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***Bogans, lawyers and teachers:* On the interactional achievement of word meanings**

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Abstract: The extent to which context, including pragmatic processes, plays a role in understanding the meaning of words has been long debated by scholars working at the interface of pragmatics and semantics. In this paper, we consider how the meanings of *bogan*, *lawyer* and *teacher* are interactionally accomplished in everyday encounters amongst Australian speakers of English. Building on methodological and theoretical insights from interactional pragmatics, the dynamic model of meaning, and dialogic syntax, we propose that locally situated, occasion-specific meanings of terms such as, *bogan*, *lawyer* and *teacher*, may be achieved with respect to contingently-relevant trajectories of social action(s) in sequences of talk, but that participants draw from recurrent sequential practices for doing so. We analyze how speakers generate dialogic resonance through the use of recurrent syntactic frames to co-construct locally situated semantic fields encompassing different words and predicates *in-situ*, and how these are underpinned by common interactional process that facilitate the negotiation of locally-situated meanings. We suggest that these locally-situated meanings draw from, and so are systematically afforded and constrained by aspects of abstracted lexical meanings to varying degrees, but that participants nevertheless are able to shape the meanings of those words for locally-situated purposes. In sum, we propose that what a word is taken to mean in locally situated interactions is invariably interwoven with the recurrent practices for framing those word meanings across turns of talk.

Keywords: word meaning, pragmatics, occasioned semantics, dialogic syntax, DMM (dynamic model of meaning), interactional pragmatics

1 Introduction

One of the key insights to have emerged from work in linguistic pragmatics is that word meanings are very often under-specified. While work at the semantics-

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pragmatics interface was initially focused on indexicals, it subsequently became apparent that connectors, discourse particles, adverbials, adjectives and so on very often require some form of inference for the context-relevant meaning of those expressions to be understood by the participants in question (Carston 2002; Horn 2009). Work on lexical pragmatics by relevance theorists and other post-Griceans have pushed the under-specification hypothesis even further with respect to word meanings. It is argued that not only do aspects of context help participants select the relevant meanings of words, but those meanings are themselves *shaped* by the context in question through processes of lexical “narrowing”, “enriching” and “ad hoc concept construction” (Ariel 2016; Wilson 2003; Wilson and Carston 2007).

It is generally accepted that words have both denotations and connotations. Denotations provide the foundations for understanding what an expression means descriptively or conceptually. They encompass the referential or descriptive meaning(s) of a word (Ullmann 1962), that is, the set of all potential referents of the (relevant sense of the) word in question. Radical contextualism focuses on the role of context and inference in ascertaining denotations (Ariel 2016; Jaszcolt 2014; Recanati 2005; Wilson and Carston 2007). Connotations, in contrast, refer to the affective or evaluative meaning(s) associated with a particular word (Ullmann 1962). Allan (2007: 1047) argues that connotations are “pragmatic effects” which emerge from speakers’ knowledge of its denotation or reference. These pragmatic effects are tied to speakers’ experiences, beliefs and prejudices about the context in which the term occurs.

In this paper, a broader notion of word meaning, which encompasses both the denotations and connotations of words, is our object of interest. In order to develop an account of this broader notion of word meaning, we are opting for a pragmatically-informed approach to the analysis of word meaning. We propose that when examined in their natural interactional habitats, word meanings can be observed to emerge as an interactional accomplishment on the part of participants. This is not to say that speakers of a language variety do not regularly attain word meanings that converge to varying degrees on some kind of prototypical understanding. Speakers very often treat their own hypothesized understandings of words as if they were simply what every (sensible) speaker of that language would take them to mean (Grice 1968). Indeed, we would suggest that the default nature of the practices by which word meanings are attained in interaction lend themselves to such regularities in understanding of word meanings across users of a language.¹ However, if we carefully analyze the usage of

¹ Albeit understandings that vary as a function of the different relational networks in which those speakers are engaged over time.

words across turns of talk by participants in conversational interaction, the locally situated processes by which participants implicitly negotiate word meanings can also be studied. A particularly rich analytical vein in that respect concerns words that involve some form of categorization, in particular, instances of categorization that are consequential for what those speakers are trying to accomplish in a practical or material sense in the course of the interaction in question. Our aim, in this paper, is to start to tease out these processes and to show how they impact on the interactional achievement of the meanings of words by participants in locally situated contexts.

We begin, in the following section, by first briefly reviewing the Dynamic Model of Meaning (DMM) and other interactional accounts of word meaning that have emerged in pragmatics. We focus, in particular, on those approaches that have attempted to situate the analysis of word meanings in the discourse contexts in which those words have been used, before elaborating on the data set and methods that are used in our own analysis. In section four, we then show through careful situated sequential analysis how we can observe the ways in which participants negotiate the meanings of particular words in the course of talking about others or themselves. We examine how locally-contingent meanings of three terms used to categorize persons, *bogans*,² *lawyers* and *teachers*, are interactionally accomplished. We propose that locally situated, occasion-specific meanings of these words are achieved with respect to contingently-relevant trajectories of social actions in sequences of talk through the co-construction of meaning-fields of varying degrees of granularity. This is followed, in section five, by a discussion of how these locally situated word meanings are interactionally accomplished by participants through recurrent syntactic frames that generate dialogical resonance across utterances. We analyze how speakers create semantic relations between words *in situ*, processes that are underpinned, in part, by the structural coupling of utterances by participants. We conclude with a brief consideration of the potential implications of our analysis for the field.

2 The dynamic model of meaning and occasioned semantics

The way in which aspects of context may shape word meanings is discussed at length in the Dynamic Model of Meaning (DMM) proposed by Kecskes (2002;

² *Bogan* is a term used by Australian speakers to refer to a particular type of person. Its exact meaning is contested as it is a culturally and socially loaded term vis-à-vis social class, but it is largely concerned with a person's looks, attitudes, values and beliefs (Rowen 2017).

2008). In the DMM, word meaning is theorized as arising through a dialectical interplay between “coresense,” “consense,” and the actual situational context. Coresense is proposed to be “denotational, diachronic, relatively constant, and [an] objective feature that reflects changes in the speech community”, while consense encompasses meaning that is “actual, subjective, referential, and connotational, and changed by actual situational context” (p. 393). Coresense thus refers to public, shared understandings of the meanings of words, while consense refers to private, individualized understandings of the meanings of words.³ Consider the following interaction taken from Kecskes (2008: 394):

Father: Listen *pumpkin*, how about going for ice cream?

Margie: Cool, let’s go.

The coresense of *pumpkin* is readily available to or inferable by speakers of English, namely, a vocative used to call the attention of an intimate. However, the consense of this word, how it is subjectively understood by different speakers, may well differ across different users, depending on their own personal experience of the word. For instance, for some speakers it might be perceived as indicating affection, while it for others it might be considered to index a patronizing attitude.

In the DMM, then, there is a place reserved for the personal experiences of individual speakers in using a word, experiences that can shape their own understandings of what that word means. What distinguishes the DMM from other post-Gricean accounts of word meaning is the claim by Kecskes (2008) that the “meaning values of words encoding prior contexts of experience play as important a role in meaning-construction as situational context” (p. 485). In other words, word meanings are not only shaped by the context, but by the personal experiences of individuals in using those words. In some cases, these “prior contexts of experience” may become tied to standard recurring contexts, such that aspects of the context itself are constituted through the use of those words (Kecskes 2002; 2008; 2010). Context not only plays a “selective” role in ascertaining and shaping word meaning, but is itself constituted in part through the use of particular words and phrases. Context not only shapes word meaning, but is itself shaped by the meanings of words.

The meaning of many linguistic expressions is thus arguably intertwined with the participants’ own personal history of social and cultural experiences

³ This distinction thus bears some similarities to an earlier one made by Grice (1968) between “timeless meaning” and “occasion meaning”.

from which they draw upon, along with reified hypotheses about the word's denotation, to (co-)construct a localized meaning that is relevant to the interaction at hand. The DMM identifies a rich set of *cognitive* processes by which these meaning(s) can be achieved, including processes such as blending, mapping, framing and so on (Kecskes 2008: 386). Such processes systematically afford a constrained range of possible meanings.

