illocution by paving the way for it (Introducer; see Table 8), ascertaining its feasibility (Pre-condition Assert, Pre-Condition Check; see Table 9), describing aspects of the offered item (Background; see Table 10), discussing and reaching an agreement on the expected perlocution (Negotiations; see Table 11) or taking care of the envisaged interactional outcome (Next steps; see Table 12).

Table 8. Introducer Move.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Label | Introducer | |
| Definition | Introducing, acknowledging or inquiring about the topic an offer will be relevant to | |
| Function detectors | What are the interlocutors talking about or commenting on? What topic is one interlocutor asking confirmation about? | |
| Content classifier | A topic that (probably) matters to or affects the offeree | |
| Content indicators | Mentioning an event or situation involving the offeree Checking the relevance, or offering evaluative feedback on, the newly introduced topic | |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for or providing a response | |
| Examples | <i>Well, I, well actually, I used to have a fruit cake store</i> <i>You didn't buy the insurance?</i> <i>Well, I was just going to talk to you about that</i> | <i>But, oh gosh, I'm starving now</i> <i>Yeah, it's really cute!</i> <i>I have, I just have a pretty bad headache right now</i> |

Table 9. Pre-condition Assert and Pre-Condition Check Moves.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Label | Pre-condition Assert | | Pre-condition Check | |
| Definition | Mentioning or confirming the pre-requisites that make the offer a possible, feasible and sensible choice | | Inquiring about the circumstances that make the offer a possible, feasible and sensible choice | |
| Function detectors | A condition exists such that it makes sense to express the offer | A condition exists such that an offer would be useful and welcome | Does a condition exist such that it makes sense to express the offer? | Does a condition exist such that it makes sense to accept the offer? |
| Content classifier | Having something of potential use to the interlocutor | Needing or wanting something the interlocutor may be able/willing to provide | Checking if the interlocutor needs something that can be given to them | Checking if the interlocutor can/will give what they offer |
| Content indicators | Statements of fact or feasibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioning the willingness or ability to provide a good/service • Expressing the feasibility of the offer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing about the circumstances faced | Volition, preference or interest queries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiring about the offeree's interest in, preference for, or willingness to accept a good/service • Inquiring about a possible problem faced, need experienced or goal pursued by the offeree | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiring about the offerer's willingness or ability to provide a good/service |
| Discursive orientation | Indirectly priming for a response | | Priming for a response | |
| Examples | <i>Because I'm free later today So if you need any help</i> | <i>I could definitely use your help Currently we don't have anybody who can help</i> | <i>Are you sure about that? Well, if it's urgent</i> | <i>Do you know how to make dinner? If you don't mind Oh really?</i> |

Table 10. Background Move.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Label | Background | |
| Definitions | Mentioning or inquiring about the characteristics of the offered item: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioning or inquiring about the logistics of the provision of the offered item, or its characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioning or inquiring about the logistics of the acceptance of the offered items, or its characteristics |
| Function detectors | Where, when or how is the offer realized? Under what circumstances is the offered item (to be) used? What is the offered item like? | When, where or how should the offered item be provided (so as to meet the offeree's needs/goals)? What should the offered item be like? |
| Content classifiers | The offered item will be provided under given circumstances The offered item will be relevant to a given situation The offered item looks or feels in a certain way | The offered item is expected to look/feel in a certain way The offered item is to be provided under certain conditions |
| Content indicators | Asking or informing about the contextual options or constraints applying to the realization of and reaction to the offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrating the details characterizing (the provision of) the offered good/service; • Ratifying the details or constraints about the provision of the offered item | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifying, acknowledging, or exploring the details of the offered item in relation to one's needs/goals |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for a response | |
| Examples | <i>Well, we haven't quite (laughs) ironed out the details yet While you're away?</i> | <i>It sounds like it might have to do with puppets or some sort of play show What does this, um, research opportunity entail?</i> |

Table 11. Negotiations Move.

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
| Label | Negotiations | |
| Definition | Checking, discussing, or ratifying aspects of the feasibility or acceptability of the offer with its details/conditions | |
| Function detectors | What are the conditions applying to the offer and its acceptance? Are the conditions acceptable? The conditions are acceptable | |
| Content classifiers | Given terms would have to apply in the specific case Is it possible to agree on a given term? There is consensus on a given term | |
| Content indicator | Reflecting on, inquiring about, stating, proposing, imposing, or accepting the situational details or conditions applying to the offer | |
| Discursive orientation | Inviting or providing a response | |
| Examples | <i>Ok. That works well</i> <i>Is that correct?</i> <i>Ok, excellent, I'll be sure to do that.</i> | <i>Ok I'll be waiting at 7.50</i> <i>Yes, yes, that's it</i> <i>Ok, I think I have to ask my mummy</i> |

Table 12. Next Steps Move.

