

“Laughing matters: A conversation analytic account the use of laughter by suspects and officers in the police interview”

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Abstract

This conversation analytic research uses police interviews as data in investigating the role of laughter by police officers and suspects in managing aspects of police interviews. Laughter in the institutional context of the police interview has not been subject to extensive research in this field, unlike that of ordinary conversation. The two-tiered approach to the analysis finds the basic actions performed by the laughter (such as in response to a ridiculous comment in the prior turn) are uniform across participants. Attention is then given to the way it is used, on a secondary level, in differing ways by the participants. The suspect uses laughter to support his/her position, for instance that of innocence, or to deflect contradiction of the officer. On the part of the officer, laughter is used to frame a ‘time out’ from the constraints he/she is operating under. This highlights the tailoring of the way laughter is used according to the role played in the police interview.

The police interview

The police interview can be seen as the institutional and interactional manifestation of the social ‘battle’ between the police and suspects; the social and perhaps moral barrier between the participants could be likened to Holdaway and Rock’s “set pieces of social control, which are almost by definition wrapped in symbols and ritual” (Holdaway and Rock 1998: 156). Criminologically, the police interview is an aspect of the criminal justice system that has been the basis for much research such as: police interview techniques (Fisher et. al. 1987; Baldwin 1993), deception and behavioural cues in confessions (Shuy 1998, Davis et. al. 2005) and the production of false confessions (Horselenberg et. al 2006). Also offenders’ techniques of neutralisation of crimes (Sykes and Matza 1957), officer training for interviews (Powell 2002 Memon et. al. 1995) and tape recording in interviews, (Barnes and Webster 1980, Willis 1984) as well as the criminal justice system in general (Sinclair 1983, Butters et. al. 1993). Other explorations such as video recording of interviews (Baldwin 1992) and tactics to elicit confessions (Pearse and Gudjonsson 1999) use the police interview itself as data.

Conversation analysis (CA) is the detailed study of the features within the sequential structure of interaction which gives the researcher an insight into the structured social actions performed through interaction. The attention to the accomplishment of interaction on a microscopic level is reflected through the detail captured in the transcription which allows the richness of the data to be analysed.

"...detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs" (Sacks 1984: 24)

The majority of non CA explorations into the police interview eschew the empirical approach for those such as interviews with suspects after they had been interviewed by the police (Sykes and Matza, 1957), or interviews with officers regarding their performance (Kebbell and Wagstaff 1996). However, this trend may also be an indication of the difficulty of availability of police interview tapes as data, in addition to the relatively recent turn from verbatim recording of interviews to tape recording practices making this area available for research outside law enforcement.

Conversation analytically, the police interview is a specific type of institutional interaction, such as the interaction between the doctor and patient in mental hospital admission interviews (Bergmann 1992) and interaction between the defence counsel and the victim in a courtroom (Drew 1992). These types of interaction are also based largely on the question-answer sequencing similar to the police interview (Heydon 2005). Conversation analytic research addressing interaction in the police interview does so from different angles, such as confessions to murder (Watson 1999), the interpreter in the police interview, (Komter 2003, 2005) and the general structure of the language of the police interview (Heydon 2005). Although there are recent advances in CA in the empirical exploration of police interviews such as storytelling (Holt and Johnson 2006), so-prefaced questions (Johnson 2002) and questioning strategies (Johnson and Newbury 2006) in the police interview, in addition to their general structure (Heydon 2005), laughter remains relatively unexplored in this context.

Laughter

The aim of this paper is to investigate the use of laughter by the suspect and officer in the police interview; analysing the ways in which laughter is used to accomplish specific tasks in the interview by the participants. Laughter in ordinary conversation provides a structure by which laughter in this institutional setting can also be analysed, and its similarities and differences to it observed.

From in response to a comedian to in everyday talk, laughter punctuates interaction; its production and maintenance a collaborative experience between the participants and its management indicative of their orientation to the talk. The discovery of laughter as a phenomenon constrained and co-ordinated in talk-in-interaction on a finely tuned level (Jefferson 1979; 1984; Jefferson et. al. 1987) rather than a uniformly simple action in response to humour is reflected in the detailed transcription of laughter (e.g. the transition from being represented as '((laughs))' to 'hehaha'). The transcription reflects the different types of laughter varying from bubbling-through laughter to full laughter I.