There are arguably important similarities between the dynamic nature of word meaning outlined in the DMM, and the ways in which word meanings can be negotiated by participants in interaction.⁴ We would thus suggest that complementing such socio-cognitive processes are a range of recurrent and systematic *interactional* practices by which locally-situated understandings of word meanings can emerge through interaction. However, in order to tap into such locally-situated understandings of word meanings we need to set aside, in this paper at least, deep philosophical questions about the nature of meaning itself, including the question of “what does it mean for a word mean to something?”, to consider questions of material importance to participants themselves, including, “what does this word mean for these participants?”, and “how do participants attain a locally situated meaning for a particular context that is relevant to their ongoing action trajectory and overall activity?” It is thus to a consideration of interactional and discursive perspectives on word meaning that we now turn.

Interactional or occasioned semantics (OS) is a relatively new approach within pragmatics in which the focus of analysis is on examining how word meanings are co-constructed by participants in the course of interaction (Bilmes 2008; 2009; 2011; 2015; Depperman 2011a; 2011b; Hauser 2011; Hayashi 2016; Maynard 2011). Such understandings are said to be achieved by interlocutors co-constructing a local “field of meaning” (Bilmes 2009), a proposal that echoes the traditional notion of *Wortfeld* in ethnosemantics (Leavitt 2015). Co-constructing a meaning-field involves establishing the local relevance of various semantic relations between the word in question, and other salient terms in that specific moment of interaction. This is accomplished through sequentially dependent processes of “taxonomizing”,

⁴ The negotiation of (word) meaning is often associated with repair, that is, instances where there are troubles in speaking, hearing or understanding what word has been said or what is meant by that word (Schegloff et al. 1977). However, here we are focusing on instances where participants evidently assume they all know the basic denotation of the word in question, and are orienting towards the interactional achievement of a locally-situated understanding of that word's contextualised meaning.

where words are set in relation to each other, including relationships of contrast/co-categorization, generalization/specification, intensity/prototypicality, part-whole relations and so on. Bilmes (2009) argues that occasioned meanings are inter-laden with aspects of the interlocutors' culture, standardized knowledge and (relational) biography, which are variously drawn upon in co-constructing fields of meaning in the course of interaction. However, the structure of the meaning-fields that emerge through the sequential accomplishment of talk-in-interaction is not necessarily reflective of the lexical relations that are attested to hold between words in dictionaries or other reference works. Instead it involves taxonomic relations that are oriented as salient for the participants in question in the course of attaining locally-situated understandings of the meanings of those words. In other words, participants co-construct and negotiate word meanings in ways that are most relevant to them, in particular, understandings that aid the ongoing progressivity of the various kinds of practical courses of action that come into play in specific interactions.

However, while the use of locally co-constructed taxonomies and membership categories are useful in mapping the emergent meaning structures that are accomplished across turns of talk, there has been less attention paid in such work to the ways in which word meanings themselves can evolve over the course of interactions. In order to document the interactional strategies that participants employ both in and across interactions to accomplish varying degrees of specificity or granularity in word meanings, we propose that analytical tools from dialogic syntax (Du Bois 2014), specifically, diagraph mapping, can be usefully combined with the methods of ethnomethodological conversation analysis and membership categorization analysis that are utilized in occasioned semantics. These diagraph mappings are drawn upon in our analysis to help examine how participants co-construct locally-relevant semantic relations between the various terms used by those participants. In this way, we are able to pinpoint the specific structural couplings of utterances over turns that contribute to the emergence of locally-situated, occasion-specific word meanings. Our overall aim is to illustrate the ways in which creating locally-relevant semantic relations between words can contribute to the interactional accomplishment of locally-contingent word meanings for those participants.

3 Data and method

The data presented here are drawn from a corpus of naturally-occurring everyday interactions amongst (Australian) speakers of English across various

interactional settings, totaling approximately 34 hours in length. 53 instances where occasioned meanings were co-constructed by participants were identified in the corpus, the analysis of which only four are presented here in this paper for reasons of space. The collection of interactions was recorded using multi-directional microphones, and where participants gave their consent, video was also recorded using a single stationary camera.

The analytic approach chosen to highlight the interactionally achievement of the meaning(s) of words, draws on a number of approaches in relation to meaning and meaning in interaction, as alluded to in the previous section. DMM (Kecskes 2002; 2008) and dialogic syntax (Du Bois 2014) form the overarching analytical focus by providing a framework in which to analyze how words may be underspecified in relation to their valence and so have different connotations (i.e. their consense). How different, locally-situated understandings of the consense of these words emerge is what we intend to focus on here in exploring how participants (co-)construct semantic relations over the course of interaction. We draw on the concept of “format tying” (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987; Sacks 1992), whereby participants link a current utterance with a prior one through partial and additive repetition of various phonetic, lexical and syntactic features of that prior utterance. The practice of format tying generates dialogic resonance across the sequences of utterances, thereby enabling participants to converge in their understandings of the locally-fitted consense of that word.

We focus, in particular, on how participants use recurrent syntactic frames that are valenced through association with various evaluative and attributive predicates in the course of interactionally achieving locally-situated, occasion-specific meanings. While the term “frame” is commonly used in theoretical semantics to refer to the semantic knowledge evoked by a construction,⁵ it is not used in such a way here. In this paper, it is simply used to refer to the syntactic constructions that speakers use and reuse within and across multiple utterances. The more these syntactic frames get repeated, the greater the levels of resonance that arise. These dialogic resonances arguably offer us analytical insights into how words are afforded a context-specific meaning (consense).

5 The term frame has been used across a number of disciplines in semantics. From early work in cognitive semantics (Lakoff 1987) it was carried forward into construction grammar (Goldberg, 2006) and Fillmore’s frame semantics (Fillmore 1982; Cruse 2004). The latter looked at frames in terms of the associated knowledge related to a word from which its meaning is derived.

4 Analyzing locally-situated word meanings

Our analysis draws from excerpts taken from recordings of four separate interactions. We investigate how locally-contingent meanings are interactionally accomplished in the case of three different words: *bogans*, *lawyers*, and *teachers*. These three terms differ in the degree to which they are linguistically institutionalized. The exact meaning of the term *bogan* is something that continues to be disputed amongst Australian speakers of English (Rowen 2017).⁶ In contrast, the meaning of *lawyers* and *teachers* would appear to be more straightforwardly specifiable given they involve common occupations. However, in the following excerpts we analyze the ways in which the participants concerned co-construct locally-contingent understandings of the meanings of each of these words with respect to contingently-relevant trajectories of social action.

4.1 Bogans

In the first excerpt presented below, Tim (T) and Miranda (M) are a young couple in their twenties chatting in a café in Darwin about how a non-present third party might best be described.

- (1) TPMK160914: 3:30
- 1 M: if you looked at him from behind (.) wh- like?
 2 on that bike yesterday?
 3 what would you have thought (.) he was=
 4 T: =stoner. (0.2) massive stoner.
 5 (1.0)
 6 M: stoner riding? a hipster b[like] (.) no
 7 T: [mm]
 8 M: I would've thought he was a °hipster°=
 9 T: =>but 'member remember< ahh Mick's wife? (.) what
 10 was her name (.) Jess (.) her saying that she:
 11 teaches (.) and these parents they rock up? (.)
 12 >with no shoes and shit on< but they're
 13 scientists? and shit from the CSIRO? =
 14 M: =°yeah she said they just look like° utter? ferals.
 15 T: yeah
 16 (3.3)

⁶ See footnote two for a brief explanation of this term.

