

“Who does she think she is, eh?”

A discursive psychological analysis of in-group
teasing in problem-based learning

Gillian Hendry

School of Psychological Sciences and Health

University of Strathclyde

Doctor of Philosophy

2016

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Publication list

Data from the thesis has been used in the following publications:

Hendry, G., Wiggins, S. & Anderson, A. (2016). The discursive construction of group cohesion in problem-based learning tutorials. *Psychology Learning and Teaching*, 15 (2), 180-194.

Hendry, G. (2016). What makes a tease a tease? Considering the practice of teasing from a social constructionist perspective. *QMiP Bulletin*, 21, 18-26.

Hendry, G., Wiggins, S. & Anderson, A. Are you still with us? Managing mobile phone use and group interaction in PBL. Submission to 2016 Special Issue, Interactional Research in Problem-based learning, Gaining emic perspectives:

The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning. Accepted March 2016, In Press.

Hendry, G., Wiggins, S. & Anderson, A. (2014, May 22-23). *Constructing cohesion through laughter*. Paper presented at 9th Nordic conference in group- and social psychology: Independent in the herd? Inclusion and exclusion as social processes, Linköping, Sweden. ISBN: 978-91-7519-217-8.

As per the Regulations for submission according to the University of Strathclyde, I can confirm that I am the first author of all above papers, responsible for all aspects of data collection, analyses and reporting of the research.

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Acknowledgements

It is my pleasure to thank the many people who have helped and supported me throughout my PhD.

Firstly, my supervisors, Sally Wiggins and Tony Anderson, who have guided me, providing reassurance, encouragement and unwavering support. Particularly Sally, who has stuck with me throughout undergraduate, Masters and now Doctorate level, I would not be where I am today without her interest and faith in me.

I would like to thank the Higher Education Academy for funding my PhD, and to the DARG and SEDIT groups for their feedback at early stages.

The research would not have been possible without students willing to take part, so huge gratitude goes to all of my participants at Strathclyde and Leicester, and to Sarah Gretton for facilitating the Leicester collaboration.

I would also like to thank the many staff within the Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning at Linköping University, who supported my twomonth study visit in September 2014; particularly Eva Hammar Chiriac and Gunvor Larsson Abbad, who have become less like colleagues, and more like friends.

Special thanks to the staff in my own department and, of course, my fellow PhD students; especially those to have graced the confines of CASP!

I would not be at this point now if it were not for the continuing support from my friends and family. Particularly my mum, my sisters, and my husband-to-be Stephen, I cannot thank you enough for the love, encouragement, and comfort you have given me the past three and half years. I am very lucky to have you.

Finally, to my wonderful dad, who would be so proud of me.

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Abstract

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centred pedagogy in which students learn about a subject through collaborative problem solving. While research has demonstrated the educational value of the approach, it has tended to neglect investigations into the group processes that are at the core of a group's interactions: that is to say, we currently know quite little about how PBL actually 'works'. As such, the current thesis is concerned with developing naturalistic research into PBL. The aim of this dissertation therefore is to demonstrate how the application of discursive psychology to PBL can contribute to our understanding of group interaction, by examining instances of teasing in groups, focusing on the impact this has for groups.

Teasing is of interest to study in such settings due to its ambiguous nature as being both beneficial for and detrimental to groups. While some research purports it can foster cohesion and collegiality between group members, others demonstrate its link to increased depression and anxiety. However, such 'functions' of teasing are often methodologically questionable, and it can be unclear how the likes of cohesion or collegiality are actually constructed. In addition, this focus on teasing was of particular interest due to the methodological challenge of demonstrating what teasing actually is and how it plays out in interaction, and the difficulty of extrapolating it from other similar 'processes' such as bullying. Data is taken from eighty-five hours of student PBL meetings, encompassing thirty-one students across nine groups. The analytical focus is on teasing as an interactive process; demonstrating how, for

instance, teasing can be a discursive device for identity construction, or how displays of accountability for transgressions are made relevant through teasing. Despite the negative connotations that accompany teasing, the dissertation aims to show the multi-functionality of such a process, thus providing further insight into the interactions that take place within PBL that are bound up in academic discourse.

Past research has shown a discrepancy between self-reported and observed behaviour in groups, and so demonstrating the real-time interactions that take place in such environments is advantageous for us as educators to know more about what actually happens in PBL.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis is a discursive psychological examination of the practice of ingroup teasing in student problem-based learning (PBL) interactions. Past research has shown that in-group teasing can have positive (e.g. cohesion building, rapport) and negative (e.g. bullying) outcomes, however, it is difficult to define and demonstrate what teasing actually is, because of the differing ways in which it is delivered and treated by individuals. As such, this project has used video and audiorecordings of students to demonstrate the social functions that teasing can serve PBL interaction by considering teasing formulations, teasing responses, and teasing going wrong.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centred pedagogy that encourages independent learning, collaborative knowledge construction and intrinsic motivation (e.g. Dolmans & Schmidt, 2006). Students learn through the process of problem solving: working with others to share ideas, clarify differences, and construct new understandings (Forslund Frykedal & Hammar Chiriac, 2011). Past research in the area has tended to home in on the educational aspects of PBL, demonstrating its value as an approach that can facilitate a greater knowledge of and understanding around a subject, encourage better critical thinking, and promote knowledge retention over a longer time period than traditionally-taught methods (e.g. Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche & Gijbels, 2003; Fenwick, 2002; Finucane, Johnson & Prideaux, 1998; Hmelo-Silver, 1998; Mergendoller, Maxwell & Bellissimo, 2006;

Norman & Schmidt, 1992; ten Dam & Volman, 2004). While understanding the educational impact of PBL is of course of utmost importance, it is vital too to consider the more ‘social’ aspects of group interaction. As discussed by Provan (2011), there is a difference between ‘real’ and idealised PBL, and in recent years there has been a call for more empirical attention to be paid to the detailed interactions through which group processes can evolve in groups (e.g. Chiocchio & Essiembre, 2009).

This is the focus of the current study: investigating real-time interactions in PBL. There has been little prior research looking specifically at the interactions that take place in PBL groups, with that that has been done focusing on, for instance, how groups spend their time (e.g. Visschers-Pleijers, Dolmans, De Leng, Wolfhagen & Van Der Vleuten, 2006). To do so, eighty-five hours of PBL interactions were recorded and transcribed, with one phenomenon appearing frequently within the corpus; that of teasing.

A common element of peer interactions, teasing has been defined as talk that is marked as playful or non-serious towards another, present, person (Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young & Heerey, 2001). Teasing has been reported to facilitate socialisation and affiliation between individuals (Campos, Keltner, Beck, Gongaza & John, 2007; Haugh & Bousfield, 2012; Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig & Monarch, 1998), but conversely has also been linked with higher depression-suicidal feelings and lower self-esteem on the recipient’s end (e.g. Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, Haines & Wall, 2006; Espelage, Aragon, Birkett & Koenig, 2008). However, it is still unclear *how* this happens as many reports of teasing are retrospective of the interaction.

While teasing has routinely been conceptualised as something one individual *does* to another, this thesis adopts a social constructionist approach to analysis by positing that teasing is in fact a collaborative action by at least two parties, and which serves particular functions in interaction. However, even defining what teasing is is problematic due to the variability with which teasing is delivered and treated by different individuals. What one person may consider a tease, for instance, another may consider an insult, a joke, or a criticism: almost any utterance therefore could be interpreted as a tease. Particularly in PBL where groups often spend many sessions working together, it is important for us as educators to learn more about how such practices are constructed in interaction, and so this thesis aims to do just that.

In order to consider this, the analysis of this thesis is split into the following three chapters to demonstrate how teasing serves group functions in PBL interaction:

- (Chapter 4): Teasing formulations: Academic identities occasioned in teasing
- (Chapter 5): Teasing responses: Accountability in teasing
- (Chapter 6): Teasing going wrong: Deviant case analyses

Each of these chapters individually are analytically interesting as they inform us more about how teasing occurs in real time, and, put together, they broaden the literature on both teasing and PBL research through the application of discursive psychology to the data. Through considering teasing as an interactional achievement between individuals as opposed to something one person does to another, we can broaden our knowledge about the ways in which group members interact with each other within the PBL environment.

Aims

Therefore, the first aim of the thesis is to clarify what a tease actually is, and how it is defined. This is problematic when considered from a social constructionist perspective, due to issues around what constitutes teasing. The thesis thus questions when a tease becomes a tease; whether this lies with the teaser to deliver an utterance *as* a tease, or with the recipient to treat an utterance as a tease as opposed to an insult, a joke, or a bullying remark. Jointly acknowledging a tease can be considered an interactional achievement and an example of psychology-in-action.

This leads to the second aim, which is to show how teasing actually occurs; how it is collaboratively constructed as such, and how it plays out in interaction. To investigate this, three patterns of teasing interactions were identified in the corpus, which are explored in turn in the analysis chapters, and based upon how teases are constructed and oriented to within groups. In analysing the turn-by-turn interactions involved, we can show that teasing is a much more complicated process than some past definitions would suggest.

The third – and main – aim of the thesis is to use discursive psychology to demonstrate the functions that teasing can serve in PBL interaction. Past research has well documented both the positive and negative outcomes of teasing; for instance, that teasing can foster cohesion within groups (e.g. Boxer and Cortés-Conde, 1997; Cooper & Dickinson, 2013; Lytra, 2003), but it is not always clear how this happens. Discursive psychology thus allows us to take an in-depth look at how teasing is constructed, attended to, and understood in interaction by focusing on teasing formulations, teasing responses, and teasing going wrong.

Overview of the thesis

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter places the thesis in context by detailing the literature in which it is best placed. This is split into four main sections. In the first, *group work* in general is discussed, detailing the premise of group work, benefits of group work for teaching and learning, and an overview of problem-based learning. This leads on to the second section where the concept of *group dynamics* is reviewed, discussing how it has traditionally been conceptualised, but how this is problematic when considered from a social constructionist perspective. In the third section, *group interaction* literature is discussed, detailing some of the current interaction research in PBL, and identifying how naturalistic methods of studying group interaction can be advantageous to learn more about the intricacies of what actually happens in group work. This builds up the argument that one way in which to investigate such naturalistic group interaction is through the practice of teasing. As such, the chapter ends with a comprehensive overview of *teasing* literature, focusing on why teasing can occur in interaction, responses to it, and outcomes. The chapter concludes by using some of the data from the current study to demonstrate some of the difficulties with defining what teasing actually is, in preparation for the first analytical chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter begins by introducing the methodological approach being taken; discussing the theoretical positioning of discursive psychology (and its influences), its origins, use in similar and empirical research, and its appropriateness as an analytic approach for the current thesis. In the second part, a comprehensive

overview of the methodological procedures involved in the thesis is detailed, split into two parts to discuss firstly the dataset, and then the practicalities involved in collecting, transcribing, and analysing the data.

Chapter 4: Identity categories occasioned in teasing

The analysis begins by demonstrating how teasing can perform the function of addressing deviant behaviour in group interaction. More commonly known as ‘group norm violations’, the chapter shows how targets are teased through the construction of their academic identities as being normative or transgressive; as being ‘too academic’, or not academic enough. This is of interest to consider in relation to PBL groups specifically, since individuals are responsible for their own and others’ learning.

Chapter 5: Accountability in teasing

The analysis continues by looking at the practice of responding to teasing, demonstrating, for instance, how a target manages the seemingly opposing actions of accepting yet defending themselves against teasing, and what group functions are served therein. A continuum of responses to teasing is detailed, starting from the target contributing to the tease, to the target teasing back through retaliating. Through analysing the account work done by tease targets, we can learn more about the ways in which teases are dealt with in interaction.

Chapter 6: When teasing goes wrong

The final analytical chapter is slightly different in that it supports the analyses detailed in chapters 4 and 5 by demonstrating examples of the phenomena already seen through considering interactions in which teasing has ‘gone wrong’, which paradoxically can inform us of normative teasing procedures. Such analyses are routinely referred to as ‘deviant cases’ in discursive psychology (cf. Potter, 2012), and are analytically interesting due to the focus on the absence of normative interactions. This chapter looks at such issues as how talk is occasioned to demonstrate that a certain topic is not considered appropriate to tease about, what happens when teasing goes on for too long, and also discusses the distinction between ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ teasing.

Chapter 7: Discussion/ conclusion

This chapter is the concluding discussion, focusing on the key themes and debates from each of the analyses chapters, highlighting and discussing the drawbacks and critiques of the approach to the research, identifying future research directions, positing how the work contributes to research in the field, and finally concluding the thesis.

Chapter 2 Literature review

In recent years there has been a growing interest in curriculum change sweeping through higher education, partly in response to the demands for the development of students' personal qualities and skills as they prepare for the world of work (Blackmore & Kandiko, 2012). Theories of human learning and cognition have increasingly considered social and cultural aspects of the learning context, with a major feature of this change being on the development of student autonomy in learning (Stokoe, 2000). For this reason, higher education has seen an influx of collaborative learning approaches, which have been considered a success story in both the realms of psychology and education (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2007). However, there is still much about the intricacies of collaborative learning that remains unknown.