¹ See Transcription Convention Glossary for definitions and transcription conventions

The analysis of laughter in contexts such as institutional settings provides an insight into how it is used as an interactional device to accomplish tasks within the interaction. The use of 'gallows humour', humour amongst female sex workers (Sanders 2004) and Alexander and Wells' (1991) study into police officers using laughter to deal with psychological trauma at times of extreme stress are examples of how laughter can reveal much about the context in which it is produced.

A significant body of literature focuses on what laughter is used to achieve in ordinary conversation. It can be used as a tool to enable talk about troubles (Jefferson 1984), to affirm relationships or otherwise (Glenn 1995), or create intimacy between participants in conversation (Sacks Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). Jefferson (1979) also analysed techniques practiced by the speaker in order to invite laughter responses from the addressee(s), such as the speaker laughing after an utterance or, if laughter was 'expected' by the speaker, laughing after a pause in which the addressee(s) failed to do so.

The key findings of this research are that laughter is used in different ways by the officer and the suspect as a tool in the police interview. These differences highlight the contrasting restrictions of the officer and suspect in this setting. The officer is constrained by the codes of conduct, if breached might mean the interview is inadmissible as evidence. The suspects, if protesting innocence, may not be believed. The use of laughter to reduce the constraints' effect is investigated.

Methodology

While many approaches are concerned with linguistic variations or differences associated with other exogenous factors, CA has revealed procedures independent of such variations. These include the organisation of turntaking and the systematic nature of interaction on all levels through all contexts. Other methodologies such as content analysis, discourse analysis and systematic functional linguistics are all current approaches to spoken interaction. Their focus lies on glosses such as the credibility of participants, their lexis, syntax, order of production, and the use of pragmatic or rhetoric devices rather than the deeper forms of prosody, intonation and timing of interaction.

The use of the conversation analytic approach in this research enables the elucidation of details within interaction as well as its' orderly and sequential nature. This focus brings to the forefront the assumption that reality does not lie outside the words spoken but is shaped by them. It is the use of CA that enables a better understanding of the fundamental structure of police interviews through the in situ discourse practices of the participants rather than their post hoc experiences and views. It is important to note that although the individual utterances are unique (having occurred in a specific environment at a particular place and time) the interaction is bound by the structure of language. They do not occur in isolation

and the organisation of the interaction in the context of the police interview remains at the forefront of this research. The manner in which utterances are used reflects social orientations as well as the orientation to the context in which they are produced. As such, an analysis of institutional interaction is not an analysis of social interactional theories, but rather the analysis of the way in which participants accomplish social actions through the way they orient themselves.

"...this objective [of CA] is one of describing the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behaviour and understand and deal with the behaviour of others" (Atkinson and Heritage 1984: 1)

Forming part of wider research into the structure of police-suspect interaction, this research uses a selection of data from a corpus of 150 police interview tapes from a British police force.

Findings

This research has found dual and participant-dependent uses of laughter. Although the suspect and officer use laughter in similar ways on a basic level, that is, to identify the prior utterance as unexpected, ridiculous or otherwise of note, further analysis shows that the suspect uses laughter to strengthen his/her account and the officer uses laughter to frame a moment away from the strict protocol, such as a 'jokey' aside. Transcripts of police interviews with officers, suspects and witnesses are shown throughout the analysis, which concentrates on the suspect's use of laughter, then the officer's.

Suspect - Laughter to strengthen accounts

In the extract below the suspect has been arrested for an assault on his wife. The officer is reading a statement made by the wife about being hit on the head by the suspect with an object that was later found to be a statue or miniature figurine. In this excerpt the suspect is claiming it was he who was hit on the head with a statue by his wife, and not the other way around.