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
| Label | Next Steps | |
| Definition | Discussing the (verbal) actions enabling or favouring the provision/delivery of the offered item | |
| Function detectors | What can/shall I/we do next? Shall/can I/we do X next? I/we will do X next. Let's do X next. | |
| Content classifiers | Looking for, or inquiring about, an appropriate future course of action Proposing the next course of action Announcing the next course of action Acknowledging the next course of action | |
| Content classifier | Mentioning a future (joint or coordinate) course of action | |
| Content indicators | Offering information Requesting information Making arrangements Seeking or ensuring commitment | Seeking arrangements Expressing commitment Agreeing on arrangements |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for a response or ratifying a previous contribution | |
| Examples | <i>Just let me know then</i> <i>I'll check up on you later</i> <i>Well then I would also need their contact information</i> | <i>Alright, sounds good I'll keep you updated</i> <i>How about you just send me an email about it?</i> <i>Yes, of course</i> |

The above moves did not account for all the conversation material contributed by the offerers and offerees, who sometimes digressed from the main focus of their interactions. I labelled these off-topic utterances *Other* (see Table 13).

Table 13. Other Move.

| Interlocutor role | Offerer | Offeree |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Label | Other | |
| Definition | Performing alternative communicative functions | |
| Function detectors | What else are the participants talking about besides the offer? What else are they doing besides opening or closing the interaction? | |
| Content classifier | A topic not directly relevant to the offering illocution | |
| Content indicators | Realizing other speech acts Engaging in small talk outside ice-breaking pleasantries or pre-closing strategies Providing minimal listener responses Reporting on past actions Commenting on each other's experiences | |
| Discursive orientation | Priming for or providing a response | |
| Examples | <i>I know! 30 5 year-olds, it's gonna be a little crazy</i> <i>Well, I recommend buying locally at any of the smaller shops that you see around the area</i> <i>Really? That's my name, that's, that's a funny coincidence!</i> | <i>It's not like how it used to be!</i> <i>You have, you have like no accent</i> <i>I've always wanted to go to Africa</i> |

The following is the transcript of a conversation between an offerer (A) and an offeree (B), where moves have been tagged. Those in italics are the offeree's (i.e., B's) second pair parts to the offerer's (i.e., A's) first pair parts. In this exchange, five of the interlocutors' seven turns encoded more than one move, and these addressed transactional needs, except for A's very first move, which was focused on interactional needs.

Tagged Transcript OF-O1-C1-02

- A. <ALERTER>Hey Matt,</ALERTER> <INTRODUCER><ILLOCUTION-MOTIVATOR>er, I've been noticing that you have some trouble with your back,</INTRODUCER></ILLOCUTION-MOTIVATOR> <PRE-CONDITION-CHECK>is that true?</PRE-CONDITION-CHECK>
- B. <INTRODUCER>*Yeah, it's been really hurting recently, I think it's, just been overworking it or something, not sure.*</INTRODUCER>
- A. <INTRODUCER>[I], *I understand that.*</INTRODUCER> <PRE-CONDITION-ASSERT>*I actually, er, went to school with er, a local ocu, orthopaedic here*</PRE-CONDITION-ASSERT> <PRE-CONDITION-CHECK>and if you want me to</PRE-CONDITION-CHECK> <HEAD-ACT>I can definitely set up an appointment for you.</HEAD-ACT>
- B. <HEAD-ACT-RESPONSE>*Yeah, I, that'd be great*</HEAD-ACT-RESPONSE> <PRE-CONDITION-CHECK>if you don't mind.</PRE-CONDITION-CHECK> <REACTION-MOTIVATOR>I think that would work wonders for it. I definitely need some attention soon if I wanna keep working here at this rate so...</REACTION-MOTIVATOR>
- A. <ACCEPTANCE-MAXIMISER>Yeah, no problem, er it definitely would benefit both of us</ACCEPTANCE-MAXIMIZER> <NEXT-STEPS>so I'll give him a call and, er, I'll get him to set up a time with you then.</NEXT-STEPS>

B. <NEXT-STEPS>*Great,*</NEXT-STEPS> <FACE-ENHANCER>*appreciate it.*</FACE-ENHANCER>

A. <FACE-ENHANCING-RECIPROCATION>*No problem.*</FACE-ENHANCING-RECIPROCATION>

Move Tokens

Table 14 shows how frequently the moves making up the offering exchanges were instantiated across the datasets. Given the varied range of moves identified and the small size of the corpus, no single move was textually prominent. More revealing are thus the figures regarding the dispersion of the moves.