This chapter will thus provide a review of literature relevant to this thesis, to set the context for the analytical chapters that follow, which are focused on demonstrating the functions of in-group teasing in PBL.

Part 1: Group work

The literature review begins, therefore, with a broad overview of what group work actually pertains to. Group work falls under the umbrella term of 'collaborative learning', pertaining to individuals working together in small groups towards a common goal, being responsible not only for their own learning, but for others' too, utilising others' resources and skills (e.g. Dillenbourg, 1999; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; O'Donnell, Hmelo-Silver & Erkins, 2006; Resta & Laferrière, 2007).

Collaborative learning is based on the social constructionist view that knowledge is a social construct; that it is produced jointly between individuals to display understanding (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), and is in contrast to individual learning where individuals are responsible only for their own knowledge attainment, without regard for others. There is more to the approach, however, than simply arranging students into groups, although a main focus is for students to work together, and capitalise on each other's expertise and skills.

1.1 Implementing group work in education

Group work is not just one single activity but is comprised of several activities each with different goals and conditions (Hammar Chiriac, 2009). A common theme across higher education policy and funding specifically in the UK is the need to ensure that graduates are prepared for, and able to contribute to, the economy and society (Higher Education Academy, 2014). Forslund Frykedal and Hammar Chiriac (2011) report that teachers view group work as a means to develop students' interactive abilities as opposed to acquiring academic knowledge, therefore providing them with the opportunity to develop their employability skills of (for instance) collaborative working. This growing interest in group learning is being driven by a number of factors, but primarily that educators are becoming more aware of the benefits of collaborative learning, and the importance of students knowing how to effectively communicate and collaborate before they leave higher education and enter the world of work (Blackmore & Kandiko, 2012; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007).

There is scientific support for the benefits of having students engage and learn through group work as it has been reported to enhance critical thinking (Gokhale, 1995), encourage social skills (Petress, 2004) and foster greater academic achievement (Hansen, 2006; Springer, Stanne & Donovan, 1999). Savin-Baden (2003) argues that in life we invariably must work in teams, and so investing in ‘team learning’ should be a vital component of higher education. Despite this, how to establish a well-functioning group in education is not self-evident, and the reality of the classroom can make small group work difficult, with the potential benefits often being mitigated by the perceptions, experiences and expectations of the participants (Kramsch, 1985).

As noted by Hammar Chiriac (2009), all educators and students who use or participate in group work know that it functions in various ways, and while group work can end up with positive outcomes, it can just as easily go wrong, dependent as it is on both the knowledge of group members and the extent to which the group can access this knowledge (Bonner & Baumann, 2012). However, it is an established teaching and learning method worldwide, with some institutions devoting whole academic programmes to certain forms of group work, such as Maastricht University in the Netherlands where each course is taught entirely through problem-based learning. It is to this area of research that I will turn next, as the data used in this thesis is taken from such groups.

1.2 Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning (henceforth, PBL) is a student-centred, collaborative approach to learning, developed in 1969 by neurologist Howard Barrows at

McMaster University as a way of training medical students in diagnosis and other clinical skills (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980). It emerged fundamentally as a reaction to the passive teaching practice at that time, where medical students were taught ‘facts’ chosen by their instructor, and were expected to memorise them for future purposes. Barrows reported an increasing concern that the curriculum of many medical schools, by focusing on teaching such ‘facts’, neglected to teach students the problem-solving and self-directed study skills necessary for the practices of medicine, arguing that learning was not actually taking place (Barrows, 1983). At the time it was introduced, there was no philosophical or cognitive theoretical underpinning explicitly stated, and indeed Barrows had no background in educational psychology or cognitive science, but recognised that students were becoming disillusioned by the illogicality of learning through lectures, arguing that in the clinical setting, they would have to use their abilities of problem solving to determine patients’ ailments and to offer diagnoses (Barrows, 1983; Neville, 2009).

PBL encourages collaborative knowledge construction, independent learning and intrinsic motivation (e.g. Dolmans & Schmidt, 2006). Students learn through the process of problem solving, working in groups to determine what they already know, what they need to find out, and how they will go about doing so. By interacting with others in this way, students learn to inquire, share ideas, clarify differences and construct new understandings (Forslund Frykedal & Hammar Chiriack, 2011). A core assumption of PBL is that the desired cognitive and educational effects are dependent on group activities and cannot be achieved to the same extent by students individually (Hak & Maguire, 2000).

PBL focuses on (usually) student groups being provided with complex, ‘real world’ problems that have no single ‘correct’ answer (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Groups are generally given a problem to analyse in which they must identify the key issues, determine what they do and do not already know about the subject, consider what information they need to find out and how to do so, and apply their acquired knowledge and information to produce a ‘solution’ to the problem (e.g. Azer, 2009). The ‘problem first learning’ philosophy of PBL provides an opportunity for students to develop a number of cognitive and non-cognitive skills – as well as content and thinking strategies – as the group work through the problem, such as hypothesis generation, planning, communication skills, interaction, and handling conflict (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Schmidt, 1993). This all adds to the student actively engaging in constructing knowledge, which sets it apart from more traditional types of learning.

There are three core principles behind PBL which are regarded as essential for enhancing student learning (Abrandt Dahlgren & Dahlgren, 2002; Wiggins & Burns, 2009). Firstly, there is the notion that knowledge is constructed collaboratively through social interaction. The desired cognitive and educational outcomes of PBL are dependent on group activities such as brainstorming, testing hypotheses and identifying learning issues, and these cannot be achieved to the same extent by students individually (Hak & Maguire, 2000). Groups work with a facilitator, and through discussions, students are expected to clarify their understanding and identify further learning needs, thus learning through the experience of problem solving and reflecting (Chernobilsky, Nagarajan & HmeloSilver, 2005). Secondly, the development of meta-cognitive skills and self-

directed learning are considered important for students' taking responsibility for their own learning (Abrandt Dahlgren & Dahlgren, 2002). PBL can foster self-directed learning (Barrows, 1986; Loyens, Magda & Rikers, 2008), thus enabling students to formulate learning goals, choose appropriate strategies for learning and evaluate the outcomes (Zimmerman, 1990). Finally, the problems that groups are given should be based within real-life scenarios so students' learning can be put in context. This notion can be traced back as early as Dewey (1929), who stressed the importance of learning in response to, and in interaction with, real-life events. Research has shown that giving students real world problems can promote engagement (Savery & Duffy, 1995), motivation (Hmelo-Silver, 2004), and can lead to the process of 'learning' and 'doing' becoming intertwined (Stinson & Milter, 1996). The main emphasis is for students to realise that there is rarely one single correct answer to a problem, mirroring real life, and to begin thinking like professionals in their field early on in their careers, thereby easing the transition when they leave university.

The main pedagogical aim of PBL is to encourage students to take an active role in the learning process. Groups are not generally given any information regarding the problem beforehand, meaning that group members begin their task discussions based on what prior knowledge they already have (Yew & Schmidt, 2009). In traditional problem-solving learning, staff set curriculum-bounded problems and students attempt to resolve them, with the focus being on preparatory learning prior to the exposure to the problem (Savin-Baden, 2001). In contrast, PBL is 'problem first learning' (Spencer & Jordan, 1999) in which curriculum content is organised around problem scenarios, rather than subjects or topics, with the onus on students identifying their own learning needs, being given the independence to

research what they feel is necessary, and encouraging students' abilities to 'learn how to learn' rather than simply assimilate content (Dahlgren & Oberg, 2001). As such, the role of the class tutor in PBL is redefined. Maudsley (1999) classifies the role as "not authoritarian" (pp. 658), and instead should involve facilitating the group to ensure satisfactory progression through the problem. De Grave and colleagues consider the PBL tutor to be a scaffold for learning, implying that the tutor should provide support for students to think for themselves (De Grave, Dolmans & van der Vleuten, 1999).

Despite the holistic focus on independent learning in PBL education, Barrows himself identified that the term 'problem-based learning' does not refer to a specific educational method, resulting in different meanings depending on the design employed, skills of the teacher and discipline as PBL branched out beyond medicine, resulting in variations in quality and in the educational objectives that can be achieved (Barrows, 1986). One of the most widely-adopted approaches to PBL was first proposed by Schmidt (1983), and has since been adopted most prominently by Maastricht University as the 'seven steps' method (see Appendix A for full overview). The premise of this approach is that student groups follow a number of 'steps', using a systematic approach to analyse the given problem, to formulate learning objectives and collect information (Schmidt, 1983). Hmelo-Silver (2004, pp. 236-237) defines the process as follows:

"...the students are presented with a problem scenario. They formulate and analyse the problem by identifying the relevant facts from the scenario. This fact-identification step helps students represent the problem. As students understand the problem better, they generate hypotheses about possible

solutions. An important part of this cycle is identifying knowledge deficiencies relative to the problem. These knowledge deficiencies become what are known as the learning issues that students research during their selfdirected learning (SDL). Following SDL, students apply their new knowledge and evaluate their hypothesis in light of what they have learned. At the completion of each problem, students reflect on the abstract knowledge gained”.

Research into PBL has shown that the approach can provide students with a wide variety of skills, and there is a wealth of literature pertaining to the benefits of PBL in education. Rand and Baglioni (1997), for instance, demonstrated how PBL can facilitate a greater knowledge of and understanding around a subject; a finding frequently replicated in subsequent research (e.g. Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche & Gijbels, 2003; Fenwick, 2002; Mergendoller, Maxwell & Bellissimo, 2006; Smits, Verbeek & de Buissonjé, 2002). Research has also shown that PBL students can be more likely to adopt ‘deep’ approaches to learning (Albanese & Mitchell, 1993; Gurpinar, Kulac, Tetik, Akdogan & Mamakli, 2013), and develop better critical thinking (Hmelo-Silver, 1998; ten Dam & Volman, 2004), cognitive (Azer, 2009; Dolmans & Schmidt, 2006), and employability (Martin, West & Bill, 2008) skills compared to their traditionally-taught peers.

However, despite these findings, there is a distinct lack of *naturalistic* research into PBL. That is to say, most research – both for and against the approach – is based upon populations that detail their PBL experience after it has occurred, through the analysis of questionnaires to obtain ‘before and after’ attitudes towards

it. As such, there is a need for more real-time research into PBL to see what actually goes on in PBL tutorials, as this information – and subsequent analysis from a social constructionist perspective – can help us as educators to better support students as they engage in the process. While PBL can be a beneficial experience for students, we need to find out more.

1.3 Section summary

In summary of this first section, I have introduced group work as a method of learning, discussing how educators view its implementation in the curriculum as an opportunity for students to gain essential employability skills before they graduate and enter the world of work. I discussed one particular type of student-led group work – problem based learning – which is constructed around the core principles that knowledge is created collaboratively through social interaction, that students take responsibility for their own learning, and that learning is put in a real-world context, ultimately demonstrating that there is rarely one single correct answer to a problem, mirroring real life.

Since its inception, PBL has expanded into a credible learning method in a variety of disciplines, and research continues to grow as the approach is more widely adopted. However, one area in which PBL research is not quite so abundant is with regard to what actually happens within PBL tutorials. While past research has looked at the outcomes of PBL on an academic level, there is little work devoted to understanding the naturalistic side of it; how group members interact with each other. While it is, of course, crucial to investigate the educational aspects of PBL and group work more generally (such as, as detailed above, how students collaboratively learn),

it is important too to look at other processes that take place in the group setting. To understand people, we must understand their groups, and so to have a more holistic view of group interaction, we must first consider the group dynamics and interactional processes that are at the heart of such interactions more broadly.

Part 2: Group dynamics

Research into group dynamics has a long history within psychology. In fact, the whole field of social psychology is commonly defined as the study of the ways in which people interact with others (e.g. Hogg & Vaughan, 2008). The term ‘group dynamics’ generally refers to the behaviours and psychological processes involved when individuals in a group interact, and the relationship between the group and individuals within it (e.g. Forsyth, 2006). Research commonly distinguishes between inter- (between) and intra- (within) group dynamics; both of which have yielded some of the most influential and acclaimed work in the area (e.g. Festinger, 1954; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, considering such research from a social constructionist perspective is problematic, and so this section aims to address some of the issues with past work into group dynamics, highlighting the need for more focus on the perspective that approaches such as discursive psychology can bring to the field, and how such approaches can help to better inform us of the interactions taking place within groups like problembased learning.

2.1 What are group dynamics?

Each individual in the world belongs to various groups: for instance, a family group, a friendship group, a co-worker group, an online gaming group, even the collection of people that wait for the train to work each morning. While each of these groups may seem unique, they possess one critical element that defines them; a connection linking the individual members whether that's everyone having the same surname, the same job, or the same need to get from A to B on the train. Research into group dynamics has spanned many years, traditionally defined as the study of processes that take place in groups (Brown, 1988; Cartwright & Zander, 1953; Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Schruijer & Curseu, 2014; Shaw, 1981). In the last thirty years or so, theoretical developments such as Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) have transformed the study of inter and intra-group relations, bringing research into group activity back into prominence in the field of social psychology (Dovidio, 2013).