- 17 M: bu- (.) but she: was also sayin' (0.3) that the kids.
 18 (2.0)
 19 were ↓just (0.2) ((blows air)) sumthin' else =
 20 T: = how s:o?
 21 M: just (0.2) I dunno? (.) like they're rou:gh? a:[nd]
 22 T: [who]
 23 the parents wh- are scientists?
 24 M: yeah.
 25 T: really?
 26 M: I dunno (.) rough (.) rude (0.3) just =
 27 T: = ↑WOW.
 28 M: >you know< sh-sh-she said that they were just
 29 (5.2)
 30 °like- like rough and feral and°
 31 (0.2)
 32 T: bogan.
 33 M: bo:gan
 34 M: but (.) they had money? (.) and the kids
 35 kind of expected they could be treated a
 36 certain way? (0.2) but she was like? you
 37 don't act? like you should be treated
 38 with a bit of class (.) because °you're just°
 39 (1.3)
 40 T: but do[es that make] them bogan? =
 41 M: [boganish]
 42 T: =if they're hippies but they have money
 43 what sort of bo:gan is that?
 44 M: is it cashed up bogans?
 45 T: >it is and it isn' <t because a cashed-up bogan
 46 to ↓m:e is like >someone who works on °INPEX⁷>
 47 and they fuckin come ho:me° on the weekend
 48 and they got the wa:ke boards (.) bo:at an-
 49 they've got all that stuff (0.3) but these
 50 peo[ple are]
 51 M: [have more] debt than they do
 52 [ac- actual money.]
 53 T: [tha- that's i:t the]y're not educated (.)

7 INPEX is the name of a Japanese oil company running a mining project in Northern Territory, Australia.

- 54 the:se people are highly educated they still- they
 55 just cho:ose not to live within societies? bounds like
 56 they're too? educated they question? everything
 57 so are they bogan then
 58 what are they? are they something else.
 59 M: maybe they're quasi bo:gans.
 60 T: yeah °quasi bogan° these aren't like- its like
 61 the greens ther- they- they obviously vo:te gre:en?
 62 s:o (1.6) °yeah° (.) I dunno y[ou tell]
 63 M: [that's like] that's
 64 like a lot of the population in Darwin though
 65 like you've got like the INPEX with their bogans
 66 the INPEX=
 67 T: =full blown.
 68 M: and then you've got like the optometrists (1.2.) the
 69 doctors (.) the mari::ne biologists the
 70 T: yeah

The excerpt begins with Miranda seeking an assessment of her optometrist, who Tim also saw recently riding a bike at the beach. In response to this, Tim offers the category *stoner*⁸ as consistent with the “look” and “character” of the optometrist (line 4). Notably this assessment is accomplished through an anticipatory completion of Miranda’s prior utterance (Lerner 1991), by which Tim displays a claim about what he believes Miranda to have had in mind. However, Miranda counters Tim’s characterization of the optometrist through invoking the term *hipster*, implying that because he rides a bike he is more of a *hipster* than a *stoner* (lines 6, 8). Over the course of these four turns, then, Miranda and Tim have drawn upon various different membership categories in negotiating how Miranda’s optometrist might be most aptly categorized (Fitzgerald and Rintel 2013; Sacks 1992).

The various forms of structural coupling involved in their initial characterization of the optometrist is illustrated in diagraph 1 below.

⁸ In Australian English the term *stoner* denotes a person who regularly smokes marijuana for recreational purposes, but in this case it is the associated connotations that are being invoked, that is, other attributes associated with the category of *stoners*.

Diagraph 1: Optometrist (O) is like a stoner and O is like hipster-like-stoner

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
|---|------------------|----------------|--------|----------------|----------------|----|-----|---|-----------|
| 3 | M: what | would | you | have | <u>thought</u> | he | was | | |
| 4 | T: <u>stoner</u> | <u>massive</u> | stoner | | | | | | |
| 6 | M: <u>stoner</u> | riding | a | <u>hipster</u> | bike | | | | |
| 8 | I | would | | 've | thought | he | was | a | °hipster° |

As we can see, the shift in the way in which the optometrist is being characterised by the two participants is accomplished in a stepwise fashion. It begins with Tim characterizing him as a *stoner* (line 4: A-C), followed by Miranda initially creating a hybrid category (*stoner-hipster*) (line 6: A, D), before claiming that he is best described as a *hipster* (line 8: I). Notably, her degree of commitment to this latter assessment is weakened slightly through recycling her formulation of this assessment as made at the time (*would have thought*) rather than in the present moment (lines 3 and 8: C-E). Yet while they differ in their initial assessments, through “format tying” (Charles and Goodwin 1987) these descriptions, a degree of “dialogic resonance”, that is, “catalytic activation of affinities across utterances” (Du Bois 2014: 359), is generated. Given their conversation has only just commenced, these participants are still trying to make connections between their respective views regarding the optometrist. This enables them to accomplish the shifts in their assessments of the optometrist as if they were agreeing about them, even though they are evidently offering somewhat different assessments.

Notably, the different terms invoked by the two participants in these first four turns form the basis for them subsequently co-constructing a locally-situated assessment of this specific person within the broader membership categorization device “local parents”. In lines 9–13, Tim backs off from his initial assessment of the optometrist as a *stoner* and starts building grounds for an alternative assessment by suggesting that while he could be characterized as a *stoner*, he has a reputable career and so people like him (“these parents”, line 11) can’t be strictly treated as a member of that category (Day 1998). Tim draws on a mutually known, non-present third party (Mick’s wife Jess, lines 9–10) to start building an alternative assessment of the optometrist through category-tied predicates relating to behavior and appearance, namely, people who don’t wear shoes and dress badly (line 12), even though they have professional jobs (line 13). The former is cast as characteristic of *ferals* (line 14) by Miranda, although this stance is attributed to Jess through indirect quotation, thereby allowing Miranda to index a lower degree of commitment at this point to this categorization. Tim then prompts Miranda to proffer a description of Jess’s

reasoning underpinning her assessment of “local parents” as *ferals* through a continuer (line 15), and subsequent withholding of an affiliative response (line 16). Miranda then continues by indirectly quoting what Jess said about the children of these “local parents” (lines 17–19), before providing more granular descriptions of the attributes of *ferals*, namely, that they are *rough* (line 21, 26, 30) and *rude* (line 26).

The ways in which these social category terms and evaluative predicates of these terms are structurally coupled across Miranda’s turns is illustrated in diagraph 2 below.

Diagraph 2: Local Parents are like ferals

| | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
|----|----|-----|------|------|------|-------|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 14 | M: | she | said | they | ‘re | just | look | like | <u>utter</u> | <u>ferals</u> |
| 19 | | | | | were | ↓just | somethin’ | <u>else</u> | | |
| 21 | | | | | | | rou:gh? | a:nd | | |
| 26 | | | | | | | <u>rough</u> | , | rude | |
| 28 | M: | she | said | they | were | just | | | | |
| 30 | | | | | | like | rough | and | | feral |

What is evident from this diagraph is the way in which repetition and format tying is used by Miranda to progressively build up Jess’s characterization of “local parents.” Reproduction of the “she said that” construction followed by the repetition of “rough, rude and feral” category predicates creates an exclusive pairing of the features, thereby concessively negating her initial assessment of the optometrist as a *hipster*. The repetition and reframing of the predicates tied to local parents (*rough* and *rude*) show the incremental progression of format tying which shifts from the optometrist to local parents more generally.

These indirect quotes from Jess subsequently occasion Tim’s assessment of these “local parents”, and by extension the optometrist, as *bogan* (line 32). Miranda initially appears to agree with Tim’s assessment through a direct repeat (line 33) that indicates confirmation (Kim 2002), but this repeat subsequently pivots into a modified repeat (Stivers 2005), as Miranda goes on to qualify this categorization of them as *bogans* with “money” and “a bit of class” (lines 34–38). The latter qualifications prompt an expression of doubt from Tim that local parents cast as *ferals* who are “rough” and “rude” can really be characterized as *bogans* (line 40), as he ties back to Miranda’s initial assessment of the optometrist (who is a co-member of “local parents”) as a *hipster* (line 42). Miranda responds with a locally fitted characterization of them as *boganish* (line 41), as illustrated in diagraph 3 below.

