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The accomplishment of nonserious talk in severe speech disability: An examination of recipient uptake and delayed other-initiated repair.

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Introduction

This paper uses the method of conversation analysis (CA) to investigate nonserious talk produced by a person with a severe acquired progressive motor speech impairment (dysarthria) and its receipt by his conversation partner. The motivation for this investigation comes from the observation that attempts to quip, tease and/or joke by people with severe communication disabilities can result in interactional problems for both participants. Through a detailed examination of the practices used to accomplish nonserious talk it will be shown how participants manage humour within the constraints of severely unintelligible speech.

Acquired dysarthria is a neurological motor speech disorder arising from a stroke (CVA), traumatic brain injury or degenerative disease (e.g. amyotrophic lateral sclerosis/motor neuron disease, Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis). The rate of change and patterns of physical and acoustic symptoms associated with dysarthria vary greatly but are typically categorised according to the level of severity, neurological site and speech subsystems involved (Duffy, 2005; Weismer and Kim, 2010). The functional outcome of dysarthria is an impaired speech signal resulting in varying levels of (un)intelligibility. For many people with degenerative diseases in particular the pattern of speech production is, inevitably, one of progressive deterioration.

Historically dysarthria research has focussed on acoustic/perceptual feature analysis (Yorkston, 2007) based on a speech processing model exemplified by the terms 'speaker' and 'listener'. Within this paradigm there has been some recognition that speech intelligibility is an 'emergent property' of the listener (Liss, 2007) but until relatively recently enquiry has centred on how dysarthric speech is produced, how it is perceived acoustically and how it deviates from an acceptable norm.

Dysarthria beyond speech processing

The effects of acquired dysarthria beyond acoustic and physiological features are receiving increased attention with work identifying the impact of dysarthria on social and civic participation (Hartelius, Elmberg et al., 2008; Mackenzie, Bennett et al., 2011) and perceptions of self as a communicator (Robillard, 1999; Miller, Andrew et al., 2011). Evidence indicates that dysarthria can have a significant impact on the ability to engage in social activities and that this is not necessarily related to the severity of physical impairment (Brady, Clark et al., 2011). Even people with mild speech symptoms can experience

significant problems in social encounters. Further work has examined the ways in which people with acquired dysarthria construct their talk (Comrie, Mackenzie et al., 2001) and make adaptations in the design of turns to cope with the effects of reduced intelligibility (Bloch, 2005). The nature of trouble sources and their repair in conversation have also been examined (Bloch and Wilkinson, 2009; Bloch and Wilkinson, forthcoming). These studies draw attention not just to what people with dysarthria might do to manage their unintelligibility (Rutter, 2009) but also what their conversation partners, or co-participants, might do in terms of collaboration and trouble source management. From the studies reported it becomes clear that perceptions of self and the abilities to speak intelligibly, communicate functionally and participate socially/civically and be adversely affected by acquired dysarthria and the diseases with which it is associated.

Reduced intelligibility, humour sources and troubles in talk

Reduced speech intelligibility in naturally occurring interaction typically manifests itself through an increase in hearing/speech signal problems as displayed by the co-participant (Bloch, 2006; Rutter, 2009). Associated features include understandability problems relating to the relationship between a turn containing a problem and what has just come prior (Bloch and Wilkinson, 2009). In these instances the difficulty is not only about (un)intelligibility but also about making sense of how a turn fits with the on-going conversation (Drew, 1997). As well as increasing the occurrence of problems, reduced intelligibility can result in participants changing the ways in which they construct their turns either through natural speech (Collins and Markova, 1995; Bloch, 2005; Bloch and Beeke, 2008) or through the use of augmentative and alternative communication systems (Bloch and Wilkinson, 2004; Bloch, 2011; Wilkinson, Bloch et al., forthcoming). Such changes can have profound effects on how interaction works for both the person with dysarthric speech and with whomever they are interacting.

Actions that may be particularly sensitive to reduced intelligibility are those that are designed for a specific and timely response (i.e. where certain things become accountable). One example of this is talk designed for recipient laughter or some other sort of humour appreciation. If such a response is not produced at the appropriate place then its absence or misplacement may have consequences for the ways in which the participants organize subsequent talk (Jefferson, 1979).

It has previously been shown that children with physical disabilities and no functional speech are able to bring about and organize episodes of nonserious interaction with their peers (Clarke and Wilkinson, 2009). For adults with traumatic brain injury (Kovarsky, Curran et al., 2009), aphasia (Madden, Oelschlaeger et al., 2002; Simmons-Mackie and Schultz, 2003; Wilkinson, 2007) and dementia (Wilson, Muller et al., 2007) laughter and humour have also been shown to contribute to social engagement, displays of competency and the management of delicate issues. Little is known, however, about how humour is managed when there are problems in the understanding of verbally produced humour source talk.

Recent research on the perspectives of people with acquired motor speech disorders reports changes in communicative behaviour including a reduction in so called joking activity and the negative attitudes of others (Walshe and Miller, 2011). If it turns out that producing nonserious talk is problematic for a speaker with a severe speech problem then it is worthwhile to ask how such talk gets treated as nonserious by the recipient and what is it that both participants do to signal to each other the nature of that talk. One further practical consideration is that shared laughter is one way through which participants display affiliation and construct intimacy (Jefferson, Sacks et al., 1987). If the mechanisms for humour are restricted in some way then there may be additional difficulties beyond simply being able to accomplish humour.