The suspect's laughter (line 427) is in response to the immediately prior utterance; a statement read by the officer alleging he hit his wife over the head. The suspect uses the laughter to signal the mistaken nature of the content of the statement being read out; the laughter reinforces the (literally) 'laughable' nature of the prior police statement. This is supported by the suspect's provision of a contrasting account than that of the officers. The laughter is also used by the suspect to deflect the disaffiliative consequences² of contradicting the officer; this deflection is buttressed by its placement through 'no', the

² Contradicting a police officer is a disaffiliative action; that is, one that does not affiliate with the social action being accomplished in this context. Laughter as a method of displaying disaffiliation is addressed in Carter (2005)

bubbling-though laughter physically breaking up the word and softening and distorting its' output.

In the officer's turn (line 429), he asks a question based on the suspect's prior statement, and does not attend to the laugh by topicalising it or laugh in response to the suspect's laughter, suggesting the laughter was not taken by the officer as reciprocal.

(1) Hit on the head with a statue

- 420 PI >but she can< hear the object breaking into smaller piece:s >I
421 think originally she said she thought it was a< bottle (0.8) but later on
422 she's found a small statue (0.2) which is broke:n
423 (0.5)
424 S hm[m
425 PI [in the house and she's assumed its tha:t (0.3) i[s that ri:ght
426 S [y yeah
427 S n(hh)o I-I I've had the statue over my: head
428 (0.9)
429 PI have you got any injuries to your head
450 S yes (0.5) your doctor (0.6) pointed them out
T29-31-06

In this extract, drugs were found in the suspect's wardrobe. He is being questioned about how long they were there, and in (3), what type of drugs they were.

In line 112 the suspect answers the question posed by the officer in the previous turn. The officer does not respond to the suspect's answer; this turn not taken is reflected in the pause on line 113. Following this pause the suspect takes another turn where he reformulates his answer into a less precise answer with laughter. The suspect's laughter is part of a retroactive reformulation of his prior turn; a direct answer to the officer's question 'how long do you think it's been in your wardrobe'. The suspect's first turn (on line 112) is a straightforward answer to the officer's question, however he uses laughter in his second turn to alter the repeated answer 'months' into a vaguer one, buttressed by his use of 'probably' afterwards. This answer is also used to distance him from awareness of the drugs, to reduce the degree of culpability that is associated with knowing the exact details of how long the drugs had been there, and the laughter through the opening part of the reformulated turn buttresses this action.

This turn is used by the suspect to suggest that the drugs had been there a laughable amount of time, and in doing so, distancing himself from them. This is supported by the verbal explanation following this laughter as well as his previous utterance 'ages ago' (line 108). Although not disagreeing with the officer (such as excerpt 1) with the charge or the

presence of the drugs in his wardrobe, laughter is used to display his reaction to the charge as laughable as the drugs had been there for so long even he had forgotten their presence. This is supported by the suspect's later claim that he'd forgotten they was there. The officer's interpretation of the suspects turn as 'distancing' can be seen on line 118, where he does not topicalise the laughter or respond to the suspect answer other than producing a new question turn.

(2) Drugs in the wardrobe

- 105 PI why do you think it might be sp^leed
 106 (0.6)
 107 S cu:z (0.6) >over the par-< i've took it before and like it might just be: (0.3)
 from when
 108 i've taken it and thro:wn it (0.5) >an like l^left it there< from ages *l^lago
 109 (0.9)
 110 PI >ho:w long< do you think its been in your wardro:be
 111 (0.8)
 112 S monthS:
 113 (0.7)
 114 S l^l mo(hh)nths probably
 115 (0.6)
 116 S coz i havent done it in about three months,
 117 (1.6)
 118 PI wh^lo does it belong to:
 119 (2.0)

T22-20-06

Three turns later, the suspect responds to a question again with bubbling-through laughter (line 129). This laughter is used by the suspect to point to the rather leading nature of the officer's prior question (lines 126/127). The bubbling-through laughter shows the suspect treating the officer's question as a joke, and shows the suspect as unwilling to provide the answer the officer is seeking. This use of laughter is providing a 'time out', a joking episode rather than a serious answer, and is used as a way out for the suspect from answering the question and incriminating himself. This is supported by the suspect's answer, 'glucose', which is a facetiously literal answer. In a similar way to his earlier laughter (extract 2), the suspect uses it to support his distancing behaviour.