However, social constructionist approaches to research have begun to reconceptualise such work, redefining such phenomena within an interactional and social framework to show how conceptualising group dynamics as a set of processes that influence individuals is flawed, and that of arguably more importance is the explicating of participants' understandings of the activities in which they are involved (Stokoe, 2000). As an example, Hammar Chiriac (2009) argues that when people come together in an educational context in order to collaborate, a great number of processes arise within the group, influencing groups' production and quality of learning. However, how do we know that such production and learning is

the result of ‘good group dynamics’? In a similar manner, Shaw (1981, pp.454) defines a group as, “two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person”, but, again, how do we demonstrate this ‘influence’? In order to question this further, the rest of this section is split into three of the most commonly researched intragroup dynamic ‘topics’, to discuss how they have been studied in the past, but how such ways are problematic when considered from a social constructionist perspective. Despite there being a wealth of literature available pertaining to the study of intragroup dynamics, the following sections will focus on this only briefly to highlight how it is currently studied, before moving onto the main crux of this literature review; how we can see group dynamics taking place in real life.

2.1.1 Group membership/ group identity

A good place to start is to consider group membership. What makes us a member of a group? As stated earlier, it could be because we identify with other individuals waiting for the train every morning, and as such feel a ‘connection’ with like-minded people. However, groups are also formed less naturally, like, for example, at university, where students may be put into planned groups as the course requires with others they do not know. These types of groups tend to be organised, task-focused and formal because membership criteria are pre-defined: each group member is a student in the class and is expected to produce work that reflects this (Forsyth, 2006). Membership in groups can be rewarding, through combining interpersonal relations with goal targets, with some research showing group

membership to be a consistent predictor of academic achievement (e.g. Wentzell & Caldwell, 1997).

Being a member of a group arguably provides an individual with the means to accomplish goals they may not have achieved alone, in addition to (ideally) receiving support and guidance, and differing or additional knowledge, skills, and abilities, which is of particular benefit in educational environments. Groups have been reported as creating relationships between people through providing their members with a sense of ‘identity’; social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) have been used to describe how a group-level identity emerges.

However, this approach is problematic when considered from a discursive perspective. Rather than considering group membership or identity as something that we have, or belong to, or that guides our behaviour, the approach that this thesis takes is to construct group membership or identity in terms of the interactional functions doing so can serve; as occasioned conversational resources that are locally and rhetorically constructed (e.g. Antaki, Condor & Levine, 1996). Identity is a central theme in discursive psychology, and there has been a plethora of research undertaken to demonstrate the ways in which identity can be considered both an achievement and a tool: an achievement in that it is achieved in and through talk, and a tool in that it is used to perform particular actions in talk. For instance, in his 2011 paper, Dempster demonstrated how male undergraduate students manage the competing task of constructing themselves as ‘laddish’ through positioning drinking alcohol as normative, but simultaneously disassociate themselves from the extremities of alcohol-induced ‘laddishness’. Such a perspective shows how identity

constructions are constantly negotiated to achieve certain goals within interaction, as opposed to assuming one fixed, immovable identity.

This discussion now moves on to another oft-cited aspect of group dynamics; group norms.

2.1.2 Group norms

Group norms have cognitively been conceptualised as an unspoken set of rules that govern individual behaviour within a group (e.g. Terry, Hogg & White, 1999). Often, they are not understood or acknowledged until they are violated; for instance, a group would not necessarily verbalise that it was not allowed for a group member to attend a session with no clothes on, but if a group member did do this, it would clearly be out with what was acceptable behaviour as a group member. Norms have been classed a fundamental aspect of a group's structure as they provide direction and motivation, organising the social interactions of the members, and controlling group behaviour (Forsyth, 2006). However, this is a somewhat dubious position to take, considering that such 'processes' cannot be evidenced in interaction, and again, it is arguably of more value to consider the study of norms from an interactional point of view.

For instance, although not the main focus of their paper, in their (2002) analysis of university tutorial talk, Benwell & Stokoe demonstrated how students can demonstrate group norms through orienting to the violation of them. In a transcript excerpt in which a student answered an academic question rather sophisticatedly rather than adhere to the 'typical' position of refuting engagement with the task, the authors noted how appearing eager to work or behaving in any way like a tutor can

be met with disapproval as displayed through laughter, interruptions, and the mocking of ‘expert’ discourse. Through responding negatively to what the authors deemed ‘intellectual’ identity, the group reinforces the normative boundaries of ‘student identity’, simultaneously stigmatising an orientation to academic identity. Although this norm of not engaging with the task was never verbally discussed, it became a norm through group members’ interactions for that specific group, and as such, acting in a way that violates it is noticeable.

Research suggests that norms develop implicitly over time (e.g. Postmes, Spears & Lea, 2000), and the very fact that groups orient to norm violations suggests they are at least somewhat together/ cohesive as a group, as they are acknowledging something ‘unusual’ happening. Group cohesion has historically been considered the most important variable in small group research (e.g. Lott & Lott, 1965). However, as with group membership and group norms, research into this has previously been somewhat problematic.

2.1.3 Group cohesion

Group cohesion pertains to the extent to which individuals within a group feel connected (Greer, 2012) but it is an extremely complex entity to evaluate, with ongoing controversy regarding how to define and measure it (e.g. Beeber & Schmidt, 1986; Budge, 1981; Greer, 2012; Keyton, 1992). There is no absolute definition of cohesiveness, but descriptions range from feeling “strong ties” (Granovetter, 1973) and “connectedness” (O’Reilly & Roberts, 1977) within a group and being committed and interpersonally attracted (Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon, 2003), to having uniformity and mutual support between members (Hogg & Vaughan,

2008) and “sticking together” (Mudrack, 1989). Such definitions, however, are almost pointless considering that cohesion has an inadequate conceptual basis (Cota, Evans, Dion, Kilik & Longman, 1995) and varies across disciplines (Carron & Brawley, 2000).

Because social psychologists have not really resolved the problem of knowing unambiguously how to operationalise cohesiveness (Evans & Jarvis, 1980; Moreland, 1990; Mudrack, 1989), more recent research has tended to be in applied areas. Within the realm of sports psychology, in particular, scales have been devised to measure the cohesiveness of sports teams, however, such measurements are debatable as to whether they are a ‘true’ reflection of group cohesion, as the data is reliant on individual opinion. For example, what if one group member states that the group was cohesive and another does not?

There appears to be a huge gap in the literature regarding naturalistic group cohesion. Theorists have pleaded for more empirical attention to be paid to the dynamics by which cohesion evolves and shapes naturally in groups (e.g. Chiochio & Essiembre, 2009). Since past research has shown that members of strongly cohesive groups are more inclined to participate readily and to stay with the group (Dyaram & Kamalanabhan, 2005), it is imperative to discover how individuals ‘do’ being cohesive. Mudrack (1989) discussed how cohesiveness is a property of ‘the group’, but ‘the group’ as a distinct entity is beyond the grasp of understanding and measurement. Therefore, in order to ‘measure’ cohesiveness, research is focused on individuals (i.e. the tangible part of a group) to draw conclusions about the group. Herein lies a problem: it makes sense to say that a group is cohesive, but that an individual is not. As such, group cohesion can be thought of as a discursive

accomplishment; just as discursive psychologists look at talk as a social action, the notion of group cohesion is a social action. In other words, individuals cannot be cohesive by themselves; the cohesion comes as a result of interaction with others.

2.2 Teasing out group dynamics

In summary, the social constructionist approach to the study of group dynamics refutes that ideological frameworks are useful analytic tools, and instead suggests that the way a group of people represents a social issue is, itself, an outcome of that group's discursive interactions, rather than a pre-existing framework around which those discursive interactions converge. In order to identify such a social issue, however, we have to examine how it is made relevant in interaction. In the current thesis, the analytic focus was on interaction in problem-based learning, and one 'issue' that emerged in the data was how teasing was produced and constructed to serve certain functions. While teasing is commonly considered a negative and something to be avoided (e.g. Eisenberg et al., 2006; Espeleage et al., 2008; Keery, Boutelle, van den Berg & Thompson, 2005; Mottet & Thweatt, 1997; Schnurr & Chan, 2011), research has shown that actually it can be beneficial within the group setting. However, the research that shows this is somewhat vague as to how it occurs; is it enough to say that because a group shared a laugh, that they are, for instance, cohesive?

Group dynamics research therefore is not something that can be studied as an entity; rather, we learn *about* group dynamics through the study of group interactions; interactions based upon such practices as, for instance, teasing. In doing so, we can demonstrate why dynamics in a group are important, and the ways in

which they can be affected through individuals' dealings with each other, but not necessarily that they underpin interaction. As such, this chapter will next move on to considering group interaction.

2.3 Section summary

In summary of this section, we have taken a brief look at some of the foci of group dynamics that underpin group interaction. Group dynamics is one of the most widely researched areas within the field of social psychology (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008), and so the above review does not do justice to the wealth of literature that is available on this topic.

Fundamentally, we argue that the way in which group dynamics research has traditionally been conceptualised is problematic when considered from a social constructionist perspective, due to the inadequacy with which concepts such as 'underlying processes' are formulated. When considering group work approaches such as PBL, it is of little value to learn that, for instance, a group displays a low awareness of effective group dynamics, because we cannot *see* what it is about these 'processes' that make them effective or not to students (Tipping, Freeman & Rachlis, 1995). Instead, what we *can* do is focus on the observable aspects of group work; of the interactions that take place at the time, in the group context, not at a later date by way of reporting via a questionnaire. As such, we can argue that group dynamics within PBL groups can be evidenced by considering the functions they serve in group interaction, which is the body of literature to which this chapter turns next.

Part 3: Group interaction

The vast majority of research into academic group work has focused on the effectiveness of peer group learning methods compared to other instructional methods, with little attention being paid to students' interactions within such groups (Cohen, 1994; Kumpulainen & Mutanen, 1999). One of the strengths of working with naturalistic data is that it can provide a close-up look at what is going on in groups. In the aforementioned study into group dynamics in PBL, Tipping et al. (1995), for example, noted a discrepancy between self-reported and observed behaviour in groups; for instance, that students may detail that they work well together, but actual observations would suggest quite the opposite. Other researchers also advocate the expansion of naturalistic group research, highlighting the rich insights that can be obtained about group processes therein (e.g. Frey, 1994).

In their 1996 publication, for instance, Carson and Nelson investigated Chinese students' interaction styles within peer response groups, and found that the primary goal for Chinese students specifically was social; to maintain group harmony. As such, these students were reluctant to initiate comments, but when they did, they ensured they would not incite conflict in the group. This led them to avoid disagreeing with or criticising peers' work, which, while it may maintain harmony, is not fundamentally advantageous for their learning and academic achievement. In a more recent (2014) publication, Howe questioned whether there are certain types of social interaction (and therefore discourse) that best supports student learning. Based on her past twenty years of research, Howe reported that students in groups that contained members known to have differing ideas and/ or expressed differences during group work demonstrated a significantly greater conceptual understanding of

the topic when individually tested at a later stage. This promotes the importance of engaging in group work; particularly when individuals have opposing thoughts, as this helps to consolidate learning. Although Carson and Nelson's (1996) groups may have been harmonious, Howe's groups were presumably more knowledgeable.

3.1 Interaction work in PBL

The group processes and interactional practices that occur between students and are at the heart of PBL have only received limited attention to date (e.g. Hak & Maguire, 2000; Koschmann, Zemel, Conlee-Stevens, Young, Robbs & Barnhart, 2005; Linblom-Ylänne, Pihlajamäki & Kotkas, 2003). That is to say, we currently know very little about what students actually do in PBL tutorials. While there is indeed a plethora of research looking at interaction in student group work (e.g. Barfield, 2002; Cohen & Lotan, 2014; Gillies, 2006; Hutchison, Faber, Benson, Kim & DesJardins, 2013; Langholz & Zimmer, 2012), there is a need for more attention to be paid to interaction specifically in PBL. Past work into the collaborative learning process has typically been through indirect evaluations; examining students' perceptions through questionnaires and thus ignoring the more naturalistic interpretations and opinions of collaborative learning (e.g. De Grave, Dolmans, & Van Der Vleuten, 2002; Virtanen, Kosunen, Holmberg-Marttila & Virjo, 1999). For instance, students would be asked for feedback regarding their experience of PBL after their participation, and accounts after-the-fact may not necessarily align with what actually happened at the time.

While De Grave, Boshuizen and Schmidt (1996) claim that research into the nature of verbal interaction by students is insufficient to explain the effects of PBL,

Clouston (2007) suggests a need for more of a qualitative approach to PBL, to enable an understanding of how effective PBL is constructed, as the overall effectiveness can often rest on the quality of student interactions. This thesis thus argues that not only is this critical to the expansion of the literature in the area, such analyses can be infinitely more fruitful than retrospective reports.