Other-initiated repair and its delay

When problems of speaking, hearing or understanding arise participants commonly make use of an organized set of practices to address and potentially resolve such problems. These practices are referred to as 'repair' (Schegloff, Jefferson et al., 1977; Schegloff, 1997). At a fundamental level participant management of problems or troubles operates through two stages, repair initiation, that is showing there is a problem, and repair outcome, that is fixing/resolving or abandoning the difficulty (Schegloff, 2000). Such a mechanism is seen as crucial for a system of interaction that is based on mutual understanding and intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984).

It has been previously established that whilst there is a strong preference for the speaker of a trouble source to identify and resolve his or her own trouble, that is, self-initiated self-repair (Schegloff, Jefferson et al., 1977), repair initiation by the recipient of problematic talk, commonly referred to as the *other*, is also possible. Hence the description other-initiated repair (OIR hereafter).

A range of features associated with OIR has been investigated including the types of repairs used (Drew, 1997; Svennevig, 2008) and the position in which they occur (Schegloff, 1997; Schegloff, 2000). Of particular relevance for the analysis below is Schegloff's (2000) observation that whilst by far the majority of OIRs occur in the next turn following a trouble source turn, some are produced past the next turn position, that is, they are not adjacent to the trouble source turn and hence *delayed*.

One specific environment in which delayed OIR occurs is where there is a response to the trouble source turn prior to the other-initiation, that is where the recipient of a turn responds to it in some way and then subsequently initiates repair on it. Within this category comes laughter as a specific type of response to a turn that is subsequently treated by that same recipient as problematic.

When someone laughs he or she is displaying a particular stance towards whatever has been said, typically, but not necessarily, treating what has just been said as humorous. A subsequent repair initiation on that laughter source then creates a possible tension between a recipient's initial 'claimed grasp of the preceding talk' (Schegloff, 2000) and the proceeding signal of problematicity through the OIR. In short treating something in the prior talk as a humour source and then showing that it has not been fully understood is potentially problematic. OIR is an important resource but one which has the structural potential to raise the relevance of a lapse in competence by the trouble source speaker (Robinson 2006) as well as the perceived competencies of the person who has laughed at something that has not been understood.

In this paper we explore recipient uptake of dysarthric speech turns within one specific environment, namely, following nonserious talk by a speaker with dysarthria. We consider the ways in which the recipient of a dysarthric speech turn first accomplishes the task of appreciating the humour action attempted through a prior turn, second manages the delicacy of showing they have not fully heard the laughable talk even though they have claimed an appreciation of that talk through laughter, and third displays a subsequent understanding of the nature of the attempted humour. The analysis thus reveals distinctions between recipient displays of prior talk appreciability, intelligibility and understandability.

Methods

The data presented here were obtained as part of a larger study examining talk between people with progressive neurological diseases and close family members. Approval for the study was awarded by a UK National Health Service (NHS) Research Ethics Committee. People with clinically diagnosed cognitive and/or language disorders were excluded from the study. In the present paper analyses are based on four different extracts obtained from one dyad's data set.

Data Collection and method of analysis

The dyad described below volunteered to participate in a study examining the effects of acquired dysarthria on everyday conversation. They were recruited through their NHS speech and language therapy service.

The couple were loaned standard video camera equipment. The able-bodied partner was instructed in the video camera use with an additional short written operating guide. They were asked to record themselves for approximately 30 minutes within an agreed one-week sampling period. It was requested that the recording take place during a regular opportunity for everyday conversation (e.g. at a meal or coffee time). This process was repeated at three monthly intervals (+/- one week) over a 12-month period. The talk was transcribed according to common CA conventions (Jefferson, 1984) and then different patterns of interaction were identified. It was noted that quipping and joking were common occurrences throughout the conversation. A detailed analysis of humour-source talk followed.

Participants

The participant couple are identified in the text by the pseudonyms: Alex and Molly. Alex is a 38 year old English speaking computer programmer. Approximately one year prior to data collection he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis/ motor neuron disease (ALS/MND) an acquired and relatively rapidly deteriorating neurodegenerative condition. The symptoms of his ALS were reportedly emerging at least a year before formal diagnosis. Alex has significantly impaired motor speech abilities (dysarthria) and both upper and lower limb mobility problems. He neither reports nor displays any language or cognitive difficulties. His speech is characterised by marked respiratory, phonatory, resonatory and articulatory weakness. At the point at which the Extract below was recorded, Alex's Frenchay (Enderby and Palmer, 2007) conversation intelligibility subsection rating is grade 'd' ('occasional words decipherable'), and his ALS Severity Scale (Hillel, Miller et al., 1989) rating is 5, described as 'speech is slow and laboured; extensive repetition or a 'translator' is commonly used; patient probably limits the complexity or length of messages'. Alex has been living in a nursing home for six months prior to data collection.

Molly is Alex's 62 year old mother. She visits Alex's on a daily basis for approximately two hours every afternoon. She neither reports or displays any physical, sensory or intellectual impairments that might impact on everyday interaction with Alex.