Table 14. Frequency and Dispersion of Moves.

| Moves | | Offerer | | Offeree | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | No. of tokens | No. of scripts | No. of tokens | No. of scripts |
| Interaction management moves | Alerter | 24 (5.3%) | 24 (74.1%) | 10 (2.1%) | 10 (32.2%) |
| | Alerter Reply | 7 (1.5%) | 7 (22.5%) | 13 (2.7%) | 13 (41.9%) |
| | Opener | 30 (6.6%) | 19 (61.2%) | 31 (6.5%) | 20 (64.5%) |
| | Closing | 20 (4.4%) | 17 (77.4%) | 26 (5.4%) | 21 (67.7%) |
| | Face Enhancer | 18 (3.9%) | 14 (45.1%) | 23 (4.8%) | 18 (58.0%) |
| | Face-Enhancing Reciprocation | 15 (3.1%) | 14 (45.1%) | 8 (1.6%) | 8 (25.8%) |
| Illocution-relevant offerer moves | Head Act | 38 (8.4%) | 28 (90.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| | Illocution Motivator | 16 (3.5%) | 14 (45.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| | Acceptance Maximiser | 20 (4.4%) | 11 (35.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Illocution-relevant offeree moves | Head Act Response | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 54 (11.3%) | 30 (96.7%) |
| | Reaction Motivator | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 25 (5.2%) | 19 (61.2%) |
| | Need Minimiser | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 9 (1.8%) | 6 (19.3%) |
| Illocution relevant shared moves | Introducer | 27 (5.9%) | 18 (58.0%) | 27 (5.6%) | 21 (67.7%) |
| | Pre-condition Assert | 27 (5.9%) | 16 (51.6%) | 18 (3.7%) | 9 (29.0%) |
| | Pre-condition Check | 24 (5.3%) | 14 (45.1%) | 14 (2.9%) | 10 (32.2%) |
| | Background | 38 (8.4%) | 20 (64.5%) | 39 (8.2%) | 18 (58.0%) |
| | Negotiations | 39 (8.6%) | 19 (61.2%) | 51 (10.9%) | 19 (61.2%) |
| | Next Steps | 36 (7.9%) | 24 (77.4%) | 34 (7.1%) | 22 (67.7%) |
| Combinations (co-coding) | | 29 (6.4%) | 19 (61.2%) | 3 (0.6%) | 2 (6.4%) |
| Other | | 44 (9.7%) | 16 (51.6%) | 65 (13.7%) | 20 (64.5%) |
| Total | | 452 (100%) | 31 (100%) | 474 (100%) | 31 (100%) |

The interaction management moves characterised a majority of the exchanges. More specifically, moves for establishing and closing contact with the interlocutor were slightly more common among the offerer turns; this is in line with the pro-active interactional role of the offerers. Face-Enhancing moves were instead slightly more common among the offeree moves; this was to be expected, given that sustaining the offerer's positive face is a way of restoring the balance of the relationship after incurring a social debt with the acceptance of the offer.

Unsurprisingly, Head Act and Head Act Response were the most frequent moves both within their groups (i.e., the illocution-relevant moves), and overall (to the exclusion of Other among the offerer data). Of the two offerer-specific initiating illocution-relevant moves, Illocution

Motivator was more frequent than Acceptance Maximiser; in parallel, of the offeree-specific moves, Reaction Motivator was more frequent than Need Minimiser.

The other illocution-relevant moves displayed comparable frequency and distribution patterns in both the offerer data and the offeree data. However, Introducer – which raised issues to be addressed by the offering illocutions – was more typical of the offeree data. On the other hand, the moves discussing the pre-conditions of the offering illocution – which served to verify or reassure the interlocutor about the feasibility of the offering exchange – were more common in the offerer data.

Text segments realising two moves simultaneously were prominent only in the offerer data, and over half of them involved the expression of positive politeness strategies in combination with some other communicative function.

Table 15 shows that virtually all the moves were instantiated in all the datasets, with a few exceptions: Alerter Reply was not found in Set A; Illocution Motivator and Acceptance Maximiser were not attested in Set F; Need Minimiser was not exemplified in Sets B, C or F; and Pre-Condition Assert was not found in Set D.

Table 15. Dispersion of Offerer (O-er) and Offeree (O-ee) Moves.

| Offerer Moves | | Set A | Set B | Set C | Set D | Set E | Set F | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | (1,077 words; 4 scripts) | (1,877 words; 6 scripts) | (1,636 words; 6 scripts) | (1,251 words; 4 scripts) | (1,016 words; 5 scripts) | (2,035 words; 6 scripts) | | | | | | |
| | | No. of scripts | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Offerer and Offeree roles | | O-er | O-ee | O-er | O-ee | O-er | O-ee | O-er | O-ee | O-er | O-ee | O-er | O-ee |
| Interaction management moves | Alerter | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| | Alerter Reply | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| | Opener | 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| | Closing | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 6 |
| | Face-Enhancer | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| | Face-Enhancing Reciprocation | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Illocution-relevant offerer moves | Head Act | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| | Illocution Motivator | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Acceptance Maximiser | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Illocution-relevant offeree moves | Head Act Response | 0 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| | Reaction Motivator | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| | Need Minimiser | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Illocution relevant shared moves | Introducer | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| | Pre-condition Assert | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | Pre-condition Check | 3 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| | Background | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| | Negotiations | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| | Next Steps | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| Combinations (co-coding) | | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Other | | 1 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 |