The pause after the suspect's turn (line 130) suggests the officer left space for elaboration but it wasn't taken by the suspect. This expectation by the officer of the suspect to fill the pause with a further explanation highlights that 'glu(hh)cose' was seen by the officer as a time out from the 'serious' interaction, rather than a straightforward answer. That the

suspect does not fill the pause with a subsequent 'serious' answer further suggests his use of non-serious talk as a method of avoiding answering and incrimination.

The officer then continues without topicalising the suspect's turn; however the reformulation of her prior leading question into a direct one (line 131) suggests that the suspect's turn as an aside has been attended to accordingly.

(3) Drugs in the wardrobe ii

120 S me
121 (1.8)
122 PI can you remember where you got it from
123 (0.4)
124 S n*ah
125 (4.5)
126 PI >you say< >i mean it< >its certainly< (.) it's a white powder< and it looks
like (.) speed
127 or amphetamine to me: (0.9) is there anything else >that it< could be:
128 (1.5)
129 S gluc(hh)ose
130 (1.6)
131 PI right but you tell me you think its speed
132 S yeah its not (0.2) >nothing more than speed or<
T22-20-06

In the following extract the suspect is being questioned about the cannabis she was arrested for carrying.

Similarly to the extract 3 the suspect's laughter is used to highlight the potentially incriminating nature of the officer's question (line 152); potentially incriminating as it is attempting to ascertain whether the suspect is guilty of the additional and far more serious crime of possession with intent to supply. The suspect uses laughter to illustrate the literally 'laughable' concept of her using these drugs to supply others. This laughter used to support her version of the facts, interestingly, is based on the logical premise of there 'not being enough' to sell on, rather than that she wouldn't do it. This employment of laughter to treat the officer's suggestion as ludicrous supports her position of innocence of the additional crime.

After the laughing episode the suspect very quietly utters 'sorry', then pauses, and then takes another turn in which she directly answers the officer's question with 'no'. That the suspect apologises suggests some assessment of the immediately prior utterance (her laughing

episode, line 153) as inappropriate or wrong in some way and her next turn 'no', is used as a 'real' and direct answer to the officer's question.

The officer then shows a response to the suspects second turn by repeating her answer 'no'. She then, in her next turn, attends to the suspect's first turn by reformulating the suspect's answer into further question, avoiding topicalisation of the laughter but drawing on the suspect's knowledge claim about drug amounts. That the laughter is not responded to as an invitation to laugh suggests the officer interprets laughter as not a part of their joint exchange.

The officer displays her interpretation of the suspect's laughing account as part of serious talk by her requests for clarification on line 159 and again on line 164.

(4) No deal

- 147 PI so BASICALLY >I MEAN IVE< (.) >arrested you for being in possession
 148 of cannabis< which you admit to h[aving] (0.2) >and you're saying that
 149 you-< (0.4) had- (.) that- (.) to smoke for yourself is that corre:ct
 150 S mmh[mm]
 151 (0.5)
 152 PI r[ight] did you intend on (1.1) >giving it< to anybody e:lSe
 153 S [kh-he th(h)ere's no:t enough (.) [sorry][
 154 (0.4)
 155 S nah
 156 (0.3)
 157 PI no:
 158 (1.2)
 159 PI >what d'you mean< there's not enough (0.4) well how much >would you
 160 say< was the:re
 161 (1.4)
 162 S [i] -dunno
 163 (0.6)
 164 PI tk- >well how many< joints do you think you'd get out of that-you just
 165 said there's not enough to sell, so how much is there
 T31-27-06

Officer – Laughter to frame a 'time-out'

The suspect in extract 5 has been arrested after a long distance high speed police chase in an allegedly stolen car. The interaction shown occurs after the officer opens the interview and starts the questioning. At this point the suspect has made no comment to the four questions that have already been asked; the following exchange is part of the officer attempting to establish whether the suspect will answer any questions at all.

The laughter is used by the officer to draw attention to the nonsensical nature of the immediately prior utterance, in which the suspect answers 'no comment' to a question about whether he is going to answer 'no comment' to all questions. The officer uses the laughter to highlight the suspect's response as an unusual response to what is a straightforward and ordinary question. This is supported by the officer's statement immediately before the laughter 'he can't even say yes to that'.

