Relationship initiation and formation in post-match Tinder chat conversations

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ABSTRACT

This article uses CA to investigate the communicative practices of unacquainted, matched Tinder users in chat conversations, in the process of developing a potential romantic relationship. Drawing on data from 157 Tinder conversations, the analysis explores the occasioning of talk about personal and intimate matters. The analysis shows that the interactional device through which the revelation of personal and intimate information is prompted is the 'elicited self-disclosure sequence'. In cases in which a direct question fails to prompt a disclosure from the recipient, the 'volunteered self-disclosure sequence' emerges as an alternative to promote the revelation of further intimate information. We conclude by observing that relationships are ongoing routine accomplishments arising in mundane sociorelational contexts. The data are in Spanish and Catalan with English translations.

Introduction

Despite the fundamental importance of social interaction in the initiation and development of romantic relationships, close relationships research has yet to explore how such relationships unfold both offline and online in live conversational contexts. Research in interpersonal communication and social psychology has predominantly employed experimental methods or theoretical models to explain how personal relationships begin and evolve. Scholarship in this field has produced abundant theories about, and studies on, personal relationship initiation and formation. For example, Knapp's (1978) relational stage model elaborated how relationships sequentially escalate, stabilize, and descend over time through interpersonal communication. The "social penetration theory", formulated by psychologists Altman and Taylor (1973), suggests that as relationships progress, interpersonal communication evolves from fairly superficial levels to more intimate ones. This theory, also known as the onion theory, proposes that as people peel each layer of disclosure and have deeper conversations, they get nearer to the "core" of a person. As relationships evolve, the parties will reveal more facets of themselves with more breadth and depth (ibid.). A crucial element for the development of social (and, in particular, romantic) relationships is therefore that of self-disclosure, typically understood as the process by which individuals reveal personal information

about themselves to others (Jourard, 1964; Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006). Self-disclosure reciprocity, particularly characteristic of initial interactions between strangers, is referred to as the communicative process by which an individual's self-disclosure prompts another individual to self-disclose (Jourard, 1971). Such process, known in the literature as the "self-disclosure reciprocity effect", has been argued to promote disclosures that are equivalent in breath and/or depth (Hill & Stull, 1982). Other research in the field contends that strangers communicating in online settings through, for example, instant messaging tend to disclose with greater intimacy than those communicating face-to-face, since a reduction in cues fosters a more intimate communicative environment (Jiang et al., 2013; Tidwell & Walther, 2002). In relation to online dating, it is also argued that by having information from an individual's profile instantly available to anyone, the process of self-disclosure is accelerated (Lawson and Leck, 2006). Further, in such environment, there is pressure to disclose lots of information in a short time in order to create trust and rapport quickly (ibid.).

From the perspective of this paper, a key limitation of these theories is that they are not constructed from a close analysis of the real-world communicative practices. As such, they miss the nuances of contextual action that comprise the working-out of the phenomena at hand. The current study intends to bridge that gap by examining the communicative actions of potential romantic partners in the actual interactional context of post-match Tinder chat conversations. Tinder is an online dating App where users search profiles of other users to find potential dates. Users complete a profile consisting of pictures, lists of interests and hobbies and basic personal information such as their occupation, relationship status and so on. They also specify what they are looking for in a partner in terms of gender, age, interests, and other variables, many of which are defined by the system. Tinder presents the user with profiles that match their search interests within a specified location area. Users can scroll through these matches and choose to initiate a chat with these matched profiles with the ostensible aim of possibly arranging a date.

Relationship initiation and formation from a conversation analytic perspective

3

From CA's standpoint, instead of considering relationships as "a reality lying behind and influencing members' face-to-face behavior, we can investigate them for how, in the course of time, they are accomplished within everyday interaction by various speaking practices" (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984; 305). In their pioneering CA study of first encounters, Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) showed that unacquainted pairs rely on the immediate context and the mutual knowledge of their shared memberships (e.g., being college students) to generate topical talk and do "acquaintedness" "as an intimacy ploy in the ongoing construction of relationship between parties" (Maynard & Zimmerman 1984, 313). Svennevig (1999; 2014) revealed that unacquainted people use the "self-presentational sequence" (comprising a request for self-presentation, the self-presentation, and a response to the self-presentation) in initial interactions to get acquainted and (eventually) develop a relationship.

CA has fruitfully explored the initiation of romantic relationships in the context of speed dating encounters. Korobov (2011) has looked at how mate-preferences or relationship histories (Stokoe, 2010) were elicited in speed dating, and how participants assessed the practice of dating and used these assessments as a topic to construct common ground (Turowetz and Hollander 2012). Such work reveals the interactional structures through which initial orientations in these extremely brief, face-to-face encounters are developed. For instance, Stokoe's (2010) work showed how talk about relationship histories is initiated. Disclosures about relationship histories were either volunteered (without being asked) or prompted (after questions about previous relationships). Typically, questions about personal relationship histories tended to come after talk about other matters (such as occupation), and that categories such as "single", "unsuccessful in relationships" were invoked as accountable reasons for attending speed dating.

In CA, self-disclosure is not approached as "a simply-categorizable single piece of verbal behaviour, but a social action which must be brought off in the circumstances of a given interaction" (Antaki, Barnes & Leudar 2005, 196). Other conversation analytic work on self-disclosure (e.g., Kidwell & González Martínez, 2010; Stokoe, 2009) shows that disclosure is not to be considered as "a trait-like construct, varying in degree from one person to another" (Ignatius & Kokkonen 2007)

measured as a dependent or independent variable, but as ordinary instances of autobiographical talk to an unknowing interlocutor. Our concern here is with the distributed accomplishment of disclosure by participants in Tinder chat conversations.

Data and method

In the present study we collected a corpus of 157 conversations from Tinder users in a large Spanish city. The sample consists of a total of ten users (four women and six men) that self-identified as heterosexual; their ages ranged from nineteen to sixty (See Figure 1). Participants shared with us the screenshots of the conversations that they held in the Tinder chat with matched users. In accordance with our ethical guidelines, participants blanked out the names and other identifying features of the users they interacted with prior to sharing the data with us. Our university Research Ethics Committee approved all procedures, and participants gave informed consent. Participants shared the entirety of the conversations that they had with users, which varied in length with some consisting of just a small number of messages within a few minutes of each other, while others lasted for days or even weeks (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Demographic information on participants and average number of messages per conversation

User	Age	Gender	Conversations	Average number of messages per conversation
01	19	Male	24	<10
02	48	Female	42	20-30
03	61	Male	12	>50
04	43	Male	12	10-20
05	22	Male	7	20-30
06	45	Female	5	20-30
07	53	Male	8	>50
08	22	Female	35	10-20
09	57	Male	9	30-40
10	21	Female	3	>50

The paper draws on methodological frameworks developed in the application of Conversation Analysis (CA) in digitally mediated contexts (Giles et al. 2015; Jucker 2021). These frameworks have been described in detail elsewhere and we will not discuss them in depth here (Ten Have 1999; Sidnell 2010). Our analysis concerns the sequential ordering of the turns and the ways that participants elicit information from one another in the process of "getting acquainted".