The data showed that an offering exchange was built gradually and jointly by the interlocutors. The offerer paved the way for the illocution and performed it; then the offeree reacted to it; next, the offerer sustained it by evoking or exploiting its felicity conditions, while the offeree sustained his/her reaction to the offer by discussing, verifying, and ratifying these conditions; finally, both interlocutors negotiated their complementary views, developing and concluding

the exchange in a stepwise fashion. More specifically, first the interlocutors took care of phatic and interpersonal needs; next, they clarified the goal of their interaction, and supported it with relevant communicative strategies; and finally, after reaching an agreement on the acceptable outcome of their interaction, they addressed specific transactional details, before winding down the interaction, and bringing it to a close. The gradual co-construction of an offering exchange can thus be represented as in the following schema, keeping in mind that not all the moves were always instantiated in all the data, and that Face-Enhancer and Face-Enhancing Reciprocation were not only optional, but also variably positioned in the transcripts:

Alerter/Alerter Reply > Opener > Introducer >

Pre-condition Check/Pre-condition Assert ~ Head Act > Head Act Response > Illocution Motivator /+ Reaction Motivator ~ Background ~ (Face-Enhancer + Face-Enhancing Reciprocation) ~ Acceptance-Maximiser /+ Need Minimiser >

Negotiations > Next Steps ~ (Face-Enhancer + Face-Enhancing Reciprocation) > Closing.

In the above schema, the symbol “>” stands for ‘is followed by’, “~” for ‘occurs next to, either before or after’, and “/+” for ‘in alternative to or together with’. This sequencing pattern is comparable to that characterizing written offers (Gesuato, 2015).

Discussion

Summary of Findings

The main goal of this study was to identify, classify, and describe the strategic moves making up interactions specifically oriented toward the realization of offers. To this end, I elicited open role plays from six pairs of English-speaking students at an American university, by means of written scenarios tailored to the complementary roles of offerer vs offeree. The scenarios, based on real-life experiences, represented interlocutors differing in terms of power and distance. The analysis of the 31 dialogues collected involved identifying component moves by applying a number of complementary formal, content-related and strategic criteria (see Research Question 3). The findings showed that the offering exchanges were gradually built by the interlocutors, comprising interaction-relevant and illocution-relevant moves (see Research Question 1), some of which were shared, but most of which were specific to the interactants’ complementary initiating and responding conversational roles (see Research Question 2).

More specifically, the short dialogic exchanges considered here highlighted four main interactional patterns:

- conversational routines included both two-part complementary sequences and longer sequences (cf. Levinson, 2013, pp. 125–126);
- a turn instantiating more than one move could be followed by a turn by the other interlocutor that picked up on a sub-set of the moves in that previous turn;
- the elaboration of speech act sequences was visible in the co-presence of head acts and supporting moves;
- and the co-construction of dialogue involved the realization of identical moves by both interlocutors – for interactional needs and transactional goals that both interlocutors were responsible for – and complementary moves that patterned with the distinct tasks and expectations associated with different interlocutor roles.

Finally, the various strategies identified were similarly instantiated across scenarios characterised by the interlocutors' different role-relationships, that is, independently of whether the offerer and the offeree were socially distant or close, and/or whether their relative social status was symmetrical or asymmetrical.

Limitations

This study considered a small number of transcribed interactions; therefore, it was not possible to explore possible correlations between the use of specific communicative strategies and contextual variables. Furthermore, the role-plays were all produced by speakers of similar demographic backgrounds in terms of age and occupation. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised beyond the data examined, and different interactional styles may emerge from an inspection of a wider variety of conversational practices across population samples. Also, although the participants had a say in which scenarios to choose for their role-plays, no pilot study was run to determine the degree of understandability and acceptability of the scenarios in terms of their content and form. Moreover, a different number of conversation transcripts was available for each dataset, so that the findings about the dispersion of moves across the scenario sets are not fully comparable. Additionally, although I analysed the same dataset repeatedly, I did not measure intra-coder agreement across my coding sessions; as a result, the reliability-solidity of my classification is to be further ascertained. Finally and more importantly, the suitability of the coding procedure was not validated through an involvement of multiple raters.

Interpretations

The study findings suggest a number of observations.