The officer's laughter also frames his turn as a 'time out' from the rigours of the interview. By using laughter, his turn can be taken as an acceptable part of ordinary conversation rather than his comments about the suspect's use of 'no comment' (as is the suspect's right) being taken as a possible breach of interview protocol. That the solicitor interjects before the onset of the officer's laughter suggests the officer's utterance, before the laughter was produced, was taken to be a possible breach rather than a 'time out'. This supports the central role of laughter in the management of enabling breaks from the normal rigidity of this institutional interaction, something sustained next when the officer's similar statement with a second laughter (the laughter produced first) is not interrupted by the solicitor.

The officer's second laugh (line 66) is used again to highlight the suspect's use of 'no comment' as ridiculous (supported by his statement 'not quite a catch all answer that'). In doing this he reaffirms his prior laughter of line 61, highlighting why he had previously laughed as the solicitor's interruption just before the laughter suggested she had taken it as a possible breach. The officer's laughter is again used to frame this episode as a 'time out' in which he makes a joke of the suspect's use of no comment, however the laughter is not reciprocated by the other participants; the pause after the laughter showing this opportunity to reciprocate remaining untaken. That the second officer was seeking reciprocal laughter is shown when it is not forthcoming, and he, after a pause, apologises. The first officer does not topicalise the laughter or the content of the second officer's prior turn, although he does refer to the solicitor's turn (line 69) and his emphasis on line 71 of 'colleague' may suggest, in this context, that the colleague had in fact already said too much.

(5) No comment to that

- 58 PI okay is it your intention (0.5) to: (0.3) offer no comment to (1.8) any further questions
- 59 ..hh I should put to you (0.4) with regard to this manner
- 60 S [no comment]
- 61 P2 [tk- he can't even say yes t[o that eh hu hu hu he he ha ha
- 62 So [>mr. gou<- mr. gould will be exercising his right to silence
- 63 obviously yes
- 64 P2 okay
- 65 PI okay

66 P2 □ hhha its (.) not quite a ca- (0.2)catch question you know >yeah go on< (0.4)
 so:rry
 67 (1.0)
 68 PI i've got nothing else in that case as you've er (.) declined to comment to far,
 (0.5) and
 69 your solicitor has said that you will be exercising your right of silence
 throughout, i've got
 70 nothing else ...hh (1.2) .hh >that I consider it's worth asking< you at this
 stage, unless my
 71 colleague's got anything that he'd like to say
 72 (2.5)
 73 P2 □ no□
 T19-26-06

In extract 6 the suspect has been arrested for deception. The officer, after opening the interview by reading the suspect her rights and confirming her identity, tries to establish casual terms of address.

The officer's laughter is produced after the suspect's refusal to answer a polite aside (on lines 31/32) on how she would like to be addressed. This laughter (line 35) is used to deal with the officer's potential 'loss of face' from when his friendly aside in his previous turn is rejected by the suspect. The laughter is used by the officer to bring attention to the unexpected nature of the suspect's response. The suspect's rejection of the officer's overture to be friendly also represents a rejection of the officer's attempt at a respite from the questioning. Her use of 'no comment' marks her response firmly within the serious framework of the police interview, and not in line with the officer's. The officer responds with laughter, which is used to explicitly frame this response as a 'time out', perhaps additionally as a retroactive reparative measure as a result of his initial attempt at a time out unexpectedly being received in a serious way. This 'time out' is used by the officer to enable him to comment on the suspect's unusual use of 'no comment' without topicalising it and so ensuring he does not compromise interview protocol, as seen in extract 5.

That this was a respite from the interview can also be seen through the officer's return to the business of interviewing. The return is clearly marked by the repeat of the utterance made immediately prior to the aside ('you were originally arrested', line 31), again after the aside (lines 35/36); signalling his continuance of the interview from the point prior to the exchange.

(6) What shall I call you?