Diagraph 3: Local parents are like bogans

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
|----|----|------|----------|-------|---------|---------|-----|------|------|-------|
| 32 | T: | | bogan | | | | | | | |
| 33 | M: | | bo:gan? | | | | | | | |
| 40 | T: | make | them | bogan | | | | | | |
| 41 | M: | | boganish | | | | | | | |
| 42 | T: | | | if | they're | hippies | but | they | have | money |

As we can see, the word *bogan* becomes a focal point of discussion through repetition (Kim 2002) of the term by both Miranda and Tim over a number of turns.

The proposal of *boganish* as a way of characterizing local parents, and thus Miranda's optometrist, occasions a question from Tim about what kind of *bogan* they're talking about (line 43), and a subsequent proposal from Miranda that they are *cached-up bogans* (line 44). The talk that follows focuses on what constitutes an example of the latter, and how the attributes of the local parents and optometrist are not consistent with those of *bogans*. Much of this discussion turns on the extent to which being "(un)educated" and really having "money" as opposed to spending lots of money and creating "debt" determines co-membership in this category (lines 45–58). As illustrated in diagraph 4 below, we can see how the two participants move from the term *cached-up bogan* to a locally fitted term, *quasi bogan* (line 59), through various layers of structural coupling across a number of turns.

Diagraph 4: Local parents are quasi-bogans

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|----|----|-------|--------|--------------|----------------|
| 44 | M: | is | it | cached-up | bogans? |
| 45 | T: | it | is | and it isn't | |
| 45 | | | a | cached-up | bogan |
| 53 | | they | 're | not | educated |
| 54 | | these | people | are | highly |
| 56 | | they | 're | too? | educated |
| 57 | | are | they | | bogan |
| 58 | T: | are | they | | something else |
| 59 | M: | maybe | they | are | quasi |
| 60 | T: | | yeah | quasi | bogan |

Across these turns, Tim and Miranda selectively reproduce parts of prior utterances to contrast the category-bound activities and predicates of

cached-up bogans and *bogans*, with the former being “highly educated” and latter being “not educated”. This leads to the emergence of a term, *quasi bogan*, to categorize “local parents”, and by extension the optometrist in question.

Over the course of this excerpt, then, the two participants confer a locally generated and situated meaning upon the term *quasi bogan*. That is, it refers to people who are *rough*, *rude* and *feral*, and yet also *educated* and by implication *wealthy*, *hippies*. Through additive reproduction (cf. Du Bois 2014), where participants reproduce a section of a prior utterance (both that of the other participant and their own), but add one or more lexical items to that reproduced talk, the participants are able to foreground particular locally relevant meanings of the term *bogan*. This is accomplished, in part, through interactionally achieving particular semantic relations between these terms, and, in part, through invoking different predicates for them. For instance, *cached up bogans* are positioned in a scalar relationship (Horn 2009) with *bogans* (i.e. <cached up bogan, bogan >), in which being a *cached up bogan* entails being a *bogan*, but being a member of the latter does not necessarily mean one is a member of the former (i.e. labeling someone as a *bogan* only implicates they are not a *cached up bogan*). *Quasi bogans*, on the other hand, are positioned as a membership category that shares some predicates with that of *bogans*, but is nevertheless mutually exclusive (i.e. one cannot be both a *bogan* and a *quasi bogan*). Through repeatedly invoking a “not X” syntactic frame, then, the participants come to a number of locally contingent agreements, for instance, that being a *bogan* is not consistent with being a *hipster* despite both categories of persons thumbing their noses at established social conventions of dress, and that a *quasi bogan* is not the same thing as a *cached up bogan*, despite the former sharing certain characteristics with the latter (i.e. having money). In other words, what underpins these locally situated negotiations about what these various words mean is an ongoing “not X but could be X” interpretive frame. While the word *bogan* may be taken to mean in a relatively abstracted sense someone who is uneducated and (prototypically) works in the mining industry (Rowen 2017), here the participants have co-constructed a locally contingent meaning for a specific, locally-situated interactional purpose. The participants are thus evidently co-constructing a meaning-field in which the word *bogan* is fitted for the purposes of accomplishing their ongoing conversational project, namely, coming up with an adequate social categorization of Miranda’s optometrist.

In the following excerpt, from a conversation between four people who are previously not acquainted, a somewhat different understanding of the term *bogan* emerges in the course of attributing certain characteristics to “people

from Perth”. In this case, however, the “not *X* but could be *X*” interpretive frame we saw in the excerpt above is used in conjunction with a “is like *Y*”/“is not like *Y*” interpretive frame.⁹ What the participants here come to understand *bogan* to mean differs markedly from the attributes foregrounded in the example above. The excerpt begins with an embedded self-disclosure from Craig in which it emerges that he has previously lived in Perth.

- (2) JCSHTBRR_16112014: 47:40
- 34 C: so um in fact? (1.0)I ↑might even (.) tryna? think
 35 if they are even in south- nah they were actually
 36 living in ↑Perth this time? last year
 37 (0.4)
 38 so that ↑made that part a little bit easy(hh)
 39 J: CAN I SAY that you're? very different to anyone
 40 else I've ever met whose from ↑Perth
 41 C: [yeah how so]
 42 T: [°ha ha ha°]
 43 J: they're the biggest BOGANS in the ↑world.
 44 S: .hh [in a good way?]
 45 T: [ha ha hah]
 46 J: MY OLD MAN'S got family over? there as well.
 47 C: ye:ah where? a↓bouts in Perth are they?
 48 J: I'm not really sure actually u:m
 49 (1.2)
 50 J: both FIFO's they're °FIFO's°
 51 C: mm
 52 J: >covered? in sleeve tattoo↓s and hate anyone
 53 who's not ↑WHITE
 54 T: mmhha
 55 J: yeah full ↓bogans (.) well they are °full° ↓bogans.
 56 S: mm they are
 57 J: and then I had mates up here from ↑Perth
 58 and they are the ↑sa:me (0.4) but a bit
 59 more conservative. =
 60 T: =didn't? you say old mate used to smoke? ice.=
 61 J: =YEAH he did? (.) so he wasn't that

⁹ In differentiating the syntactic frames produced by speakers, *X* is used to identify where a *category* is invoked, while *Y* refers to the tying of a *predicate* to the category in question.

- 62 conserv[ative?]
 63 T: [hha hah]hha ha ha
 64 J: well on those points he wasn't ehh yeah
 65 hun↓dred percent?
 66 C: ehh well I know that these people do exist in
 67 Perth. (.) we met I've met more
 68 [than I ↓would] have ↓liked to but.
 69 T: [ehh ha hah]
 70 C: but there are some more cultured and educated
 71 people there as well.
 72 S: ha ha

Craig's revelation that he is from Perth is taken as an opportunity by James to launch a sequence focusing on characteristics of "people from Perth". James begins with a pseudo request for permission (to make the subsequent assessment), and disclaimer that Craig is not like "anyone else" he has met from Perth, which sets the stage for an upcoming negative assessment (lines 39–40). Given the use of an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986), Tim's laughter (line 42) appears to be orienting to the likelihood that James is going to go on to invoke negative, but potentially non-serious, stereotypes about people from Perth. Craig, however, simply gives a "go-ahead" to this pre-assessment (line 41), and so does not orient to this possible move into a non-serious key. James then formulates the anticipated negative assessment, which once again is delivered through an extreme case formulation (line 43), to which Tim, a side participant, once again responds with laughter (line 45), thereby displaying treatment of it as a (partially) non-serious claim. Sarah, however, appears to orient to the possibility of Craig taking offence through an incremental "glue-on" (Couper-Kuhlen and Ono 2007; Schegloff [2001]2016) in line 44, which is built off James' previous disclaimer in lines 39–40. Through this increment, Sarah emphasizes that Craig is not like that (i.e. a *bogan*), thereby working to counter any incipient offence on his part.

