Gender Differences in Question Tag Usage:
A Study of Reality TV

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá spojitostí mezi pohlavími a tázacími dovětky. Cílem je zjistit, zda ženy používají tázací dovětky v konverzacích více než muži. Druhým cílem této práce je zjistit, jaké tázací dovětky jsou využívány nejvíce celkově a jaké tázací dovětky nejvíce používají muži a ženy. Hypotézy této práce tvrdí, že ženy používají více tázacích dovětků než muži, nejvíce používaný typ tázacího dovětku celkově je ‚facilitační,' muži ‚vyzývající' a ženami ‚facilitační.' Metodologie této práce spočívá v pozorování rozhovorů žen a mužů v převážně neskriptované reality show, přesněji seznamovacím pořadu ‚Too Hot to Handle,' zapisování dat a vyvozování závěrů na základě počtu a analýzy použitých tázacích dovětků. Výsledky tohoto výzkumu ukazují, že muži používají tázací dovětky častěji než ženy, což vyvrací stanovenou hypotézu. Data ukazují, že nejpoužívanější typ tázacího dovětku celkově je ‚rétorický,' muži ‚rétorický' a ženami ‚facilitační.'

Klíčová slova: tázací dovětky; pohlaví; lexikální volba; rozdíly mezi pohlavími; sociolingvistika

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis deals with the connection between question tags and gender. The aim is to find out, whether women use question tags more frequently than men when talking. The second goal of this thesis is to find out what kind of question tag is used the most overall and what type by men and women. I argue that it is women who use question tags more and that the most used type of question tag overall is 'facilitative,' by men 'challenging,' and by women 'facilitative.' The methodology of this thesis lies in observing conversations of women and men in a mostly unscripted reality TV show, specifically a dating show 'Too Hot to Handle,' writing the data down, and making conclusions based on the count and analysis of the question tags collected. This research showed that men use question tags more, which denies the hypothesis. The data showed that overall, the most used question tag type is 'rhetorical.' The most used question tag types by men were 'rhetorical' and by women 'facilitative.'

Keywords: question tags; gender; lexical choice; gender differences; tag questions; sociolinguistics

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

According to Haque and Wong (2003) in the 1970s, after the release of the book *Language and Women's Place* by Robin Lakoff in 1975, research on language in connection to gender had begun. The book has received criticism from linguists for the lack of empirical evidence, (Haque and Wong 2003 mention that Lakoff 1973 admits that she used her intuition in her analyses) and has set off a series of studies on this topic (Haque and Wong 2003). Other authors researched some of the gender differences that Lakoff talks about, and this thesis offers a comparison between what Lakoff claims and the data that were found. This thesis uses terms such as 'woman's language' and 'men's language' (Lakoff 1973). This terminology refers to differences that have been found between how men and women speak, which are discussed later in the thesis.

Books, studies, and authors (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; Trudgill 1972; Holmes 1984; Lakoff 1973) make various claims about how men and women differ in language use. The most found conclusion is that women use standard language (Gordon 1997), are more uncertain about their views (Meyerhoff 2006), do not swear (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013), are interested in different topics than men (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013) and more.

Research on the issue of question tag usage, whether it is women or men who use it more, has been done by several authors, and the conclusions were not unanimous (Haque and Wong 2003). The different results that Haque and Wong (2003) mention are also discussed in this thesis. This thesis collects empirical evidence from an unscripted reality TV show called 'Too Hot to Handle' with an equal number of male and female members. This thesis aims to find out which gender uses question tags more and what type of question tag is the most used overall, by men and by women. The collected sentences containing a question tag are counted and analysed.

This thesis is divided into two main parts. The first part is theoretical, where previous research, information on question tags and tag questions, and other language differences connected to gender topics are described and discussed. The second analytical part presents the methodology of said research, the analysis process, and the findings.

The thesis findings suggest that it is men who use question tags more. The second research question and the rest of the hypotheses are answered by analysing the collected sentences based on Holmes's (1995) division of question tag types, which are 'epistemic modal,' 'facilitative,' 'softening' and 'challenging,' together with Axelsson's (2011) 'rhetorical' type. The results show that the most used question tag type by the participants in 'Too Hot to Handle' overall is 'rhetorical,' the most used question tag type by men is also 'rhetorical,' and the 'facilitative' tag type was the most used by women. The results were surprising since three out of four hypotheses were disconfirmed and are later discussed in Chapter Discussion.

I. THEORY

1 AIM OF THE THESIS

1.1 Goals

In this thesis, two research questions connected to the gender differences in question tag usage are established.

The first goal of this thesis is to find out whether there is a difference in the amount of question tag usage when it comes to genders and, if there is, to find out what gender dominates in the question tag usage. Sentences containing a question tag in the reality TV show 'Too Hot to Handle' are counted, resulting in a total number of question tags used. While noting down the sentences, the gender of the speaker of the sentence is noted, which shows how many times the question tag was used by men and how many times by women. In the analysis, this goal is referred to as 'research question number 1.'

The second goal is to determine what type of question tag is used the most overall and what type men and women use the most. This goal is reached by analysing all the collected sentences based on definitions provided by Holmes (1995) and Axelsson (2011). Holmes (1995) distinguishes several types of question tags. Those found in the collected sentences are 'epistemic modal,' 'facilitative,' 'softening,' and 'challenging.' The 'Rhetorical' question tag is based on Axelsson (2011). In the analysis, this goal is referred to as 'research question number 2.'

1.2 Hypotheses

According to the established goals for this thesis, hypotheses were constructed based on intuition and the literature researched before conducting the research.

The hypotheses for this thesis are:

H1: Women in the reality TV show use question tags more frequently than men.

H2: The most used question tag type overall in the reality TV show is 'facilitative'.

H3: The most used question tag type by men in the reality TV show is 'challenging'.

H4: The most used question tag type by women in the reality TV show is 'facilitative'.

All of the hypotheses above were tested and either confirmed or disconfirmed. Hypothesis 1 was disconfirmed. Men in 'Too Hot to Handle' with their 95 uses used question tags in their

speech more compared to women, who used question tags 19 times. Hypothesis 2 was disconfirmed; the predicted 'facilitative' type was the second most used overall, and the most used type was 'rhetorical.' Hypothesis 3 was disconfirmed; the most question tag type used by men in 'Too Hot to Handle' was 'rhetorical.' Hypothesis 4 was confirmed; the 'facilitative' tag was used the most by women.

2   BACKGROUND

In this chapter, the problem concerning the research and goal of this thesis is identified, and previous studies and claims by other authors are mentioned. The connection between question tags and gender is explained.

2.1 Identification of the problem

Many studies and authors mentioned below and throughout the thesis claim and conclude that there are differences between a 'women's language' and a 'men's language', meaning differences in how women and men talk. The explanation for that is that it comes down to the problem of inequality between the genders and their position in society (Gordon 1997; Lakoff 1973; Eckert 2000). Several claims or research concerning question tags and tag questions suggest that women use these syntactic structures more than men; more information is in Section 2.3.

However, most of the research and experiments mentioned are from the late 20th century and it is known that language is in a constant process of change. In Subsection 4.2.2, Lakoff (1973) mentions that women are adapting to men's language because they seek men's jobs. This means that the results might differ in the current time, being the early 21st century.

2.1.1   Terminology

Some terminology needs to be briefly explained to understand the points and research mentioned in the sections below.

2.1.1.1   Status

Status is a term related to 'social class' which is measured based on a person's lifestyle, life choices, wealth, or occupation (Meyerhoff 2006, 296).

2.1.1.2   Standard language and English

Standard language or Standard English is a set of locally shared norms. It is associated with education, authority, social status, and power that the speaker using it holds (Meyerhoff 2006, 15-16). Any variant that does not follow those norms is called 'non-standard.'

2.1.1.3   Negative concord

Negative concord, also known as 'double negatives,' is a "pattern of agreement between a negative constituent early on in a sentence and any indefinites that follow it." It is stigmatised

in Standard English but widely used in non-standard variants (Meyerhoff 2006, 176). For an example see example (1).

2.1.1.4   Accent

Accent is a phonological difference in pronunciation, different accents are associated with different regions or educations (Meyerhoff 2006, 286).

2.1.1.5   Overt prestige

Overt prestige is a prestige variant that appears in the speech of speakers with higher status; it is used consciously and associated with being 'nicer' or 'better' (Meyerhoff 2006, 37; 293).

2.1.1.6   The [iŋ] and [in] variant

The -ing variable (*laughing, running*) has two variants, those being the velar nasal variant [iŋ], which is in all varieties of English considered to be 'better' and standard, and the alveolar variant [in] (Meyerhoff 2006, 161-162).

2.2 What has been said about women's and men's language

Cheshire (2003), while talking about sex and gender in variationist research, mentions theories and claims of different authors. Cheshire (2003) mentions Fasold's (1990) suggestion that women use standard variants to make them sound less local, allowing them to have a voice to protest against their inferior position to men. Cheshire (2003) also refers to Gordon's (1997, 47-63) contributions with experimental evidence saying that women avoid non-standard variants not to be associated with their social stereotype.

In her research, Gordon presented her 107 recipients with 3 different women with different accents and clothing styles and asked several questions about them in her questionnaire. The questions were, for example, what the respondents thought about their sense of humour or what career they would pick for the girl. "The results of this research project show clearly that, when given a choice of three clothing styles and three different New Zealand accents, the clothes and accent most likely to be associated with lower-class women elicit a depressing stereotype." The woman representing the lower-class was considered by the respondents the least intelligent, the least humorous, not friendly and "her future occupation included unemployed, single parent, and prostitute." (Gordon 1997, 60)

Meyerhoff (2006, 207-8) talks about a study by Trudgill (1972) that was done to find out whether men or women use standard language more. The results show that women do, and one of the interpretations of why that happens is that women are more sensitive to standard and nonstandard language. Meyerhoff (2006, 208) mentions Trudgill's (1972) point that "men are evaluated more on what they do and women on how they appear." Based on that he suggests that this might be the reason why women are more careful about stylistic markers in their speech.

Trudgill (1972, 179-195), in his research, looked for differences between men and women when using the (-*ing*) variable, which refers to the pronunciation of the suffix -*ing* (*walking, laughing*). Trudgill (1972, 180) claims the pronunciation variable [iŋ] occurs in a prestige accent.
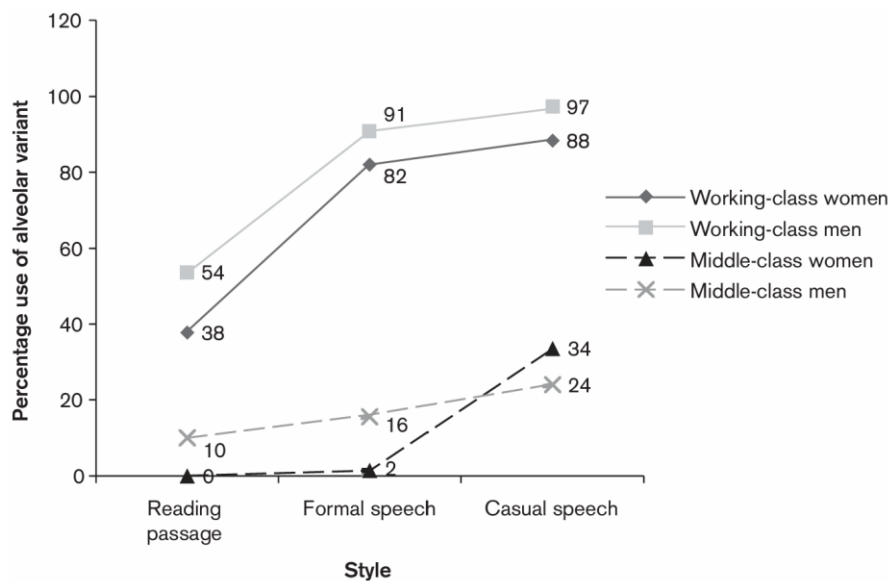
Figure 1: Men's and women's use of the alveolar variant [in] in three speech styles and two socioeconomic classes in Norwich, England (Trudgill 1972 in Meyerhoff 2006, 208)

As can be seen in Figure 1, Trudgill (1972) analysed the variant in different contextual styles (Reading passage, Formal speech, Casual speech) and different groups of participants based on classes. The contextual styles are irrelevant to this thesis; see more in Trudgill (1972, 179-195). The figure shows the distribution of the alveolar variant [in]. "The data for working-class speakers show that in all three speech styles, women use more of the [iŋ]

variant, and men use more of the [in] variant." (Meyerhoff 2006, 208) The conclusion of this research is that women used, as Trudgill suggests, the prestigious variant [iŋ] more than men.