26 you do not have to say anything unless you wish to< do so (0.[h]3) but
 anything you

27 say (.) may be given in □ evidence (0.2) do you understand that:
28 (0.2)
29 S □ yes□
30 (0.3)
31 PI □ okay□ tha:nks (1.2) no::w (.) you were ori:ginally arrested (0.5) ker >is it
32 alright if i call you< kerry: o:r (.) what >d'you prefer< to be ca:lled
33 (1.5)
34 S no c□ omme:nt
35 PI □ □ h::: ((wheasy laugh)) h(h)o(h)k(h)ay (0.2) o(h)k(h)ay, (0.4) E:RR (1.7) you
were
36 ori:ginally arrested on the sixth of a:pril this ye:ar (0.3) erm (.) fo:r (.) on
suspicion of
37 two offences of decept□ ion (0.[h]3) and that is that yo:u (0.4) <on that date>
went into
T30-25-06

Conclusion

This analysis shows that the basic functions of laughter by the officer and the suspect in the police interview appear very similar; both employ laughter to point to some aspect of the prior utterance as something of note such as laughable, ludicrous, unexpected or unreasonable. This research has identified that laughter is also employed, on a secondary level, to accomplish specific and separate tasks in the police interview. The suspects' and officers' respective use of laughter affords them additional communicative means; for the suspect it can be employed to buttress his/her position (such as that of innocence), and provides the officer a 'time out' from the serious interaction to communicate more freely.

These secondary level uses are shown to be employed in different ways by the suspect and officer. An example of which is the case of deflection; used as a distancing tool by the suspect, and a way of saving 'face' and avoiding topicalisation by the officer. These secondary level uses, however, are sometimes even used, in part, in similar ways, although again for divergent purposes; both the suspect and officer have been shown to use laughter to structure their turn as an 'escape' from the serious business of interviewing. The participants use laughter to frame instances of ordinary conversation as a departure from the interview proper; as a means of avoiding sanction, supporting the thesis that laughter is managed context-specifically. This can be seen where the suspect uses laughter to avoid answering a question seriously (such as in excerpt 3), and, as in excerpts 4 and 5, for the officer it is used to enable him/her to comment on the suspect's making no comment as a response. This suggests that laughter may be used for similar interactional purposes by both the suspect and the officer, but that they can be directed toward differential second order objectives due to the divergent positions, rights and obligations of the two parties.

Although the differing roles of the suspect and the officer in the context of the police interview may create a natural disparity between the participants, this paper illustrates that their joint orientation to laughter as a tool in their interaction is also evident.

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Transcription Convention Glossary (adapted from Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998))

PI	Interviewing police officer
P2	Second interviewing police officer
S	Suspect
So	Solicitor
M	Mother
(0.5)	The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of seconds.
(.)	A dot enclosed in brackets indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.
=	The equals sign indicates latching between utterances.
[An open square bracket between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset of a spate of overlapping talk
.hh	A dot before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath. The more h's the longer the breath.
hh	An 'h' indicates an out-breath. The more h's the longer the breath.
y(hh)es	An 'h' or collection of h's in brackets indicates 'bubbling through laughter'. The more h's the longer the laugh. This laughter occurs mid-word; its placement denoting the placement and length of laughter
hh haha heh	The variety of sounds occurring as a result of types of full laughter are onomatopoeically denoted by variety of letters in order to render as literal transcription as possible. This results in a collection of h's, hah's, heh's, hih's and variants thereof.
((coughs))	A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity.
-	A dash indicates a sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
:	Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or

	letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
!	Exclamation marks are used to indicate an animated or emphatic tone.
()	Empty parenthesis with a large gap indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
(guess)	The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance.
.	A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
,	A comma indicates a 'continuing' intonation.
?	A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.
*	An asterisk indicates a 'croaky' pronunciation of the immediately following section.
▸ ▹	Pointed arrows indicate a market rising or falling intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.
a:	Less marked falls in pitch can be indicated by using underlining immediately preceding a colon.
a:	Less marked rises in pitch can be indicated by using a colon which itself is underlined.
under	Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
CAPITALS	Words in capitals mark a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.
▫ ▫	Degree signs are used to indicate the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
Thaght	A 'gh' indicates that the word in which it is placed had a guttural pronunciation.
> <	'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
< >	'Less than' and 'more than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably slower than the surrounding talk.
▫	Arrows in the left margin point to specific parts of an extract discussed in the text.