The chats in Tinder have properties common to other forms of mediated discourse: the turns are received as completed turn units, and, unlike spoken talk, are not visible during the moment of their construction (Hutchby & Tanna 2008). Unlike other modes of communication, Tinder users do not have access to GIFs and cannot include URL links in their text or audio or video recordings so there only interactional resources are text (including punctuation) and Emoji.

A body of work from CA and cognate "discourse" studies have started to explore the interactional features of online dating. Mortensen (2017) examined flirting strategies used by participants in an online Danish dating site, including instant messages and emails. The analysis explored how participants used "imagined togetherness" as a strategy to flirt, projecting moments when they may be together as a way to move towards the organisation of dates. Licoppe (2020) compares conversational practices in Tinder and Grindr, showing that Grindr users tended to re-play the sexual scripts of "quick sexual hook-ups" commonly found in certain non-heterosexual cultures (Humphreys 1975) and that they avoided an implication of longer-term emotional relationships. In contrast, heterosexual users in Tinder showed a preference for the scripts of "sex within relationship", and as such oriented to more extended topics of conversation and to "keeping the conversation going". This was manifest in longer answer turns, and multi-topicality, with conversations addressing multiple topics. Licoppe (2021) examined the sequential orders of Tinder users, showing that users held each other accountable to these emergent orders of engagement. A particularly important part of Licoppe's argument is that users noticeably structure their

conversations in relation to the possibility that a user may disappear at any moment (a process referred to as "ghosting").

Analysis

Occasioning talk about personal information

Extracts 1–3 illustrate some of the ways autobiographical talk was occasioned in Tinder conversation openings. To start, Extract 1 shows the initial exchanges of MP19 and FI19 after a match occurred.

Extract 1 (T01H19-conv15) (Names and other potentially identifying particulars have been anonymized in all extracts; each numbered line corresponds to a message; we include the original Spanish or Catalan text alongside an English translation)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

```
 1  MP19   Holaaaaaa
            Hellooooo
 2  FI19   Hey
 3  MP19   Que taaaaal :))
            how's it going :))
 4  FI19   Muy bien
            Great
 5         Pero aburrida
            But bored
 6         Tu?
            You?
 7  MP19   Hahahahahahahah normal
            Hahahahahahahah sure
 8         Bieeen aquí haciendo clases online
            Fiiine here doing online classes
 9  FI19   Same
10         Y encima no me entero de nada
            And on top of that I don't understand
            anything
11  MP19   Hahahahahahaa
12         K estudias?
            What do you study?
13  FI19   Ciencias políticas
            Political science
14         Tu?
            You?
15  MP19   Música y bellas artes
```

```
              Music and fine arts
16            Un poco random hahahaha
              A bit random hahahaha
17  FI19      Bua pero es brutal
              Wow but that's amazing
18  MP19      Yaaaa
              Yeahhh
19            Si te gusta la verdad es k si
              If you like it indeed it is
20            Tu k música escuchas?
              What music do you listen to?
21  FI19      Casi de todo
              Almost everything
              [November 17th, 11:01]
22  MP19      a esta guai
              Oh that's cool
23  FI19      Sisi desde música de los 70-80 hasta trap
              de ahora
              Yeah yeah from music of the 70-80 to
              current trap music
24            Y tu que
              What about you
25  MP19      Yo también mucha variedaaad
              Me too a lot of variety
26            Ahora escucho más rap
              Now I listen to more rap
27            Pero antes escuchaba más rock
              But before I listened to more rock & roll
```

In Extract 1, towards the end of an initial greeting sequence, FI19 says that she is doing "Great" (message 4) "But bored" (message 5). MP19's turn, in message 7, is designed to convey a positive stance that empathizes with FI19's state of boredom. This happens after FI19 reciprocates a question about how her interlocutor is doing with "You?" (message 6). Given the quasi-synchronicity of instant messaging interactions, MP19's answer to that question appears in message 8 sequentially displayed after his previous affiliative contribution. MP19 then replies that he is studying online, therefore revealing that he is a student (message 8). FI19 reciprocates with "same" (message 9), avowing a similar state of affairs and thus aligning with MP19's revelation. FI19's and MP19's prompted disclosures (Stokoe 2010) in messages 13 and 15, respectively, come after direct open (wh-) questions about what they study (messages 12 and 14). Of special interest is MP19's assessment, a mild self-deprecation, of what he studies ("A bit random hahahaha", message 16) which is designed to downplay its value. In self-deprecations, there is a preference for disagreement as second

assessments (Pomerantz, 1984). As we may observe in message 17, FI19's "Wow but that's amazing" "disagrees" with MP19's previous self-deprecation, and it is properly marked so with the disagreement token "but". Disagreements with prior self-deprecations often contain favorable evaluative terms, like FI19's complimentary "Wow" and "that's amazing", contrastively employed vis-à-vis MP19's preceding self-deprecatory formulation.

In message 20 MP19 asks a direct open (wh-) question about FI19´s musical tastes, which prompts her to reveal that she listens to "Almost everything" (message 21). That prompted disclosure is then "assessed" by MP19 in message 22 with "Oh that's cool" and subsequently endorsed by FI19 in message 23, in which she expands on her favorite music. In message 24 FI19 reciprocates the question about musical tastes ("What about you"), which moves MP19 to disclose "Me too a lot of varieeety" in message 25. MP19's disclosure contains the indexical component "too", which refers back to FI19's own disclosure that she listens to "Almost everything" in message 21 and is emphatically built through the punctuation of "varieeety". Altogether, these devices are used by MP19 to display reciprocity of perspectives and further affiliate with FI19. In messages 26 and 27 MP19 finally describes the types of music he likes.

Although assessments are rarely employed to open conversations in face-to-face interactions between unacquainted people, they might be used in Tinder conversations for the purpose of conveying a positive stance and generating an atmosphere of affiliation right from the beginning. This is precisely what happens in extract 2.