3.2 Qualitative work in PBL

Qualitative approaches have, in recent years, begun to make an impact within PBL research (e.g. Barrett, 2005; Chan, Bridges, Doherty, Ng, Sharma, Chan & Lai, 2015; Hammel, Royeen, Bagatell, Chandler, Jensen, Loveland & Stone, 1999; Jin, Bridges, Botelho & Chan, 2015; Koschmann, Glenn & Conlee, 1997; Papinczak, Young & Groves, 2007). In 2006, for instance, Visschers-Pleijers and colleagues analysed different ‘types’ of interactions within the PBL setting to investigate how much time was spent on different activities. The authors argued that student learning in PBL is strongly influenced by the quality of group interactions, and therefore the more that is known about the kind of interactions taking place, the better suited educators are to ensure learning is occurring (Visschers-Pleijers, Dolmans, De Leng, Wolfhagen & Van Der Vleuten, 2006). Based on this, Gukas, Leinster and Walker (2010) analysed the verbal and non-verbal expressions used by students as indices of learning taking place, and tutors’ thresholds to intervene. The researchers considered common expressions used by students (such as “does anybody know...?”, “have we exhausted...?” and, “am I correct...?”) to indicate learning taking place, categorising each type of question into a learning interaction relating to exploratory questioning, cumulative reasoning and handling knowledge conflicts respectively. The authors

contest that such verbal and non-verbal expressions from students during PBL are useful indices of learning and can be used to help tutors decide when they need to intervene. However, it is debatable as to whether a student uttering something like, “should we get the points together?” (pp. e7) is a true reflection of learning taking place.

Jin (2014) analysed episodes of silence within PBL. After recording PBL tutorials, he identified and segmented significant periods of silence (more than one second long), before inviting the same participants back who had been recorded to view the footage and comment on their own and their group’s interaction processes. Findings from a content analysis of the data showed that silence is used for listening, comprehension and communication, and from a communicative functional perspective, the author argues that silence in PBL tutorials is conceptualised as being for participation and learning (Jin, 2014).

Imafuku and colleagues (2014) video recorded PBL sessions to investigate the process of collaborative knowledge construction. The analysis showed two patterns of knowledge construction: co-constructions between students from different disciplines, and elaborations between students from the same discipline. The authors argued that students’ learning processes were mediated by cultural assumptions, professional identities, and perceptions of collaborative learning, stating that such findings provided insights into participants’ introspections of the discussions (Imafuku, Kataoka, Mayahara, Suzuki & Saiki, 2014).

Whilst of interest, the research cited in the previous few paragraphs is beginning to highlight some of the problematic issues with the types of qualitative work that have been conducted in PBL. Research that hinges on interpreting

individuals' speech to represent inner thoughts about behaviour (such as whether learning has taken place, or what silence was used for) does not align with the methodological approach used in the upcoming analysis of this thesis, and arguably exemplifies De Grave and colleagues' (1996) claim that students' verbal interactions are insufficient to explain the effects of PBL.

There has been some discursive research in the area, though. Barrett (2010), for instance, conducted a discursive analysis of talk in PBL, arguing that this naturally occurring talk is the pivotal learning site for students, and therefore it should be studied close up. Barrett investigated how students constructed their understanding of the PBL process through their talk, arguing that by experiencing and understanding the PBL process as a process of finding and being in "flow" (open to knowledge), students are better positioned to transfer their use of this process across different situations in higher education and in the workplace (Barrett, 2010). What is of particular interest about this study in comparison to others we have discussed in this section is that the author approached the research in a way that allowed for the participants themselves to demonstrate their understanding of the PBL process and what it meant to them. Similarly, Koschmann and LeBaron (2002) recognised the need for research into *how* learning is articulated by those *doing* the learning, as opposed to past research which focused on measuring the effects of articulation of learning.

While it is encouraging to see research beginning to focus on the more naturalistic side of PBL, as stated earlier, it would appear that the majority of this is focused on the educational implications of the approach, neglecting to look at the group interactions that are taking place that can demonstrate group processes in

action, such as how groups display cohesion, identity, and norms. Understanding more about how these ‘group dynamics’ are constructed, oriented to, and dealt with in interaction allows us gain a better understanding of how the ‘doing education’ is conceptualised: if we can see, for instance, how cohesion is created in a group, we are better placed as educators to encourage such interactions.

However, as detailed earlier, the social constructionist approach to research does not position cohesiveness (for example), as a social representation, but rather considers it in terms of something people can construct or achieve interactionally. One way in which to do such constructing is through the practice of teasing. For instance, Drew (1987) and Straehle (1993) were among the first to suggest that teasing occurs in response to deviations from social norms and/ or in response to a speaker’s violation of communication standards, such as improbable claims, boasts, overly formal utterances, descriptions of impossible events, or exaggerated storytelling, with the trouble source for most teasing involving minor conversational transgressions. This notion of teasing as a response to misbehaviour is explained by Fine and de Soucey as, “the member who has violated group expectations is reprimanded, but because the frame is a joking one, there is formally no criticism; the reputation remains formally unsmudged: this is, after all, only ‘joking’” (Fine & De Soucey, 2005, pp.11).

In a working environment like PBL where individuals are dependent on each other, it is inevitable that troubles are going to arise in the form of norm deviations such as, for instance, social loafing (e.g. Dolmans, Wolfhagen, van der Vleuten &

Wijnen, 2001). Teasing, therefore, allows for the transgressor to be acknowledged or even reprimanded, but in a way that does not irreparably damage the group, as it can be framed as non-serious, or ‘kidding’.

This type of interaction is arguably evidence of group dynamics in action, as opposed to it being a set of processes that underlie our behaviour, and it is to this body of literature that we turn next: evaluating current teasing research before moving on in the analysis to demonstrate how teasing is a social practice, produced turn-by-turn in interaction to serve certain functions.

3.3 Section summary

In sum, it is important to demonstrate the value of naturalistic data, as it can inform us more clearly about what is going on in groups. Although PBL research has shown that it can be effective as a learning method, we remain unsure *how* this happens. The fundamental problem with using questionnaire methods to analyse group interaction is that individuals can report different opinions at different times and individuals analyse interactions in different ways. For instance, a group member may hate doing group work at the time, but when asked about it at a later date may rate it more highly than they would have previously. As such, analysing group members’ talk and interactions is key to understanding more about the intricacies that take place moment by moment within a group. Although some researchers (e.g. De Grave, Boshuizen & Schmidt, 1996) claim that research into verbal interactions is insufficient to explain results of PBL, others dispute this by showing that student learning in PBL is strongly influenced by the quality of group interactions (e.g.

Visschers-Pleijers, Dolmans, De Leng, Wolfhagen & Van Der Vleuten, 2006). In more recent years, PBL research has begun to implement more qualitative approaches to the study of PBL, analysing such interactions as individuals' utterances for determining how PBL stimulates collaborative learning (e.g. Imafuku et al., 2014; Yew & Schmidt, 2009) and the development of 'technical' vocabulary (Da Silva & Dennick, 2010). However, what is clear from above is that research into interaction in PBL – the actual happenings within the tutorial – is very much focused on the educational perspective; analysing the learning benefits students obtain from such interactions. There is, therefore, a need for more research into the social practices that complement the 'learning' side of PBL. In reconceptualising group dynamics as something that can be *achieved* collaboratively in interaction, we open ourselves to learning more about how groups actually function moment by moment.

Part 4: Teasing

Teasing is artful work, often used to convey messages that may seem negative or hurtful towards a recipient, but in a way that suggests the opposite (Harwood & Copfer, 2015). Although it is an everyday social interaction between humans, it is a difficult term to define, essentially because it has been conceptualised from various research perspectives. As such, teasing research tends to focus on one population or environment such as in friendship groups (Habib, 2008), in family interactions (Dunn & Brown, 1994; Margutti, 2007), in the workplace (e.g. Schnurr & Chan, 2011) and in different cultures (Campos et al., 2007; Garde, 2008; Schieffelin, 1990), and so there is no 'one-term-fits-all' to define how teasing actually appears in interaction. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to review

some of the literature pertaining to teasing, highlighting some of the theoretical complexities of studying such a phenomenon using data from the current thesis, and produce a tentative teasing definition that ‘fits’ with the methodological approach, for the sake of the following analytical chapters so that we can demonstrate the functions that are served through in-group teasing using discursive psychology.

4.1 Why does teasing occur?

Although perhaps counter-intuitive, this section will begin with a discussion around why and when teasing takes place, as opposed to offering a definition straightaway. Doing so invites the reader to consider some of the issues in defining such a concept; something that will be broached later in this chapter.

Typically, research into naturally-occurring teasing in interaction has noted the conditions or acts that immediately precede a tease (e.g. Alberts, 1992; Bradney, 1957; Underwood, Hurley, Johanson & Mosely, 1999), with two types of disruptions in social interaction consistently occurring. The first of these, as stated above, is in response to norm deviations; something happening in interaction that is not usual. Eder (1991), for instance, discussed how teenage high school girls were likely to be teased if they did not adhere to the norms regarding how they should dress and act. Similarly, Thorne (1993) demonstrated how girls – and more so boys – are likely to be teased when interacting with members of the opposite sex at an age when withingender play is usual, because doing so violates the norm of playing with same-sex peers. A few years later, Vessey and colleagues determined that children with physical differences from that of the group norm were at a particular risk of being teased (Vessey, Swanson & Hagedorn, 1995), while fairly recently, Heijens, Janssens

and Streukens (2012) explored body dissatisfaction, demonstrating that individuals who were overweight were teased due to not adhering to the social norm of being of a regular weight.

This type of research links back to the earlier discussion regarding the importance of group norms, and it is clear to see how the violation of such practices can lead to teasing, as a way of acknowledging the violation without being overly critical. In addition to this, however, interpersonal conflict has also been identified as an antecedent to teasing.

Over half a century ago, observational research found that individuals teased when resolving conflict-laden issues (Bradney, 1957), as it is believed to be an indirect, playful way to deal with it (e.g. Eder, 1993). This type of social influence has been studied in a range of settings and has shown, for instance, that as conflict with family members increases, so too does teasing as a way of negotiating it (e.g. Dunn & Munn, 1986). Straehle (1993) demonstrated how friends were likely to tease each other when discussing opposing views, due to the tension arising from not agreeing, while further research has looked at teasing as a means of responding to *potential* conflict; allowing individuals to negotiate problems before they arise (Keltner et al., 2001). Interestingly, research has also identified that conflict may come as a *result* of teasing (e.g. Kowalski, 2004; Montemayor & Hanson, 1985; Petrovic, 2009), demonstrating the fluidity of such constructs.

Despite the above being ‘reasons’ for teasing, it is arguably the reaction from the target which determines whether or not a tease has been treated as such; if a recipient does not treat the utterance as a tease, does that mean it is instead an insult?

As such, our attention must turn to the practices involved in receiving and responding to teasing.

4.2 Responding to teasing

Drew (1987) claims that a basic social skill is one's ability to accept a tease without showing resentment, and research has suggested an important feature of (male) identity construction is to be able to take a joke and 'fight back' (Franzen & Aronsson, 2013). A number of researchers have studied responses to teases, and as such are shedding light on the variety of different ways in which this is done.

In his 1987 paper, Drew identified that teases come as a response to a prior turn at talk; that is, they rarely happen out of context (Drew, 1987). From this, he developed a six-part continuum of responses to teasing from his data of naturally occurring telephone calls and face-to-face conversations with people familiar with each other, ranging from non-serious to serious; humorously going along with the tease to seriously correcting or rejecting the tease. Drew found that recipients of teasing rarely accept the implied criticism completely, and usually resist by making a 'po-faced' (serious) response. Hay (2001), found a similar, albeit simplified pattern to Drew in which targets responded to teasing by either providing support and thus endorsing it, supporting the humour aspect whilst commenting on the message, or correcting or denying the message without supporting the humour at all.

In a similar vein to Drew's (1987) work, Tholander and Aronsson (2002) found that responses to teases could be analysed as a continuum of defensive to offensive moves, with elaborate accounts at the defensive end and retaliations and proactive moves at the offensive end. They note that the participants in their studies

never seemed to ignore teasing attacks; instead, the ways in which they responded were just as varied and sophisticated as the ways in which they were attacked. Yu (2013) showed how teasing activity can bring about a shared experience of amusement for both teasers and their targets, arguing that such targets are active contributors in the social interaction, and any embarrassment felt by the teased participant does not prevent the exchange from reaching a shared experience of amusement.

Kowalski (2004) asserts that a target's reaction to a tease serves as a function of his or her perception of the (for instance) humour, ambiguity, identity confrontation and aggression/ coercion that the tease entails, and as such sets the tone for ensuing interaction; in the case of a 'malicious' tease, conflict may ensue, but in the case of pro-social teasing, good natured interaction will follow. Past work in the area has identified a clear difference between pro- and anti-social teasing, identifying that even young children have the ability to differentiate between them (e.g. Barnett, Burns, Sanborn, Bartel, & Wilds, 2004; Harwood & Copfer, 2015).