First, the move types identified are in line with findings from studies on spontaneously produced offers – e.g., Curl's (2006) analysis of recordings of phone conversations, and Rabinowitz's (1993) analysis of exchanges collected through the ethnographic method – although the terms used and the classification procedures adopted in those studies differ from mine. For instance, what Curl (2006) labels *Background* in so-called *reason-for-calling offer sequences* – i.e., in interactions that are motivated by a phone caller's intention to make an offer, and thus whose rationale is very much like that of my data – corresponds to the *Introducer* move in the present study. Also, the different types of responses to the offering illocution mentioned in Rabinowitz (1993) (e.g., voiced vs implied acceptance/refusal, non-commitment, switch to an unrelated topic, ignoring the offer) collectively belong to my *Head Act Response* move, within which I make no further sub-distinctions. Finally, the offering sequences of variable length attested in Rabinowitz (1993) – which may comprise from two to five component steps – are also exemplified in my data, motivated by the optional occurrence of such moves as *Acceptance Maximiser*, *Need Minimiser*, *Background*, and *Negotiations*. These findings suggest that the mimetic-pretending role play interactions examined here may accurately reflect speakers' habitual discursive practices and not only represent what they consider effective and appropriate communicative strategies. (On the advantages and disadvantages of using role plays in speech act research, see Bella (2016, pp. 536–537).)

Second, it appears it is important to apply multiple parameters to detect moves in discourse. It is only when several clues converge in the same direction that a move token may be identified with some degree of certainty. For example, *Don't worry about it* may count as an *Acceptance Maximiser*, a *Head Act Response* or a *Reaction Motivator*, depending on who utters it and at

what point in the interaction. (Cf. Levinson's (2013, p. 107) remark: "the same utterance might have different actions mapped onto it by virtue of its location.") The importance of not assuming that a definition of a move type is enough to identify the tokens that instantiate it in context becomes even crucial when taking stock of the occurrence of nested moves (encoded in turn segments occurring inside larger turn segments), interleaving moves (encoded in partially overlapping turn segments), and multi-functional moves (encoded simultaneously in identical turn segments). In fact, future analyses of speech act data may have to consider additional identification-description criteria, which should specify details of the formal encoding of moves – such as syntactic function (e.g., declarative); communicative function (e.g., statement); syntactic strategy (e.g., passive voice, subordination); semantic strategy (e.g., ability query, volition statement); lexical preferences (e.g., evaluative, or stance terms) – and functional relevance of each offerer move type to a range of offeree move types, and vice versa.

Third, the data showed that offering sequences are multi-stage exchanges; their discursive fabric consists of moves contributed by both interlocutors, each of which serves as scaffolding material for the next. As schematically presented in *Quantitative analysis*, the participants began their interactions with conversation management moves for establishing contact with each other and getting the interaction under way; next, they addressed and sustained their transactional goals with moves functional to the offering illocution from their complementary roles as offerer vs offeree. While furthering their transactional goals, they could also take care of interpersonal needs by sustaining each other's positive face. Finally, they wound down the interaction with conversation management moves.

Also, as outlined in *Qualitative analysis*, most move types ideally combined in complementary sequences, with the offerer initiating moves priming for offeree responding moves, which matched the former in content and function (e.g., Acceptance Maximiser vs Need Minimiser). However, as the frequencies of occurrence of the move tokens reveal (see Table 14), an actual instantiation of a given initiating move was not necessarily matched by its theoretically corresponding responding move. There may be two reasons for this. First, while an initiating move primed for a preferred responding move, alternative, and equally relevant responses were also possible (e.g., an offerer's Head Act could trigger either a Head Act Response or a Need minimizer). Second, if an interlocutor produced clusters of move tokens in one turn, the other party could reply to only one, or a subset, of all those move tokens. More generally, while a common communicative rationale motivated the beginning of the interaction, namely making a conditional promise, the rest of the interaction was built on optional, rather than pre-determined, supporting moves, which invoked or referred to one or more of the felicity conditions applying to "ideal" offers. Therefore, in the role-plays, the conversation participants may have unconsciously drawn on a basic interactional script, but nevertheless adapting it to their context-specific interactional-transactional goals, reacting to the other party's contribution on a moment-to-moment basis.

Suggestions for Future Research

To gain more accurate insights into what oral offers are like, one should consider how they are performed with variable objects of the illocution, that is, goods or services of different types and magnitude. It is to be expected that offered items of relatively low value are associated with shorter, simpler exchanges because they are not likely to bind interlocutors to costly promises or acts of acceptance. On the other hand, offered items relevant to potentially sensitive issues may lead to more elaborate negotiations before the terms of the provision of the offered

items come to be agreed upon. To this end, scenarios could be designed, based on the literature on offers, relevant to a variety of offered goods and services.

Also, given that role-plays are produced by speakers with no true vested interests in the interactions they are engaged in (i.e., what they say or do does not affect themselves or their interlocutors for real), it would be profitable to check to what extent spontaneously produced offers compare to elicited offers in terms of their moves and formulation. To this end, it may be useful to record interactions in contexts in which offerers are likely to be spontaneously produced, for instance, in service encounters where customers/clients are likely to look for guidance from expert service providers.