Extract 2 (T08M22-conv11)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

```
 1   FP22  Me en can ta el surf
            I lo ve surfing
            [Monday 0:33]
 2   MI23  jajaja pues ya somos dos
            hahaha that makes two of us
```

```
              [Monday 10:21]
 3   FP22  jajaja que mas te gusta?
              Hahaha what else do you like?
              [Monday 12:11]
 4   MI23  😊
 5            😂😂😂
 6            comer y mucho
              Eating and a lot
              [Tuesday 8:53]
 7   FP22  jajajajaja que tipo de comida
              Hahahaha what kind of food
              [Tuesday 16:16]
 8   MI23  Sushi me tira mucho
              Sushi really appeals to me
 9            pfff es que la comida 😋😍😋
              Pfff it is food 😋😍😋
10            jajajajaj
              hahahaha
11            y a ti que mas te gusta?
              And what else do you like?
              [Wednesday 22:38]
12   FP22  jajaja pues no puedo tomar sushi así que
              tendrás que pensar algo mejor para nuestra
              1 cita
              Hahaha well I can't eat sushi so you will
              have to think of something better for our
              first date
```

In his Tinder profile, MI23 states an interest in surfing, making available that "disclosure" to all users whose search criteria (age range and geolocation) match his profile. After a "match" occurred (both users swiped right on each other), FP22 opens the conversation by producing an assessment ("I lo ve surfing") (message 1) of MI23's statement in his Tinder profile that he practices surfing. This assessment is emphatically built through punctuation by splitting the words into syllables (better appreciable in the Spanish original) to convey a very positive stance. After an undetermined gap, MI23 produces an affiliative response in the shape of a second assessment ("that makes two of us", message 2) that is prefaced with a token of laughter ("hahaha") used to acknowledge FP22's unconventional, albeit original, opening. After another gap of at least 10 hours, FP22's subsequent question "what else do you like?" is prefaced with another token of laughter (message 3). Jefferson (1979) pointed out that laughter routinely occurs as a response to an invitation to laugh made through laughter in the previous utterance. In turn, reciprocation of laughter may affiliate with the conveyed stance of the preceding speaker, which is what happens with FP22   s token of laughter

in message 3. MI23's flirtatious response through emoji (message 4) implicates FP22's as a potentially lascivious question and is followed by laughter emojis (message 6) and a prompted disclosure that he likes "Eating and a lot" (message 6), to which FP22 replies with an open question (prefaced by a token of laughter) about what kind of food he likes (message 7). MI23 reveals in message 8 that he likes sushi but also food in general (message 9) and then reciprocates the question (message 11). FP22's "well"-prefaced response in message 12 is disaffiliative with MI23's preference for sushi but contains an affiliative token of laughter and envisages the possibility of a first date, the latter being an offer that typically arises in the last stages in Tinder conversations. By designing her turn in message 12 that way, FP22 might be seen as preserving the environment of mutual affiliation built so far and project further affiliations to come.

Extracts 1 and 2 show the kinds of personal information (studies, hobbies and basic tastes in music or food) that younger Tinder users tend to share in the initial stages of their conversations. Older users, as we may appreciate below in extract 3, seem to have an orientation to pursue and reveal other items of personal information in their conversation openings.

Extract 3 (T02M48-conv12)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

```
 1   MI51   Hola
             Hello
 2          Buenos días
             Good day
 3   FP48   Bon dia
             Good day
 4   MI51   Que tal?
             How is it going?
 5          De donde eres????
             Where are you from????
 6   FP48   ((name of city))
 7          Y tu
             And you
 8   MI51   Guaii
             Coool
 9          Yo también
```

```
           Me too
10  FP48   que barrio
           which area?
11  MI51   ((name of neighborhood))
12         Y tú??
           And you??
13         A que te dedicas??
           What do you do??
14  FP48   Yo ((nombre de barrio)) y soy profesora
           I live in ((name of neighborhood)) and I am
           a teacher
15  MI51   Bien!!!
           Good!!!
16  FP48   ((nombre de escuela))
           ((name of school))
17  MI51   Yo arquitectura
           I work in architecture
```

Extract 3 begins with a two-part greeting exchange (messages 1-4) followed by the emphatically punctuated open (wh-) question "Where are you from????". Tinder users tend to be concerned about the geolocation of their matches (Tinder shows to both FP48 and MI51 as being 31 kilometers apart) as a long distance could be an obstacle for a potential date and, eventually, a relationship. This is why there is a series of four question marks in the question, which frame it as an important one. The design of the question, in turn, prefigures the expected answer as a relevant one in the business-at-hand. FP48'answer in message 6 reveals that she lives in "((name of city))" and then reciprocates the same question to MI51 in message 7 with "And you". This is then followed by MI51's third-turn receipt, consisting of a positive assessment ("Coool" in message 8) produced to affiliate with FP48, and subsequently by a revelation that he lives in the same city (message 9). FP48 and MI51 ask each other further questions about the area in which they live (messages 10 and 12) and their jobs (message 13), framing both matters (through emphatic punctuation) as particularly important. Another third-turn receipt, comprising an assessment conveying a very positive stance ("Good!!!", message 15) is produced by MI51 on FP48's place of residence and occupation.

In summary, in extracts 1-3 we have identified a recurrent turn-taking pattern in which: (1) one party (elicitor) asks a question to elicit a disclosure from recipient; such question is formulated as an open (wh-) question, which does not display an expectation or assumptions of what the answer will be. (2) Recipient produces a prompted disclosure. (3) Recipient reciprocates a similar question.

(4) Elicitor reciprocates similar personal information. (5) Selected disclosures are positively assessed by either interlocutor to display affiliation. The sequence here described, which might be termed the "elicited self-disclosure sequence", can be started by either interlocutor and result in a symmetric contribution to the development of the conversation and (potentially), a relationship.

Occasioning talk about intimate information

In this section we explore how Tinder users manage the occasioning of talk about intimate matters. Such talk tends to occur in later stages in Tinder conversations, is delicately handled by the coparticipants and involves issues such as their relationship status or history, and their physical or personality attributes. Extract 4 reproduces a fragment of the first uninterrupted stretch of conversation between MP57 and FI46. They have already enquired each other about where they live, occupation, relationship status (although indirectly framed) and hobbies. It is precisely this last topic they are chatting about at the beginning of data extract 4.

Extract 4 (T09H57-conv2)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

1	FI46	M'agrada el tema de bricolatge, sobretot perquè jo sóc una patata *I love DIY, especially because I'm terrible at it*
2	MP57	😆 😆 😆
3		Tens nanos Anna? *Do you have children Anna?*
4	FI46	No *No*
5	MP57	Si no és indiscreció *If it's not indiscreet*
6	FI46	I tu? *And you?*
7		Bueno, tinc un peque de 5 mesos pero es caní 🐶 *Well, I have a little one that is 5 months old but he's a dog* 🐶
8	MP57	El gran 25 anys, profesor emancipat. I una petita de 9 amb custodia compartida *The eldest is 25 years old, he left home and is a teacher, and a 9-year-old daughter with shared custody*

```
 9  FI46  El meu me'l va donar una amiga. Els teus deuen venir de
           dos matrimonis, no?
           Mine was given to me by a friend. Yours must come from
           two marriages, right?
10  MP57  Són macos els gossos.
           Dogs are cute.
11         Sí, bona observació, veig que et fixes en els detalls
           Yes, good observation, I see you pay attention to the
           details
12  FI46  🤟 🤟
13         😂😂 sóc listilla
           😂😂 I'm smart
14  MP57  Ja ho veig
           I can see that
```