4.3 Outcomes of teasing

Research with children has shown that teasing can foster social rejection and aggression (e.g. Boulton & Hawker, 1997; Olweus, 1978, 1993; Randall, 1997), and is classed by Land (2003) as simply a form of peer victimisation. In their 2007 publication, for instance, Butler and colleagues demonstrated that teasing experiences recalled from childhood (in adulthood) were associated with significantly higher levels of rejection sensitivity (Butler, Doherty & Potter, 2007). In

addition, studies have shown that teasing can foster excessive body image concern and/ or eating disorders (Cash, 1995; Gleason, Alexander & Somers, 2000; Hutchison, Rapee & Taylor, 2010), lower self-esteem (Hazler, Hoover & Oliver, 1993), and increased depression and anxiety (Olweus, 1993); all of which suggests that early teasing can have a lasting negative impact on an individual.

In a relatively unique qualitative study, Magin and colleagues (2008) investigated the experiences of appearance-related teasing in individuals with skin diseases. From interviewing individuals and subsequently using a grounded theory methodology to analyse the data, the research team identified themes such as ‘the use of teasing as an instrument of social exclusion’, ‘the universally negative nature of the teasing’, and, ‘the emotional and psychological sequelae of teasing’, indicating the inherent negativity between skin disease appearance and teasing, and the emotional and psychological impact therefrom (Magin, Adams, Heading, Pond & Smith, 2008).

Research such as that by Schnurr and Chan (2011) identified that teasing can have a negative effect for those on the receiving end as it can pose several threats to the target’s face and sociality rights. For instance, teasing may threaten the listener’s ‘quality face’ (when being teased about a personal attribute or quality), or ‘identity face’ (when being teased about an aspect of their professional capability). The authors argue that this may be especially pertinent in the work place if the teasing occurs in front of colleagues as it may jeopardise their standing.

Other research has shown how teasing can lead to negative body image e.g. (Keery, Boutelle, van den Berg & Thompson, 2005), higher depression-suicidal feelings when the teasing pertained to non-heterosexuality (e.g. Espeleage et al.,

2008), and lower self-esteem (e.g. Eisenberg et al., 2006; Mottet & Thweatt, 1997), to name a few.

Research has also, however, demonstrated pro-social outcomes of teasing such as socialisation, affiliation, and conflict resolution (e.g. Campos et al., 2007; Haugh & Bausfield, 2012; Keltner et al., 1998; Palmer & Kawakami, 2014; Pawluk, 1989; Warm, 1997). In his 2012 paper, Nesi explored teasing in university lectures, and how ‘picking on’ one individual to be the butt of the joke can construct cohesion between individuals due to a shared understanding of the tease. For instance, mocking a student who arrived late to a lecture by insinuating the lateness was due to the student being hungover and not being able to get out of bed promotes the feeling of ‘we all can be included in this because we identify (with) the subject of the mock’, conforming to a widely-accepted ‘student’ script relating to the stereotype of students drinking and partying. This teasing is a form of social control, as misbehaviour on the part of the student (i.e. through late-coming) threatens the lecturer’s competence (Nesi, 2012).

In an earlier study, Gockel (2007) also discussed group cohesion as a result of teasing by advocating that the target should be someone out with the group. Through this, she argued, group cohesion is enhanced through group members’ shared amusement at the expense of someone else, although this seems somewhat obvious in that group dynamics literature has long reported that members of groups are likely to see themselves as superior to others, and as such, form bonds based on this shared unity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Walsh, Leahy and Litt (2009) found teasing (or, “cajoling” as they called it) to be a way of enhancing cooperation between clinicians and clients in a medical

setting. Through analysis of clinical discourse, the authors found that in response to apparently inappropriate comments by clients, clinicians who respond with teasing and laughter gained and maintained cooperation, and instead of such behaviour being viewed as ‘inappropriate’, a desirable by-product of rapport was established, where participants share a mutual focus while working toward a common goal.

Straehle (1993) used frame analysis (e.g. Goffman, 1981) to explore teasing within the context of flirting, arguing that the “antagonistic discourse structures of teasing carry a meta-message of rapport” (p. 228), demonstrating the link between some form of aggression (i.e. antagonising) and pro-social behaviour (flirting). Similarly, some twenty years later, Harwood and Copfer (2015) described affiliative forms of teasing, characterised by enjoyment from both the teaser and target. Schnurr and Chan (2011) report that teasing is a valuable tool for superiors in the workplace to communicate potentially face threatening messages, whilst at the same time enhancing solidarity and rapport, despite the negative outcomes, as detailed above, while Keltner and colleagues, for instance, determine teasing as central to socialization practices, enhancing bonding and negotiating social identities (Keltner et al., 1998).

Teasing is commonplace in groups of individuals, and yet there has been little work done to detail the turn-by-turn interactions therein, with most research relying on self-reports pertaining to teasing. Since there is still ambiguity with regard to what actually happens within an episode of teasing, there is a need for more naturally occurring observations, specifically in situations like working PBL groups where group interaction could potentially be irreparably affected by teasing if it is not managed well. This is the focus of the current study, but in order to demonstrate

such teasing interactions, we need to work from a definition of what teasing actually is, and what it looks like in interaction. Let us, then, review how past research has approached this.

4.4 Defining teasing

This next section will use examples from the current study to detail some of the problems with past teasing definitions, as much work in this area focuses solely on how an utterance is formed as a tease, and not with how it might *become* a tease through the way in which it is responded to. Crucially, this section will not go too in-depth with discursive psychology; rather, it will discuss some of the theoretical issues involved in defining teasing, before the actual analysis of demonstrating the functions that teasing can serve PBL interaction begins in chapter 4.

Teasing has often been categorised under the broader notion of ‘interactional humour’ or ‘conversational joking’ (e.g. Blythe, 2012; Norrick, 1994). However, how can we then differentiate a tease from a joke, or a humorous tease from a nonhumorous tease? Teasing is so ambiguous it requires some analysis of what it actually is.

Perhaps a good place to start is with Keltner et al.’s (2001) empirical review, in which the authors analysed sixty-two research papers for their measurements and definitions of teasing, coming to the conclusion that most scholars suggest that teasing *involves aggression, but also aspects of pro-social behaviours such as humour or play, directed at the self or others* (e.g. Alberts, 1992; Blythe, 2012; Boulton & Hawker, 1997; Shapiro, Baumeister & Kessler, 1991). However, Keltner and colleagues (2001) identified a number of problems with this broad overview,

pertaining to the ambiguity of the meaning of “aggression” and “prosocial behaviours”, the problem of context generalisability (in that most studies focused on one population or within one environment), and the lack of differentiating teasing from other related categories, such as bullying. As such, the authors offered their own definition; “an intentional provocation accompanied by playful markers that together comment on something of relevance to the target of the tease” (pp. 229); one which has been routinely cited in research since (e.g. Adetunji, 2013; Aronson, Biegler, Bond, Clark, Drogos, Garcia, Gleisner, Hendee, Licciardello, Linder, Mannone, Marshall, Pham, Porter, Scott, Volkmann & Yahn, 2007; Gorman & Jordan, 2015; Kowalski, 2004; Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2006). This definition is, however, problematic when considered from a discursive point of view.

4.4.1 The problem with intent and provocation

Brenman (1952, pp.265) defined teasing as standing “somewhere between aggression and love”. Whilst undoubtedly true, this ‘definition’ demonstrates the ambiguous nature of what teasing actually is: in order to place an utterance on a spectrum between ‘aggression and love’, the analyst must consider what such an utterance is doing in the interaction (i.e. insulting, charming), which is problematic for discursive research. Consider the following example, taken from a group of PBL students:

Example A: Group 1

Raymond: ((looking at Ella)) you sound really dull

The discursive psychological approach to data analysis aims to counter what mainstream psychology has done with discourse (i.e. treat talk as the expression of an internal mental stance) and rather demonstrate how psychological issues such as intent are encountered ‘indirectly’ through descriptions of actions, events, and settings (Edwards & Potter, 2005). From a cognitivist perspective, the above utterance from Raymond to Ella would be considered a verbal display of an attitude: that he thinks of her as “sounding dull”. According to Keltner and colleagues (2001) this would be an example of an intentional provocation: that what is being said is intended to unnerve/ upset/ arouse the recipient in some way, as the speaker appears to be enticing a reaction by negatively defining his peer. However, we cannot take for fact that this is what Raymond is doing, and instead of focusing on what he *may* be intending with this utterance (as we do not have access to his mind, we do not know for sure), we can instead focus on what this utterance does within the interaction. Take another example from another group of PBL students:

Example B: Group 6

Hannah: ((to Katy)) y’always have >issues<

Like in the previous example, as we do not have direct access to Hannah’s mind, we cannot state for certain that she was assigning a negative attribute to Katy by classing her as always having “issues”. As such, reading transcripts to look for an episode of teasing is problematic for discursive researchers if we are to go on the basis of identifying a speaker’s intent, as teasing intent cannot be inferred from a speaker’s words. We do not know whether Hannah’s aim was to tease or insult Katy

(two different actions), because we cannot read her mind, despite past research focusing on intent in their definitions of teasing (e.g. Bosacki, Harwood & Sumaway, 2012; Eisenberg, 1986; Gorman & Jordan, 2015; Mooney, Creeser & Blatchford, 1991).

Let us, then, consider the point about provocation. Keltner et al. (2001) identified that although early definitions of teasing involved aggression, they downgraded “aggression” to “provocation”, determining it to incite frustration or cause tension in the target (e.g. Mills and Babrow, 2003). We cannot, however, arguably, define an utterance as being provocative until we see how it is responded to. Let us return to the above two examples:

Example A: Group 1

Raymond: ((*looking at Ella*)) you sound really dull

Example B: Group 6

Hannah: ((*to Katy*)) y'always have >issues<

In categorising a peer as “sounding dull” or “always (having) issues”, the speakers are inviting a response from the recipient. While we cannot infer intent (i.e. we cannot say whether it was the speaker’s aim to insult, or tease, or joke), we can observe that in producing the utterance, some kind of interactive function is served, but only if the target responds to it in a way that demonstrates their recognition that the utterance provoked them in some way. Because we do not see Ella’s and Katy’s responses here, we cannot say whether the utterance has been treated as provocative. Arguably, we need more evidence to demonstrate that an utterance is *designed* to

tease, as opposed to bully, intimidate, insult. To put more simply, how does an individual demonstrate that they are teasing, as opposed to anything else? As it is, from a discursive psychology perspective, teasing definitions that hinge on ‘intentional provocation’ are problematic. However, this is not the only aspect of past teasing definitions that is problematic.

4.4.2 Markers and cues

Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997) refer to bonding, nipping and biting teases while Schieffelin (1986) discusses playful, controlling and malicious teases. However, there remains debate regarding what constitutes a ‘playful’ remark as opposed to ‘nasty’, and whether it is the teaser or the target who determines this (Kruger, Gordon & Kuban, 2006). For instance, a teaser could insist that his utterance was playful, but in the target’s perspective, it was nasty. One way in which researchers have attempted to demonstrate this is through the use of markers in speech.

Leech (1983) first introduced the concept of “mock impoliteness” to demonstrate whether an utterance should be taken seriously, or not. Discussions around mock impoliteness originally stemmed from Brown and Levinson’s (1978) politeness theory, which illustrated the practice of being polite in order to ‘save face’ for another. Politeness theory, in turn, stemmed from Goffman’s (1955; 1967) analysis of social interaction; specifically the concept of ‘face’. According to Goffman, ‘face’ is a mask that changes depending on the audience and the social interaction therein. He asserts that people use politeness strategies – engaging in

‘face work’ – to maintain others’ faces by avoiding sensitive topics and disregarding actions that may threaten others (Goffman, 1955; 1967; 1971). As such, Brown and Levinson’s theory (1978) demonstrates how politeness tactics accompany behaviours in which an individual threatens the face of another – for instance, in teasing – and so

1 to reduce the face-threatening potential of such an act, the individual will accompany
2 the behaviour with ‘off-record’ strategies suggesting that the commentary should not
3 be taken seriously or literally (Clark, 1996).

4 Subsequent teasing research developed this notion, placing emphasis on such
5 markers to identify teasing in interaction. Kowalski (2004), for instance, determined
6 that teasers use these types of cues to indicate how a tease should be interpreted, and
7 as discussed by Blythe (2012), teases are *marked* as not to be taken seriously through
8 the likes of facial displays such as smiling, laughing, mock aggression, nickname
9 usage, and exaggeration. Consider the following extract in which another group of
10 PBL students are working on their laptops:

11

12 *Extract C: Group 7*

13 Rachel: ((typing on laptop)) fI forgo(h)t Ste(h)ve

14 Donald: ((smiles)) (hhh)

15 Phillip: a heh heh

16 Rachel: hih hih (.) hih

17 (0.5)

18 Phillip: [((smiling, air quoting))

19 [forgo:t_

20 Rachel: fhh no I actually did hih hih

21

22 The onus of this extract is that a group member omitted another member of
23 their class when she was sending an email to the whole class and as such is teased for
24 it. We see the teaser (Phillip) laugh, smile, elongate his speech, and embody the
25 action by air quoting as he speaks, thus clearly marking that what he is saying is
26 playful and not serious. The target (Rachel), in turn, demonstrates her recognition
27 that Phillip’s teasing is just that, and she responds appropriately – albeit defensively

28 – in a matching, jovial way, demonstrating that the tease has been interactionally
29 interpreted as jocular rather than aggressive (Haugh, 2010).