Eckert (2000) mentioned in Meyerhoff (2006, 209), adds that women pay more attention overall to symbolic resources such as their fashion of choice, make-up, or speech to establish their position in society.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 253-261), in a Chapter called "Girlie girls and manly men," talk about what is expected from women and men. The ideal feminine woman is petite, graceful, smells of flowers, speaks politely, and has prestige variety. She is not suited for hard work or dirt. She should be a part of polite company, meaning not using swear words, negative concord, or 'heavy accents' (by 'heavy accent' is meant non-standard English) (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 254).

The ideal masculine man should have some physical size to him, be strong, be made for hard work and dirt, and be tough and rough. While women should be polite company and prestigious or aristocracy, the stereotypical man is working class (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 254).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 254) point out, "If we think of canonical femininity and masculinity as opposite poles in the gender binary, it's clear that we can't talk about gender without also talking about class."

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 255) point to Wolfram's (1969) study that showed that women in the socioeconomic hierarchy use standard language more than men. Gordon (1997, 51), mentioned in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 255), adds that one of the reasons why women use language variants associated with prestigious classes is that they fear being seen as sexually loose or not respectful.

While discussing standard and non-standard language, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 259-261) mention a study in Detroit suburbs (Eckert 1989) that focused on the differences between two groups in Belten High. The two groups observed were so-called 'jocks' and 'burnouts.' Jocks and burnouts have different territories, fashion styles, hairstyles, views on substance use, and more.

Jocks hung out in the cafeteria and wore preppy clothes, the jock boys and some of the girls had short hair, and other girls had long "feathered" hair. Jock girls wore pastel make-up, and jocks overall participated in antismoking activities (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 259).

Burnouts were the opposite. They hung out in smoking areas and wore dark clothes and concert T-shirts; both boys and girls had long, straight hair. The girls wore dark make-up and burnouts generally bragged about smoking (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 259).

The burnout girls further separated themselves into two groups. The so-called "normal burnouts" and "the biggest burnouts," who are referred to as "burned-out burnouts." The difference was that "burned-out burnouts" were wilder than "normal burnouts," meaning they would get arrested for drug use and more (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 260).

However, what was found in the study, was that there was also a difference in standard and non-standard language use between jocks and burnouts. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 294-5) say that using nonstandard language at school does not only mean that one is perceived as uneducated but also as rebellious. The data from Belten High suggests that rebellious girls use nonstandard language more than girls who are not rebels and use nonstandard grammar as much as rebellious boys. By 'rebels' is meant burnouts.

The jocks and burnouts also come from different socioeconomic backgrounds and aim at different goals in life. "The jocks and the burnouts constitute middle-class and working-class cultures within the adolescent context, and their practices bring into stark contrast values about friendship, institutional engagement, hierarchy, and the local area." (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 276)

The difference in their educational orientation is reflected in standard and non-standard language. Jocks use standard grammar, and burnouts use forms of non-standard grammar such as negative concord, shown in an example (1) from Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 276).

(1) *I didn't do nothing.*

Table 1: Percent negative concord among jocks, burnouts, and burned-out burnout girls
(Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 295)

jock girls	jock boys	burned-out burnout girls	other burnout girls	burnout boys
2	19	50	40	45

Table 1 shows the percentage of negative concord usage in observed groups. The highest percentages were found in burned-out burnout girls, other burnout girls, and burnout boys, where the percentages surpass 40% while jock girls and boys do not go over 19%.

In this section, some of the research focusing on how different women and men speak is discussed and shown, the following section focuses on research done on gender differences with question tag usage.

2.3 Connection between question tags and gender

Haque and Wong (2003, 42) review major literature and authors concerning tag questions. The research on language connected to gender started in the mid-1970s. According to Haque and Wong, the most influential book of that time was Lakoff's *Language and Women's Place* (1975), which initially started as a journal article (1973). Even though her book received criticism from linguists for the lack of empirical evidence, which she had admitted, it was her book that started the studies on this topic. (Haque and Wong 2003, 42) For more information on the criticism of Lakoff, see Dubois and Crouch (1975).

Haque and Wong (2003, 43-47) mention several researchers and their conclusions from gathered empirical data. The conclusions, however, were not unanimous; some said that women use more question tags, some that the frequency is equal, and some that it is men who use question tags more often.

Dong (2014) claims that according to Lakoff (1975), question tags are not found in men's daily conversations; men would instead use declarative sentences. What is meant by that is shown in example (2) from the collected sentences, showing a question tag, and an altered example (3), showing a declarative sentence.

(2) *Beautiful yacht, isn't it?*

(3) *This is a beautiful yacht.*

Lakoff (1975) believes that tag questions make the speaker look more modest and that it is a way to avoid mistakes and invite the addressee to express their own opinion to avoid conflict. Using a question tag means that the speaker may be uncertain and wishes to receive an affirmation from the other party. So, women use question tags (2) to express their uncertainty and interest in the opinions of others. On the other hand, men are more certain of their views, meaning they would use a declarative sentence (3) (Dong 2014, 95).

Siegler and Siegler (1976) in Coates (2004, 90) did an experiment where 16 sentences were presented to students, and they were supposed to assign the gender of the speaker to each sentence. Four of the 16 sentences were tag questions, and the rest were declarative. The results of this research support Lakoff's claims since the sentences with question tags were most often marked as spoken by a woman while the declarative sentences were by a man. The results were statistically significant.

Later on, Holmes (1984) tried to analyse the frequency of use of question tags not solely based on gender but also on the type of question tags. Holmes divided question tags into two groups: speaker-oriented (they ask the addressee to confirm the speaker's proposition, in the table marked under 'modal meaning') and addressee-oriented (they express the speaker's attitude to the addressee, marked under 'affective meaning'). 'Modal' and 'affective' question tags are discussed in Subsections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2. The results of this study showed that women used slightly more question tags than men; however, the percentages when dividing the results into particular types of question tags show some differences (Table 2) (Haque and Wong 2003, 44).

Table 2: Distribution of tag questions according to speaker's gender and function of tag in discourse based on Holmes 1984, 54 (Coates 2004, 91)

Type of meaning	No. of tag questions	
	Female	Male
Modal meaning		
Expressing uncertainty	18 (35%)	24 (61%)
Affective meaning		
Facilitative	30 (59%)	10 (25%)
Softening	3 (6%)	5 (13%)
Total	51	39

Coates (2004) also comments on Holmes's (1984) findings. The difference in the times women used question tags is not great but it is there. However, what is according to Coates (2004), important to notice, are the percentages in facilitative and modal tags. Women used facilitative tags in 59% of cases and men in 25% of cases, while 61% of men used the modal tag, which expresses uncertainty compared to 35% of women who used the modal tag. 'Facilitators' (Holmes uses this term to describe speakers who ensure smooth interactions, such as interviewers on TV or radio, teachers, and hosts) are more likely to use tags than 'non-facilitators'. Compared to men, women are more likely to use tags when acting as facilitators (Coates 2004, 92).

A study by Cameron, McAlinden, and O'Leary (1989) supports Holmes's (1984) findings. Their study focused on differences in question tag usage in 'asymmetrical' and 'symmetrical' discourse. In asymmetrical discourse (speakers are not equal in status), it was found that powerless speakers never used affective (facilitative, softening) tags, (see Table 3). This would mean that affective tags are connected with powerful speakers, which challenges Lakoff's (1975) claim that question tag usage makes the speaker weak (Coates 2004, 92).

Table 3: Tag questions in unequal encounters based on Cameron, McAlinden and O'Leary 1989, 89 (Coates 2004, 92)

	Women		Men	
	Powerful	Powerless	Powerful	Powerless
Modal	3 (5%)	9 (15%)	10 (18%)	16 (29%)
Affective Facilitative	43 (70%)	0 –	25 (45%)	0 –
Softeners	6 (10%)	0 –	4 (7%)	0 –
Total		61		55

An example of studies that found that the use of question tags was more or less the same in both women and men is Hartman (1976) in Smith (1985, 153), mentioned in Haque and Wong (2003, 43). Hartman recorded speech in academic and non-academic contexts (an office meeting, women's discussion group, and graduate seminars), and from all the recordings, only 20 sentences using question tags were found. They were produced roughly equally by men and women. Baumann (1976) in Thorne et al. (1983, 13) mentioned in Haque and Wong (2003, 43) found in her research that in a classroom setting, men and women used question tags almost equally as well (Haque and Wong 2003, 43).

Finally, an example of a study where men used question tags more is Crouch and Dubois (1975) in Smith (1985, 152) mentioned in Haque and Wong (2003, 43). Crouch and Dubois (1975) performed a study in a small university academic workshop where they recorded a total of 33 sentences with a question tag. The results were that none of those 33 sentences were spoken by women even though the number of men and women participants was roughly equal.

The studies might have different results because the number of men and women was not equal or the participants had different positions in society, which would result in power inequality affecting their answers (Haque and Wong 2003, 44).

Meyerhoff (2006, 224) mentions that some distributional patterns have been found in studies that focused on the use of tag questions in spontaneous use. According to Meyerhoff, studies say they are not equally distributed across the speech community. For example, teachers are

known to use question tags often because they are expected to ask questions, be attentive, and gather feedback from students.

Meyerhoff (2006, 224) mentions research that collected data from a corpus concentrated on the distribution of question tags in the spontaneous speech of men and women. The conclusion of this research says that if 'challenging' (3.3.2.3) and 'aggressive' (3.3.5) tags are excluded, meaning the supportive tags ('facilitative' and 'softening' tags explained in 3.3.2.1; 3.3.2.2) are analysed, women use question tags more frequently.

Meyerhoff (2006, 224) noted that based on this research, researchers suggested that the study resulted that way because "women are more uncertain and seek validation of their opinions or clarification of facts more often than men do." However, this does not apply since there are many more types of question tags that serve several different social and linguistic functions (Meyerhoff 2006, 224).

In most English-speaking communities there are certain expectations about how women should behave. They are expected to be attentive and interested in contributions from others in daily conversations. Men use question tags as well, but the frequencies and context differ from women, meaning they do not use them because it is expected that a successful or good man would (Meyerhoff 2006, 224-5).

3   TAG QUESTIONS

3.1 Definition

In English, several types of question tags can be found, which are discussed in Section 3.3 below; however, first, definitions of a tag question and a question tag are needed. The term tag question is used to describe the combination of an 'anchor' and a 'tag' (Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 284). An anchor and a tag are explained in one of the examples from the collected sentences (4).

   (4) *She <u>was</u> just there, <u>wasn't</u> she?*

Tag questions consist of two types of clauses; in example (4), those are a declarative clause and an interrogative clause. The declarative clause is known as the anchor and the interrogative clause as the tag (Reese and Asher 2019, 449). Later, in Section 3.2, it is mentioned that there are other types of anchor clauses as well.

The tag consists of a subject pronoun and an auxiliary or modal verb that shares the person, number, and tense of the anchor verb. The subject pronoun in the tag and the subject of the anchor also share certain features, those being the person, number, and gender (Reese and Asher 2019, 449).

This can again be shown in the example (4). Verbs in both clauses are in the third person singular and the past tense. Subjects in both clauses share third-person singular and feminine gender.

In case the anchor is not expressed by an auxiliary (*be, do, have*) or a modal auxiliary (*should, could, would*) verb (meaning that lexical verbs are left, *look, laugh, run*), a form of *do* takes place (Reese and Asher 2019, 449). Brinton and Brinton (2010) refer to the form of *do* as 'do-support' and add that it behaves like the auxiliary but serves only as a "tense carrier" since it lacks lexical meaning (Brinton and Brinton 2010, 234). This is shown in example (5) from the collected sentences.

   (5) *You <u>look</u> alright, <u>don't</u> you?*

The difference between a "normal" question and a tag question should also be mentioned. When forming a question, 'subject-auxiliary inversion' happens. That means that the position of the subject and the first auxiliary verb switch, leaving the auxiliary and its tense in front of the subject (*It is.* →*Is it?*) (Brinton and Brinton 2010, 232).

However, in tag questions, the tense and auxiliary are "copied rather than reordered." And the subject with its features is duplicated into a pronoun, rather than moved (Brinton and Brinton 2010, 237).