After chatting about some of their hobbies (like for example DIY, in message 1), we may see how

MP57 asks "Do you have children Anna?" (message 3), which might be heard as a topic-proffering

question designed to initiate an elicited self-disclosure sequence focused on their respective

relationship statuses. Unlike extracts 1-3, the topic-proffering question in message 3 adopts the form

of a yes/no interrogative and offers for confirmation MP57's assumption of a particular aspect (that

she might be a parent) of FI46's relationship status. Further, MP57's topic-proffering query is other-

orienting, thus making the recipient the authority in the projected topic (Schegloff, 2007). Responses

to topic proffers may take up (which is the preferred action, through expanded turns) or decline (the

dispreferred option, via minimal answer-long replies) the proffered topic. As we may observe in

message 11, FI46's response "No", although being type-conforming (it includes a "no", one of the

two options prefigured by yes/no interrogatives) (Raymond, 2003) is a minimal response that

declines expanding the proffered topic. Interestingly, MP57's question is followed by the tag "If it's

not indiscreet" in message 5 (probably typed in overlap with FI46's "No" in message 4 but

sequentially displayed subsequently on the Tinder's chat interface). In the speech acts tradition, tags

or pre-sequences like "if it's not indiscreet" or "If you don't mind me asking" are identified as speech

act conditionals used for the purpose of managing politeness, since they serve to diminish

assertiveness (Sweetser, 1990). But it appears that "if it's not indiscreet" does a lot more than

managing politeness. Conditionals appeal to hypotheticality, with an implication of alternatives to

hedge, and thereby may serve to elude the negative effects of a particular action – in the above data

extract, a question demanding intimate information (message 3). In its design, the *if*-clause ("If it's not indiscreet") constitutes the medium for the action performed (a question in which MP57 enquires FI46 whether she has children). A conditional like "if it's not indiscreet", as Brown and Levinson (1987) point out, serves to prepare the recipient to expect the contrary and therefore concede that the question might be indiscreet and anticipate the prospective answer as something deserving discretion and delicateness. It also serves to minimize the speaker's involvement in the action, making him/her appear less invested in the upcoming response, thereby generating an environment of trustworthiness. As a result, it might help eliciting an intimate disclosure (as happens with "Well, I have a little one that is 5 months old but he's a dog 🐶", message 7) and therefore encourage FI46's contribution to topic expansion.

Although the sequence starting in message 3 might have progressed by deploying a succession of "elicited self-disclosure sequences", the production of a disclosure-eliciting question followed by the conditional tag "If it's not indiscreet", has substantially altered the trajectory of the conversation by promoting the expansion of a topic that did not offer the promise of a much longer path. Their topical detour has provided them with new materials to elicit further disclosures (like FI46's inference about MP57's relationship status, in message 9, converted into a yes/no interrogative by the use of a question tag) and build further mutual, intimate affiliation (through the assessments in messages 10, 11 and 13).

After their "match", MP61 and FI50 (below) have been chatting on and off since the morning and midnight is approaching. They have been talking about where they live, their work and what they are looking for in Tinder.

Extract 5 (T03H61-conv6)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

```
1   FI50  Pues te sienta muy bien ese bañador naranja fosforito
          So you look great in that bright orange swimsuit
2   MP61  Bueno se hace lo que se puede
```

		Well, we do what we can
3		😂😂😂
4	FI50	Por cierto cuánto mides *By the way, how tall are you*
5	MP61	Soy normal 1,81 *I am normal 1,81*
6		*79 kgs*
7	FI50	Bien! Por lo menos eres más alto que yo 😜 … que ya es difícil *Good! At least you're taller than me 😜 ... which is hard enough!*
8	MP61	Eres alta *You are tall*
9	FI50	1,67 pero es difícil encontrar chicos altos por aquí *1,67 but it's hard to find tall guys around here*
10	MP61	Vaya *Wow*
11		El físico le das mucha importancia? *Physique, do you attach a lot of importance to it?*
12		Yo si *I do*
13	FI50	Le doy la importancia justa pero es la primera carta de presentación *I give it the right importance but it is the first impression*
14	MP61	Si, cierto *Yeah true*
15		Es lo que te lleva a entablar una conversación *It is what leads you to strike up a conversation*
16		Nunca me he enamorado de alguien por ser buena persona, tener un gran corazón etc etc etc, lo del roce hace el cariño nunca me ha pasado *I have never fallen in love with someone for being a good person, having a big heart, etc. etc. etc., that thing of close contact breeds affection has never happened to me*
17	FI50	Jajaja…. No puedo estar más de acuerdo contigo. A mi me pasa lo mismo, me tiene que entrar por el ojo si no no hay nada que hacer *Hahaha.... I can't agree with you more. It's the same for me, I have to get him through my eye or else there's nothing to do*
18	MP61	Claroooooooo *Suuuuure*
19		Luego es el conjunto *So it's the whole*
20		El que te llena *That fulfills you*
21		Si ves una persona y no te da el vuelco el corazón y hace hervir tu sangre,…. Mal asunto *If you see a person and doesn't make your heart skip a beat and your blood boil, ... Bad business*
22	FI50	Totalmente de acuerdo *Totally agree*

In message 1, FI50 compliments MP61's for a picture in his Tinder profile in which he appears wearing a swimsuit. As we saw above, users' profiles are often used as resources to occasion talk about personal topics. In particular, positive assessments of items in the profiles might well serve to convey positive stances and accomplish mutual affiliation. This is what happens in message 1 with FI50's flattering comment about MP61's physical appearance. Compliments, as Pomerantz (1978) indicated, are assessments that trigger the operation of two diverging preferences. On the one hand, there is a preference for agreement over disagreement in second assessments, which would result in the acceptance of the compliment. On the other hand, there is the preference against self-praise and, therefore, for disagreement in responses to compliments. MP61's answer in message 2 ("Well, we do what we can") "solves" the problem of the two diverging preferences by partially disagreeing (with the disagreement token "well") and producing a scaled-down agreement ("we do what we can") reinforced by the 3 tokens of laughter in message 3.