Analysis and findings

A regular feature in our data is Molly's display of appreciation (laughter) following Alex's humour-source talk. Within this collection of nonserious talk episodes there are also instances of post-appreciation activity in which Molly displays some sort of problem with the laughter-source talk. Of additional note in the extracts below are the ways in which Alex's turns are designed to minimise intelligibility problems, that is by reducing the length of each

turn irrespective of grammatical content, and Molly's are designed to show explicitly what she has heard in each prior turn, that is by redoing Alex's prior turn talk.

Extract 1

An example of unproblematic nonserious talk is presented in Extract 1. Immediately prior to this sequence Molly has been holding up a newspaper for Alex to read. There has been some confusion over whether or not Alex has finished reading a particular article resulting in Molly turning the page over before Alex is ready. The humour is grounded in Alex's use of the phrase 'you can't get the staff' treated as a nonserious complaint to, and teasing¹ of, Molly. Through her laughter receipt Molly reveals her appreciation of the nonserious nature of Alex's utterance. Alex's laughter source talk is shown to be intelligible through Molly's re-doings and understandable through her subsequent retort to Alex's tease.

Extract 1: A&M1

01 Alex ((*shifts gaze from newspaper to Molly*)) I::
 02 (0.4)
 03 Molly I
 04 Alex (haven't finished)
 05 Molly haven't finished,>I beg [your pardon.<]
 06 Alex | hce: |
 | ((gazes to paper & smiles)) |
 07 (2.3)
 08 Alex ((*directs gaze to Molly*)) [(2 syllables)]
 | ((subtle smile)) |
 09 Molly ((*leans forward*))
 10 (1.2)
 11 Alex [(why o:)]=
 | ((smiles)) |
 12 Molly =(smiles) °pa° may I have?
 13 (0.4)
 14 Alex ((*slight head shake*)) (wh-why o:)
 15 (1.2)
 16 Molly ((*slight head tilt*)) start [again]
 17 Alex [(why] o:)
 18 (0.4)
 19 Molly what (0.3) I=
 20 Alex = [(no:)] (why o:)
 | ((head shake)) |
 21 (0.4)
 22 Molly what=
 23 Alex =(why o:)
 24 (0.3)
 25 Molly why o >oh sorry< why o
 26 Alex yu
 27 Molly yu (.) yu
 28 (0.8)
 29 Alex ce ay
 30 (0.3)
 31 Molly ce ay
 32 (0.3)
 33 Alex en
 34 Molly can
 35 (0.9)

36 Alex not
37 (0.2)
38 Molly not
39 (0.7)
40 Alex (get the)
41 (0.3)
42 I can [not]
[((leans forward))]
43 (0.4)
44 Alex (get the)
45 (1.3)
46 Alex (gee ee)
47 (0.3)
48 Molly u:
49 (0.4)
50 Alex (gee ee)
51 (0.2)
52 Molly gee ee?
53 (0.2)
54 Alex [t]
55 Molly get
56 (0.4)
57 Alex the
58 (0.3)
59 Molly the
60 (0.3)
61 Alex es
62 Molly es
63 (0.3)
64 Alex [t]
65 (0.6)
66 Molly tee?
67 (0.3)
68 Alex [(ay ef)]
[((slight smile)]
69 (2.1)
70 Molly es tee:
71 (0.4)
72 Alex ay
73 (0.5)
74 Molly kharnt >get the< [sth↑a::ff] huh
((leans back))
75 Alex [((smiles))] °uhg°
76 (8.5) ((Alex continues to read the paper))
77 Molly yeah but I'm unpaid sta[haff]
78 Alex [((smiles))]

Alex's first utterance 'I haven't finished' is produced with Molly collaboratively over successive turns. Molly (line 05) then appears to treat Alex's utterance as a potential complaint by offering an explicit apology (Robinson, 2004). The evidence of Alex's subsequent smile and laughter token (line 06) indicates that he may be treating Molly's apology as mildly playful and/or sarcastic. A lengthy episode of talk follows in which Alex produces the utterance 'you can't get the staff'. Through this talk Alex and Molly engage in a lengthy sequence of repair featuring particular difficulty at the start of the word 'you'. Between lines 08-23 Alex attempts to say the letter name pair 'y' and 'o' six times before

Molly finally shows a correct hearing (line 25). Both participants display a variety of repair initiation and completion attempt practices throughout this section but of particular note here is the accompanying nonverbal activity at the start of the talk. At lines 8 and 11 Alex smiles as he produces his letter name attempts, reciprocated by Molly in her first show of hearing (line 12). Given Molly's response Alex's smiles are a possible, but not inevitable, indication that his utterance in progress has nonserious intent. However, any notion of humour is then superseded or at least delayed by the repair work required to establish intelligibility. It is only at the end of the spelling of 'staff' (line 68) that Alex smiles slightly indicating a possible return to nonserious talk.