3.2 Types of anchor clauses

The anchor does not always have to be declarative, as already mentioned above, but can appear as imperative and interrogative. This is shown in the examples provided by the authors. The examples were taken by Kimps, Davidse, and Cornillie (2014) from WordbanksOnline (WB) and the Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT) (Kimps, Davidse and Cornillie 2014, 65).

Declarative examples from Kimps, Davidse, and Cornillie (2014, 65):

    (6) *That's not very good, is it.* (COLT)

    (7) *Ah, you're making an assumption there, are you.* (WB)

Imperative example from Kimps, Davidse, and Cornillie (2014, 65):

    (8) *Go a bit slower will you.* (COLT)

Interrogative examples from Kimps, Davidse, and Cornillie (2014, 65):

    (9) *Like, is it cos I'm black, isn't it.* (COLT)

In examples (6) and (7), the anchor clause is in a declarative form *that is not* or *you are making*, example (8) shows an imperative form *go* which if the tag *will you* was deleted would be a sentence serving as a command (*Go a bit slower.*), lastly, example (9) has *is it* in the anchor clause, which is a syntactic structure used in questions ('subject-auxiliary inversion'), making the anchor interrogative.

3.3 Use and function

Tag questions are known for serving various functions in communication. Those will be explained in the subsections below.

Tottie and Hoffman (2006, 297) mention the research of Holmes (1995) and that she divides tags into two main categories. Those being 'epistemic modal' (also referred to as 'modal') and 'affective'. The affective category has three subtypes: 'facilitative,' 'softening,' and 'challenging.'

Another author that has divided types of tags mentioned by Tottie and Hoffman (2006, 298) is Algeo (1990) that divides tags into 'confirmatory,' 'informational,' 'punctuational,' 'peremptory,' and 'aggressive.'

In the subsections below, all the mentioned types are defined.

3.3.1   Epistemic modal tags

Epistemic modal tags are one of the major categories and are used when a speaker wants to express genuine uncertainty about their statement rather than expressing politeness. This is shown in an example from the collected sentences (10). Epistemic modal tags have rising intonation, as explained in 3.4.2 (Holmes 1995, 80 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 298). Algeo (1990, 445) in Tottie and Hoffman (2006, 298) calls this type of question tag 'informational.' According to him, the speaker has an idea about the statement made in the anchor clause but seeks information without presuming the answer.

(10) *We didn't lose money last night, did we?*

The speaker is not certain whether any rules that would result in a money loss were broken and asks the rest of the group.

3.3.2   Affective tags

Affective tags are the second major category and differ from epistemic modal tags by usually having a falling intonation. Affective tags have, according to Holmes, three following subtypes (Holmes 1995, 79 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 297-8).

3.3.2.1 Facilitative tags

Facilitative tags are hedges that serve the purpose of politeness and help invite other parties into the conversation and contribute to the ongoing discourse. This is shown in an example (11) from the collected sentences (Holmes 1995, 81 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 298). Algeo (1990, 445-46) in Tottie and Hoffman (2006, 298-9) calls this question tag type 'confirmatory.' According to Algeo, confirmatory tags are supposed to draw the addressee into conversation and ask for confirmation of the statement made by the speaker.

(11) *It's tough though, isn't it?*

A contestant expresses his feelings about a challenge he must undergo to other members, seeking confirmation.

3.3.2.2 Softening tags

Softening tags are often used when commenting on something negative. It is a negative politeness device used to tone down negative utterances such as criticism (Holmes 1995, 81 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 298). This is shown in an example from the collected sentences (12).

(12) *Not the best, is it?*

Money has been deducted from the show's prize fund, and the contestant is expressing his disapproval.

3.3.2.3 Challenging tags

Challenging tags are used during confrontations to pressure a reply from the addressee or to "aggressively boost the force of a negative speech act." (Holmes 1995, 80 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 298) This is shown in an example from the collected sentences (13).

(13) *Creed and Sophie, you guys got something to say, don't you?*

There was a breach of the rules after a warning and a member of the show is challenging the guilty contestants to confess.

3.3.3 Punctuational tags

Punctuational tags are used to highlight the point the speaker is making in the first clause, creating an emphasis on the point or a vocal exclamation mark (Algeo 1990, 446 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 299).

3.3.4 Peremptory tags

Peremptory tags are known for following statements of universal truths that cannot be disagreed with. The speaker does not expect an answer from the addressee and often uses it to end the conversation or shut down the addressee (Algeo 1990, 447-48 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 299).

3.3.5 Aggressive tags

The aggressive tag is in a way similar to the peremptory tag but differs in the fact that it does not follow an obvious statement or universal truth but something that the addressee has no chance to know. When the speaker uses it and implies that the addressee should have known that piece of information, it is considered as provocative (Algeo 1990, 447 in Tottie and Hoffman 2006, 299).

3.3.6 Rhetorical use

Kimps, Davidse, and Cornillie (2014, 68) use as a reference Axelsson (2011, 136), who disagrees with the idea that tag questions containing a declarative clause always serve as questions. Some of them do, but she claims that sometimes tag questions are used rhetorically, meaning that the speaker does not expect any kind of an answer to the sentence spoken. This is shown in an example from the collected sentences (14).

> (14) *This Prosecco isn't going to drink itself, is it?*

The speaker was not expecting an answer to the question but rather suggested opening the bottle.

3.4 Features of tag questions

3.4.1 Falling intonation

Falling intonation is used when the speaker is certain of the sentence and seeks confirmation and acknowledgement from the other party in the conversation. It serves as a statement rather than a question (Dehé and Braun 2012, 132).

3.4.2   Rising intonation

Dehé and Braun (2012, 132) claim that rising intonation is used in interrogative clauses and serves a hedging function. It expresses uncertainty or doubt, and it can also be used to ask for confirmation of the said sentence.

3.4.3   Polarity

Two kinds of polarity can be found in tag questions. Those being 'reversed' and 'constant' (Kimps, Davidse and Cornillie 2014, 65).

Examples of reversed polarity from the collected sentences:

   (15) *It's like having little kids, <u>isn't</u> it?*   Positive-Negative

   (16) *This Prosecco <u>isn't</u> going to drink itself, <u>is</u> it?*   Negative-Positive

In example (15), it can be observed that in the first declarative clause, the verb *be* is positive, followed by the second interrogative clause in which the verb *be* is found to be negative. The opposite is happening in the example (16). Examples of constant polarity from the collected sentences:

   (17) *You<u>'ve got</u> me wrapped around your finger, <u>do</u> you?*   Constant Positive

   (18) *Getting into that bed, <u>are</u> we?*   Constant Positive

Example (17) shows the verb in the first declarative clause being positive, followed by another positive verb in the second interrogatory clause, making it 'constant positive.'

The same phenomenon happens in example (18), where both verbs are positive. It also shows an ellipsis, meaning the anchor verb is missing in the first clause. The sentence would be *'We are getting into that bed, are we?'*

If sentences (17) and (18) were inverted, they would be 'constant negative' as shown in (19) and (20).

   (19) *You <u>haven't got</u> me wrapped around your finger, <u>don't</u> you?* Constant Negative

   (20) *Not getting into that bed, <u>aren't</u> we?*   Constant Negative

Kimps, Davidse, and Cornillie (2014, 72) mention Quirk et al. (1985, 809) in a connection that either a negative or a positive answer is expected based on the polarity of the tag question. This can be observed in examples (15) and (16). Example (15) has a Positive-Negative polarity, meaning it seeks a positive answer, and example (16) has a Negative-Positive Polarity, meaning it expects to be answered negatively.

3.5 Different types of question tags

3.5.1 Canonical question tags

Canonical tag questions are those that have been discussed and described so far. Meaning, they contain an anchor and a tag which changes based on the anchor clause. They use the same or a substitute verb and share a verb, person, number, or tense, as shown in example (4) (Westlund 2013, 2).

3.5.2 Invariant question tags

Invariant tags differ from canonical tags by the fact that they do not correspond to the anchor sentence but are the same no matter the verb, person, number, or tense. As invariant tags are considered, for example, *eh, okay, you know, right,* and the one that is discussed and analysed in this thesis, *innit* (Westlund 2013, 2).

3.5.3 Innit?

Westlund (2013, 5) describes *innit* as "an abbreviation of the canonical tag *isn't it*" or a "non-standard *ain't it*" based on Andersen's (1998, 4) suggestions. *Innit* was originally a canonical tag but has become an invariant used by speakers both canonically and invariantly. Its use dominates in young Londoners (Westlund 2013, 5).

According to Andersen (2001, 127-134) in Westlund (2013, 5), *innit* has three functions: 'ironical' tags, 'imagination-appealing' tags, and 'non-turn-yielding' tags.

Ironical tags follow an ironic statement, and their function is to have the interlocutor agree with the statement. This is shown in example (21) from the collected sentences. This is also an example of *innit* used canonically.

   (21) *That's easy to say, <u>innit</u>?*

Imagination-appealing tags serve the function of helping the interlocutor imagine the situation described. Westlund shows this in an example (22) from Andersen (2001, 129). This is also an example of *innit* used invariantly.

(22) *Sam and Fern weren't there innit? I was in the bedroom on my own.*

Non-turn-yielding tags are used in the middle of the sentence and discredit an answer the interlocuter could give. This is shown in example (23) from the collected sentences.

(23) *I think the workshop's made her a bit too big for her boots, <u>innit</u>, but I'm not bothered by her.*

4   GENDER AND LANGUAGE

In this chapter, differences connected to language and gender are described and mentioned. There are several sections talking about and explaining specific things that differ in so-called 'women's' and 'men's speech,' provided with examples. Some of those differences are later commented on in the Discussion and Conclusion.

4.1 Men vs women

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 158) list linguistic devices that, according to Lakoff (1975), women use to soften and tone down their opinions. Apart from tag questions and rising intonation (mentioned in Chapter 3), usage of hedges like *kinda* and *probably* is found in women's speech, along with boosters and amplifiers like *so* and *really,* indirect speech, diminutives like *panties,* politeness, or euphemisms (4.1.2).

Cheshire (2003) mentions Fought (1999, 19-20), who explains that men are socially pressured to be tough rather than good as women and that those pressures are visible, for example, in Latino communities. These qualities are found in gang members, so it is hard for a man to appear linguistically tough while avoiding being associated with gangs.

The subsections below discuss selected differences in how women and men speak.

4.1.1   Topic choices

Karlsson (2007), in her master's thesis, performs a survey where girls and boys of different ages are supposed to mark whether a given example line (A or B) is uttered by a man or a woman. Two lines included the phrase "Sport Magazine." These are some of the answers that Karlsson received from her respondents:

Female age 14: "I think it was simple to decide the characters. It feels so typical for a boy to say 'mhm' and talk about sports. And girls does (sic) care a lot and I think they talk in a more polite way." (Karlsson 2007, 30)

Female age 17: "B was into his Sport Magazine. So B is a man!" (Karlsson 2007, 30)

Female age 14: "I swear myself and I like sports so it was a bit hard. I mean, a girl can also read sport magazine and still be like a girl (nice)." (Karlsson 2007, 29)

In her summary of the comments, Karlsson says that the results show that it is typical for men to give minimal responses, use swear words, and be interested in sports. One of her male age 17 respondents comments that "It is not about the words. It's about the sentences and emotions. Men don't show emotions." (Karlsson 2007, 32)

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 116) mention different reports, focusing on how each gender bonds. She refers to Aries (1976, 13), who did some experiments on the topic of differences between genders. One of the results found is that men were telling each other dramatised stories, jumping from one to another, and bonding because of the stories and laughter they shared. Women were not jumping between different topics but discussed one for a half hour or more. Because of staying on the topic for a longer time, more feelings were revealed. They grew closer because of the intimacy of their talk.

Another observation was that men in the all-male groups did not get intimate and close with each other when talking. They did not talk about their feelings or relationships. This differed in the all-female group. They shared much information about themselves, their homes, feelings, and relationships (Aries 1976, 12).

Aries and Johnson (1983, 1185-1196) in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 116-117) mention that "focusing on difference can have the effect of erasing similarities." In a study that involved adult women and men, they asked them to reveal what topics they were discussing with their best friend of the same gender.

The study concluded that men and women share topics such as religion, morals, reminiscences, family activities, personal finances, friendship, social and political issues, secrets about the past, community and civic affairs, and work. The differences were found in topics that are often stereotyped. Women discussed more than men personal problems, doubts, fears, family problems, and intimate relationships. Men discussed sports more than women (see Table 4) (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 116-117).