In message 4, FI50 produces a "by the way"-prefaced direct question ("By the way, how tall are you") which is collaboratively expanded into an elicited self-disclosure sequence (messages 4-10). Misplacement markers such as "By the way", especially in turn beginning position, serve to "indicate that the talk that is going to occupy the turn thereby begun is something which has a proper place in conversation, but is about to be done outside its proper place" (Schegloff, 1987:72). In other words, they signal that an utterance is off topic. MP61's responses, however, address FI50's topic shift by providing the details of his height (message 5) and weight (message 6). The rest of the components of the elicited self-disclosure sequence (a reciprocated similar question, message 8; reciprocation of similar personal information, message 9; assessments of selected disclosures, messages 7 and 10) appear in the sequence ending in message 10 prior to the topic shift performed in message 11. There, MP61 might be seen as initiating an elicited self-disclosure sequence by proffering a candidate topic through a yes/no interrogative ("Physique, do you attach a lot of importance to it?", message 11). As we discussed above, yes/no interrogatives offer for confirmation one's assumption about particular states of affairs and hence might guide respondents to answer in a certain way

(Pomerantz, 1988). After the question, interestingly, he reveals his own take ("I do", message 12) on the question he just asked. FI50's reply in message 13 ("I give it the right importance but it is the first impression") is disaffiliative in that it disagrees (marked so by the disagreement token "but") and qualifies MP61's understanding of the importance of physical appearance. After FI50's disaffiliative move, it takes MP61 quite of an interactional effort to bring FI50 to a full agreement with him and to not appear as paying excessive attention to physical appearance at the expense of other immaterial aspects of romantic attraction. First, he aligns with FI50's stance with "Yeah true" in message 14. He then qualifies his own stance on physical appearance (it is now a mere vehicle to striking up a conversation, message 15) and describes what would not make him fall in love (message 16), bringing FI50 to convey a positive stance (message 17) emphatically reciprocated by him (message 18). In messages 19-21, he finally produces a "so"-prefaced upshot formulation (typically used to index or emphasize the ties between a current turn and the conversation-thus-far or a part of it) (Raymond, 2004)), in which he combines the perspectives of both in order to promote an understanding agreeable by FI50. Such agreement ("Totally agree") occurs in message 22, culminating the sequence in mutual affiliation and a shared understanding of some ingredients of romance.

In extract 6 MP53 and FI48 have already been chatting for 2 days in which they have talked about personal matters like where they live, their occupation, and (through a direct question by FI48, although framed as misplaced) their relationship status.

Extract 6 (T07H53-conv1)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)


```
 1   MP53  Conocer gente interesante y lugares únicos es mi mayor
           interés en estos momentos 💪💪
           Meeting interesting people and unique places is my main
           interest right now
           [November 11th, 12:42]
```

2	FI48	Es que eso esta muy bien
		That is very good
3		Es lo mejor
		It is the best
4	MP53	Todo es importante: trabajo, amistades, familia pero … tener pareja y disfrutar de la vida es un "Must"
		Everything is important: work, friends, family but... having a partner and enjoying life is a "Must"
5	FI48	Ummmmmmmmmm jjj
6		Si así es
		Yes that's how it is
7		Cierto
		Certainly
8	MP53	☺️☺️☺️☺️☺️
9		😙
10	FI48	Te sientes solo?
		You feel lonely?
11	MP53	No, para nada
		No not at all
12	FI48	Yo hace apenas un año estoy separada
		I've only been separated for a year
13		Aunque con muchos años de crisis
		Although with many years of crisis
14	MP53	Vaya vaya
		Oh well
15	FI48	Tengo dos hijos
		I have two children
16	MP53	Pues, hay vida más allá del matrimonio/pareja
		Well, there is life beyond marriage/couple
17		Edades ??
		Ages ??
18	FI48	Pues así lo veo también
		Well that's how I see it too
19		16 y 17 años
		16 and 17 years old
20	MP53	Yo, 17 y 19 (adolescentes) 🤪🤪
		Me, 17 and 19 (teens) 🤪🤪
21		Pero son un encanto (como su padre)
		But they are charming (like their father)
22	FI48	No puedo opinar no se como es su padre 💁♀
		I can't comment I don't know how their father is 💁♀
23	MP53	Jajajaja
		Hahahaha
24		Jajajaja
		Hahahaha
25		Un encanto de hombre
		A charming man
26	FI48	Y nada mas
		And nothing else
27	MP53	Educado, simpático, honesto, con las ideas claras 😛😛
		Polite, friendly, honest, with clear ideas 😛😛
28		Y tu ????
		And you ????
29		Como eres ??
		What are you like ??

```
                  [November 11th, 13:33]
 30  FI48  Pues todo lo anterior también, multiplicado por dos, ea
           !!!!
           Well, all of the above also, multiplied by two, well
           then !!!!
                  [November 11th, 13:49]
 31  MP53  Caramba 👏👏👏
           Gee     👏👏👏
```

In message 1, MP53 is describing what he enjoys "right now": "meeting interesting people and unique places". That revelation is very positively evaluated by FI48 in a two-part first assessment with "That is very good" (message 2) and upgraded to "It is the best" (message 3). FI48's assessment is then agreed on by MP53 in message 4, where he further specifies what he finds particularly important: "having a partner and enjoying life". That appraisal is also evaluated by FI48 in a three-part assessment with "Ummmmmmmmmmm jjj" (message 5), "Yes that's how it is" (message 6) and "Certainly" (message 7), and further endorsed by MP53 with a series of 6 smiling face emojis (message 8) to convey very positive feelings and a "kissing face with closed eyes" emoji (message 9) which might be used to give off a feeling of romance or endearment. The sequence is thus ended – assessments, as Jefferson (1984) points out, are well suited to the work of topic closure – in full agreement and in a climate of complete mutual affiliation, and it has been collaboratively accomplished through the interactional efforts of both coparticipants to affirm consonant stances.

After agreeing on the "important" things in life, we may see how FI48 asks "You feel lonely?" (message 10), which might be heard as a topic-proffering, yes/no question designed to elicit talk about (considering the issues raised in the preceding sequence and the terms embodied in the current utterance) MP53's relationships. As we may observe in message 11, MP53's response "No not at all", although being type-conforming (it includes a "no", one of the two options prefigured by yes/no interrogatives) is a minimal response that categorically ("not at all") declines the presupposed terms of the previous question and halts the expansion of the proffered topic. MP53's declination to take up the proffered topic leads FI48 to volunteer her currently relationship status ("I've only been separated for a year", message 12); by doing this, FI48 may be seen as preserving and further pursuing the topic of "relationship status" as a relevant one now. She reveals to have been

"separated for a year" (message 12), "Although with many years of crisis" (message 13). This disclosure is then evaluated in a two-part assessment by MP53 in messages 14 ("Wow") and 16 ("Well, there is life beyond marriage/couple"), designed to convey an affiliative stance with FI48's situation in her previous relationship, and further agreed on by FI48 in message 18 with a second assessment ("Well that's how I see it too"). In message 15, we may observe that FI48 reveals that she has "two children" (message 15), which serves to further elaborate on her current relationship status. MP53 then asks about their ages (message 17), which is responded to with "16 and 17 years old" (message 19) by FI48. Of particular interest is MP53's utterance in message 20, in which he voluntarily reciprocates information about his children's ages ("Me, 17 and 19 (teens) 😜 😜 ") without being asked through a direct question. It is as if in this particular environment, volunteered self-disclosures might prompt other volunteered self-disclosures. To recapitulate: in cases in which a direct question fails to elicit a disclosure from recipient, another turn-taking pattern (with more or less expansion) seems to emerge, where: (1) elicitor of failed self-disclosure volunteers intimate information; (2) recipient, and eventually producer, of volunteered self-disclosure positively assess selected items of that volunteered self-disclosure; (3) recipient voluntarily reciprocates similar intimate information. This sequence, which might be termed the volunteered self-disclosure sequence, seems to perform a significant job in promoting the revelation of intimate information in cases in which topic proffers do not result in the collaborative production of an elicited self-disclosure sequence.