Finally, the encoding of offering exchanges could be described in its lexico-grammatical specificities. To this end, recurrent formulations of offerers' and offerees' utterances could be identified, and their co-text examined in their concordances. In particular, correlations could be explored between move types and phraseological patterns.

Pedagogical Implications

The above findings show that the interlocutors' interleaving moves converged on the gradual implementation of an interactionally negotiated project. Their mutual relevance and their progressive advancement of the offering exchange were crucially tied to the rational cooperation between the offerer's and the offeree's complementary contributions. Language learners' effective participation in such offering exchanges may thus be fostered by raising their awareness of the interlocutors' implied interlocking strategic scripts. These can give learners structure, substance, a sense of purpose, and a foothold with enough in-built flexibility to be adaptable to varying situations as well as interlocutors' variable reactions.

Learners could, thus, be presented with samples of model simplified offering exchanges, in which the interlocutors' interaction-relevant and illocution-relevant moves are pointed out and described in simple terms. These exchanges could, and indeed should, exemplify conversations in which participants open, sustain and conclude their interactions, and in which the goals of the parties involved converge, diverge and are negotiated. The following made-up conversation texts and succinct descriptors, in square brackets, illustrate relevant classroom material:

Context 1): A and B are colleagues. They get together during their lunch break. [An offer is rejected]

A: Hey, Steve. [Opening]

B: Hi, Brian. How are you doing? [Opening; Small talk]

A: Not too bad. How about you? [Small talk] Still suffering from your backache? [A topic of interest to B, relevant to his/her preferences/needs]

B: Yeah, it's killing me. [Comment on the topic relevant to B]

A: You know, I have a high-school friend who is an orthopaedist. She has her practice about 30 miles from here. I hear she takes good care of her patients. [Pre-conditions that make an offer possible and appealing] I could call her and ask her to give you an appointment, if you like. [Offer of a service]

B: Oh, thank you very much, Brian. That's very kind of you, [Appreciation; pleasantries] but I made an appointment with an orthopaedist my doctor recommended to me. [Explanation of the imminent rejection] So, I guess I'm fine for now. [Rejection] But if I need a second opinion, I know who to ask, thank you. [Alternative and Pleasantries]

A: Ok, good, no problem. Well, good luck with your medical appointment. [Agreement and Pleasantries]

B: Thank you. [Appreciation; Pleasantries]

A: Our break is over, I guess. Bye [Closing]

B: Bye-bye. See you later. [Closing]

Context 2): A and B are colleagues. They get together during their lunch break. [An offer is accepted]

A: Hey, Steve. [Opening]

B: Hi, Brian. How are you doing? [Opening; Small talk]

A: Not too bad. How about you? [Small talk] Still suffering from your backache? [A topic of interest to B, relevant to his/her preferences/needs]

B: Yeah, it's killing me. I think I've tried everything and I am at my wits' end. [Comment on the topic relevant to B]

A: You know, I have a high-school friend who is an orthopaedist. She has her practice about 30 miles from here. Everyone speaks wonders of her. [Pre-conditions that make an offer possible and appealing] I could call her and ask her to give you an appointment, if you like [Offer of a service]

B: Oh, really? Are you sure? [Checking if the offer is valid/doable] That would be awesome. [Acceptance and Appreciation]

A: Ok, good, then. Let me text her and see when she might be free and then I'll get back to you and give you her contact details, ok? [Details of the next steps]

B: Wonderful. [Confirmation of the details] Thank you so much. [Appreciation; Pleasantries]

A: Our break is over, I guess. Bye [Closing]

B: Bye-bye. See you later. [Closing]

Context 3): A and B are colleagues. They get together during their lunch break. [The terms of an offer are negotiated]

A: Hey, Steve. [Opening]

B: Hi, Brian. How are you doing? [Opening; Small talk]

A: Not too bad. How about you? [Small talk] Still suffering from your backache? [A topic of interest to B, relevant to his/her preferences/needs]

B: Yeah, it's killing me. I think I've tried everything and I am at my wits' end. [Comment on the topic relevant to B]

A: You know, I have a high-school friend who is an orthopaedist. She has her practice about 30 miles from here. Everyone speaks wonders of her. [Pre-conditions that make an offer possible and appealing] I could call her and ask her to give you an appointment, if you like. [Offer of a service]

B: Well, I am not so sure. I wouldn't want you to go out of your way for me. [Hesitation and Partial implied reaction]

A: Don't worry. She and I are friends. [Reassurance and Implied re-offer]

B: And I'd hate to receive preferential treatment. Maybe other patients have more urgent needs. [Hesitation and Partial implied reaction]

A: Well, maybe if you talk to her on the phone and explain your symptoms, she will be able to decide how urgent your situation is. [Reassurance and Implied re-offer]

B: But, is her practice easy to reach by public transportation? [Hesitation and Partial implied reaction]

A: Hey, relax, first let's see if you get your appointment; then, we'll figure out how to get you there. [Reassurance, and implied re-offer]