Table 4: Relative frequency of conversational topics by sex of the friends (Percent) (Aries and Johnson 1983, 1188)

Topic[a]	Female-female (*n* = 74)			Male-male (*n* = 62)		
	Frequently	Infrequently	Never	Frequently	Infrequently	Never
Personal problems[d]	45	50	5	14	73	13
Doubts and fears[d]	46	49	5	16	60	24
Daily activities[c]	78	18	4	50	45	5
Family problems[d]	47	51	1	26	56	18
Intimate relationships[b]	26	45	30	8	44	48
Hobbies/shared activities[b]	60	39	1	45	45	10
Religion and morals	38	53	10	24	61	14
Reminiscences	49	50	1	37	58	5
Family activities	78	22	0	68	32	0
Personal Finances	18	57	26	10	63	27
Sex/sexual concerns	10	50	41	5	50	45
Friendship itself	26	54	20	21	50	29
Social/political issues	46	45	10	45	52	3
Secrets about past	7	46	47	7	41	52
Community/civic affairs	52	45	3	53	44	3
Work	51	45	4	56	42	2
Sports[d]	18	42	41	45	40	14

[a]Topics are arranged according to the difference between males and females in frequency of discussion, from more frequent discussion by females to more frequent discussion by males.
[b]$p < .05$.
[c]$p < .01$.
[d]$p < .001$.

Aries and Johnson (1983, 1188) find that 52% out of 62 men never talk about secrets about the past, 48% of men never talk about intimate relationships, and 45% never talk about sex/sexual concerns. When it comes to women, 47% out of 74 women never talk about secrets about past, and 41% of women never talk about sex and sexual concerns, the same as men. The third highest number in women's 'never' section is that 41% of 74 women never talk about sports while 45% of men talk about sports frequently.

4.1.2   Lexical choices

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 85-6) mention Phillips's (1989-2000) manual with instructions for male-to-female transgender people on how to talk like women. According to Phillips, some words are more feminine or masculine. The reason for this may be the power that both genders hold.

Men *want* something while women *would like* something. The manual explains that when someone wants something, it means that something is lacking, and the need must be fulfilled, and it is the "aggressive part of the power equation." Women, on the other hand, when saying they would like something, refer rather to a preference. This is the "submissive side of the power equation." (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 86)

This is shown in examples in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 86) from the manual in a situation where men (24) and women (25) would order in different manners in a fast-food restaurant.

(24) *I want a Big Mac.*
(25) *I'd like a salad, please.*

If men and women are compared, women use words such as "My dear" or "Oh God" since they try to avoid curse words, while men freely use words like "Shit" or "Darn." The supposed reason is that women prefer to use euphemistic words while talking (Dong 2014, 95).

Lakoff (1973, 50) mentions a hypothetical experiment that might be presented to native speakers of standard American English, in which two sentences would be presented and one would have to say which one has been said by a man and which one by a woman. Lakoff claims that it is safe to predict that people would assume that (26) has been spoken by a woman and (27) by a man (Lakoff 1973, 50).

(26) *Oh dear, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator again.*
(27) *Shit, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator again.*

As mentioned in 2.3, Haque and Wong (2003, 42) mention criticism of Lakoff for lack of empirical evidence in her claims. These claims are exemplary, as the experiment is only hypothetical.

In 2007, Karlsson, in her master's thesis "Gender-related Differences in Language Use," performed a survey on language differences between men and women. She refers to Lakoff's (1975) claim that "everybody without exception knew that the word 'Shit' is part of male language." Her survey, however, shows that 70% of females and 72.5% of males recognise this phrase as a part of male language, while Lakoff claims that the percentage should be 100%. "Nevertheless, even though the results did not reach 100% as Lakoff stated, swearing appears to be connected to male language." (Karlsson 2007, 36)

In her article, Lakoff (1973) mentions the fact that sentences like (27) are starting to be used even by "self-respecting women" and calls it a "recent development." This article was written in 1973, meaning 51 years ago. Lakoff claims that so-called 'men's language' is getting adopted and used by women while 'women's language' is not getting the same treatment by men, except for homosexuals. The reason for this happening is that women seek jobs that are considered 'men's jobs' while men have no desire for 'women's jobs.' The language and other non-linguistic behaviour of the group that is favoured and holds certain power in society is getting adopted by the other group and not vice versa (Lakoff 1973, 50).

Cheshire (200) mentions Labov's (1990) theory that the reason why men do not talk the same way as women is that men are aware that a variant of speech is used by women, so they avoid using it.

4.1.3   Usage of Adjectives

As another example of lexical choices in women, Lakoff (1973, 49-50) mentions the usage of adjectives. She suggests imagining a situation where a woman and a man both look at a wall of a pinkish purple colour. An example of what the women may say is provided (Lakoff 1973, 49).

(28) *The wall in mauve.*

Lakoff (1973, 49) claims that a woman speaking this sentence would not get any unusual reaction, but if a man were to speak (28), the conclusion would be that he is mocking the woman or that he is an interior decorator or a homosexual.

Lakoff (1973, 49) also claims that women name colours more precisely than men, and words like *beige, ecru, aquamarine*, and *lavender* are found in their actively used vocabulary, while in men's vocabulary, those are absent. According to Lakoff, the reason for this is that men find things like colours not important topics and find it trivial, whether a colour is lavender or mauve. "Men tend to relegate to women things that are not of concern to them, or do not involve their egos." Meaning that women have no place in important decision-making or topics and, therefore, are left with non-important matters such as colour naming. This again reflects a woman's position and societal inequality (Lakoff 1973, 49).

In *Language and Gender* (2003, 240), Eckert and McConnell-Ginet refer to similar claims also made by Lakoff (1975) where she claims that women have a larger colour vocabulary than men and are mocked for it by men. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet mention that "color-blindness is, in fact, a sex-linked secondary trait, and there are indeed more colorblind men than women." Eckert and McConnell-Ginet compare the social significance of colour with home decoration, clothing and eating practices. Those are connected with class and gender and men mocking them is a way to be seen as "appropriately masculine." As colours are considered feminine, sport vocabulary and discourse are considered masculine. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet give a 'true story' example of an 8-year-old girl having a basketball practice with her coach. "Melissa was busily dribbling down the floor when her (male) coach yelled encouragingly "go, Red." She stopped in her tracks to correct him. "We're not 'Red,' Coach, we're 'Maroon.'" Eckert and McConnell-Ginet end by pointing out that people of both genders manage to handle colour categorising as much as sports (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 240).

Lakoff (1973, 51) claims that adjectives have multiple meanings. Aside from their literal meaning, they can indicate approval and admiration. Some adjectives are considered gender-neutral and can be used by both men and women, while some adjectives are considered to be used mainly by women. Lakoff listed adjectives she considers "neutral:" *great, terrific, cool*, and *neat*, while adjectives that are used by women only are *adorable, charming, sweet*, *lovely*, and *divine*.

Jespersen (1922) in Coates (2004, 12) claims that women use certain adjectives such as *pretty* and *nice* more than men. Lakoff (1975) is also mentioned in connection with women using so-called 'empty' adjectives like *divine, charming*, and *cute*, as mentioned above by Lakoff (1973, 51).

The claims about naming colours and adjectives used by women are again unsupported, without any empirical evidence. Coates (2004, 13) points out that "there are many parallels between Lakoff's and Jespersen's work, which is surprising in view of the fact that feminists welcomed Lakoff's book but have been very critical of Jespersen's."

4.1.4 Usage of correct grammar

In Section 2.2 it has already been mentioned that women use the standard language more in order to secure a social position in the world (Cheshire 2003).

Dong (2014, 95), referring to Lakoff (1975) uses more examples to show this.

(29) *Men: "He walks too quick."*
(30) *Men: "I known that."*
(31) *Women: "He walks too quickly."*
(32) *Women: "I have known that."*

Dong (2014, 95) claims that women use standard grammar, pronunciation, standard language, and correct syntactic structures (31), (32) in order to show off their education and secure their positions in society.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) support this claim by talking about research done by Wolfram in 1969. Wolfram compared the speech of women and men in four different socioeconomic positions and found a "regular stratification of grammatical usage according to class; the higher the socioeconomic status, the fewer AAVE grammatical features." Wolfram also found that women used the AAVE (African-American Vernacular English) grammatical features less than men. To imagine what grammatical features women used less, Wolfram uses as examples the invariant *be* (*"he be singing in the street"*), absence of final /s/ on third singular verbs, and possessive and plural nouns (*"she run to school…, that's John dog"*) and zero copula (*"he bad"*) (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 293–4).

II. ANALYSIS

5 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to gather and analyse data containing tag questions and count the frequency of question tags and their types based on the gender of the speaker.

In Section 2.3, where research on question tags done by different authors is discussed, so-called 'facilitators' (Holmes 1984) and 'asymmetrical' and 'symmetrical' discourse (Cameron, McAlinden, and O'Leary 1989) are mentioned. Those are not a part of this research. This study equalises all the speakers, and there is no interest in the social hierarchy of the contestants. The contestants are roughly in the same life stage and age. As for the 'facilitators,' all the contestants find themselves in an artificially created situation (the retreat for the dating show 'Too Hot to Handle'), meaning that none of them play the role of a 'facilitator.'

5.1 Reality TV dating shows

In order to gather the data, an unscripted reality show has been selected. The reality show is called 'Too Hot to Handle' and focuses on conversations and making connections between women and men. There is an equal number of women and men in the show which makes the probability of question tag usage equal. In total, 5 seasons of the mentioned dating show have been analysed.

The reason why an unscripted reality TV show has been selected is that it provides spontaneous and natural speech since the speakers do not follow a script. The host's sentences are not counted since, as mentioned in 5.4, the host follows a script and has no freedom to create her own speech. The contestants of the show all react and talk naturally. This is also the reason why the data have not been gathered from, for example, a book. Books are edited, and all that is written is carefully thought about, while in the dating show, the contestants speak their minds right in the moment.

'Too Hot to Handle' is cut and edited into episodes but that results in missing scenes rather than edited speech. To summarise what 'Too Hot to Handle' is about, it is a dating show where the contestants do not know what they are getting into. The goal of the retreat is to help them form strong and meaningful emotional connections which comes with a set of certain rules. The contestants are observed by an AI called Lana and if the rules are broken,

the money from the prize fund is deducted. Their goal is to stick to the rules, form connections, and win the money.

The reason why the dating show specifically has been selected is that there is an equal number of men and women, as mentioned previously, and they all communicate with each other throughout the entirety of the show, except for scenes where they comment on the situations in a studio away from the rest of the contestants.

However, a dating show being selected also means that it is to be expected that the speakers talk about sex-related topics and use emotional language, as can be seen in the Appendix.

5.2 Gathering the data

For the first 4 seasons, the data were gathered from a transcript found online. All questions in the transcripts have been searched up and those containing question tags have been selected and recorded in the data collection with a note of the season and episode they belong in. The data were then confirmed by watching the parts of the show containing the selected sentences to confirm whether the transcript was correct and also to find out whether the speaker was a woman or a man. Each sentence in the Appendix has a note of whether it was spoken by a woman (W) or a man (M) and of the time mark when it appears in the episode. The time mark serves its own purpose and that is that it can be found again in the episode to gather information about the context of the spoken sentence. Finally, after analysing the data, the type of the question tag is noted for each sentence in the Appendix.

The last 5th season does not have an online transcript like the others, so it was necessary to watch the whole season and watch the show and subtitles in order to find questions containing a question tag.

There is another note added, and that is when *innit* is used. *Innit* is typical for British people, and it is used quite frequently. There is a note on whether the speaker using the invariant tag *innit* is British (UK) or any other nationality.

5.3 What is counted as a question tag

Throughout the show, a number of types of question tags were found. This thesis uses and analyses all of the types found, including the British invariant tag *innit*, except for the rest of the invariant tags, such as *right* or *eh*.

5.4 What parts of the shows are analysed

To analyse the data, the whole episodes of 'Too Hot to Handle' are used, except for the lines of the host Desiree, since those are unlike the rest of the show's scripted and prepared, and therefore unnatural. What else is not used are the parts that are replayed and repeated.

6   ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the data gathered from the empirical research are analysed and commented on. Figures and tables support the data to provide visual aid.

6.1 Analysis process

After collecting all the data with sentences containing question tags, the data was counted. Over 100 sentences were collected, more specifically 114. To find out which gender used more question tags, all the sentences with the M (men) and W (women) marks were summed up. The resulting numbers show the differences in the frequency of question tag usage between genders.