It is interesting to observe that after *enough* intimate information has been disclosed, the elicited self-disclosure sequence might be deployed to generate further disclosures. We may see how (1) FI48 indirectly invites MP53 to characterize his personality (message 22) and further develop that characterization (message 26); (2) MP53 discloses *what he is like* (messages 25 and 27); (3) MP53 reciprocates a similar question, framed as important through punctuation (messages 28-29); (4) FI48

reciprocates similar intimate information (message 30); MP53 evaluates FI48's self-disclosure (message 31) to convey a positive stance and accomplish affiliation.

In general, extracts 4-6 show that talk about intimate matters ordinarily emerges in later stages in Tinder conversations and the different strategies employed by Tinder users to generate such talk. The elicited self-disclosure sequence is the preferred vehicle to elicit talk about intimate matters. However, the topic proffers in the sequence tend to be designed as yes/no interrogatives and are accompanied by markers that signal the singularity or delicateness of the questions and the talk they intend to elicit. When topic proffers fail in generating intimate talk, the volunteered self-disclosure sequence appears to be an appropriate device to produce further intimate disclosures.

Managing violations of Tinder chat's turn-taking system

Sections 1 and 2 have shown how Tinder users exhibit an orientation to occasion personal or intimate talk in distinctive, recognizable ways. In this section we explore the occurrence of departures to that orientation and how they are managed by both interlocutors. In extract 7, MP22 and FI23 have been chatting on and off for about 12 hours and have been talking about personal topics like where they live (they live about 50km. apart), their hobbies (travelling, sport, music, etc.) or what they study. In the first messages (1-11) reproduced in extract 7 they are discussing how to overcome the distance hurdle and making arrangements for a face-to-face encounter.

Extract 7 (T05H22-conv7)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

```
 1   MP22   I com farem aixo de quedar, tenint en compte lo de
            ((nom de ciutat1))-((nom de ciutat2))?
            And how can we meet up, given the ((name of city1))-
            ((name of city2)) thing?
 2   FI23   Primer.. Per tu es un problema que sigui de ((nom de
            ciutat 1))?
```

		First .. Is it a problem for you that I am from ((name of city1))?
3		Podem quedar a mig camí, o pujar jo o venir tu
		We can meet halfway, or I can get there or you can come over
4		Si et sembla 😊
		If you like 😊
5	MP22	A veuree, de moment per mi cap problemaa
		Let's see, for now no prooblem for me
6		Si que amb el tema de la uni vaig bastant liat per anar d'aquí cap allá
		With the university, I am quite busy indeed to go from here to there
7		Pero bueno per un plan d'una tarda no poso pegues jajajaja
		But hey, for an afternoon plan, I'm not fussy
8	FI23	Si igual jo la veritat..
		Yes, same for me to be honest..
9		Però bueno si volem trobarem moments
		But well, if we want to, we will find the time
10		No em preocupa pas hahahaa
		It doesn't worry me at all hahahaa
11	MP22	Hahahaha geniaaal
		Hahahaha greaaat
12		Per cert, t'he de comentar una cosa que crec que es important, tinc una especie de relació oberta amb una noia de ((nom de ciutat))
		By the way, I have to tell you something that I think is important, I have a kind of open relationship with a ((name of city)) girl
13	FI23	Una especie? O la tens o no la tens hahahahahaa
		A kind of? Either you have it or you don't have it hahahahahaa
14		Mersi per comentar-mo
		Thanks for letting me know
15	MP22	Hahahahahaha bueno, la veritat es que no sha acabat de parlar entre els dos, pero pel temps que fa jo diría que si que es una relacio oberta
		Hahahahahahahaha well, the truth is that we haven't finished talking about it, but by the time it's lasted, I would say that yes it is an open relationship
16	FI23	Bueno ja ho parlareu
		Well, you'll talk about it
17		Veig que timporta
		I see that it matters to you
18	MP22	No t'ho negare jajajaja
		I won't deny it hahahaha
19	FI23	😊

Arrangements in Tinder, just like in any other speech-exchange system like ordinary conversation

(Button, 1987, 1991; Davidson, 1978; LeBaron & Jones, 2002; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) or particular

types of institutional interaction (McKenzie, 2010; Robinson, 2001; West, 2006) are typically among

the last topics in conversation and are therefore closing implicative. However, there are ways to re-open the conversation to topical talk once the closing section has commenced. One feature of pre-closings like arrangements is that they might invite the introduction of previously unmentioned mentionables. However, such unmentioned mentionables are routinely introduced only if they are related to prior topics or are seen as re-elaborations of previous materials (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). New materials are usually marked as misplaced, as we may see in the above data extract in MP22's "by the way"-prefaced intimate volunteered self-disclosure in message 12. In effect, MP22 and FI23 have been chatting so far about personal topics (where they live, hobbies, studies), but not intimate ones. Hence the introduction of his current relationship status (a status that could be incompatible with the development of an intimate relationship with FI23) in message 12 is marked as misplaced. Given the status of meeting arrangements as last topics in Tinder conversations prior to a face-to-face encounter, MP22's misplaced revelation can also be heard as denoting that its place in the topic agenda was earlier. MP22's revelation is not very well received by FI23, who produces a repair initiator in message 13 ("A kind of?") by partially repeating an item of MP22's previous message, thereby identifying it as the trouble source. FI23's repair initiator is framed as a question with a question mark and as such it probes MP22's relationship status disclosure and locally functions to prompt for an account. But it does more than that: it also challenges the acceptability of MP22's revelation and hence may engender disagreement, as happens in MP22's turn in message 15. Before that, FI23's repair initiator in message 13 is accompanied by candidate repairing objects ("Either you have it or you don't have it"), an affiliative token of laughter ("hahahahahaa") and a token of appreciation ("Thanks for letting me know", message 14) that could, altogether, anticipate a swift end to the repair sequence and preclude further disagreement. However, that does not occur. MP22's turn in message 15 reciprocates an affiliative token of laughter but is followed by the disagreement marker "well" and an account that does not clarify his relationship status. By doing that, MP22 is passing the opportunity to self-repair and that leads to further disagreement, as we may see in FI23's "well"-prefaced message (16). However, following her previous contribution, FI23

now formulates an upshot ("I see that it matters to you" message 17) that no longer probes MP22's relationship status, but seeks agreement through a formulation articulated in terms that might be acceptable to MP22. Such agreement ("I won't deny it hahahaha") occurs in message 18 and it is followed by a smiling face with smiling eyes emoji (message 19) to convey a very positive stance and culminate the sequence in a climate of mutual affiliation.