The upshot of this repair sequence is Molly's talk at line 74 'kharnt get the *sth*↑a:ff ((*audible in-breath*)) uh' and then at line 77 'yeah but I'm *un*paid stahaff'. Through these turns she accomplishes at least three things. Firstly, at line 74 she shows her appreciation of the nonserious intent of Alex's talk. Her laughter tokens during and after the talk display acknowledgement that Alex has said something designed to be humorous. Secondly she reveals what she has found intelligible. In redoing the utterance previously-in-progress (omitting the word 'you') Molly shows what she has found humorous. Thirdly, Molly's turn at line 77 'yeah but I'm unpaid staff' displays a retort to Alex's earlier quip through which she reveals her unproblematic understanding of the underlying tease and play on the use of employment talk as a source of humourⁱⁱ. Finally, Alex's smiles in response to Molly's appreciation and subsequent retort show his own acknowledgement that they are both engaged in nonserious talk.

Throughout this sequence there are clearly difficulties in establishing intelligibility. Alex is attempting to begin a new utterance by spelling without having established any prior sequential context for his talk. He is also engaging in a subtle form of humour that requires Molly to understand the relationship between Alex's idiomatic talk and what has just occurred. The potential difficulties this type of talk poses are explored further in the Discussion.

Extract 2

Prior to the talk in extract 2 two nursing home care staff have entered the room. They have produced a series of slightly risqué double-entendres without apparently noticing the presence of the video recording equipment. After their departure, Alex and Molly laugh at what has happened and comment that the camera should have been very obvious (see extract 3 below). Alex then proceeds to propose a mock-threat in which the carers' behaviour, unknowingly caught on camera, could potentially be given to the BBC, the UK's national television broadcaster. This talk is treated by both participants as humorous given the discrepancy between the actual behaviour of the staff and the ideal concept of 'professional' health carer behaviour.

Immediately following Alex's BBC quip, Molly laughs, revealing her appreciation and treatment of his talk as a source of humour. This parallels the action in extract 1 in which Molly laughs through and after her re-doing of Alex's tease. In her next turn however Molly signals a trouble source within Alex's prior talk, namely the turn she had claimed, through her laughter, to have appreciated. This trouble is then repaired by Alex with ensuing shared laughter.

Extract 2: A&M1

01 Molly ↑huh °ha ((*opening a CD wrapper*)) ↑oh: ↓dear (.) I'll get the
02 Observer in a [minute]
03 Alex [((*smiles*))]
04 Molly (.) you chan ave look at the paper I think.
05 (0.3)
06 Alex [(I I::)]
07 [((*smiles*))]
08 (0.3)
09 Molly I
10 (0.4)
11 Alex (will tell)
12 (0.3)
13 Molly will
14 (0.4)
15 Molly tell them?=
16 Alex =(i::t is)
17 (0.4)
18 Molly es
19 (0.5)
20 Alex (it is)
21 (0.4)
22 Molly it is
23 (0.3)
24 Alex for =
25 Molly =for
26 (0.4)
27 Alex the
28 (0.2)
29 Molly the ((*smiles*))
30 (0.5)
31 Alex [(B-B-C news)]
32 Molly [((*smiles*))] °he: (.) he-[he] [ha-ha-↑ha° (.) ha-ha
33 Alex [mhaf:]
34 Molly [ha-ha-↑ha° (.) ha-ha]
[*(leans back and looks away from Alex)*]
35 (0.4)
36 Molly (*leans forward and gazes to Alex*) you'll tell them it's for
37 the
38 (0.3)
39 Alex (3 syllables) [(1 syllable)]
40 Molly [beebee-s:-he]
41 [he-ha-ha-↑ha-ha s-ho (.) >I d- hon't think this'll be very]=
42 Alex [((*smiles*)) huh-huh °huh° °huh°]
43 Molly = succ↑essful< dho y-hou.

The sequence begins with an attempt by Molly to move away from the previous nonserious talk (Schegloff, 2001). 'oh dear' (line 01) displays a particular stance towards the prior talk. In this case the stance characterises the prior humour as an interlude between what can now follow (reading the paper) and whatever was happening before the care staff came in. At line 05 Alex initiates talk accompanied by a smile. Molly treats this turn as an utterance initiation through a redoing 'I'. Alex and Molly then proceed to collaboratively construct the utterance 'will tell them it is for the' (lines 11 to 29). As with extract 1 the business of utterance construction prior to Alex's laughter source turn does not feature overt smiling or laughter by

either participant. One difference in the current extract, however, is that Molly does appear to smile just before Alex's first laughter source attempt (line 31).

Having established 'I will tell them it is for the' Alex's speech in his next turn at line 31 is highly distorted. It comprises what appears to be a four-syllable string possibly saying 'BBC news'. Molly's smile in her prior redoing turn and in her overlap with Alex's current talk displays her stance as a recipient of nonserious talk. She then begins to laugh with accompanying laughter by Alex. Through this behaviour Molly is displaying an appreciation of Alex's laughter source.

In what follows we see a hitch in the humour talk sequence. After a short pause, Molly leans forwards and redoes the prior utterance up to the beginning of Alex's prior turn, namely the one to which she offered a humour appreciation. Thus, in line 36 Molly's 'you'll tell them it's for the' functions as an other-initiation of repair. There is no laughter during Molly's talk indicating a shift here from the prior appreciation to some other activity. As a link between prior talk and what is to follow this turn is designed for a specific completion, namely the trouble source element of the utterance in progress. In response Alex produces a repeat of his prior turn (line 39) to which Molly re-does as 'BBC' with inserted and post-repeat laughter. Alex also laughs in overlap.