To analyse the sentences based on question tag types, each sentence had to be analysed separately. Each sentence was looked up again in the corresponding season and episode of the show and found in the episode using the time mark. The context of each spoken sentence containing a question tag was observed. The type was assigned based on the definitions of each type by Holmes (1995) in Chapter 3, Section 3.3, including the invariant tag *innit.*

In some cases, it was difficult to decide to which type the sentence falls; in these cases, a second opinion was asked, and based on that, the type was decided.

'Facilitative' tags are used when expressing one's own opinion and seeking confirmation (33) or are used as conversation starters (34).

   (33) *He's got that Hollywood vibe to him, doesn't he?*

A contestant voices her opinion about another contestant to her friend, and receives a confirmatory answer, "Yeah."

   (34) *You look all right, don't you?*

A contestant compliments his female interest with the intention to start a conversation.

'Epistemic modal' tags are used when expressing uncertainty (35) or when one has an idea about a statement but does not presume the answer (36).

(35) *This isn't heavy petting, is it?*

A contestant is uncertain about whether his behaviour is against the rules and asks his female interest to give him an answer.

(36) *You're jealous, aren't you?*

A contestant guesses how another member feels but does not presume the answer.

'Softening' tags are used when criticising something, their function is to tone the criticism down (37).

(37) *Not the best, is it?*

A contestant complains about the amount of money lost.

'Challenging' tags are used in confrontations or when the speaker wants to pressure an answer from the addressee (38).

(38) *It's you, isn't it?*

A contestant is pressuring another member to confess during a confrontation.

'Rhetorical' tags are used in tag questions to which an answer is not expected (39).

(39) *I didn't know what we were getting into, did I?*

A contestant comments on a situation in front of a camera in a studio while separated from the rest of the members and does not expect an answer from the cameraman.

6.1.1 Decision process

In this subsection, a few examples of the decision process of what type of question tags the sentence is, are shown. In order to decide which type to assign when debating between different types, the context was closely analysed, and a second opinion was asked.

(40) *It's like having little kids, isn't it?*

A contestant is complaining and criticising other contestants to his friend and receives confirmation "yeah" from his friend; it may seem like seeking confirmation on an opinion, which would be a 'facilitative' tag, but the speaker here was annoyed, and his goal was to criticise. Therefore, a 'softening' type was assigned (40).

(41) *I was gonna say, because, obviously, sad Matt going and that, but I took his bed, didn't I?*

A contestant comments on a situation that has happened, and he is talking to another contestant who knows what is going on. He does not seek confirmation; he refers to what happened to make further points, which means the question tag is not 'facilitative' but 'rhetorical' (41).

(42) *It's just sea, innit?*

In this situation, a contestant comments on the fact that there is no visible land on the horizon of the sea to his date. The speaker seems unsure and seeks information rather than expressing his opinion, which is why this is analysed as an 'epistemic modal' tag question and not 'facilitative' (42).

(43) *Oh, just naughty little... naughty little sausages, aren't we?*

Even though this sentence was spoken in the studio with a camera crew, the speaker was there with his female interest, seeking confirmation from her, which means the sentence is not 'rhetorical' but 'facilitative' (43).

(44) *You're here to teach us a lesson, aren't you?*

This sentence looks like it could be identified as 'facilitative,' but when observing the context, it is shown that a contestant is speaking to a turned-off AI. He is not expecting an answer, therefore, it was analysed as 'rhetorical' (44).

(45) *You haven't looked, have you?*

The speaker is being sarcastic and knows that the opposite of the sentence uttered is the truth, which rules out the 'epistemic modal' type. The speaker is trying to get the addressee to confess, which means it fits in the 'challenging' criteria.

6.2 Results

This section is divided into three subsections based on what research question is discussed. The third subsection talks about results that were found along the way but were not initially researched.

6.2.1 Research Question Number 1

Out of the 114 sentences, 95 sentences were produced by men and 19 by women. This means that from the collected data, 83.33% of tag questions were produced by men, and only 16.67% by women, as shown in Figure 2.
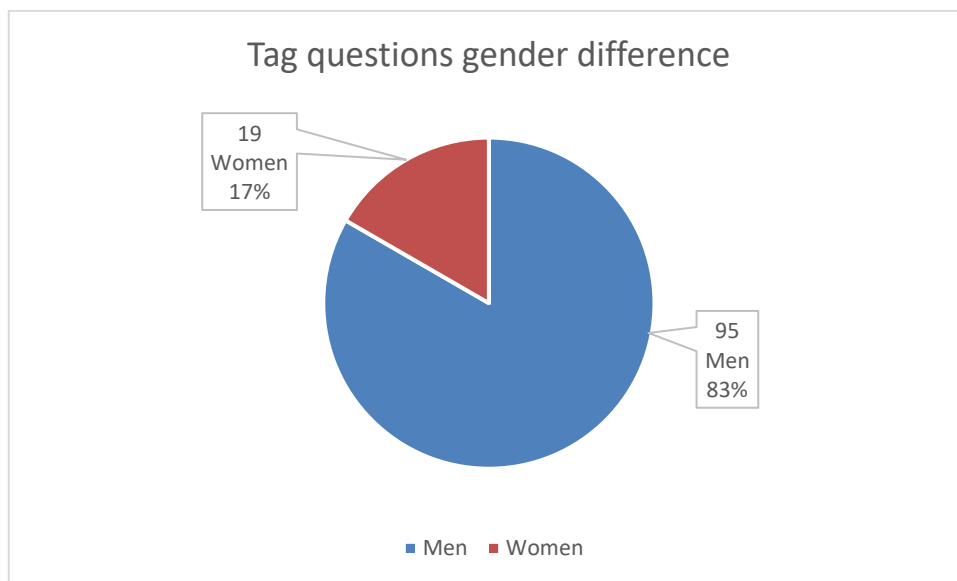
Figure 2: Tag questions gender difference

6.2.2 Research Question Number 2

After analysing the overall difference in the number of question tags between women and men, the data collected was further analysed to distinguish it into types. In total, 5 types were found: 'facilitative,' (epistemic) 'modal,' 'softening,' 'challenging,' and 'rhetorical.' After each sentence was analysed, it was counted how many times the type was spoken by a man and how many times by a woman. All of the numbers are available in Table 5 below. The 'epistemic modal' tag type is in Table 5, referred to as 'modal', the same as in the Appendix

at the end of the thesis. The percentage differences between genders are shown in the figures below.

Table 5: Collected question tags sorted by types

Type	Overall number	Men	Women
Facilitative	41	32	9
Challenging	9	6	3
Modal	9	7	2
Rhetorical	45	41	4
Softening	10	9	1
Total	114	95	19

Facilitative question tags were found in total 41 times out of the 114 sentences. Facilitative tags, therefore, make up 35.96% of all question tags, which is the second most used type after rhetorical question tags. Women used facilitative tags 9 times out of all 19 sentences they produced, meaning that facilitative tags were the most used type in women, making up 47.37%. Men used the facilitative tag 32 times out of their 95 sentences, making it 33.68%. Overall, 22% of the 41 facilitative tags found were produced by women and 78% by men. See Figures 3 and 4.
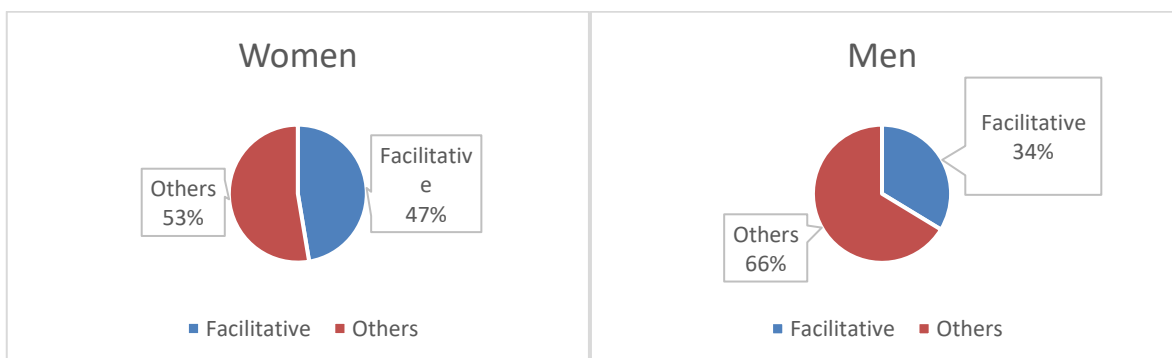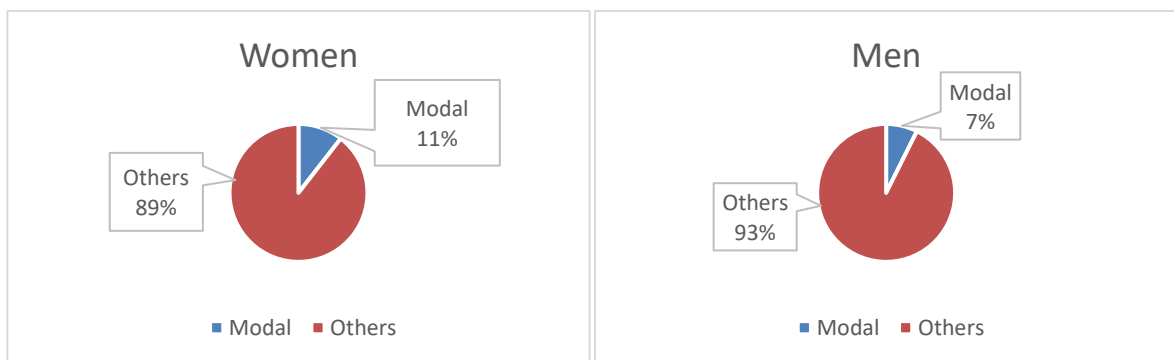

Figure 3: Percentage of facilitative tags used by women and men compared to other types
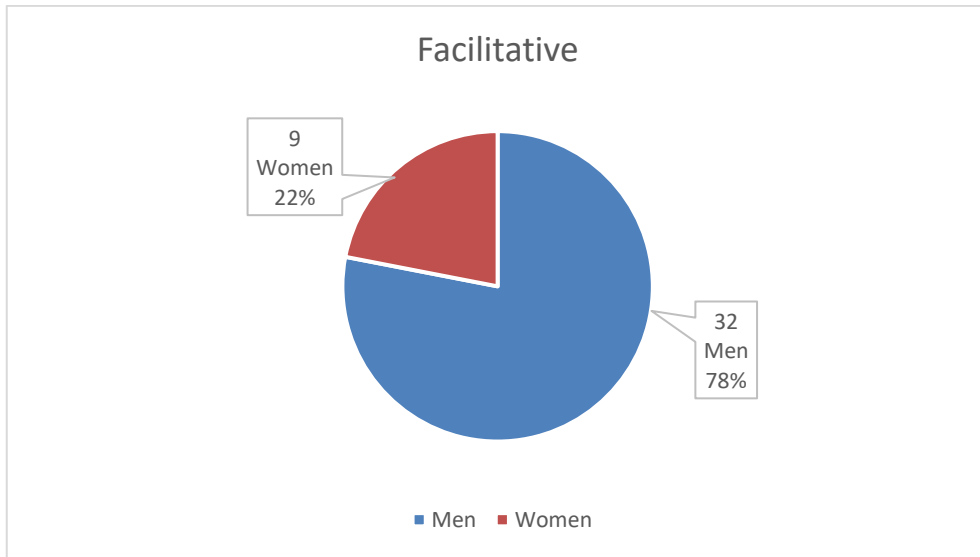
Figure 4: Number of facilitative tags used by women and men