Indeed, the possibility that James could be interpreted as "having a go" at Craig and his family as an outsider through labeling everyone in Perth a *bogan* is headed off by James citing family connections of his own (line 46). This grounds the subsequent description of these specific examples of *bogans* by James as FIFOs¹⁰ (line 50), followed by listing the category-tied predicates

10 FIFO is an acronym for "Fly-in Fly-out". It generally refers to people who are flown in and out of a town to undertake work in local mines, and so do not live permanently in that area.

of “sleeve tattoos” and “hate anyone who’s not white” (lines 52–53). These simultaneously index aggressive as well as racist attitudes (and possibly actions) on the part of those *bogans*. These attributes are then qualified as those attached to *full bogans* (line 55), a stance endorsed by Sarah (line 56), thereby also positioning *full bogans* in a scalar relationship (Horn 2009) with *bogans* (i.e. <full bogan, bogan >), in which being a *full bogan* entails being a *bogan*, but being labeled a *bogan* implicates one is not a *full bogan*. This line of reasoning is further developed through a subsequent assertion by James that he also has friends who are like *full bogans* but are “more conservative” (lines 57–59). In other words, here James is invoking the “not X but could be thought of as X” frame, in claiming that his mates are not *full bogans* but should be thought of as *bogans* because they are otherwise the same. The two inferential relationships these claims build on are: (1) stating someone is a *full bogan* entails that they are also *bogan*, but (2) being described as *bogan* only implicates that they are not *full bogans* (and so the latter inference is defeasible).

The use of the term “conservative” in relation to *bogans* occasions a subsequent tease from Tim where he seeks confirmation from James that the friend in question “smokes ice” (line 60). This tease is designed as a form of jocular pretence (Haugh 2016), as while the question itself is delivered by Tim as if he were serious, and James responds with an (ostensibly) serious answer (lines 61–62), Tim subsequently laughs (line 63), and James also shifts into a more ironic footing in subsequently re-doing his response (lines 64–65). In this way, Tim points towards the seeming incoherence in James’s prior assertions, in which Tim presumed you cannot be both conservative and smoke ice. The term “conservative” is thereby tied to the locally-contingent scalar contrast between *full bogan* and *not full bogan*, amounting to the claim that someone cannot be a *full bogan* if they are “conservative”.

Notably, it is only at this point that Craig finally takes up a speaking turn and attempts to counter the initial claim by James that everyone from Perth is a *bogan* (apart from Craig). Craig offers partial agreement in acknowledging such people do exist (lines 66–67), and that the number is not insignificant given he’s “met more than I would have liked” (lines 67–68), but in so doing, implicitly disagrees with the initial claim from James that everyone in Perth is a *bogan*. He then explicitly goes on to take this stance in introducing a categorical contrast in claiming that people from Perth are *cultured* and *educated*, attributes that are not consistent with a characterization of them as *bogans* (lines 70–71).

If we compare the way in which locally situated meanings for *bogan* are worked out by the participants in excerpts (1) and (2), it becomes clear that quite

different attributes are being foregrounded. Different patterns of dialogic resonance emerge through format tying, and these shape what is meant by *bogan* in these two different locally-situated contexts. These different attributes, and the meaning-fields in which they are co-constructed, are represented in Figure 1. Categories are indicated through solid lines and colored boxes, while predicates are indicated through dotted lines.

These different occasion-specific meanings are *bogan* are accomplished through co-constructing meaning-fields which overlap in some respects, but for the most part diverge quite markedly. Given what company a word keeps is indicative of what that word itself means (Firth 1951/1957), it is clear that the meaning of *bogan* attained in these excerpts is being actively fitted by these participants to different interactional projects. In the former case, the participants are trying to find the most apt way of categorizing Miranda's optometrist. In the latter case, it involves invoking (stereotypical) discourses about people in Perth in order to find common ground in the course of getting acquainted. Yet while the meaning of *bogan* attained in these different situated contexts is clearly not exactly the same, this does not preclude the participants nevertheless sharing a working hypothesis that *bogans* denote a certain kind of person, nor the possibility that there are some shared descriptive attributes, of such people. However, what constitutes these shared attributes and which of these can be foregrounded or backgrounded, is very much a locally determined matter.

4.2 Lawyers and teachers

While it might be argued that the meaning of words such as *bogan* is inherently open to negotiation by participants given it forms part of a broader social discourse where there is still considerable debate about whether being a *bogan* is a good or bad thing (Rowen 2017), in this section we go on to suggest that the way in which the meaning(s) of words are interactionally accomplished in locally-situated contexts is not limited to such cases. It would seem fairly self-evident that the denotations of terms like *lawyer* and *teacher* are fairly well understood (by competent speakers of English at least). However, in the following excerpts we illustrate how the broader meanings of words denoting seemingly straightforward occupations can be attained in a decidedly locally-situated manner. In the follow two examples we thus consider how locally situated understandings of the meanings occupational categories can be interactionally achieved by participants.

The first interaction takes place at a Tupperware party involving three female friends, Deanna (D), Lisa (L) and Sian (S), who have been discussing

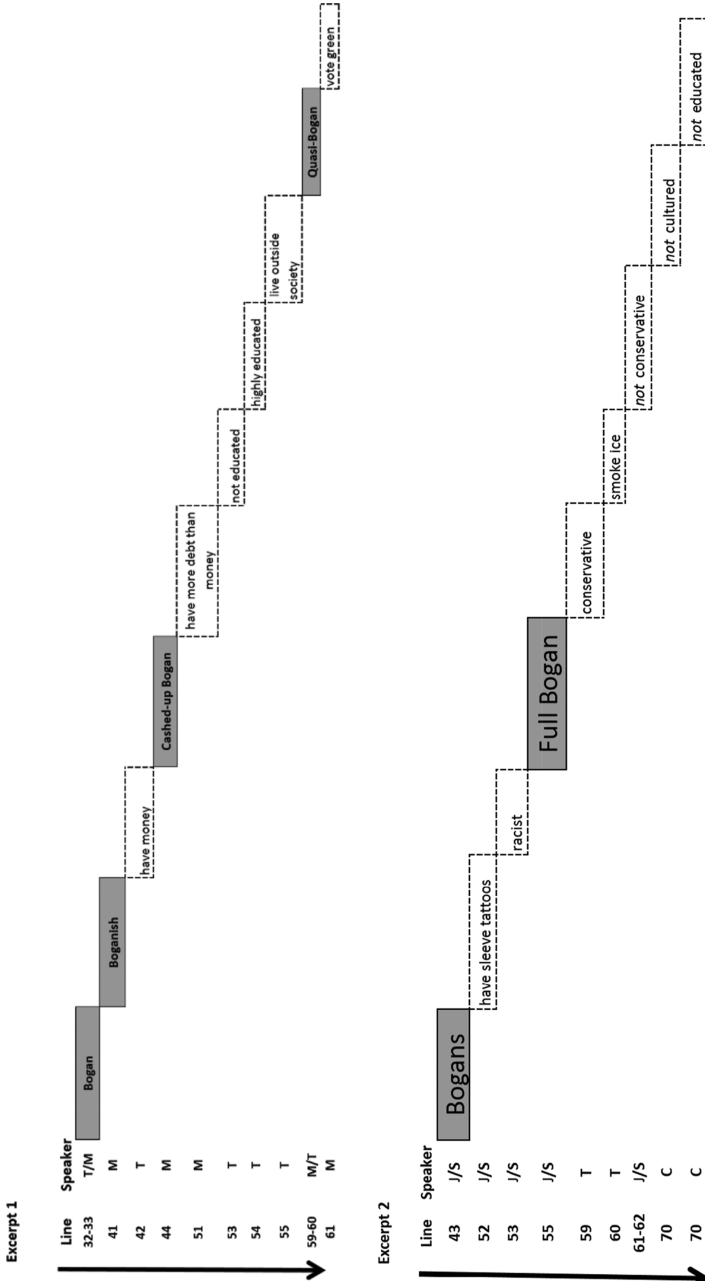


Figure 1: Comparison of the locally-situated meanings of *bogan* in excerpts (1) and (2).

private and public schools, and other people they know who have children attending private schools.¹¹ Just prior to the beginning of the sequence that follows below, Sian has asked about the occupation of one of the parents Deanna has been talking about. Deanna has responded explaining that she is a lawyer who works for the government. Sian latches and responds in agreement repeating “she’s a lawyer”, as illustrated in diagraph 5 below.