The significance of this extract is that Molly's display of appreciation (her laughter) and her subsequent display of intelligibility are separated by an other-initiated self repair sequence that, in this case features a delayed other-initiation (Schegloff, 2000). The delay here is generated through Molly's laughter source appreciation at line 32.

Extract 3

The following talk comes just prior to that presented in extract 2. With the care assistants having just left the room amidst laughter by all participants, Molly comments that 'they didn't notice anything' to which Alex then adds that 'there is a bloody great camera' in the room. The humour here is based on the care assistants' apparent lack of awareness of a video camera in Alex's room. As with extract 2 there is a temporal distinction between Molly's appreciation of Alex's humour source turn and her subsequent intelligibility receipt, with post-trouble source laughter characterising a delayed or displaced other initiation of repair. In this extract the delayed OIR is followed by a much longer repair sequence.

Extract 3: A&M1

01 Molly uh huh [(0.5)] they didn't notice anything [did thahey =
 02 Alex [huh] [((turns to Molly,
 03 slight head shake))
 04 Molly =>heh-heh-heh-[HEH- heh] heh<
 05 Alex [heh ((turns away))]
 06 (0.3)
 07 Molly they didn't notice a thing!
 08 (0.2)
 09 Molly >do you always have that thing stuck up
 10 in[he-your room there's]=
 11 Alex [((turns to Molly opens mouth))]
 12 Molly = so much equipment though int there< ((leans towards Alex))
 13 Alex [(2 syllables)]
 14 [((smiles))]
 15 (0.2)

16 Molly there is
17 (0.3)
18 Alex a
19 (0.2)
20 Molly a
21 (0.3)
22 Alex (bab yell)
23 (0.5)
24 Molly bee el?
25 (0.4)
26 Alex o: o:
27 (0.3)
28 Molly o: o:
29 (0.3)
30 Alex (2 syllables)
31 (0.2)
32 Molly bloody
33 (0.3)
34 Alex (great [camr a!])
35 |((smiles))|
36 Molly [tc°ha] ((smiles and leans back and then forward))
37 Alex °ha=
38 Molly =a ↑What-°ha?
39 (0.3)
40 Alex (2 syllables)
41 (0.7)
42 Molly cee ar:=
43 Alex =(2 syllables)
44 (0.2)
45 Molly gee (.) ar:
46 (0.4)
47 Alex (e: a:)
48 (0.3)
49 Molly e: a:
50 (0.3)
51 Alex (tsee)
52 (1.0)
53 Molly grease
54 (0.8)
55 Alex ((slight head shake and lower lip movement))=
56 Molly gee ar: (.) e: a: =
57 Alex =tee
58 (0.1)
59 Molly tee a great(0.5) bluhudy
60 bluhudy gr[hate huh >ha-ha-ha-ha<(.)]
61 Alex |((smiles))huh ((looks to camera and back to Molly))|
62 Molly what? uh-huh
63 (0.3)
64 Alex camra
65 Molly >CAMhera stuck here when they [walk] in to it ↑yeah<huh(0.3)eh huh
66 Alex [huh]
67 Molly ((returns to opening CD wrapper)) ↑oh: ↓dear (.) I'll get the
68 Observer in a minute (.) you can have a look at the paper I think.

The talk begins with laughter from both participants. The care assistants' apparent lack of awareness is then revealed as the source of humour by Molly (line 01) with nonverbal

agreement by Alex (line 02). Molly then continues the humour talk with ongoing reference to the filming equipment in the room (lines 7-10).

Alex's first verbal contribution comes at line 13 with two syllables repeated by Molly as 'there is'. The collaborative utterance production then continues with 'a' and 'bloody'. At line 34 Alex attempts a two-word construction produced with more stress than his preceding talk. In retrospect it can be seen that Alex's 'great camera', with an accompanying smile, is an attempt to complete an utterance designed to elicit recipient laughter. The final two words are produced with paralinguistic resources contributing to the exaggerated nature of Alex's quip.

Molly's overlapping laughter token, smile and movement away from Alex (line 36) signal her treatment of his prior talk as a humour source. Her laughter overlaps with the second word of Alex's turn indicating that she already has enough evidence to respond to Alex's talk as humorous even before his turn completion. Having shown her appreciation of Alex's prior utterance, Molly's turn at line 38 locates a trouble with Alex's talk. This other initiation of repair appears to target Alex's immediately prior turn, that is the one to which she has already treated as humorous. This OIR also maintains an appreciation of humour evidenced by ongoing laughter. Alex and Molly then proceed to collaboratively construct the word 'great' (lines 40-57). During this repair sequence there is an absence of laughter but Molly returns to humour at line 59. Following a full production of the prior spelt 'great' she then links this repaired item with what had come prior ('bloody'). With further laughter she produces an other-initiation of repair with 'what?'. Thus, additional appreciation of the humour source is provided here whilst at the same time signalling ongoing trouble with Alex's prior talk. Additionally, Molly is revealing what she has understood so far in terms of intelligibility as well as providing an ongoing receipt of the laughter source. Alex now has an opportunity to complete the humour utterance. This second OIR (line 59) is not delayed but rather serves the function of orientating both participants back to the original humour source utterance, providing a next turn opportunity for Alex to produce an utterance completing laughter source.