Epistemic modal question tags (in Figure 5 referred to as 'modal') were found 9 times out of the 114 sentences. Epistemic modal tags, therefore, make up for 7.89 % of all question tags, which is the least used type of question tag together with the challenging question tag. Women used epistemic modal tags 2 times out of all 19 sentences produced by women, meaning that epistemic modal tags were the second least used type in women, making up for 10.52%. Men used the epistemic modal tag 7 times out of their 95 sentences, making it 7.37%. Overall, 22% of the 9 epistemic modal tags found were produced by women and 78% by men. See Figures 5 and 6.
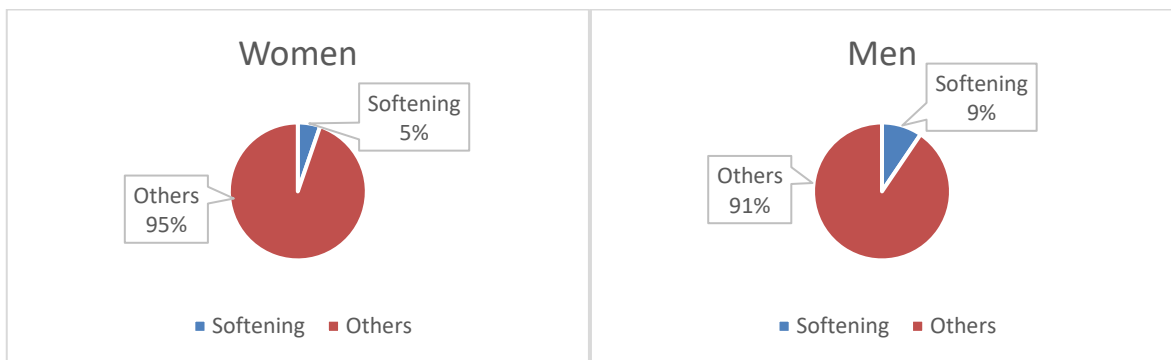

Figure 5: Percentage of epistemic modal tags used by women and men compared to other types
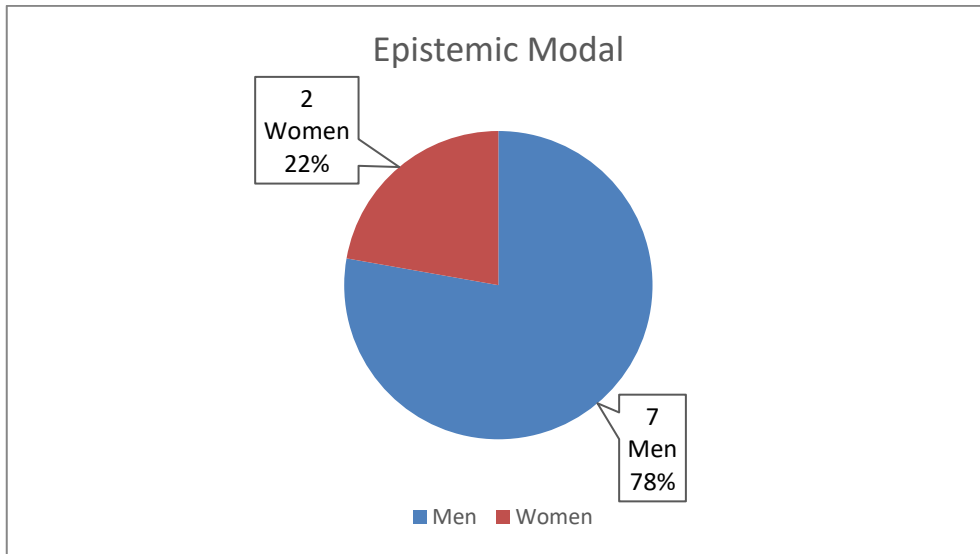
Figure 6: Number of epistemic modal tags used by men and women

Softening question tags were found 10 times out of the 114 sentences. Softening tags, therefore, make up for 8.77% of all question tags, which is the third most and least used type out of all question tag types. Women used facilitative tags 1 time out of all 19 sentences produced by women, meaning that softening tags were the least used type by women, making up for 5.26%. Men used the softening tag 9 times out of their 95 sentences, making it 9.47%. Overall, 10% of the 10 softening tags found were produced by women and 90% by men. See Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 7: Percentage of softening tags used by women and men compared to other types
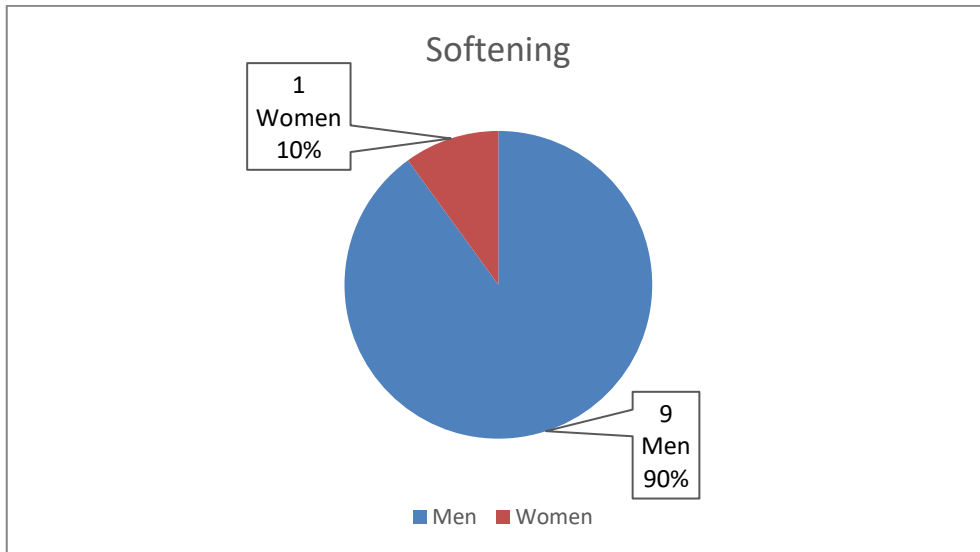
Figure 8: Number of softening tags used by men and women

Challenging question tags were found 9 times out of the 114 sentences. Challenging tags, therefore, make up for 7.89% of all question tags, which is the least used type of question tag together with the epistemic modal question tag. Women used challenging tags 3 times out of all 19 sentences produced by women, meaning that challenging tags were the third most and second least used type in women, making up for 15.79%. Men used the challenging tag 6 times out of their 95 sentences, making it 6.32%. Overall, 33% of the 9 challenging tags found were produced by women and 67% by men. See Figures 9 and 10.
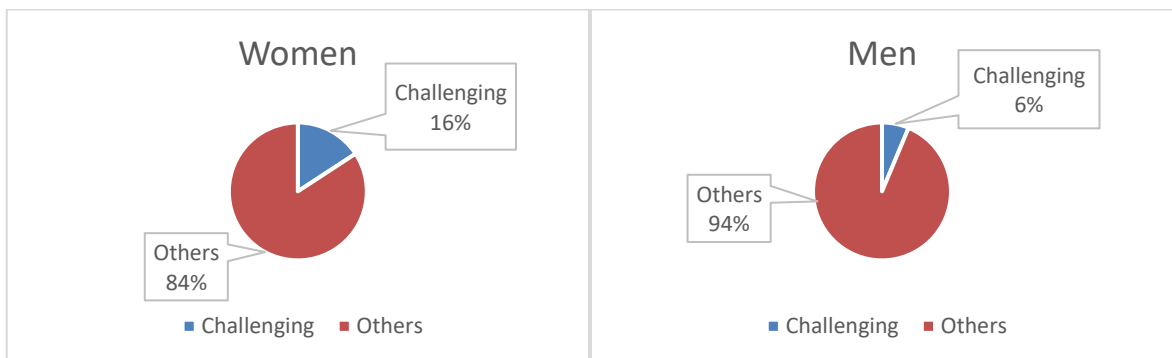

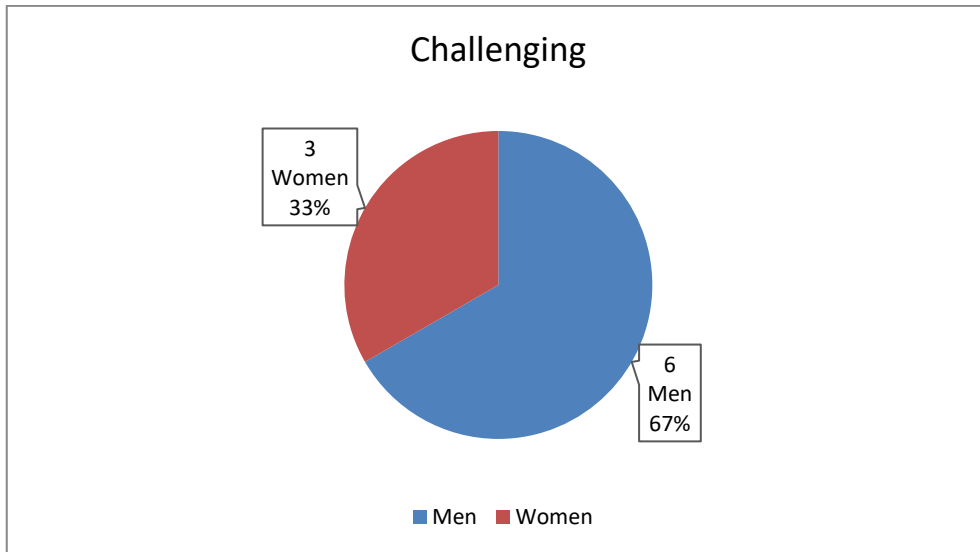Figure 9: Percentage of challenging tags used by women and men compared to other types

Figure 10: Number of challenging tags used by men and women

Rhetorical question tags were found in total 45 times out of the 114 sentences. Facilitative tags, therefore, make up for 39.47% of all question tags, which is the most used type with the following facilitative question tags. Women used rhetorical tags 4 times out of all 19 sentences produced by women, meaning that rhetorical tags were the second most used type in women, making up for 21.06%. Men used the rhetorical tag 41 times out of their 95 sentences, making it 43.16%. Overall, 9% of the 45 rhetorical tags found were produced by women and 91% by men. See Figures 11 and 12.
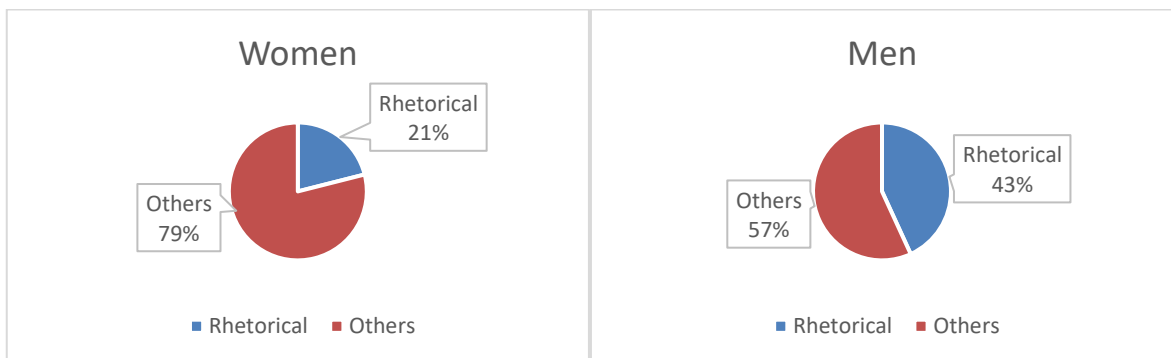

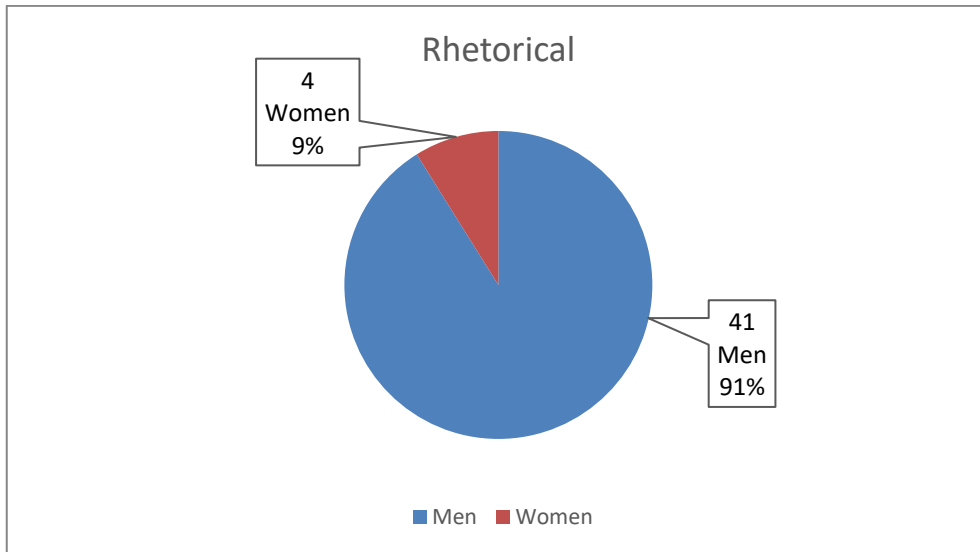Figure 11: Percentage of rhetorical tags used by women and men compared to other types