Diagraph 5: She’s a lawyer

| | | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|----|---------|---|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| 57 | D: | she’s | a | lawyer | for | the | government |
| 58 | S: | =>she’s | a | lawyer | that’s | right< | yeah |

Through this direct repetition and structural coupling, not only does Sian retroactively assert independent knowledge that the person in question is a lawyer, despite having asked what that person does in a prior turn (Stivers 2005), she also orients to being a lawyer as a topical focus of their conversation (Kim 2002). More specifically, through repetition of “she is Y” frame, the stage is set for a locally-situated meaning of *lawyer* to emerge in the course of this interaction, which as we will see, is indeed what transpires.

(3) Tupperware Party 1: 22:50

- 65 L: oo:↓hhh ye:ah I know ↓her
 66 (0.2)
 67 L: [she’s nice]
 68 D: [yeah yeah] she scares me.
 69 L: yeah (.) but
 70 she s(h)eems like a v(h)ery full on person
 71 S: .ha
 72 D: she scares the living day[lights out of me.]
 73 L: [it’s funny how do] you
 74 >how do you know her?<
 75 D: her husband is Tom’s boss.
 76 L: oh:h ri↑ght
 77 D: yeah.
 78 L: >yep yep yep< ye↓ah I don’t know her heaps well
 79 but I’ve met her on a few occasions and she-

¹¹ Tupperware is the name of a company that sells kitchen and homewares products.

- 80 she's very con[fident]
 81 D: [ohhh] sheis
 82 S: [bha hah]
 83 L: [ha ha] heard some [stories by the sou]nd of it
 84 S: [no I haven't]
 85 D: no (.) no coz [we went around there the other day]=
 86 S: [I can just imagine what she's like]
 87 D: =and she wasn't there (.) and the kids were
 88 on the roof and just like running amuck
 89 she gets back and it's just like ((clicks finger))
 90 ORder like HOLY [crap do] not step out of line(h)ha=
 91 L: [really]
 92 L: =haha that's so good (.) that's hilari:ous=
 93 D: =and like we sat ↑their house and there was
 94 like a four page list of like what you had to ↓do
 95 every day? and which switch to turn on in what
 96 order and=
 97 L: o:h
 98 D: she runs a ti:ght ship=
 99 L: =↓o:hh my gosh. how many kids? does she have?
 100 D: they have two kids (.) yeah=
 101 L: =ohh really? Wow.
 102 D: like she's nice but I can just imagine like
 103 with her being a lawyer
 104 S: =she'd be like one of those people (.) like
 105 if you crossed her you'd be °↓fucked.°=
 106 L: [she'd be all about rules and deadlines]
 107 D: [yeah I wouldn't wanna cross her I think] that's
 108 probably what makes her a good lawyer?
 109 L: yeah=
 110 D: =but and you can sort of see those aspects
 111 of what would make a good lawyer that crossover
 112 into her normal personality now?

Following confirmation from Lisa that she also knows the person in question (line 65), she characterizes the lawyer in question as “nice” (line 67). While Deanna agrees with Lisa’s characterization, she goes on to claim that the lawyer “scares her” (line 68). This sets the stage for a number of subsequent utterances in which the three participants converge on a locally situated characterization of

lawyers. As we can see in diagraph 6, for instance, the “she is Y” frame is repeatedly used in moving towards a more granular understanding of *lawyer*, which goes beyond reference to her occupation to encompassing the attributes of a *lawyer*.

Diagraph 6: She's X

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
|----|--------|----------|------|---|---------|----------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| 67 | L: she | 's | | | | nice | | | |
| 68 | D: she | | | | | <u>sc</u> ares | me. | | |
| 70 | L: she | s(h)eems | like | a | v(h)ery | <u>full on</u> | <u>person</u> | | |
| 72 | D: she | | | | | <u>sc</u> ares | the | <u>living</u> | <u>daylights</u> |
| | | | | | | | out | of | me |
| 80 | L: she | 's | | | very | confident | | | |

The “she is Y” frame previously set up in lines 57–58 continues across these turns. Deanna maintains a serious stance evidenced through her word-medial, stressed intonation across the turns, while the parallelism between utterances, highlights affinities between her assessments (lines 65, 68) and those of Lisa (lines 66) (Du Bois 2014). Through these turns, there is a shift from an evaluation of Rebecca as *nice* (line 64) to someone who is *scary*, *full-on*, *scares (one) to death* and *confident*. Notably, the multiple columns of resonance across these turns allows these participants to systematically (co-)construct a meaning of lawyer that is bound to the actual situational context of this interaction.

Prompted by Lisa (line 83), Deanna then initiates a storytelling sequence (Jefferson 1978) in which the strict and ordered approach of Rebecca towards her children and household management is recounted (lines 85–96). Deanna’s telling concludes with an evaluative idiomatic phrase, “she runs a tight ship”, that once again recycles the “She is Y” frame (line 98). This frame is subsequently repeated in tying the predicates “runs a tight ship” (line 98) with a more complex rendering of that frame (i.e. “she’d be Y”) in “she’d be like one of those people like if you crossed her you’d be fucked” (lines 104–105), and “she’d be all about rules and deadlines” (line 106), although these are preceded by a disclaimer from Deanna that “she’s nice” (line 102). Notably, these predicates are explicitly tied to her character as not just a *lawyer* (lines 102–103), but a *good lawyer* (line 108).¹² In this way, then, what it means for these participants to be a *lawyer* is not simply to be a

¹² *Good lawyer* is thus positioned in a scalar relationship with *lawyer* (i.e. <good lawyer, lawyer>), in which being a *good lawyer* entails being a *lawyer*, but being a *lawyer* only implicates not being a *good lawyer*.

member of a particular recognized professional occupation, but to mean someone who is highly regimented, strict and tough (both in their workplace and home life), at least for these participants on this occasion. This more granular understanding of *lawyer* is fitted to the developing trajectory of the locally-situated interactional project at hand, namely, evaluative talk about a third party who is not currently co-present (what is glossed in the vernacular as “gossip”).

The final example takes place at the same party as the previous excerpt. However, some of the participants have already left, while the partners of the remaining girls at the party have returned. The example begins when the men arrive home and are asking about who attended and what went on.