Extract 8 reproduces the conversation opening between MP57 and FI53.

Extract 8 (T09H57-conv3)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

```
         [December 27th, 11:07]
1   MP57  Bon dia Alicia i bon Nadal
          Good morning Rosa and merry Christmas
2   FI53  Buenos días Dani
          Good morning Dani
3   MP57  Disculpa que no te haya contestado, estoy un poco liado.
          En cualquier caso es un placer hablar contigo.
          Sorry I didn't answer you, I'm a bit busy. In any case
          it is a pleasure to talk to you.
4   FI53  Tranquilo no pasa nada
          Nevermind no problem
5   MP57  Qué tal la Navidad? Has podido participar en alguna
          fiesta familiar?
          How is Christmas? Have you been able to participate in
          any family celebrations?
6         Nosotros anulamos la tradicional comida de Sant Esteve
          We canceled the traditional lunch of Sant Esteve
7   FI53  Si muy bien con la familia
          Yes great with the family
8         Navidad siempre en familia
          Christmas always with the family
9         6 mayores y 2 niños
          6 adults and 2 children
10  MP57  Cumpliendo las recomendaciones
          Complying with the recommendations
11        Nosotros nos juntamos entre 23 y 25. Era muy arriesgado
          We got together between 23 and 25. It was very risky
12  FI53  Eso son 3 grupos
          That's 3 groups
13  MP57  Sí, no podíamos hacer la fiesta todos juntos. Lo hemos
          dejado para hacer una barbacoa en verano 😁
          Yeah, we couldn't celebrate all together. We have left
          it to have a barbecue in the summer 😁
14  FI53  😲 👏  👍
15  MP57  Divorciada también?
          Divorced too?
```

25

```
16        No comentas nada en tu perfil
          You don't say anything in your profile
          [13:08]
17        Bueno, voy a comer, he comprado Sushi ¿Te apuntas?
          Anyway, I'm going to eat, I bought sushi. Will you join
          me?
18        Por cierto, hablando de comida, ¿ya te has acabado el
          bocata de la cuarta foto? 😁
          By the way, speaking of food, have you finished the
          sandwich in your fourth photo? 😁
19  FI53  No eso no es bocata
          It is not a sandwich
20        Es un dulce de tradición de Bélgica
          It is a traditional Belgian sweet dessert
```

After an initial greeting exchange (messages 1 and 2), which includes merry Christmas wishes (message 1), MP57 apologizes for a late reply (message 3) and enquires FI53 about how Christmas is going and whether she has "been able to participate in any family celebrations?" (message 5). One of the "problems" that Tinder users have to "solve" in their chats with other users is what to talk about in conversation openings. As we have seen above, their user profile (extract 2) or the geolocation information provided by Tinder constitute common topical resources, although direct elicitation of personal information (extract 3) is habitual. Another option, as in the current data extract, is to produce "small talk". In telephone conversation openings between intimates, Drew and Chilton (2000) observed that the first topics in these conversations could be about "noticings" regarding the immediate environment, reports from the "day's happenings" or news updates about events or circumstances from when they last spoke. Maynard and Zimmermann (1984) found that strangers would make extensive use of "pre-topical sequences" to invoke their mutually available context (being college students) to generate topical talk. In extract 8, MP57 and FI53 use current important events (Christmas and the covid-19 pandemic) as their initial mentionables (messages 5-14). As we may observe, these topics are not further pursued after FI53's production of a positive assessment – which, as we saw above, might be topic-closing implicative – in the form of a smiley, a clapping hands, and a thumbs up emojis (message 14). In message 15, after the previous preliminaries, MP57 places straight on the interactional floor a topic-proffering, yes/no question directly related to the business undertaken by Tinder users after a match occurs: the production of autobiographical talk. In

26

effect, MP57's "Divorced too?" is designed to enquire about FI53's relationship status and might be seen as the first move of an elicited self-disclosure sequence to generate talk about intimate matters. After probably getting no response from FI53 (Tinder chats just display timestamps for gaps of over 15 minutes), MP57 justifies the abruptness of his previous question – new topics are typically marked as disjunct – by invoking FI53's profile as a legitimate place where she could have revealed the intimate information he is demanding (message 16). After at least 1.5 hours of getting no reply, MP57 then produces a "anyway"-prefaced TCU ("Anyway, I'm going to eat, I bought sushi") to indicate that what is to follow will be disjunctive with what was said before, and a rhetorical question ("Will you join me?") to try to engage FI53 back in the conversation (message 17).

As Licoppe (2021) has shown, the "spectre of ghosting" is permanently planning the interactional scene in Tinder chat conversations. "Ghosting", or the unilateral rescission of communication by one of the interlocutors, is a common phenomenon. Unless Tinder users display a persistent commitment in keeping the conversation going (by, among other things, asking questions and producing elaborate responses) interactional desertion is a permanent possibility (ibid.). Tinder users are well aware of that and typically, if they have an interest in the other party: (1) design their messages adhering to the sequential organization described in this paper; (2) take some kind of action when they anticipate that their interlocutor might be "ghosting". Going back to the above data extract, we may appreciate the sequential moves that MP57 makes after getting no response from FI53. First, in message 17 he produces a topic shift (thereby denoting the inadequacy or misplacement of his intimate question in message 15) and a rhetorical question in an attempt to get FI53 back in the interactional scene. Second, in message 18 he shifts topics again with a "by the way"-prefaced question in which he invokes a photograph in FI53's profile. As we saw above, Tinder users exhibit an orientation to open Tinder chat conversations by generating topical talk about their profiles, geolocation or personal (but not intimate) information. MP57's messages 17 and 18 may be interpreted as moves designed to reengage FI53 in the interaction by bringing it back to the "right" track at this stage in the conversation. At this initial stage in the conversation there appears to

27

operate a structural preference for enquiring about personal, and not intimate, information. In message 19 FI53 replies that "It is not a sandwich" and in message 20 she clarifies that "It is a traditional Belgian sweet dessert". By proffering those responses she resumes her contribution to the unfolding conversation.

It is impossible to know whether FI53 was indeed "ghosting" and, if that was the case, whether MP57's interactional efforts resulted in FI53's return to the conversation. However, the design of MP57's messages 15-18 reveals that although the production of autobiographical talk is a routine undertaking of Tinder users, such talk should emerge in specific, recognizable (first personal, then intimate information) ways.

Extract 9 shows the entire conversation between FI36 and MP43 which, as we may observe below, was rather short. The spectre of "ghosting" soon appeared.