Figure 12: Number of rhetorical tags used by men and women

In the figures below (Figure 13 and Figure 14), all the data are put into one chart for a better visual representation.
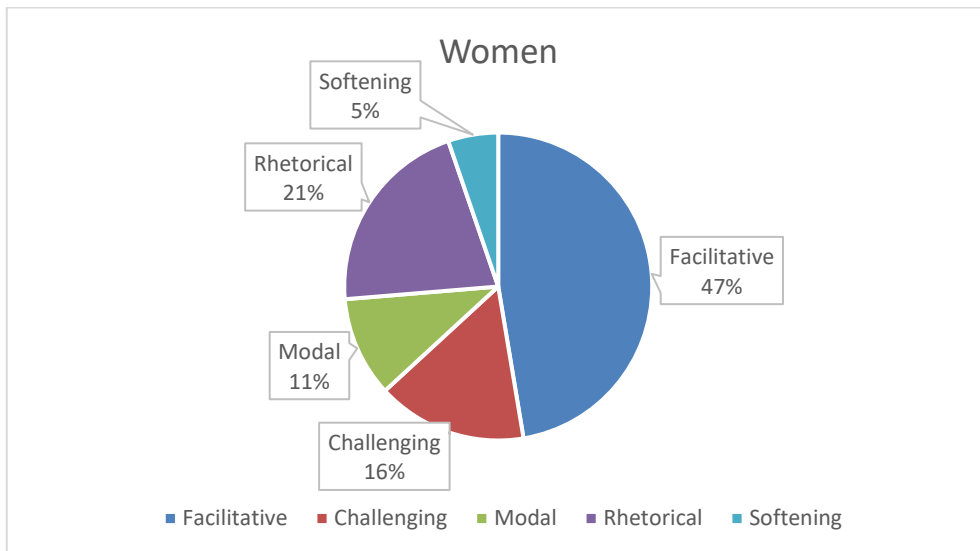

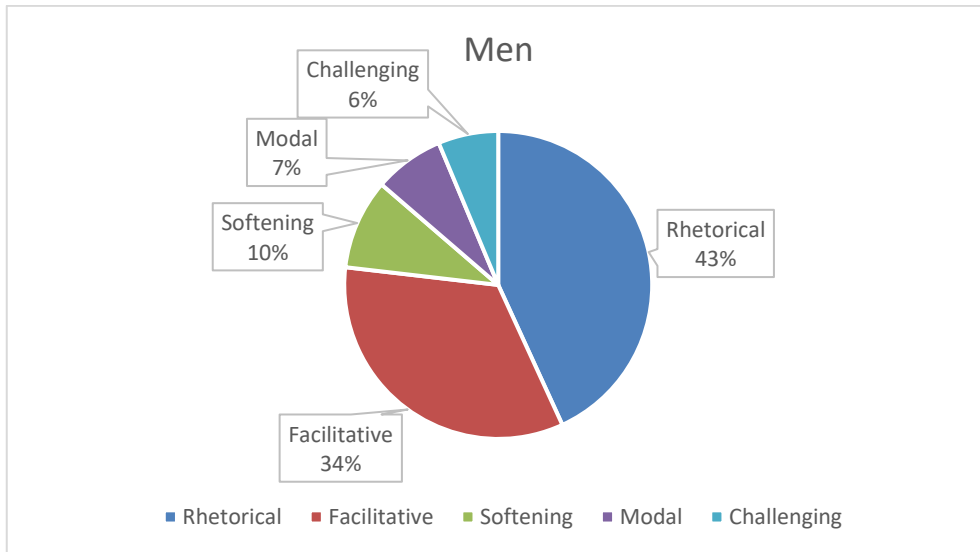Figure 13: Usage of different question tag types by women

Figure 14: Usage of different question tag types by men

6.2.3 Results found along the way

Out of the 114 question tags found, 81 are canonical question tags, and 33 are invariant question tags. The only invariant that was counted in this research was the invariant *innit*. *Innit* makes up for 28.95% of question tags out of the collected data. See Figure 15.
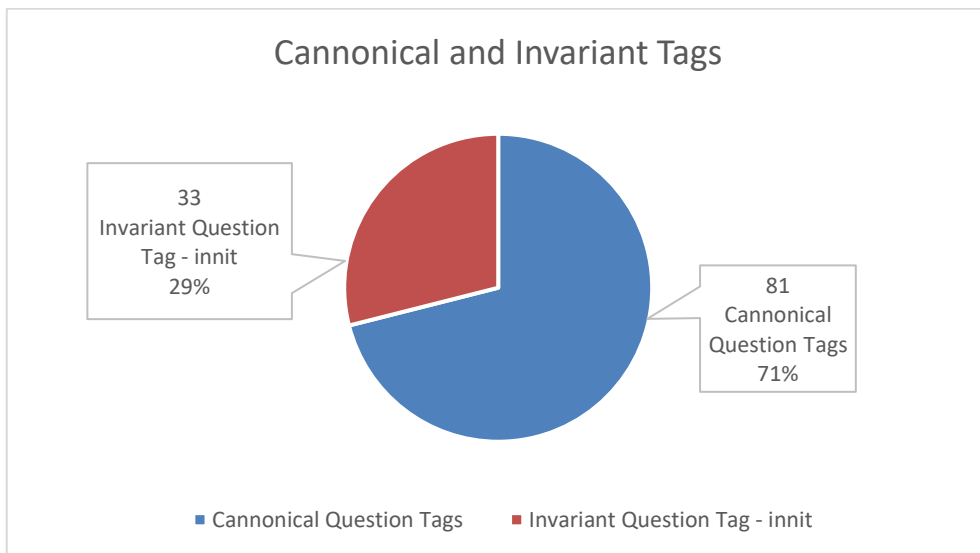

Figure 15: Canonical and invariant tag

In the usage of the invariant question tag *innit*, it was found that 97% of it was produced by men, meaning 32 times while only 1 time by a woman, meaning 3%. See Figure 16.
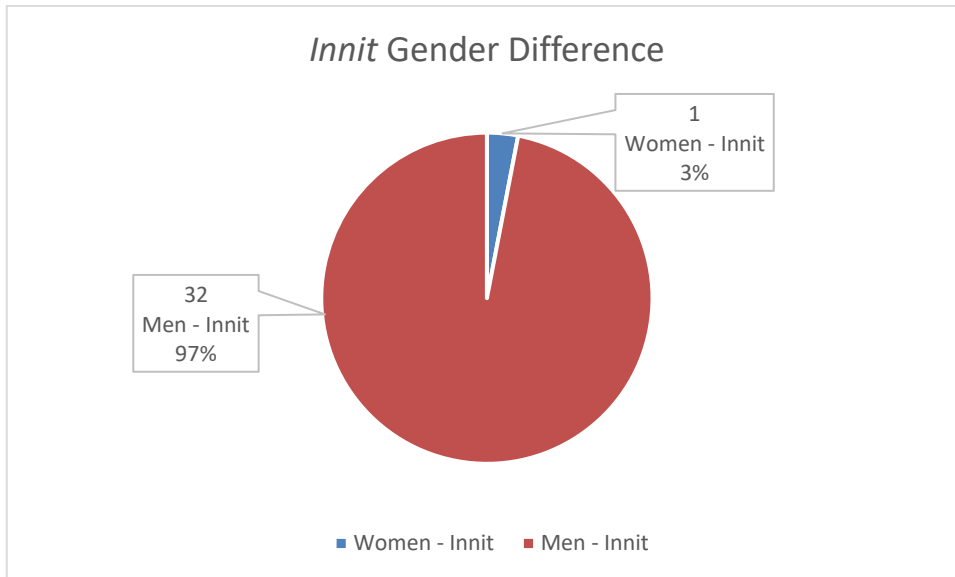
Figure 16: *Innit* gender difference

From all the 33 sentences that had the invariant tag *innit* in them, 31 were spoken by a speaker of British nationality (UK), making it 93.93%, and only 2 of them were produced by different nationalities, those being 1 time USA and 1 time South African, making 3.03% each.
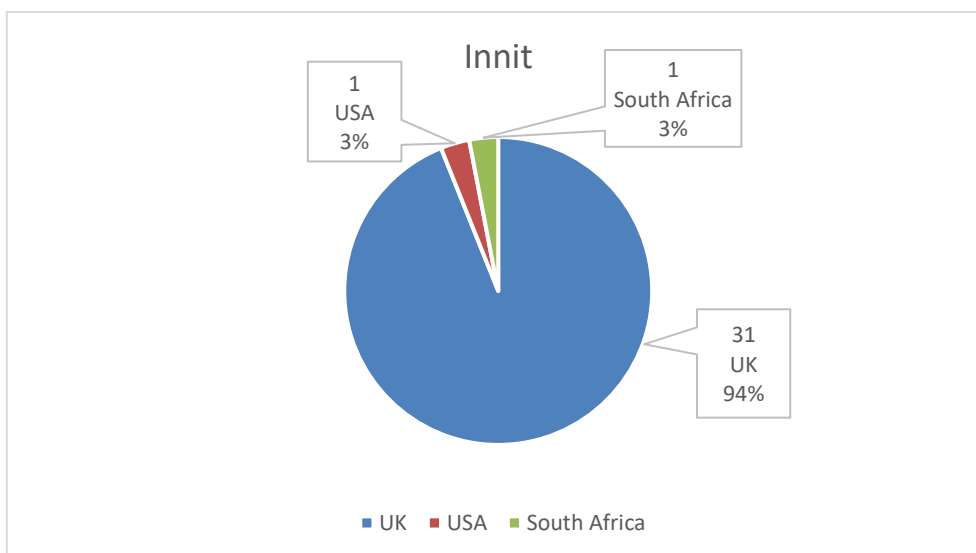

Figure 17: *Innit* based on nationality difference

7 DISCUSSION

The main research question (is there a gender difference when using question tags) of this bachelor thesis has been answered by doing empirical research and collecting the data needed. The results of the analysis of the data show that there is a difference in using question tags when it comes to genders. However, the analysis shows that the hypothesis that was made at the beginning of the research stating that "Women in the reality TV show use question tags more frequently than men." is disconfirmed. There was an overwhelming difference between men and women.

In the collected data, there was a total of 114 sentences, and men produced 83.33% of them, while only 16.67% were produced by women. This result shows that men used question tags more than women, in this research.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, several similar studies have been done and while some of them showed that men use question tags more than women and some showed that the frequency of question tag use was equal, most of them concluded that women use question tags more than men.

After the unexpected results that did not support the hypothesis of the first goal of the thesis, further analysis was done to see whether another gender difference could be found somewhere else. All of the collected data were analysed based on the type of question tags, inspired by research done by Holmes in 1984, where she did not take into question only the number of times women and men used question tags but also their types. Holmes, in her research (1984), analysed 'modal,' 'facilitative,' and 'softening' types. A similar study was performed here, only adding 2 more types that were found among the collected sentences: 'challenging' and 'rhetorical.'

The data showed that the most used type of question tag overall was a rhetorical tag, which was found in 45 out of 114 sentences, and the facilitative tag, which was 41 times out of 114. The least used tag type was epistemic modal and challenging which were both found 9 times out of the 114 sentences. The least used tag by women was the softening tag, which was used only 1 time out of 19 sentences produced by female speakers. The most used tag by women was the facilitative tag, which was found 9 times out of 19, and rhetorical with 4

uses. Men used the challenging type the least; only 6 times out of 95 sentences produced by men, and the most used tag type used by men was rhetorical, with 41 uses, and facilitative, with 32 uses.

More results were found during the process of analysing data. Specifically, information about the usage of the invariant tag *innit*. The times *innit* was used were counted and each sentence containing *innit* has a note of the nationality of the speaker in the Appendix. *Innit* was found in total 33 times out of all 114 sentences, has been used 32 times by men and only 1 time by women. The invariant tag was produced by British speakers in 31 cases, leaving 2 sentences left. One sentence was spoken by a speaker from the USA and one from a speaker from South Africa.

In Chapters 2 and 4, other differences in 'women's' and 'men's' speech were discussed, such as lexical choice, use of standard language or topic choices. In this thesis, those differences were not particularly observed or analysed. However, the episodes and series were rewatched multiple times and it cannot be said that some major differences in those criteria were seen or noticed. The lexical choices were more or less the same; for example, swear words were used by both genders. When it comes to the use of standard language, every speaker used their own idiolect and dialect. Lastly, the topic choices were very similar since the contestants were all in the same situations, and all of them were selected individuals who were interested in the other gender and dating them. So, topics like relationships, sex or intimacy were discussed by both genders.