30 However, is the presence of markers enough to illustrate that an utterance is
31 designed to tease? If a teasing definition hinges on the importance of such markers,
32 why are some utterances treated as teases even when no markers are present?

33 Consider the following:

34

35 *Extract D: Group 8*

36 Tom: ((looks up from reading)) what's the species
37 ↑called
38 (1.0)
39 Jennifer: £DON'T TEST me:
40 Tom: no it's-
41 Jennifer: heh heh heh heh

42

43 Here, we have an example of an utterance which is not formulated as a tease
44 per se, but is treated as such. Group member Jennifer has been struggling with the
45 pronunciation of a certain species, and is asked by Tom, “what’s the species called”.
46 There is an absence of markers in this utterance to suggest it was designed as a tease,
47 however, Jennifer still treats it as such: despite being defensive and replying, “don’t
48 test me”, we can see that there is laughter in her speech, indicating the joviality with
49 which she has treated Tom’s utterance.

50 We do not know whether Tom was purposely teasing Jennifer or asking a
51 genuine question. This is where the trouble with implying intent becomes relevant
52 again. As such, the importance of markers is also questioned since although they can

53 be important for signifying an utterance as a tease, they are also not necessarily
54 needed, as we have seen above. What is becoming clear throughout each of the

extracts discussed so far is not necessarily whether an utterance is intentionally provoking, or accompanied with markers but actually the interpretation of a tease being a tease lies with the recipient; a point we will return to shortly.

4.4.3 Laughter as a marker

If we accept that markers and cues are needed by at least one of the teaser or target to demonstrate their treatment of an utterance as playful, can laughter be treated as a marker or cue? Although laughter is not a certain outcome of teasing, it can be, and as such can be used to demonstrate the ‘jokiness’ with which a tease is delivered, or the acceptance with which it is received (Walsh, Leahy & Litt, 2009).

Glenn (2003, pp. 49) first highlighted the function of ‘laughables’ as being “any referent that draws laughter or for which [one] can reasonably argue that it is designed to draw laughter”, emphasising the interactive nature of laughter, and showing that it is likely to be produced in response to some prior speech. In research, however, relatively little attention has been paid to the social aspects of laughter, as historically, research has focused on the individual *doing* the laughter, as opposed to those *receiving* it, therefore neglecting the important interactional properties of laughter. As stated by Provine (2004, pp.215), “the necessary stimulus for laughter is not a joke, but another person”, which has garnered support from the likes of Holt (2011) who determined that research in the area should no longer focus on trying to explain *why* people laugh, but instead look at what actions are being performed when they do. Laughter is important in the social setting as it shows affiliation with others (Glenn, 2003); an important point to consider in teasing research due to the “risky” nature of laughter (e.g. Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2006) and the differing ways in

2 which it can be interpreted, such as demonstrating affiliation with the teaser
3 (Georgesén, Harris, Milich & Young, 1999).

4 Laughter, therefore, is actually perhaps the best indicator that a tease has been
5 treated as such, as it is organised and precisely placed to manage moments in
6 interaction, and to achieve actions (e.g. Jefferson, 1979; 1984; 2004). Yu (2013), for
7 instance, demonstrated how collective laughter from both a teaser and tease recipient
8 before the actual teasing begins provides a relaxed environment for the teasing
9 activity, through communicating amusement rather than disapproval. As a marker
10 prefacing speech, laughter demonstrates that what follows is jocular, and in
11 responding to an utterance, laughter suggests it has been accepted in this way, as
12 shown in the extract below:

13

14 *Extract E: Group 1*

15 Raymond: an' she goes to u₁ni .hh huh huh huh
16 (1.0)
17 Ella: £an' she's at the top of our [₁class
18 Raymond: [heh
19 heh heh
20 Kate: hih hih hih

21

22 In this extract, group member Kate was trying to turn on Raymond's laptop,
23 but mistook the mute button for the power button and as such is being teased by her
24 peers through their comparison between the ways in which she is intelligent (goes to
25 uni, is at the top of the class), and her inability to do something as simple as turn on a
26 laptop. Walsh et al. (2009) proposed that in teasing (or "cajoling", as the authors
27 called it) interaction, laughter can serve as a way of demonstrating cooperation
28 between the teaser and target: by laughing, the teaser demonstrates that what they are

saying is in jest, and the target demonstrates that they have not interpreted the previous turn(s) as insulting or bullying, and treat it as jovial. Here, we see that Kate laughs after the teasing episode, demonstrating her cooperation that she ‘gets’ that her peers are playing around, and what they are saying is not meant harmfully.

4.4.4 Presence of target

So, while such contextual clues as markers and laughter seem crucial to determine a tease as a tease, according to research in the area, there is another component, too. As mentioned earlier, Keltner et al. (2001, pp.234) emphasise the importance of relevance in teasing, stating: “people often recount amusing anecdotes about one another in ways that do not highlight something of present relevance to the target. This type of storytelling does not fall within the domain of teasing”. This would suggest, then, that individuals cannot be teased about something that has happened previously, (or if they do, it is not classed as ‘teasing’ but rather something else), and that if the utterance is directed at someone not present, it is not regarded as a tease but as something else (perhaps gossiping).

Keltner et al. (2001) therefore suggest that a tease will refer to one of three things: something about the target, the relationship between the teaser and the target, or some object of interest to the target. Clark (1996) suggested that a tease involves a claim about the target that occurs in the realm of pretence, and that pretence contrasts with what is known about the target, with the tease being produced from this disparagement. For instance, if an individual usually dressed well (their particular quality), but one day appeared dishevelled (which is true and known as it can be seen), a tease may be formulated due to this unusual appearance. The importance of a

11 tease being relevant to the ongoing interaction in order for it to be acknowledged as
12 such has been discussed by subsequent researchers (e.g. Lampert & Ervin-Tripp,
13 2006). Gockel (2007) classed teasing as a form of ‘put-down humour’ aimed at
14 someone within the context, whereas if it is directed at someone externally, it is more
15 akin to gossiping. Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997) similarly regard teasing as
16 requiring the joking be directed at someone present in the interaction. Consider the
17 following interaction between group members Rachel and Phillip. Their fellow
18 group member Donald has just left the room.

19

20 *Extract F: Group 7*

21 Phillip: >ah don't wanna tell 'im 'cause he might get
22 angry<
23 (0.5)
24 Phillip: [an like
25 Rachel: [ah hih hih hih
26 Phillip: smash things
27 Rachel: hih hih wha↑' (.) fhe's Donald he's not
28 gonna smash anythin' (.) fhe wi:ll find
29 sources
30 Phillip: (hhh)
31 Rachel: from every paper ever written as to why
32 you're wrong
33 Phillip: ahe:h
34 (1.5)
35 Phillip: yeah
36 (1.5)
37 Rachel: ((turns to camera and waves)) fhi Donald (.)
38 you're prolly gonna
39 Phillip: [heh
40 Rachel: [watch this when you get back
41

If we go by past teasing definitions, Rachel's utterance might fall into the category of a tease as it is marked with cues that she is being playful, but contains an element of provocation. Rachel appears to tease Donald for being 'academic'; a reason for teasing as identified by other research too (e.g. Benwell & Stokoe, 2002), and which is the focus of the first analytic chapter. Rachel constructs Donald as the type of person who, instead of "smashing things" in response to provocation, would 'do research' in order to prove why the provocateur was wrong, and as such teases him by constructing him as somewhat of a 'geek'. While we do not know what Rachel's intent was with this utterance, in acknowledging that the camera picked up her discussion about Donald, she is orienting to the fact that Donald may hear what she just said, which suggests it is a provocative utterance that may have some ramifications to it.

However, can this be classed as a tease if the target was not present? Probably not, because teasing is a collaborative interaction: the recipient must demonstrate that it is treated as such. If a teaser was just to bombard a recipient with teases without allowing for a response, we would not know whether the supposed teases were being treated as such, or as bullying remarks, insults, sarcasm etc. As such, it is crucial to consider how teases are treated in interaction; an aspect within literature that seems to be somewhat overlooked.

4.4.5 A re-focus on the recipient?

In their 2006 analysis of teasing and self-directed joking amongst friends, Lampert and Ervin-Tripp stated that, "acts that are overtly aggressive (e.g. bullying), highlight distressing (e.g. public exposure of a sensitive issue), or unmarked are more

21 likely to be experienced by a target as hostile” (pp. 56). However, this definition
22 assumes that the teaser and the target share the same definition of “aggression”, and
23 is not open to the viewpoint that such definitions may differ for different people.
24 Haugh (2010) discussed the importance of focusing both on how utterances are
25 framed by the speaker, but also the interpretation by the recipient, to demonstrate
26 teasing. Consider the following:

27

28 *Example G1: Group 1*

29 Raymond: fuck off

30

31 To read this utterance as it is here is somewhat meaningless, as the lack of
32 context renders the reader unable to make sense of its function in interaction. We
33 know that it comes from a student partaking in group work with fellow students, but
34 it is unclear why it was said at this point in time, in this way. As a swear word, “fuck
35 off” tends to be treated as at the least, impolite, and at the worst, taboo (Culpeper,
36 2005) in interaction. It could be considered a joke, a tease, or an insult (amongst
37 many), and it is not until we understand the context in which such an utterance was
38 produced that we can determine more about its function:

39

40 *Extract G2: Group 1*

41 Kate: I qui’ fancy doin’ the ground’d theory one

42 Ella: huh (.) oh do you

43 Raymond: fuck off

44

45 At this point, the context suggests that “fuck off” was in response to a peer’s
46 suggestion that she, “quite fancied doing” (analysing) a specific research paper in

47 preference to another. Raymond's utterance thus, at this point in time, serves the
48 function of demonstrating disagreement, but because there are no markers to suggest
49 that Raymond is teasing, we must look to how a response to an utterance can impact
50 its interpretation:

51

52 *Extract G3: Group 1*

53 Kate: I qui' fancy doin' the ground'd theory one

54 Ella: huh (.) oh do you

55 Raymond: fuck off

56 Kate: [heh heh heh

57 Raymond: [heh heh heh

58

59 This demonstrates the importance of analysing turn-by-turn interactions, and
60 how teasing is not just based on the individual *doing* the teasing but also the
61 recipient(s) *receiving* the tease. We can see here that both the teaser and target laugh
62 after the utterance, indicating that the target has not treated it as serious (i.e. as
63 offensive towards Kate), and the teaser also demonstrates this by laughing it off. In
64 not acknowledging how Raymond's utterance was responded to and classing it as a
65 tease (or not) based on only the utterance and not the response, the analyst leaves
66 themselves open to understanding only half the story.

67 For instance, if we return to the above example, one individual may treat this
68 utterance as 'overtly aggressive' whilst another may treat it as an indicator of
69 friendship or acceptance based on its contextual use. As such, it seems
70 counterintuitive to state that "acts that are overtly aggressive" (Lampert &
71 ErvinTripp, 2006), are *not* classed as teases, when each individual will treat such acts
72 in their own, personal way; one individual may think a certain utterance was

73 aggressive, whereas another may not. Drew (1987), for instance, categorised only
74 those remarks deemed ‘playful’ as teases, rejecting those interpreted as ‘nasty’ as
75 ridiculing attacks, but this differentiation was, arguably, only his opinion. As
76 Adetunji (2013) states, a recipient responds by displaying their understanding of
77 what he or she hears, so perhaps we need to focus more on how teases are treated by
78 recipients. Voss (1997), for instance, posits that for a tease to be ‘successful’ (i.e.
79 treated in interaction *as* a tease as opposed to criticism, or a bullying remark) it needs
80 to be responded to in a playful manner. Consider the following extract:

81

82 *Extract H: Group 1*

83 Raymond: you’re all jus’ trying t’get camera time

84 Ella: [we were- Kate:

85 [heh heh heh

86 Ella: we were actually having a

87 [conversation

88 Ava: [°fttrying to get air time°

89 Raymond: heh heh heh heh

90 Ella: relevant to this topic so Kingston¹

91 you just be quiet

92

93 The focal point here is Raymond’s utterance towards his group members that,
94 “you’re all just trying to get camera time”, presumably said to orient to the
95 transgression his peers have made, of engaging in off-topic chat when they should have
96 been working. According to Voss (1997), whether the utterance is treated as a tease by
97 his peers is dependent on it being responded to playfully. We can see from the extract

¹ Raymond is routinely called by his surname Kingston by his peers instead of his first name

98 that his three peers respond differently to his utterance: Kate laughs, Ava repeats what
99 he said (but in a jovial way, evidenced by her ‘smiley’ voice), and Ella accounts
100 seriously (with a lack of playful markers) for their supposed misdemeanour.

As such, we can argue that Raymond's utterance was transformed into a tease by two of its recipients (Kate and Ava) – despite an absence of markers to suggest it was designed as such – but into something more akin to an insult by Ella, demonstrating the context-shaping and context-renewing nature of interaction (cf. Heritage, 1984).