B: Ok, good, then. [Acceptance] Thank you. [Appreciation; Pleasantries]

A: All right. Let me text her and see when she might be free and then I'll get back to you and give you her contact details, ok? [Details of the next steps]

B: Ok, ok. [Confirmation of the details] Thank you so much. [Appreciation; Pleasantries]

A: Our break is over, I guess. Bye [Closing]

B: Bye-bye. See you later. [Closing]

The second step of classroom practice would involve familiarising learners with the types, sequencing and mutual relevance of the strategies employed by offerers and offerees. Tables 16 and 17 show possible scripts for offering exchanges, which are formulated as complementary sets of instructions for the interactional roles of offerer vs offeree, respectively. In both, Column 1 indicates the interactional phase in which a participant can make a contribution; Column 2 specifies the interactional goal that the participant should aim at; Column 3 lists verbal actions that can be carried out to achieve that goal, followed by the labels of the relevant moves identified in the corpus, in square brackets; and Column 4 illustrates the formulation of those actions by drawing on, and adapting, earlier examples. During classroom practice, the move labels should be avoided, as they are likely to sound cryptic; also, the action descriptions may have to be simplified to be fully accessible to the specific learners involved (see the sample model conversations above), and instead more examples of their possible formulations could be added.

Table 16. Script for the Offerer.

| Phase | Goal | Action(s) [Move(s)] | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| If the exchange has not started yet | Achieve joint attention | Establish or confirm contact with the other party: attract their attention, react to their call for attention and/or greet them (back) [Alerter] | <i>Excuse me</i> <i>Hi, Paul</i> |
| | Get the interaction going | Engage in small talk: introduce yourself; ask and reply to questions about legitimate topics (e.g., health, day at work); check if it is possible/appropriate to interact [Opener] | <i>I'm good; how are you?</i> <i>Could I talk to you for a moment?</i> |
| When the exchange has already started | Pave the way for the offer | Mention, confirm, or ask about a topic that matters to your interlocutor [Introducer] | <i>Yeah, I heard the company is closing down</i> <i>So, you are going to be out of town for a few days</i> |
| | Clarify that/if nothing stands in the way | Mention, or ask about, circumstances that might make a future offer relevant, plausible, doable (e.g., your possibility or willingness to act; your interlocutor's preferences or needs) [Pre-condition] | <i>If you want</i> <i>Do you have everything under control?</i> |
| When a topic has been chosen and ratified | Express the offer | Volunteer to provide a good/service: state your ability/intention to deliver it; inquire about your interlocutor's want/need for it; invite your interlocutor to accept it [Head Act] | <i>Did you want me to cook dinner?</i> <i>Just call me</i> |
| After the offer has been made | If your interlocutor is undecided | Describe what you want to offer Mention or ask about the context of its delivery [Background] | <i>Absolutely gorgeous</i> <i>On my way to work</i> |
| | If your offer is rejected | Present your offer as appropriate, reasonable, or feasible: mention a situation your offer is relevant to (e.g., your attitude, lack of constraints; your interlocutor's goal, need, problem) [Illocution-motivator] | <i>You look tired</i> <i>We'd love to have you here</i> |
| | If your offer is rejected again | Positively evaluate what you want to offer Mention the negative consequences that would be avoided Pre-empt objections (e.g., reassure your interlocutor you are serious and/or the offer is not costly to you) Repeat the offer Check your interlocutor is serious in expressing reluctance to accept it [Acceptance Maximiser] | <i>Come on – use it</i> <i>Are you sure you don't want it?</i> |
| | If your offer is accepted | Clarify, confirm, discuss the logistical details [Negotiations] | <i>Can we start at 5?</i> <i>Let's first ask John</i> |
| Anytime | Build and maintain harmony and solidarity | Make your interlocutor feel understood, appreciated: express, or supportively reply to their expressions of, affection/concern, gratitude, positive assessment, good wishes Minimise the interlocutor's social debts [Face Enhancer + Face-Enhancing reciprocation] | <i>No problem, you're welcome</i> <i>Everyone will like this</i> |
| When an agreement has been reached | Wind down the interaction and bring it to a close | Mention next steps Express good wishes, farewells, and/or reply to them [Next Steps; Closing] | <i>I'll call him right away</i> <i>Alright, have a good day</i> |

Table 17. Script for the Offeree.