At line 64, in response to Molly's OIR Alex produces a full word 'camra'. This is followed by a redoing of the repairable by Molly but with embedded laughter and word initial stress. Through this redoing she is providing an intelligibility receipt as well as further appreciation of the humour. Additionally, Molly links the repaired item with a display of understanding. This operates through an embellishment of Alex's quip in which Alex's utterance is extended by Molly, linking what he has said to Molly's earlier talk at line 08 (note also the repeat of 'stuck' with reference to the camera equipment).

Of additional note is Molly's use of 'yeah' (line 65) which may be displaying an acknowledgement or ratification of authorship (Jefferson, 1985) as well agreement of ideas. Such an acknowledgement may be important given the fact that the distinction between Alex as speaker and Molly as recipient is most likely less clear than that found in non-disordered speech conversation. Thus Molly is required to switch roles between collaborator-in-production and recipient of the talk action, meaning that, in this instance, she is again showing appreciating of a humour source that she herself has been implicated in through her voicing of Alex's turns.

As with extract 2 there is evidence of a distinction between the appreciation of a humour source turn and its intelligibility, with post-trouble source laughter characterising a delayed post-other initiation of repair. In addition this extract shows how the participants maintain the ongoing accomplishment of humour despite the occurrence of additional troubles within Alex's self-repair attempt. It is Molly's turn at lines 59-60 that brings both participants to a point at which an intelligible humour source can be supplied in the next turn.

Extract 4

The talk in extract 4 comes late on in the video recording. Immediately prior to the talk Alex and Molly have been looking at the computer screen. There has been a 20 second lapse in the conversation as Alex operates his head switches to copy a music CD.

Alex produces the utterance ‘how much an hour’. Ultimately the participants both treat this as a laughter source but Molly initially registers difficulty in understanding the utterance’s idiomatic referenceⁱⁱⁱ. In this case ‘how much an hour’ on its own proves to be insufficient for Molly’s understanding and requires additional repair talk to resolve an ambiguity in meaning.

Extract 4: A&M1

01 Molly ((gazes from computer screen to Alex and then away))
02 Alex ((opens mouth and looks to Molly))
03 Molly ((gazes to Alex))
04 Alex (how)
05 Molly ((leans forward to Alex))
06 Alex (how)
07 (0.3)
08 Molly how
09 (0.5)
10 Alex (em u:)
11 (0.2)
12 Molly have you
13 (0.5)
14 Alex (em u:)
15 (0.6)
16 Molly °ho:w°
17 (0.4)
18 Alex (em u:)
19 Molly em u:
20 (0.8)
21 Alex ce
22 Molly te
23 (0.4)
24 Alex s:
25 Molly ce
26 (0.5)
27 Alex °h°
28 Molly aitch
29 (0.3)
30 Alex ((moves lower lip down))
31 Molly how much
32 (1.0)
33 Alex (2 syllables)
34 (0.7)
35 Molly ((slight head tilt))
36 Alex (2 syllables)
37 (0.8)
38 Molly how much
39 (0.2)
40 Alex (ay an)
41 Molly ay an
42 (0.9)
43 Molly an

44 (0.3)
45 Alex (hour)
46 (0.2)
47 Molly el
48 (0.2)
49 Alex °h°
50 Molly aitch
51 (0.3)
52 Alex (o: you ar)
53 (2.4)
54 Molly °aitch o: you ar°
55 Alex ((moves lower lip down))
56 (1.0)
57 Molly how much a:n (0.3) hour=
58 Alex =((smiles)) ar[::]
59 Molly [°wh°-]
60 [WHO:s gonna get HOW much an hourah!
61 Alex [((smiles))
62 (0.2)
63 Alex ((smiles)) ar: [ar:]
64 Molly [what] (.)for [me doing this or]
65 [((points to computer))]
66 (0.2)
67 Alex for
68 (0.2)
69 Molly for
70 (0.3)
71 Alex the
72 (0.2)
73 Molly the
74 (0.5)
75 Alex (2 syllables)
76 (0.2)
77 Molly ay
78 (0.2)
80 Alex s:
81 (0.2)
82 Molly ce
83 (0.4)
84 Alex te=
85 Molly =te
86 (0.8)
87 Alex (eye en)
88 (0.8)
89 Molly ((smiles)) °ha-stop making me lahaugh [°h-Alex: he-he-he]
90 Alex [°uh-ha° uh-ha]
91 Molly (0.2) °huh-ha°
92 (0.2)
93 Molly ha-ha >how much an hour for the< (.) ay te:
94 Alex ar (0.8) ay
95 Molly ay
96 (0.2)
97 Alex (ce)
98 (0.7)
99 Molly ce
100 (0.2)
101 Alex t=

102 Molly =te=
 103 Alex =((moves lower lip down))
 104 (1.1)
 105 Alex eye en
 106 (0.4)
 107 Molly eye en
 108 (0.4)
 109 Alex (ge)
 110 (1.0)
 111 Molly act-hing [°h-he-he°] hah I don't think we're making
 112 Alex [ah huh]
 113 Molly a [very good] job of this
 114 Alex [uh hah]