(4) Tupperware Party 2: 14:15

- 1 S: Ali's keen to play touch.
- 2 (0.5)
- 3 J: that's good(h)
- 4 S: mm
- 5 J: she played rugby leag↑ue
- 6 D: really?
- 7 T: Jesus
- 8 M: who's Ali?
- 9 S: oh she's gunna play in our touch team?
- 10 M: was she ↓here today or not.
- 11 S: yeah she was.
- 12 M: oh earlier
- 13 T: where was that (.) back in Em- wher-
- 14 J: Wari↑alda?
- 15 S: yeah (.)in Mackay she played in chicks
- 16 chicks °rugby league°
- 17 M: ((makes dodging sound))
- 18 D: I can see her? being like real competitive.=
- 19 S: =yeah like with that game tod(hh)ay (.) I
- 20 wa(h)s like get fu-
- 21 D: mm=
- 22 S: =>we played the body part game and she was
- 23 just like< ((clicks fingers))
- 24 D: but using like? scientific names °so smart° =
- 25 S: => like like the letter was Q<
- 26 (0.8)
- 27 S: >body part starting with Q<
((omitted section))

- 43 S: the first one? [was R and] Sarah goes WRIST? hh
 44 J: [°is that°]
 45 D: [ha ha ha]
 46 T: [ha ha ha]
 47 M: [ha ha HA] HA HA HA HAH
 48 and she's a tea↑cher
 49 V: yeah exactly
 50 S: haha we we- EVeryone was just like? pffhaha
 51 T: hahahah
 52 V: so when the kids are fucked up?
 53 S: yeah
 54 V: don't blame the pare↓nts
 55 (1.3)
 56 there's some responsibility the teacher's gotta take.
 57 S: mmhuh that's right (.) we're supposed to be smart
 58 (0.3)
 59 kinda
 60 V: wrist
 61 S: I fuck heaps of kids up? includ↑ing Joog.
 62 J: you did what?
 63 V: HE HE
 64 D: [ha ha]
 65 T: [ha ha]
 66 M: don't say that out loud (.) there'll be an inquiry
 67 J: fuck these ki↓ds [up]
 68 S: [up]
 69 V: ay
 70 (7.2)
 71 S: °her lack of intelli↓gence gives us a bad na:me?

The opening lines of the sequence set the scene for the locally situated meaning that emerges in the later part of the excerpt. It begins with Sian telling her partner John that Ali, her teaching colleague is eager to join their touch rugby team (line 1). It has been previously established by the participants that Ali is a teacher. Based on already established implicit knowledge that Ali is a teacher, and her demonstrated sporting capabilities, Deanna offers an assessment of Ali that she is likely to be “real competitive” (line 18). Sian latches onto this assessment and aligns with it by providing an example of how she was extremely competitive today at the party playing

one of the games. Sian explains to the male participants who were not present, how they played a game where you had to name body parts based on letters of the alphabet as they were drawn out (lines 22–23). Sian uses the gesture of clicking fingers to demonstrate to the group how quick Ali was at providing answers. Deanna then further explains that Ali was using the scientific names of body parts to ground her assessment of Ali as “so smart” (line 24). What is predicated here is that Ali, a member of the category “teacher”, behaves in a way consistent with the general knowledge assumption that teachers as educators are (expected to be) intelligent.

The excerpt resumes following an extended joking and role playing sequence re-enacting the game and how Ali exerted her competitiveness and intelligence, which is rounded out by John joking that if he “was still at school [he] would have got that” (data not shown). This joking sequence further ties the introduced predicate of “intelligence” and “knowledge” to Ali’s membership of the “teacher” category. However, Sian then goes on to contrast Ali’s level of intelligence as a model member of that category with the performance of Sarah (another teacher who was at the party), who, when asked to name a body part beginning with the letter R, answered “wrist” (line 43). Sian’s recount of Sarah’s (poor) performance in the game is met with emphatic, shared laughter to which Michael adds “and she’s a teacher” (line 48) providing the first explicit mention of the category. Here Sarah is also treated as a member of the “teacher” category, but one whose apparent lack of intelligence is at odds with that membership. It is at this point that a localized meaning of *teacher* begins to emerge. The participants make use of format tying (Charles and Goodwin 1987) to categorize Sarah as an “unintelligent” teacher who “fucks up kids”, while also positioning themselves as teachers who are, to varying degrees, similar to her.

Victor then introduces the standardized relational pairs (Stokoe 2012) *teacher-student* and *parent-child* in claiming that “when the kids are fucked up, don’t blame the parents, there’s some responsibility the teacher’s gotta take” (lines 54, 56). While holding the floor to continue to outline his stance, Victor ties additional predicates to the “teacher” category. He notes that not being intelligent can have an adverse impact on “kids”, and that while this responsibility is traditionally traced back to parents, he asserts that teachers have equal responsibility for this problem. What we see here is that while the consense of the term *teacher* is typically tied to age-old traditions of rigor, intelligence and knowledge, for Sarah, and others, this is not the case.

Sian, who is also a teacher, for instance, responds in agreement in claiming they are supposed to be smart people (line 57), but by implication are themselves not so smart. She then initiates a joking response to Victor’s prior turns through partial repetition of his prior turn in asserting that like Sarah,

she too “fucks lots of kids up”, as well as her dog, Joog (line 61), which occasions shared laughter. Sian rounds this conversation out by re-using the “unintelligent” predicate to highlight that teachers like Sarah “give us a bad name” (line 71).

Diagram 7 shows how through the partial reduplication of Victor and Sian’s utterances the group have been able to tie predicates not commonly linked to the occupation of teacher, for the purpose of describing Sarah, and, in some respects, themselves as well. Through repetition of the syntactic frame “I/they do Y” frame, the participants generate multiples levels of dialogic resonance between the categories *teacher*, *parents* and *kids*, and the predicate “fuck(ing) up.”

Diagram 7: I/They do Y

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|----|----|---------|-------|----------------|----------|-------|------------|
| 48 | M: | | she’s | a | tea↑cher | | |
| 52 | V: | | when | the | kids | are | fucked up? |
| 54 | V: | don’t | blame | the | pa↓rents | | |
| 56 | V: | there’s | some | responsibility | teachers | gotta | take. |
| 61 | S: | fuck | heaps | of | kids | up? | |

As we can see in the diagraph above, the syntactic frame “they do Y” is used by participants in moving towards a locally-contingent meaning of *teacher*. This clearly goes beyond generic reference to the occupation denoted by *teacher* to a locally situated, occasion-specific meaning of teachers as people who “fuck up kids” (like parents), a meaning that is retrofitted to the interaction in order to account for the apparent lack of intelligence of teachers like Sarah.

Upon comparison of the ways in which locally-situated meanings for occupation terms such as *lawyer* and *teacher* are negotiated in excerpts (3) and (4), it is evident that in order to co-construct a localized meaning, participants re-cycle parts of prior utterances or even entire utterances, resulting in multiple layers of dialogic resonance. While in both excerpts, the words in question have clear denotations, that is, particular occupations, what these words are taken to mean by these participants on these occasions go beyond their respective coresenses. Through format tying across utterances, the participants co-construct dialogic resonances that confer particular locally situated meanings (consenses) on these two words. In the case of *lawyers*, they are not simply people who practice law, but people who are “scary”, “full-on”, “confident” and (to paraphrase) “regimented”; in the case of *teachers*, they are not simply people who teach, but (sometimes) people that are not always smart and so “fuck up kids” (in the same way that parents are commonly thought to do).

Figure 2 below provides a comparison of the emergent meanings of *lawyer* and *teacher* that are interactionally accomplished in these interactions. While the term *lawyer* was used from the outset and the nuances of localized meaning were fitted to this single category, the *teacher* example involved the use of three interrelated categories (*teachers, parents, kids*) to co-construct a locally situated meaning of *teacher*.

5 The interactional accomplishment of word meanings

In course of discussing examples of locally situated meanings in the previous section, we highlighted the ways in which locally situated meanings of words we use in talking about others and ourselves, such as *bogans, lawyers* and *teachers*, can be fitted to specific contexts by participants. Particular attributes may be foregrounded and backgrounded through format tying, thereby allowing a more fine-grained and granular understanding of the meanings of these words to emerge in the to-and-fro of these interactional exchanges. Yet while the locally-relevant meanings of such words can vary across participants and vis-à-vis the interactional project to which they are fitted by those participants, as we briefly noted in the course of our analysis of these different interactions, it is also apparent that these participants are drawing from a number of recurrent practices in order to accomplish these locally-situated meanings.