Lakoff, in her article from 1973 argues that many "self-respecting" women are starting to use sentences containing swear words (*Shit)* instead of euphemisms (*Oh dear)* and calls it a "recent development" while noting that women are adapting 'men's' language because there are seeking their jobs and the power that comes with it. This may be the reason why the results in this research differ from experiments done 50 years ago.

However, it is important to mention again that these phenomena were, in fact, not carefully observed, counted, or analysed; therefore, these are just mere observations that were noticed while gathering different data.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to find out whether there is a difference in question tag usage between men and women in the reality TV show and whether it is women who use them more, as the first hypothesis states. The second goal of this thesis was to find out what type of question tag in 'Too Hot to Handle' is used most overall and which type is used most by women and by men.

Research on the frequency of question tags was carried out, using the dating show 'Too Hot to Handle' as the data source where all 5 seasons were analysed. All sentences containing a question tag were collected, counted, and lastly assigned a type.

The hypothesis for the first research question is 'Women in the reality TV show use question tags more frequently than men.' Based on the results that were collected, this statement is not correct. Out of the total 114 sentences containing a question tag, 95 were produced by male speakers and only 19 by women. Meaning, that the results show the opposite.

The hypotheses for the second research question were 'The most used question tag type overall in the reality TV show is facilitative.' 'The most used question tag type by men in the reality TV show is challenging.' 'The most used question tag type by women in the reality TV show is facilitative.'

The results show that overall, the most used question tag type was not facilitative as predicted in the hypothesis but rhetorical. Most of the time, a question tag was used when the speaker did not expect an answer or confirmation from the addressee. The rhetorical question tag was used 45 times out of all 114 sentences. The facilitative tag, however, is placed as the second most used type, with 41 sentences.

The most used question tag type by men was the already mentioned rhetorical tag, which was used 41 times out of all 95 sentences produced by men. The second most used type was facilitative, which had 32 uses. The predicted challenging type was used the least together with the epistemic modal type, with only 9 uses by men.

The most used question tag type by women was facilitative, as correctly predicted in the hypothesis. The facilitative question tag was used a total of 9 times out of all 19 sentences produced by women. The second most used question tag type was rhetorical with 4 uses.

These results suggest that it is not women but men who seek confirmation from others or are uncertain of their views. It was previously suggested in the thesis by, for example, Lakoff (1975), who claimed that it is women who use question tags and that those are not found in men's daily conversations since, as Lakoff suggests, they use declarative sentences.

Further research could be done to see whether the results would differ in speakers who are from countries where English is not spoken or are not fluent in English. The weaknesses of this thesis are that not all invariant tags were analysed (*right, eh, you* know) and that the results showed that the invariant tag *innit* was mostly found in speakers from the United Kingdom, which, as mentioned in Subsection 3.5.3, is something typical for Londoners. This was found accidentally when analysing the data.

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LIST OF FIGURES

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APPENDIX

Number	Gender, nationality	Sentence	Season, Episode	Time stamp	Type
1	M, UK	But that's adorable, innit?	S1E1	25:18	facilitative
2	M	She's got a real polite voice, hasn't she?	S1E1	35:46	facilitative
3	M	It's like having little kids, isn't it?	S1E2	6:35	softening
4	W	He's got that Hollywood vibe to him, doesn't he?	S1E4	0:17	facilitative
5	M	I don't know. You're meant to leave girls waiting, aren't you?	S1E4	20:24	modal
6	W	You wanna lose three grand right about now, don't you?	S1E4	23:07	facilitative
7	M	Tease, isn't she?	S1E4	26:48	softening
8	M	It's a lot with trust, isn't it?	S1E5	30:35	rhetorical
9	M, UK	So, we'll see what happens, innit?	S1E6	12:45	rhetorical
10	M, UK	That dreambird, innit?	S1E6	15:55	rhetorical
11	M	I was gonna say, because, obviously, sad Matt going and that, but I took his bed, didn't I?	S1E6	36:20	rhetorical
12	M, UK	At the end of the day, I saved some people some money, innit?	S1E7	15:22	rhetorical
13	M, UK	I think the workshop's made her a bit too big for her boots, innit, but I'm not bothered by her.	S1E7	29:39	rhetorical
14	M, UK	That's that, then, innit?	S1E7	29:50	challenging
15	M	She was just there, wasn't she?	S1E8	27:03	rhetorical
16	M	A cougar, are you?	S2E1	12:36	modal
17	M	It's a good bed, this one, isn't it?	S2E1	24:21	rhetorical
18	M, UK	It's just sea, innit?	S2E1	30:10	modal
19	M	Bet you didn't see that one coming, did you?	S2E1	30:36	rhetorical
20	M	He's a swifty little one, little Pete, isn't he?	S2E1	5:47	rhetorical
21	M	I didn't know what we were getting into, did I?	S2E1	42:47	rhetorical
22	M	You look all right, don't you?	S2E2	6:37	facilitative
23	M, UK	Good-looking boy, innit?	S2E2	16:57	rhetorical
24	M, USA	This is tense, innit?	S2E2	25:08	facilitative
25	M, UK	Bit of sneaky snakes going on, innit?	S2E2	26:28	rhetorical
26	M	They kept that one quiet, didn't they?	S2E2	27:43	rhetorical
27	M, UK	One mirror between ten people, is hard, innit?	S2E2	36:00	softening
28	M, UK	Marvin laid next to them is just... just awkward, innit?	S2E2	41:29	rhetorical
29	M, UK	This is sexy, innit?	S2E3	34:05	facilitative
30	M, UK	No sex before marriage, innit?	S2E4	1:02	facilitative
31	M	Oh, just naughty little... naughty little sausages, aren't we?	S2E4	4:28	facilitative
32	M, UK	It is what it is, innit?	S2E4	8:17	rhetorical
33	M, UK	This is hot, innit?	S2E4	16:18	facilitative
34	M	Sexy, little pilot, isn't she?	S2E4	16:43	rhetorical
35	M	Ah, greedy, ain't I?	S2E4	20:56	rhetorical
36	M	It's... checkmate, really, isn't it?	S2E4	22:02	rhetorical
37	M	Oh, you did, did you?	S2E4	25:53	rhetorical
38	M, UK	Yeah, it was just chat, innit?	S2E4	25:56	facilitative
39	M, UK	Yeah. Rattle, rattle, tonight, innit?	S2E4	30:36	facilitative
40	M	Oh, she's a bit, isn't she?	S2E4	34:55	rhetorical
41	M	Absolute sort, isn't she?	S2E4	35:02	facilitative
42	M, UK	It's just sex, innit?	S2E4	35:33	facilitative
43	M	I've been a bit of a dickhead, haven't I?	S2E4	44:44	rhetorical

44	M, UK	Oh, that's a bit, innit?	S2E4	45:54	softening
45	M	I just can't help myself, can I?	S2E5	42:58	rhetorical
46	M	Not the best, is it?	S2E6	5:41	softening
47	W	That sounded naughty, didn't it?	S2E6	24:30	rhetorical
48	M	It's tough though, isn't it?	S2E6	29:56	facilitative
49	M, UK	Just selfish really, innit?	S2E7	9:45	rhetorical
50	M	Strange, isn't it?	S2E7	34:52	facilitative
51	M	But she's got a little more for us, hasn't she?	S2E8	5:47	rhetorical
52	M	I just can't help myself, can I?	S2E8	8:21	rhetorical
53	M, UK	This is bad, innit?	S2E8	42:52	rhetorical
54	W	That is the ultimate test then, isn't it?	S2E9	4:31	facilitative
55	W	That's quite nice, isn't it?	S2E9	16:08	facilitative
56	M	Smiling like a Cheshire Cat, isn't he?	S2E9	22:10	rhetorical
57	M	Chase is a big boy, isn't he?	S2E9	24:17	rhetorical
58	M	You like cheese, don't you?	S2E9	26:04	facilitative
59	M, UK	That's a lot, innit?	S2E9	36:26	facilitative
60	M	Commitment Cam now, aren't I?	S2E10	9:29	rhetorical
61	W	Such a classy lady, aren't I?	S3E1	12:20	rhetorical
62	M	You're here to teach us a lesson, aren't you?	S3E1	42:07	rhetorical
63	M	It wasn't Stevan, was it?	S3E2	8:20	rhetorical
64	W	It's you, isn't it?	S3E2	9:18	challenging
65	M	You are just as naughty as me, aren't you?	S3E2	31:40	challenging
66	M, South Africa	That's easy to say, innit?	S3E3	6:50	challenging
67	M	This retreat's clearly working, isn't it?	S3E3	12:01	softening
68	M, UK	Just déjà vu, innit?	S3E5	9:10	rhetorical
69	W	It's not like you, is it?	S3E5	31:07	facilitative
70	M	This is romantic, isn't it?	S3E5	32:31	facilitative
71	W	We definitely made that worthwhile, didn't we?	S3E7	4:44	facilitative
72	M	Well, I can't just say no to the date, can I?	S3E7	6:02	facilitative
73	W	Always gotta touch, don't you?	S3E8	29:52	softening
74	M, UK	It's a bit of a downer, innit?	S3E9	6:00	softening
75	M	And it got pretty deep, didn't it?	S3E9	27:44	facilitative
76	M	Got a few snogs, didn't we?	S3E9	28:55	facilitative
77	M	It's sad, isn't it?	S3E10	39:43	facilitative
78	W, UK	This is just crazy, innit?	S3E10	39:54	facilitative
79	W	That's just crazy, isn't it?	S3E10	41:52	rhetorical
80	M	We never thought we'd get this far, did we?	S3E10	43:01	facilitative
81	M	It's actually tense, isn't it?	S4E2	15:10	facilitative
82	M	You're jealous, aren't you?	S4E2	17:38	modal
83	M	When your pupils get bigger, it's like attraction or something, isn't it?	S4E2	25:53	modal
84	M	Not a very romantic accent, is it?	S4E2	41:15	facilitative
85	M	This isn't heavy petting, is it?	S4E3	24:06	modal
86	M	Creed and Sophie, you guys got something to say, don't you?	S4E3	33:15	challenging
87	M	We didn't lose money last night, did we?	S4E5	0:27	modal

88	W	That's like postcard blue, isn't it?	S4E5	2:57	facilitative
89	W	Obviously I'm not fucking okay, am I?	S4E5	40:47	challenging
90	M	Freezing, isn't it?	S4E6	24:00	rhetorical
91	M	Got a new sleeping partner, have I?	S4E6	42:34	challenging
92	M, UK	It's muggy, innit?	S4E6	42:50	challenging
93	M	He's not going to be, like, spicy is he?	S4E7	5:44	rhetorical
94	W	You like to get messy, do you?	S4E7	24:06	modal
95	M	Yeah, it's not good, is it?	S4E8	15:32	softening
96	W	That was a lame answer, wasn't it?	S5E1	8:18	modal
97	M	And giraffes are quite lean, aren't they?	S5E1	10:45	rhetorical
98	W	Beautiful yacht, isn't it?	S5E1	25:46	facilitative
99	W	You haven't looked, have you?	S5E1	26:54	challenging
100	M	As soon as I saw you, it was straight, wasn't it?	S5E1	35:42	facilitative
101	M	Pretty easy, isn't it?	S5E2	17:42	facilitative
102	M, UK	Let me tell something to you though, 'cause I'm a real person, innit?	S5E2	40:30	facilitative
103	M, UK	It is beautiful though, innit?	S5E3	4:08	facilitative
104	M, UK	Ah, this is a pickle, innit?	S5E3	17:03	facilitative
105	M, UK	It's weird, innit?	S5E5	11:23	facilitative
106	M	It's not smart, is it?	S5E6	18:15	softening
107	M, UK	It's just the same old shit, innit?	S5E7	35:19	rhetorical
108	M	So you don't know, do you?	S5E7	43:11	rhetorical
109	M	You've got me wrapped around your finger, do you?	S5E7	51:09	facilitative
110	M	I'm in another shit hole, ain't I?	S5E8	6:27	rhetorical
111	M	Obviously gonna mention the boob thing, isn't she?	S5E8	20:24	rhetorical
112	W	Getting into that bed, are we?	S5E9	3:46	rhetorical
113	M	This Prosecco isn't going to drink itself, is it?	S5E9	11:32	rhetorical
114	M	It's mad, isn't it?	S5E10	38:22	facilitative