Extract 9 (T04H43-conv8)

Male (M); Female (F); Research Participant (P); Interlocutor (I); Stated age (number)

```
        [13:20]
 1  FI36  👋
        [13:58]
 2  MP43  Hola!!! Que tal? Eres de ((nombre de ciudad 1))? 😊
          Hi!!! How's it going? Are you from ((name of city 1))?
          😊
        [15:07]
 3  FI36  De ((nombre de ciudad 2))
          From ((name of city 2))
 4        I tu?
          And you?
        [17:02]
 5  MP43  Jo de ((nom de ciutat 1))!! No tenim excusa per fer un
          día un cafetó en un día assolellat i terrasseta! 😊 Jo
          puc quasi sempre, tant entre semana com caps de setmana!
          Com vas de temps?
          I'm from ((name of city 1))!! We have no excuse to have
          one day a coffee on a sunny day and in a terrace! 😊 I
          can almost always, both on weekdays and weekends! How
          are you doing with your time?
        [18:55]
 6  FI36  Jo tinc dos fills amb custodia compartida
          I have two children with shared custody
```

```
7        A que et dediques?
         What do you do?
8        Tens fills?
         Do you have children?
9        Altura?
         Height?
```

After both participants "swiped" one another right, FI36 takes the initiative to greet MP43 with a waving hand emoji (message 1), which is emphatically reciprocated (after a gap of no more than 38 minutes) with "Hi!!! How's it going?" by MP43 in message 2. In the same message, MP43 produces a topic-proffering question ("Are you from ((name of city 1))? 🙂") that prompts an "elicited self-disclosure sequence" in the conversation (messages 2-5), which is used by both participants to enquire about and reveal personal information about where they live. In message 5, after the fourth move in the sequence (MP43 reciprocates personal information about where he lives with ("I'm from ((name of city 1))!!"), MP43 initiates the arrangements for a face-to-face meeting with "We have no excuse to have one day a coffee on a sunny day and in a terrace! 🙂 I can almost always, both on weekdays and weekends! How are you doing with your time?". As discussed above, arrangements are characteristically one of the last topics in talk-in-interaction; also, in Tinder conversations. Further, arrangements are occasioned after both participants have "intimated" by revealing "enough" personal (first) and intimate (afterwards) information to one another. MP43's proposed arrangements, ending with the question "How are you doing with your time", are not responded to by FI36 and are left unfinalized. Instead, after a gap of nearly 2 hours, she volunteers her currently relationship status in message 6 with "I have two children with shared custody". After this intimate volunteered self-disclosure, she asks a series of personal (message 7) and intimate (messages 8-9) questions, which are left unanswered. MP43 "ghosted" or deserted the interactional scene.

    In order to make sense of MP43's ghosting, it is crucial to elucidate what "violations" of the turn-taking system of Tinder chat conversations occurred in the above data extract. First, MP43's attempt to making arrangements (message 5) was sequentially misplaced, as arrangements are among the last (and not initial) topics in Tinder conversations and typically precede a face-to-face

encounter. Further, MP43's attempt of making arrangements, ending in a question (a first-pair part of an adjacency pair), was not responded to by FI36. Instead, she volunteered intimate information (perhaps intended to prompt an intimate self-disclosure from MP43), also sequentially misplaced.

Second, as we have seen in the previous analyses, Tinder users display a commitment to converse and getting to know one another by collaboratively deploying elicited self-disclosure sequences (composed of two Q-A adjacency pairs) or, alternatively, volunteered self-disclosure sequences. Both types of sequences require the production of alternate turns by different speakers. FI36's production of a volunteered self-disclosure (message 6) followed by a series of questions (messages 7-9), designed to elicit personal and intimate disclosures from MP43, hampers the progress of sequences that require collaboration. Overall, MP43's ghosting might be interpreted as the result of several "wrong" moves by both users.

Concluding remarks

This article has employed CA to investigate the communicative practices of unacquainted, matched Tinder users in chat conversations, in the process of initiating and forming a potential romantic relationship. Those practices involved the occasioning of talk about personal and intimate matters with matched users' discernible purpose of getting acquainted, exploring their compatibility, eventually arranging a face-to-face romantic or sexual encounter, and (depending on the preceding) developing an intimate relationship. The 157 conversations that constituted the data corpus for this study varied substantially in duration and length, but they all had something in common: they had been produced by Tinder users that "liked" (or swiped right, in Tinder's parlance) each other and were willing to interact to get acquainted.

The analysis started by first showing how personal talk was occasioned in the openings of the examined conversations. The personal topics young Tinder users initially enquired about were their studies, hobbies, and basic tastes in music or food, while older users would ask about their place of

residence or occupation. The interactional device through which the revelation of such information was prompted was the "elicited self-disclosure sequence". As we saw above, the moves of the sequence seem to be well suited to the purpose of romantic relationship initiation because they allow interlocutors to symmetrically contribute to the development of the unfolding interaction, exhibit other-attentiveness, occasion talk about personal matters, and build mutual affiliation. Building mutual affiliation appeared to be crucial for the development of relational intimacy. As the analyses showed, by conveying positive stances through assessments or laughter, matched Tinder users managed to display consonant perspectives, solidarity, and similarity. When the building of affiliation was disrupted by, for instance, disagreement, Tinder users exploited the interactional properties of devices like formulations to return the conversation to a territory of complicity.

The "elicited self-disclosure sequence" was also employed in later stages in Tinder conversations to generate talk about intimate matters such as relationship status or history, and physical or personal attributes. However, unlike its typical use in Tinder conversation openings, topic proffers in the sequence adopted the form of yes/no interrogatives and were prefaced or followed by devices (e.g., conditionals or misplacement markers) that signaled the singularity or delicateness of the question and the talk they purported to elicit. The use of yes/no interrogatives (instead of open questions) to occasion talk about intimate matters does not seem to be random. Yes/no interrogatives offer for confirmation speaker's assumptions about recipient's particular states of affairs and therefore serve to exhibit knowledge of, and familiarity with, those very states of affairs. In that respect, in the context of Tinder conversations, yes/no interrogatives do not only operate to demand intimate information but appear to constitute invitations to collaboratively accomplish acquaintedness and relational intimacy. In cases in which a direct question failed to prompt a disclosure from recipient, the "volunteered self-disclosure sequence" emerged as a felicitous device to promote the revelation of further intimate information and keep the conversation (and potential intimate relationship) going.

The deployment of distinctive turn-taking patterns in Tinder conversations, and the ways departures to such patterns were managed, demonstrate that getting acquainted with the purpose of initiating and developing an intimate relationship is an orderly interactional phenomenon. Our findings in this article might be similar to those of mainstream social science. For example, we support Knapp's (1978) claim about the fundamental role of interpersonal communication in relationship initiation and formation. Likewise, we showed the significance of self-disclosing in the progress of relationships (Altman and Taylor, 1973), and observed the "self-disclosure reciprocity effect" described by Jourard (1971). However, mainstream social science's failure to consider relationships as worded, interactional phenomena, might compromise the validity of its observations. As we have shown, relationships are ongoing routine accomplishments arising in mundane sociorelational, interactional contexts.

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