One key practice that we have observed is that participants draw from various syntactic frames to co-construct highly granular meaning-fields that confer particular shades of meaning on the word in question. The key frames invoked by participants in the excerpts we examined include: (1) “[she/he/they] [is/are] X” and the related “[she/he/they] [is/are] like X”, along with (2) straightforward negations of those frames, namely, “[she/he/they] [is/are] not like X”, as well as (3) concessive negations, “[she/he/they] [is/are] not X but could be thought of as like X”. The former involves what Horn (1989) terms an “outer-neg reading”, while the latter involves an “inner-neg reading”. Drawing from these frames, participants are able to co-construct locally-situated meaning-fields. Critically, these frames do not occur in isolation, but are contingently relevant both on what has come before and what follows in the interaction. In other words, we cannot understand what meanings are conferred on a word by participants in invoking one or more of these frames without examining the local sequential environment in which they occur.

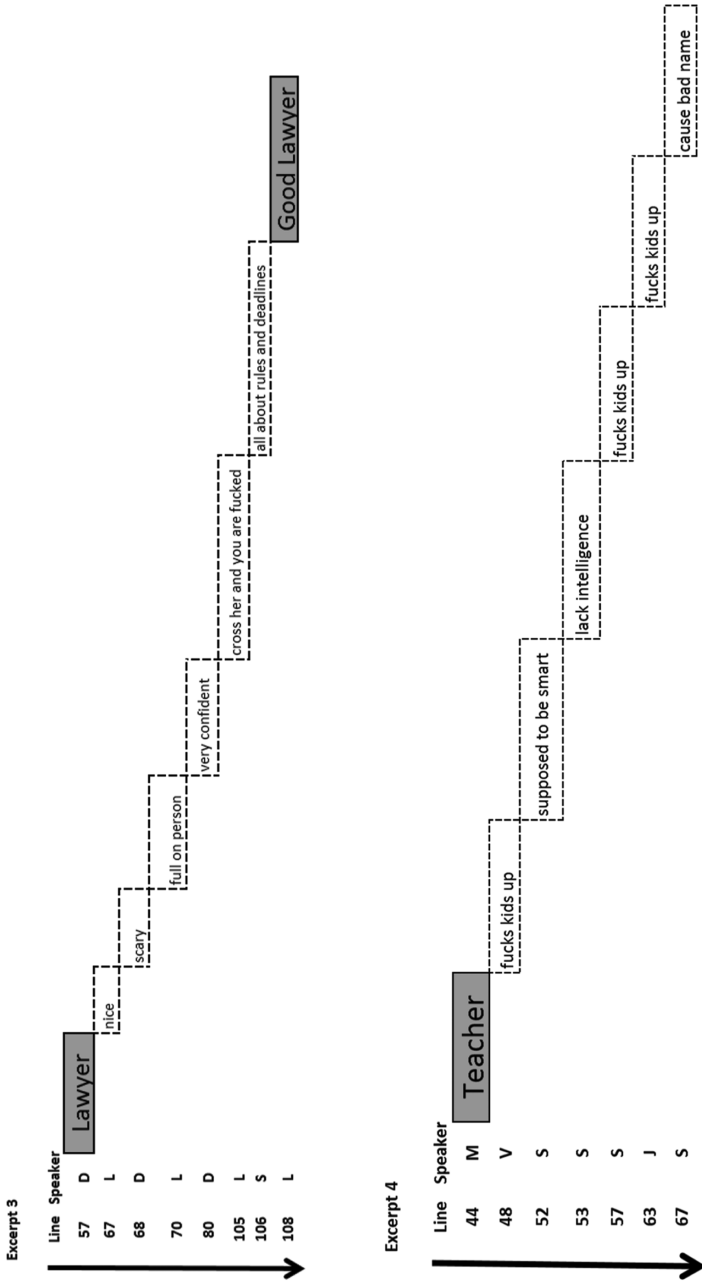


Figure 2: Comparison of the locally-situated meanings of *lawyer* and *teacher*.

In the first excerpt, for instance, the meaning of the social category *bogan* and the extent to which it applies to Miranda's optometrist is built up through framing a membership categorization device (MCD), "local parents" using particular (syntactic) frames: "*local parents* are *X*", "*local parents* are not *X* but could be thought of as *X*" and so on. In the second excerpt, the focus shifts to one of the participants justifying his assessment of Perth people as *bogans*. Through an extended series of turns, this participant attempts to explain what he means by *bogan* in relation to people from Perth through a particular frame (i.e. "*bogans* are *Y*"), an understanding that is further shaped by another participant with a different frame (i.e. "*bogans* are not *Y*") in the course of countering that not all people from Perth can be classed as *bogans*. Notably, the locally-situated meaning of *bogan* that emerges in excerpt (2), differs from the understanding of what is meant by the term *bogan* amongst the participants in excerpt (1). In the final two excerpts we examined, the meaning of two words that have seemingly straightforward denotations, *lawyers* and *teachers*, were construed by the participants on these two occasions in a much more fine-grained and granular manner drawing from three key (syntactic) frames, namely, "she is *Y*" and "she would be *Y*" and "I/they do *Y*". Across these four examples, then, the meanings of these words in question are evidently locally shaped through invoking different membership categories, associated category activities and linked predicates, thereby co-constructing locally-contingent semantic relations between the word in question and related terms that are invoked.

A second key practice that we have observed is the way in which participants selectively reproduce structures from prior utterances (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987), thereby co-creating dialogical resonance across their turns of talk (Du Bois 2014: 359). This enables participants to co-construct a locally-relevant meaning that is shaped by incrementally building up a contingently relevant meaning. In other words, the various forms of structural coupling, which we have highlighted in the course of our analysis through diagraphs, is a key practice by which participants are able to *converge* on a locally-situated understanding of what that word means for them on this particular occasion.

Through such practices, then, participants bring together both linguistic and world knowledge, along with their own private experiences, to arrive at a locally-situated meaning. This finding is broadly consistent with the theoretical claims made in the DMM (Kecskes 2002; 2008). The meanings of words can be locally fitted to interactional trajectories of social action by participants foregrounding, and thereby simultaneously backgrounding, aspects of linguistic and world knowledge along with their own private experiences within the

actual situational context at play. While we fully acknowledge that there are relatively stable aspects of word meaning that can be abstracted out from across particular contexts (i.e. the coresense of a word), our analysis indicates that participants themselves may well be more concerned, on some occasions at least, with a more locally-situated and granular meaning of the word in question (i.e. the consense of a word).

6 Conclusion

In this paper we have explored the role of pragmatic process in the interactional accomplishment of word meanings. Through a detailed sequential analysis of interactions in which participants are invoking particular terms to talk about others (and themselves), we have argued in favor of an approach to analyzing the meanings of these words that is pragmatics-rich and tied to the inherently sequential nature of conversational interaction. We have examined the way in which participants co-construct a locally situated meaning-field, thereby enabling a more granular, occasion-specific understanding of the word in question to emerge. A key finding of our analysis is that when participants talk about others and themselves, and in the course of doing so ascribe persons into particular categories they co-construct locally-situated meanings for those category terms that are relevant to their ongoing interactional project, and thus the actual situational context of that interaction. We acknowledge that much less granular understandings of word meanings are accomplished more often in conversational interaction. Indeed, in the examples we discussed, many words were used by the participants in ways that did not require any sort of fine-grained understanding on their part. Our point has simply been that despite presuming what a word means is what we as individual speakers of a language presume any (sensible) speaker of that language would intend it to mean, participants may nevertheless orient to accomplishing highly fine-grained and granular understandings of the meanings of particular words on some occasions. We have also proposed that there are recurrent practices by which these locally-situated, occasion-specific meanings are interactionally accomplished. We have highlighted, for instance, the use of format tying across utterances by participants to create patterns of dialogic resonance that contribute to the emergence of a locally-fitted consense. We would suggest that any comprehensive theory of word meaning must be able to take into account this level of complexity in attaining word meanings given it is a real-world activity of participants themselves. Close examination of the recurrent practices by which word meanings are interactionally accomplished may go some way, then, in empirically addressing the broader question of the extent to which word meanings are indeed

(under-)specified, a question that arguably lies at the heart of ongoing debates at the interface of semantics and pragmatics.

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Bionotes

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