To emphasise the importance of focusing on the target to determine whether a tease is a tease, consider this final extract:

Extract I1: Group 2

58	Ally: well the whole thing contributes to the e:nd
59	piece so you're learnin' as you go along
60	Nadia: [((nods))
61	Regina: [yeah ah course (.) that's what university
62	<u>is</u>

As we join this group of psychology students, they have been discussing their PBL task, with group member Ally asserting that the work they do week by week contributes to the final, overall assignment. This is confirmed by Regina, with no obvious sign that it was meant to be interpreted in any other way than to agree with what Ally had just said, however, when we see the next few turns at talk, we can demonstrate more clearly the importance of the response to an utterance in determining how it should be classified:

Extract I2: Group 2

63	Ally: well the whole thing contributes to the e:nd
64	piece so you're learnin' as you go along

65 Nadia: [((*nods*))

66 Regina: [yeah ah course (.) that's what
university

67 *is*

68 Jackie: ((*looking down, smiling*)) hm hm

69 Regina: ɸbut

70 Nadia: >he he he [he he he<

71 Regina: [heh (.) e(h)m .hh

72 Ally: ((*smiles, gaze downwards*))

Regina's response to Ally ("yeah ah (of) course") is an example of what Heritage and Raymond (2005) would class as a negotiation of authority; in proposing that she 'already knew' what Ally said, she is questioning the 'who is informing whom' dynamics, which works as a tease as demonstrated through the response it receives. Jackie smiles and minimally laughs (line 68), before Regina appears to attempt to continue her point, although this time with a laughter marker. At this point Nadia quite audibly laughs which is reciprocated by Regina, despite not initially doing so. This build-up of laughter after Regina's utterance demonstrates that what she said was interpreted as a tease due to Ally's stating the obvious. The fact that Regina starts to continue her point at line 69 suggests that she was not provoking Ally deliberately – as she did not wait for a response from her – but as demonstrated in the ensuing interaction, her utterance was treated as such.

This then raises the question of whether a tease is a tease if others orient to it as such, even if the 'target' does not. Although we see that Ally smiles (line 72) and as such presumably 'accepts' the tease, if she had not done so, would this interaction still be considered teasing, based on the fact that other individuals treated it as so? This is a very tricky interaction to consider and hypothesise about when there is no

example. Had Ally taken offence at Regina and stormed out of the room (granted, an extreme example), would Regina's utterance then be considered an insult or a bullying remark, as opposed to a tease? And what if the utterance had been glossed over and not oriented to at all? Presumably then it would not be considered a tease but rather just another turn at talk.

4.5 An interactional approach to teasing

The important point here is the suggestion that perhaps research should not get too immersed in trying to define what a tease actually is, but to focus instead on the functions that be served in interaction through teasing. Concepts like 'cohesion' and 'fun' are constructed through the collaborative action that is teasing, demonstrating that teasing is a multifunctional resource, used by speakers to manage group interactions and negotiate identities. Ultimately, teasing will probably never achieve a universally-accepted definition because everyone treats it differently. In addition, people respond differently at different times depending on who is doing the teasing and what it is about, and so it is not a stable construct to analyse but rather one that is better to consider in terms of what it does in interaction at a particular time. This ambiguity in teasing can actually work to its advantage by distinguishing it from bullying and other more 'serious' forms of interaction (e.g. sexual harassment) simply because researchers do not tend to classify bullying as ambiguous (Land, 2003). However, no matter how threatening a tease is to the recipient, the teaser can always claim that they were 'just kidding', thus removing themselves from the potential responsibility for harmful effects resulting therein (Kowalski, 2000).

While past research has certainly begun to provide fruitful insights into the practice of teasing, approaches to the field such as discursive psychology can demonstrate how much more there is to consider. There is, however, limited research that has looked discursively at teasing in interaction, as it is often a by-product of research into groups more generally, and there is even less work to date looking at teasing specifically within PBL, although we know that it does happen (e.g. Hendry, Ryan & Harris, 2003). In comparison to general group work, PBL is of particular interest to consider in terms of the functions teasing can serve, due to its studentcentred focus. Because group members are responsible for, and contribute to, each other's work and (usually) grades, teasing can be useful as a form of social control.

As such, the current analysis will be focused on the following:

- to continue discussions (as started in this chapter) on what a tease is, and how it is defined
- to show how teasing actually occurs; how it is collaboratively constructed as such, and how it plays out in interaction
- to demonstrate the social functions that teasing can serve in PBL interaction

Past research has glossed over issues like, 'teasing can enhance bonds' and 'teasing can foster social rejection', and so it is the aim of this analysis to show *how* teasing can perform certain functions through looking at the sequential unfolding of turns in group interaction. Past work has focused on teasing as something one person *does* to another, but this thesis argues that teasing is a joint action; that an utterance

can be transformed into a tease if it is oriented to as such, and in happening, a range of functions are served within the context of the group. To do so, the analysis will focus on identity occasionings in teasing, accounting for transgressions, and what happens when teasing goes wrong.

4.6 Section summary

In sum, teasing is fundamentally difficult to define, and it is not the aim of this thesis to do so; particularly because the methodology assumes an emic approach to categorising data and so teasing should be defined by the participant. However, when conducting an analysis based on teasing, there must be some kind of framework to work from, in order to be able to identify teasing interactions. Not only are there a wide range of terms that fall under the umbrella of ‘teasing’ (such as taunting, kidding, mocking, badgering, and provoking, to name a few), such utterances can be responded to in a wide range of ways, such as laughing, ignoring, retaliating or defending, again, to name just a few. As such, analysing teasing in interaction is a complex process.

This section began, then, detailing that because of this variance, research tends to focus on one population or environment, and indeed, in the upcoming analysis of this thesis, teasing is focused on student PBL groups. Past research has established that teasing tends to evolve in response to a violation of group norms, or in response to potential and actual conflict. In both situations, the joviality of teasing is used to address something more serious, but in a way that suggests the initiator (teaser) is not adding fuel to the fire. Being on the receiving end of a tease gives the target the power to determine whether the tease is just that or is something else; for instance, if a target laughs along they display their understanding of the joviality of

the utterance, but if they become defensive, they suggest that they have treated the utterance as something other than a tease – perhaps an insult or a criticism. Whether an utterance is a tease, therefore, is not established until we can see how the recipient responds. Arguably of more interest than providing a definition, is looking at the functions teasing can serve within the PBL environment, and so that is what the analysis aims to demonstrate following this chapter summary, and the methodology chapter.

Part 5: Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was to discuss and review literature pertaining to the rationale for the current study: namely, group work, group dynamics, group interaction, and teasing. In the first section, I began by introducing group work as a method of learning at university. One particular ‘type’ of group work was discussed in depth – problem-based learning – highlighting its place and value as a method of learning, but that there is a lack of research into what actually happens in PBL groups. This led to the second section, in which I discussed the core concepts of group dynamics as problematic to conceptualise as ‘processes’ that underpin groups, and that rather we should focus on the functions that can be observed by studying group interaction, which lead to the third section. Here, I explored the importance of and need for more research into naturally-occurring group interaction, to allow us to better understand the intricate and often minute interactions that take place in groups, but doing so required a focus which led to the final section in which the interactive practice of teasing was detailed. Teasing can be thought of as a way of demonstrating

group processes and dynamics in action, and so it is the aim of this thesis to explicate this as it happens in PBL.

Having now introduced the background literature of this thesis, in the next chapter I move on to discuss the methodology; the theoretical underpinnings of the methodological approach, the procedures involved in data collection, transcription, and analysis, and the practicalities of undertaking the research.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodological assumptions, procedures, and practicalities of the thesis. It is split into two sections; firstly, the theoretical framework and analytical approach to the research will be discussed, reviewing the theoretical roots of discursive psychology and detailing why it is an appropriate analytical approach for the current research, before detailing the dataset and specific procedures that were involved in collecting and analysing the data which comprised the thesis.

Part 1: Theoretical framework

1.1 Introduction

This thesis adopts a social constructionist approach to analysis, positing that jointly constructed understandings of the world form the basis for shared assumptions about reality. Specifically, the analysis uses discursive psychology; applying ideas from discourse analysis to central topics in social psychology, fundamentally drawing on the notion that language performs certain functions in interaction. While cognitive science treats language as a representation of some inner process – i.e. that what we say somehow reveals what we are thinking or feeling – this is unobservable and as such discursive psychology takes the action-oriented and

reality-constructing features of discourse as crucial for understanding interaction (Potter & Edwards, 2001). The approach rejects the factors-and-outcomes model that underlies much psychological research, and instead treats psychological topics as things that are constructed, attended to, and understood in interaction. This first section will therefore explore the theoretical influences behind the methodology of discursive psychology – those of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis – before introducing discursive psychology itself, demonstrating why it is an appropriate methodology for the current study.

1.2 Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is concerned with the study of ordinary people's methods; those used for producing and making sense of every day social life (Goffman, 1981). Social life is anything but random, and people are constantly attempting to understand what is going on in any situation; using this knowledge to conduct themselves appropriately. The approach focuses on the way in which people make sense of their everyday world; whether that's how strangers behave in cafés (e.g. Laurier & Philo, 2006), or how individuals 'play' (e.g. Tolmie & Rouncefield, 2013).

The approach is perhaps most commonly associated with the sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1917-2011) who, whilst studying the decision making processes of juries at the University of Chicago in 1954, was interested to note the common sense methods through which members of a jury produce themselves as a jury; that these individuals did not seem to learn these distinctions as a result of being a member of

the jury but brought them into the court as part of an organised body of knowledge and skills used all the time (Garfinkel, 1974). Garfinkel's definitive *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) credits the development of the discipline to the works of Talcott Parsons, Alfred Schutz, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber (Rawls, 2000), and at the heart of it proposes that people organise their conduct in ways that are designed to be intelligible, recognisable and accountable (Heritage, 2001).

Garfinkel determined that activities found in daily life were phenomena worthy of study in their own right, and sought to explore the common-sense and often taken-for-granted methods individuals use to make sense of their own social worlds. The discipline of ethnomethodology (and others, such as conversation analysis and discursive psychology, which will be discussed shortly), uses language and discourse as both *constructive of* and *constructed through* everyday life (Potter & Edwards, 2001). Rather than conduct research on society by applying findings from a previous setting, researchers study the orderliness of social life as it produced through shared sense-making practices. There is thus a reflexivity – a bidirectional relationship – between the activity of making sense of a social setting, and the ongoing development and production of that setting (Garfinkel, 1984; Heritage, 1984).

For instance, to demonstrate how language is used in everyday settings, it is useful to consider Wieder's (1974) classic study into life in a half-way house for narcotics criminals. The research involved Wieder spending time at the house, watching what went on, and building a relationship with inmates and staff so he could discuss with them about their lives. The main aim of his work was to demonstrate the differences between the ethnomethodological approach and

(traditional) social scientific approach to language, highlighting the shortcomings of the latter. As such, he adopted the traditional social scientific ploy of identifying a set of informal rules operating in the institution (such as ‘share what you have’ and ‘do not trust staff’), and demonstrated how these rules could be construed as guiding behaviour (for instance, ‘do not trust staff’ could explain why some inmates avoided interacting with staff, as they deemed them untrustworthy). Wieder proposed, however, as an alternative to this view, that the rules themselves became the topic of study to inform how they were used *in practice* at the house: shifting from using features of talk as an explanatory resource to looking at them as a topic for research in their own right. This is an underpinning concept in ethnomethodological research. In doing so, Wieder questioned what talk was doing and what it achieved, demonstrating that the nature of interaction is that it is not pre-packaged and preordained but is reproduced on each occasion. Wieder and his inmates, therefore, were not just passively acting out the ‘rules’ as to how they should each behave, but were formulating the nature of the action and the situation as it happened.

Of the various forms of research inspired by the field of ethnomethodology, it is arguably that of conversation analysis that has been of the most prominence. It is to this body of research that I turn next.

1.3 Conversation analysis

Based upon the ethnomethodological focus of social life as it occurs *in situ*, conversation analysis was developed by Sacks in the late 1960s, and subsequently refined with his colleagues Schegloff and Jefferson (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Sacks, 1992). Prior to this, few believed that conversation was orderly enough

to allow for detailed description of its structure, with previous research focusing on invented or imagined scenarios, as ‘normal’ conversation was deemed too mundane and ‘messy’ to study (Heritage, 1984). The approach demonstrates how conversation is interactively constructed by looking at its basic properties, and shows how conversation, although naturally-occurring, is systematically orderly, offering an approach to analysis that combines how conversation is both heard and understood by its participants (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). Through such conversational practices, individuals construct and maintain their social worlds, defined by Drew (2005) as “our relationship with one another, and our sense of who we are to one another, is generated, manifested, maintained, and managed in and through our conversations” (Drew, 2005, pp. 74).