| Phase | Goal | Action(s) [Move(s)] | Examples |
|---|---|--|---|
| If the exchange has not started yet | Achieve joint attention | Establish or confirm contact with the other party: attract their attention, react to their call for attention and/or greet them (back) [Alerter; Alerter Reply] | <i>Yes?</i> <i>Oh, hello Professor Jen</i> |
| | Get the interaction going | Engage in small talk: introduce yourself; ask and reply to, questions about legitimate topics (e.g., health, day at work); check/confirm if/that it is possible/appropriate to interact [Opener] | <i>How are you today?</i> <i>Sure, I can spare a few minutes</i> |
| When the exchange has already started | Provide the context for a possible offer | Mention a topic relevant to you Check or comment on a newly introduced topic [Introducer] | <i>We have been receiving a lot of orders lately</i> <i>Yes, that's original</i> |
| | Clarify that/if nothing stands in the way | Inform or ask about circumstances that might make a future offer relevant, plausible, doable (e.g., the interlocutor's ability/willingness to provide a good/service; your goal, need, problem) [Pre-Condition Check; Pre-Condition Assert] | <i>No-one is substituting for Jane these days</i> <i>Do you know how to do it?</i> |
| When a topic has been chosen and ratified | React to the offer | Assess the offered good/service Express your (emotional) reaction: interest, appreciation, indifference, gratitude [Head Act Response] | <i>That sounds fantastic</i> <i>Thank you!</i> |
| After the offer has been made | If you are undecided | Specify/confirm or explore the details of the offer in relation to your needs/goals [Background] | <i>It sounds like some sort of play show</i> <i>What does it involve?</i> |
| | If you reject the offer, possibly repeatedly | Explain that/why no offer is necessary (e.g., you have no, or only a little, problem, need, goal to address; you are self-sufficient in addressing your problem, need or goal; social norms suggest no offer should be made or accepted) [Need minimiser] | <i>Oh, I'm fine thank you</i> <i>Well, I'll get over it, just need some rest</i> |
| | If you accept the offer | Mention or confirm the circumstances that make the offer appropriate (e.g., your expectations, goals) Clarify, confirm, discuss the logistical details of the offer [Reaction motivator; Negotiations] | <i>I think that would work wonders</i> <i>So, what time?</i> |
| Anytime | Build and maintain harmony and solidarity | Make the addressee feel understood, appreciated: express (reactive) gratitude, positive comments, good wishes [Face-Enhancer; Face-Enhancing Reciprocation] | <i>Thank you for the opportunity</i> <i>It was nice talking to you</i> |
| When an agreement has been reached | Wind down the interaction and bring it to a close | Agree on arrangements, express commitment Express good wishes and farewells, and/or reply to them [Next Steps; Closing] | <i>This sounds excellent</i> <i>Hopefully you'll come back some time</i> |

The idea behind the above strategic scripts is that recurrent action patterns in speech act behaviour are varied surface manifestations of speakers' internalised action plan fit for specific illocutions. If made explicit, the scripts sustaining these action plans serve as guidelines for the planning and management of interaction in language for general purposes contexts (see Research Question 4).

The third step of classroom practice would involve having the learners engage in offering exchanges by following the model scripts – taking turns playing the roles of offerer vs offeree – which could be provided in the form of numbered cue cards, each relevant to each major likely phase of the exchange. Feedback could then be provided in the form of comments regarding the presence/absence, order, relevance and formulation of the interlocutors' utterances.

Conclusions

In general, the findings support Geis's (1995) view of speech acts as conversational interaction: this consists of goal-achievement through utterance production and goal-recognition through utterance interpretation, which Levinson (2013) calls *action formation* and *action ascription*. Such conversational interaction develops over multi-turn exchanges contributed by both parties; it furthers transactional and interpersonal goals; each of its constituent utterances contributes to the satisfaction of speech act conditions and/or the instantiations of relevant predicates (on what the speech act is about) in a gradual fashion, showing how formally identical utterances have different functions in different conversational contexts (also on account of the interlocutors' role-relationships and beliefs).

The above findings have pedagogical relevance. The offering exchanges considered appear to be a manifestation of the ability “to project coherent sequences from their subparts, and cooperatively offer to do part of them,” which is “part of some special capacity for interaction that seems more or less confined to our species” (Levinson, 2013, p. 125). This is an ability that is useful for learners to develop so as to be able to plan and predict how to conduct themselves in interaction. Scripts can thus be devised, tailored to the interpersonal-transactional needs of communication participants involved in an exchange focused on a given illocution, which present conversation as a verbal collaborative project, showing that “[a]ctions are in the service of projects, and projects are themselves actions to accomplish” (p. 126). Such scripts should show how contributions to talk-in-interaction do “something local, which governs its response types,” but also that they are “part of something more global [...] which also plays a role in fashioning responses.” The scripts presented above address both issues, showing the mutual relevance of sequential conversational actions, and that “there is a hierarchy of actions within a project” (p. 126).

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[1] Cultures may differ as to what they consider the preferred response to an offer (Koutlaki, 2002) or the value they ascribe to the tentativeness vs insistence with which an offer is made (Bella, 2016).

[2] Also, since an offer is an other-directed, hierarchical action, and an offer acceptance an acknowledgement of a need that puts the offeree in the debts of the offerer, the offeree may be reluctant to accept it, expressing excuses (Couper-Kuhlen, 2014, pp. 630–632).