Firstly, as with the previous extracts, Alex and Molly collaboratively construct the first utterance over a series of turns (lines 04 – 57). With parallels to extracts 2 and 3 this construction features a number of within utterance other-initiated self repair sequences operating on Alex's problematic intelligibility. One important distinction between Alex's delivery in this extract and those presented earlier is that his first smile (line 58) comes just after Molly completes her first re-doing of the full utterance (line 57). Thus, his speech during utterance construction is not accompanied by any nonverbal or paralinguistic cues associated with nonserious talk. A further departure from the prior extracts is that Molly, at line 57, produces a complete re-doing of Alex's prior utterance. Through this re-doing she provides an unequivocal display of intelligibility but her treatment of this utterance as a possible humour source is less clear. Unlike the prior extracts there is no laughter during Molly's redoing. Following Alex's smile (line 58) Molly initiates repair by signalling an ambiguity in person reference as the trouble source. Alex's next turn (line 63) is a vocalisation that may be laughter or an attempt to talk, potentially providing a response initiation to Molly's question. However Molly's own talk overlaps with Alex's and offers a candidate response to her own enquiry. Here her ambiguity is shown to relate to their concurrent computer related activity (copying CDs). She is offering one possibility that Alex's prior utterance is humorous with reference to payment for an ongoing task to which they are both directed. In ending her turn with 'or' Molly provides evidence of the possibility that there may be an account for Alex's turn other than her computer work suggestion.

Alex now proceeds to provide this alternative account. He begins (line 67) by using the same formulation found in Molly's turn: 'for + reference'. This utterance is then jointly constructed with 'for the a-c-t' (lines 67-85). At line 87 Alex adds two more letter names but there is an interruption to the utterance-in-progress in which Molly complains (nonseriously) about Alex making her laugh. Molly now returns to the utterance by repeating what is already known. Further repair work on individual grapheme names ensues before Molly animates and appreciates as humorous the final element of the account 'acting' (line 111).

What distinguishes this extract from those previous is that the trouble source signalled through 'WHO:s gonna get HOW much an hourah!' (line 60) is not one based on unintelligibility. Rather, the nature of the trouble relates to the reference of the humour source turn. By invoking 'acting' as a performance for which they may get paid (for making the video), Alex is able to maintain the humour intent without having to offer a formal explanation of the humour source. Differences between the troubles in this extract and those presented earlier are explored further in the Discussion.

Discussion

In this paper we have used the principles of Conversation Analysis to examine nonserious talk produced by a man with a severe dysarthria. We have also investigated the ways in which this talk is appreciated by its recipient and how problems with intelligibility and understanding of humour-source talk are identified and resolved. In addition we have considered how nonserious talk is produced and maintained through repair. Fundamentally the analysis shows how appreciability and intelligibility can feature as distinct practices.

As shown in extract 1, Alex and Molly are able to collaboratively construct an utterance over a series of successive turns. Whilst there are ongoing troubles with intelligibility during utterance construction the overall action (a nonserious tease) is shown by Molly to be simultaneously appreciable through laughter and intelligible through a redoing of the complete utterance.

It is not the case however that all of Alex's attempts at humour are unproblematic. In extracts 2 and 3 there is evidence of other initiated repair characterised by immediate post-humour source laughter (appreciation) followed by the signalling of a trouble with the prior laughter source turn. Here the OIR is delayed. In the first instance the trouble is resolved promptly through Molly's repeat of the whole utterance up to the point of trouble. Alex's redoing of 'BBC' enables Molly to show her understanding and reinforce her appreciation through more laughter in the next turn. In the second instance, Molly's repair initiation also necessitates a repeat of the whole trouble source turn but the repair attempt is constructed over a number of turns. This is accomplished by Alex breaking down the trouble source (great camera) into paired or individual grapheme names, each taking a turn exchange in its own right. It is only nearing the end of the repair sequence that Molly reinstates humour appreciation by redoing the earlier utterance components together with laughter. She then provides a next turn opportunity for Alex to complete the humour source talk as intelligibly as he can. In constructing the repair in this way both Alex and Molly are able to return to the nonserious nature of the talk. One of the main factors here may well be Molly's receipt of the laughter source repairables. It is Molly who animates (Goffman, 1981) rather than simply repeats the complete laughter-source utterances in extracts 1, 2 and 3, and, simultaneously, shows appreciation of that talk by laughing through and after their production.

Extract 4 is different insofar as the nature of the trouble source ('how much an hour') is not one of (un)intelligibility but rather of reference ambiguity. Molly is unable establish the person to whom Alex might be referring (who's gonna get how much an hour?) and cannot fully appreciate any nonserious intent. She offers one candidate account but then provides an opportunity for Alex to produce an alternative. Alex proceeds to repair the trouble by invoking acting as the activity with which they have been engaged. Further humour arises here not just from the colloquial use of 'how much an hour' but also by inferring that their current activity, making a naturalistic video is acting and therefore non-naturalistic. The way in which Alex repairs this trouble may be important in terms of maintaining a humour framework.

In the data presented here Molly's repair initiations reveal two distinct types of trouble source. An *intelligibility* problem in extract 2 is signalled through Molly's redoing of Alex's prior utterance up to the point of trouble. In extract 3 she uses an open class (Drew, 1997) repair initiator ('a what?'). In both instances Alex responds with a repeat of his immediately prior talk. The difficulty in both cases appears to be one of problematic hearing. The trouble in extract 4 however involves a problem with *understandability*. Molly successfully reproduces Alex's utterance ('how much an hour') before querying its meaning in relation to person reference. This distinction contributes to previous findings relating to dysarthric talk (Bloch and Wilkinson, 2009) and communication aid use (Bloch and Wilkinson, 2004). The

issue here is that trouble sources in an environment of severe speech disability are not restricted to unintelligibility but can also encompass a wider range of problems. 'how much an hour' may be particularly problematic given its sequential placement. This utterance is produced whilst both participants are engaged in a computer related activity and it is this current local activity that Molly utilises in her attempt to understand the utterance's meaning. Through Alex's subsequent repair Molly learns that he is actually making reference to the video data recoding ('acting'). This is of course a concurrent activity but one that is perhaps more of a background or global task in contrast to the more immediate/hands-on computer work. It may be further problematic as a construction given its idiomatic framing.

An additional issue is how nonseriousness itself is accomplished within an environment of severe speech unintelligibility, that is, what resources do the participants themselves utilise in their orientation towards talk designed for nonserious receipt. At least three factors may be relevant here. The first is smiling. Alex's use of smiling may be one way through which he can signal his talk as nonserious. It is not the case that he smiles throughout his talk but rather at specific places. In the first three extracts Alex can be seen to smile at the beginning of those multi-turn utterances that are subsequently treated as nonserious by both participants. Similarly he smiles during the last element of his utterance in extracts 1 and 3. The second factor is context. In extracts 2 and 3 there has been humour talk prior to Alex's nonserious utterances and even though Molly may be attempting to mark a transition to serious talk (see extract 2 lines 01-03) Alex continues with verbal and nonverbal humour talk. Thirdly, there is the placement of laughter. It has been shown throughout that Molly's use of laughter immediately post-trouble source in extracts 2 and 3 marks her appreciation of Alex's humour intent. Additional evidence comes from Alex's laughter occurring once Molly has initiated her own laughing.

As mentioned in the Introduction other-initiated repair has the potential to raise a lapse in competence by the trouble source speaker. In interactions featuring people with communication and severe physical disabilities there may additional risks associated with judgements of ability (Higginbotham and Wilkins, 1999). These risks extend beyond the individual with the disability to include those with whom they interact. Thus co-participants may also be judged in terms of their ability to interact and make sense of disordered speech and/or language. For Alex and Molly one way in which competence can be maintained is through the ongoing display of understanding through intelligibility. As shown throughout, Molly's explicit re-does of Alex's turns are an important resource for the maintenance of intersubjectivity. In addition there are also the social actions that Alex attempts. In attempting to competently pull off quips and nonserious teases Alex requires Molly to display not just an understanding of what he has said but also a timely appreciation of the humour he is invoking. In all of the extracts presented here Molly shows this appreciation and reveals her own competence as a recipient of humour. For this dyad at least claiming some grasp of the prior talk through laughter followed by an OIR does not appear to cause problems for either participant.

Implications/conclusions

This paper has focussed on nonserious talk and offered some insights into the practice of delayed OIR. Ongoing analysis of talk involving people with severe motor speech disorders is likely to reveal further features of action accomplishment particularly where intelligibility is problematic. Of additional interest is how different co-participants might impact on the competencies of speakers with dysarthria particularly where actions like humour are being attempted.

We have yet to consider whether there may be any direct clinical implications arising from this study. A CA influenced approach to motor speech assessment has been proposed (Bloch and Wilkinson, 2011) with work underway to develop a clinical tool for profiling acquired dysarthria in interaction. Whether specific practices such as nonserious talk production and appreciation are amenable to intervention awaits further investigation. Evidence drawn from recent aphasia intervention research (Wilkinson, 2010; Wilkinson, Bryan et al., 2010; Beeke, Maxim et al., 2011) does indicate that a CA inspired approach may well offer a complementary approach to other forms of intervention.

Finally, given Alex's severely restricted physical speech production abilities it is worth commenting that successful humour talk is possible. The humour sources produced by Alex include nonserious teasing ('you can't get the staff' and 'how much an hour'), a mock threat ('I'll tell them it's for the BBC') and hyperbole ('bloody great camera'). Despite problems encountered in the latter three extracts, both participants are able to engage in practices that generate and appreciate humour talk. The analysis presented in this paper indicates that nonserious talk is achievable despite the profound challenges of severe speech disability.

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ⁱ This tease invokes Alex as an employer expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of Molly's assistance. The phrase itself is somewhat idiomatic in its use as a vehicle for nonserious complaining in British culture.

ⁱⁱ What is observed here is a familiar pattern of tease response activity (Drew, 1978). Namely a clear understanding that the tease is not designed to be taken seriously but with an attempt by Molly to put the record straight.

ⁱⁱⁱ The humour here is similar in style to that in extract 1 ('you can't get the staff') insofar as it is a nonserious colloquial phrase invoking payment for work in circumstances where no contractual work is being done or payment expected. This phrase is typically used informally in British culture as a nonserious tease between familiar interlocutors.