Through a detailed analysis of the ordinary practices through which conversation is produced, Sacks and colleagues’ seminal work offered rigorous accounts of how ordinary social lives are produced and managed in social interaction through focusing on the organisation of conversational materials and identifying robust patterns of interaction and rules to which speakers orient. Fundamentally, conversation analysis begins by establishing a research problem and collecting data in the form of video or audio-recorded conversations; collected in this way so there is a record of not only what is said, but how it is said (noting, for instance, pitch changes, increased or decreased speed and volume, and pauses). The most basic assumption within CA is that talk is orderly, focusing on what it is *doing* in interaction as opposed to what it may be communicating; as a basic illustration, to return to Example A above where Raymond said to Ella, “you sound really dull”, the conversation analyst would not necessarily be interested in the meaning behind the

utterance (i.e. the supposed insult), but more so on what function this serves in interaction.

Conversation analysis is considered one of the primary methods to study talk-in-interaction, and so a key concern for researchers is to analyse the ways in which people organise and manage their interactions (Schegloff, 2007). To do this, researchers analyse turn-by-turn interactions to find out what function(s) are being performed through talk based on the ways in which conversational turns are initiated and responded to. There are four main practices identified that allow interaction to proceed, described by ten Have (2007) as *turn-taking organisation*, *sequence organisation*, *repair organisation*, and the *organisation of turn design*, as detailed below.

Firstly, turn-taking organisation refers to how conversation is organised so that speakers know when to speak, who speaks next and how to avoid speaking over others. Each speaker's turn is made up of turn construction units (TCUs) which can be single words, clauses or full sentences (Sacks et al., 1974). The end of a TCU is marked as a transition relevant place (TRP); the point at which the turn at talk may go to another speaker, or may stay with the same speaker who begins a new TCU. Speakers regulate turntaking by attending to such TRPs, and it is through this negotiation that speakers display their mutual understandings of the interaction based on what each speaker has said (Schegloff, 2007).

Secondly, sequence organisation is concerned with how turns are produced and ordered to follow preceding turns (Schegloff, 2007). When one speaker initiates an action, it is expected that a second will respond appropriately; whether that's returning a greeting, answering a question, or accepting an offer (Schegloff & Sacks,

1973). These types of turns are known as ‘adjacency pairs’, and when initiating the first part of an adjacency pair, the second part becomes interactionally relevant; i.e. a certain response is expected, if not predicted, and is categorised as ‘preferred’, as it allows the interaction to continue in a smooth manner. However, in conversation we often find that a first part pair is followed by something that disrupts the interaction; whether that’s a refusal to answer a question, a challenge to the speaker or simply no response at all. These kinds of second part pairs are regarded as ‘dispreferred’, as they interrupt the interaction and point to some sort of problem. In addition, sequence expansions – before, within or after an adjacency pair – can function to, as the name suggests, expand on the interaction. Fundamentally, sequence organisation helps speakers to accomplish and coordinate an interactional activity, with understanding being continually checked and demonstrated through the way in which conversation is delivered, heard, and understood (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013).

Thirdly, repair organisation manages problems in speaking, hearing and understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977). It refers to the set of practices wherein a speaker interrupts the ongoing course of action to attend to an instance of ‘trouble’ such as, for instance, failure to hear or to be heard, trouble on the part of the recipient with understanding or misarticulations (Schegloff, 1987). The organisation of repair is a self-righting mechanism in social interaction; participants in conversation seek to correct the trouble source by preferably initiating self-repair over other-repair.

Finally, the organisation of turn design refers to the way in which our turns are designed to inform and shape recipients’ understandings (Schegloff, 1972). Each turn we take ‘does’ something, and interaction fundamentally consists of the

interplay between what one speaker is 'doing' in their turn-at-talk, what the previous speaker 'did' in theirs, and what the next speaker will 'do' subsequently. These actions involve inviting, questioning, assessing, enquiring and so on, and so each turn at talk, is contingent in some way on the previous speaker, and sets up contingencies of its own for the next (Drew, 2013; in Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). Drew (2013) describes this as a connected sequence of turns which is, in other words, interaction, and evidence that the other speaking party understands what one is saying. Conversation analysis, therefore, studies more than just the language in an utterance; it studies it within context (Goodwin, 1990). Speakers draw on a variety of resources (such as word choice, timing, gesture etc.) when constructing their turns to perform specific social actions, and it is this facet that is a fundamental concern for conversation analysis research.

This is very much a broad-brush overview of conversation analysis for the sake of brevity, but there is a wealth of research available pertaining to the approach (e.g. Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Drew & Heritage, 1993; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1988; Pomerantz, 1984, 1986; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff et al., 1977). While the forthcoming analytic chapters use the method of conversation analysis, they focus more so on discursive psychology. ten Have (2005) argues that discursive psychology has moved closer to conversation analysis in approach over the years, possible due to the latter's evolution of analysing naturally occurring interactions as opposed to just written texts and interview accounts. This chapter will now turn to the approach of discursive psychology.

1.4 Discursive psychology

Discursive psychology's (DP) beginnings can be traced to three seminal texts, produced by colleagues at, and members of, Loughborough University's Discourse and Rhetoric Group (DARG). Potter and Wetherell's (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology*, Billig's (1987) *Arguing and Thinking*, and Edwards and Potter's (1992) *Discursive Psychology* are considered the starting point for what is now known as discursive psychology, offering new ways of conceptualising fundamental topics within the field of social psychology. DP stems from a dissatisfaction with how discourse was being treated in psychology at the time, with cognitive-oriented research positing the existence of internal mental states, and looked for external behavioural evidence for it. Potter and colleagues thus challenged this, and aimed to demonstrate how such cognitive conceptions dismissed the way that, for instance, memories or states of thought are made relevant in talk, and the actions that are accomplished in doing so (i.e. *doing* 'remembering' or *doing* 'thinking') within the local discursive context (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

DP therefore regards conversation and interaction as having a social function, and not as a representation of some internal position; discourse is examined in context as a situated, occasioned construction that accomplishes some form of action (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992). DP aims to re-evaluate the way that traditional topics have been studied in the field – such as attitudes and identity – emphasising the impact and importance of considering interaction with the social world, arguing that because talk is functional, language shapes reality, and as such talk should be conceptualised as the event of interest in itself (Edwards, 1997). Therefore, traditional psychological concepts become something people *do* (i.e.

remember) rather than *have* (i.e. memories), made relevant in interaction to achieve certain functions.

Research within the field of discursive psychology has investigated a wide variety of topics including (but not limited to), neighbour disputes (Stokoe & Hepburn, 2005; Stokoe & Wallwork, 2003), family mealtime interaction (Wiggins,

2004a, 2004b; Wiggins & Potter, 2003; Wiggins, Potter & Wildsmith, 2001), calls to telephone help lines (Hepburn & Wiggins, 2005; Potter & Hepburn, 2003), identity and gender (Abel & Stokoe, 2001; Attenborough, 2011; Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Speer, 2001; Stokoe, 1998, 2003, 2004; Wetherell, 2007), ‘scripted’ talk (Edwards, 1994, 1995, 2005) and emotion and crying (Hepburn, 2004; Hepburn & Jackson, 2009; Hepburn & Potter, 2007). Within such topics, discursive analysts are concerned with understanding how everyday activities are constructed, attended to, and understood in interaction (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). DP treats psychological issues as a feature of the business of talk that is being managed, made relevant, and produced to perform certain actions within any given situation (Edwards, 1997). Potter and Edwards (2001, pp. 103) define the function of the approach as: “while theory and method in social cognition presume an out-there reality that provides input to cognitive operations, discursive social psychology focuses on the way both “reality” and “mind” are constructed by people conceptually”. To exemplify, returning to extract D above:

Tom: ((looks up from reading)) what’s the species
 ↑called
 (1.0)
 Jennifer: £DON’T TEST me:
 Tom: no it’s-
 Jennifer: heh heh heh heh

a cognitivist interpretation of this interaction may be that Jennifer’s raised voice towards Tom is indicative of anger; that she has a negative, defensive attitude to what has been put to her (i.e. that she cannot pronounce the species’ name); that the shouting is evidence or truth of an internal ‘angry’ mental state. The discursive

interpretation, however, would focus instead on the relevance of this utterance at this point in time, and the function it was providing in the interaction. The discursive analyst, for instance, may be interested in how and why Jennifer constructs the question as a “test”; as something she must account for, and how she manages this accountability in the ensuing interaction, and to what end.

In *Discourse and Social Psychology* (1987), Potter and Wetherell outlined what we now know as DP as a methodological approach that could be used in place of the questionnaires and experiments that had defined social psychological research until that time, and centred the approach around three key assumptions about the nature of discourse: that it is action-oriented, both constructed and constructive, and situated, as explained as follows:

1. *Discourse is action-oriented*

Discourse is considered the primary arena for social action to take place: in talking and interacting, we carry out certain actions and coordinate interactions. Actions are often done indirectly via descriptions, as practices of this kind offer the speaker a different kind of accountability than an ‘on the record’ speech act (Potter, 2012). Accounts are constructed in ways that perform actions for the occasion of their telling, such as (for instance) producing a speaker as not to blame within the setting of relationship counselling therapy (Edwards, 1994). The main point is that instead of discourse being representative of some internal stance or position, it is studied for the action or function it serves in interaction. As a basic example from the current research, one of the focal points of analysis was on the action-orientation of

teasing; of how, through teasing, actions such as addressing norm transgressions could be occasioned.

2. Discourse is both constructed and constructive

Speech and writing are constructed from a range of resources such as grammatical structures, words, categories, conversation practices and so on, which can be used to represent particular versions of the world. However, speech and writing are also constructive in the sense that they offer a particular version of things when there are many, and establishing that there is no one ‘truth’ but that the varying versions of the world are a product of the talk in itself (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). As an example, this could refer to the differing ways in which utterances are treated in interaction; whilst one individual may treat the assertion of “sounding dull” (as in example A above on page 54) as a tease, another may treat as an insult, or as a jibe. These kinds of topics are thus explored in discursive psychological work to demonstrate how things are made ‘psychological’ by people through their talk.

3. Discourse is situated

Discursive psychology treats discourse as situated in three ways. Firstly, it is situated sequentially in that words and actions happen in the here and now of unfolding conversation and in the context of what preceded and what is going to happen next. To use the example Potter (2012) does, when an invitation is issued, this sets up an ordered array of possible next actions, of which accepting or refusing are the most relevant. Conversation analysis research has highlighted the minute detail and specificity in which interaction like this is organised (e.g. Schegloff,

1987). In addition, discourse can be situated institutionally such that institutional identities and tasks (such as a doctor-patient interaction) may be relevant to what takes place; i.e. the influence of the surrounding environment or context. Thirdly, discourse is situated rhetorically in that one way of describing something will always be countering alternative ways, and so to understand it fully it must be examined as it happens, bound up in its situational context (Edwards, 2005; Potter, 2012; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Within the realm of teasing, one of the difficulties of defining whether an utterance is or is not a tease based solely on something like “you always have issues” (example B, page 55) is due to the ambiguity of how such an utterance is oriented to. The discursive analyst therefore would look at what preceded and succeeded it, to see how it is situated in the interaction, and make sense of it.

Additionally, in his 2012 publication, Potter discussed a fourth characteristic; that discourse is produced as psychological, looking at how individuals construct their own and others’ dispositions, assessments and descriptions as subjective (psychological) or objective (Potter, 2012). Potter asserts that DP is fundamentally focused on analysing psychological matters as they arise for people as they live their lives.

There is no specific way in which to “do” discursive psychology; it is defined by its interest in, and appreciation of, action and interaction as situated, practical, and orderly, although research should start from data guided by an interest in a particular form of interaction (Potter, 2012; Wiggins & Potter, 2007). Such a point of interest for discursive analysts, for instance, is how people ‘construct’ their identities through talk and interaction with others. From the cognitive perspective, identity refers to a mental state (“I am a shy person” or “I am extroverted”) which thus groups people

with other, like-minded people. Discursive analysis, however, proposes that individuals possess many different identities for different contexts, and that there is no one “true self”; our identity at a certain time and place is dependent on context, aligning with the core principle that discourse is both constructed and constructive, and whatever identity is relevant at one moment in time is serving a particular purpose to achieve a certain goal. This fundamentally opposes the notion that individuals have one ‘attitude’ about anything, as people can say quite contradictory things in different contexts.

1.4.1 Why discursive psychology?

The actual discourse used in interaction should be the basis for all insights around a phenomenon, but discursive psychologists also use the work of others to corroborate points being made. As an example relevant to the current thesis, the conversation analyst Anita Pomerantz (e.g. 1984) is well known for her work into the actions and methods of agreeing and disagreeing in interaction. As such, the current analysis makes reference to Pomerantz’s work in relation to similar or opposing findings – such as how group members may agree or disagree with a tease – questioning what function this may have served in the interaction.

Potter (2012) highlights the virtues of working with such naturalistic materials as transcripts and recordings, advocating that naturalistic data collection allows for direct documentation of whatever is being investigated. He provides the example of a researcher being interested in counselling on an abuse telephone helpline, and details the value of accessing and analysing the actual telephone recordings; not reports of counselling or theorising about counselling but the

counselling *as it happens*. As such, through video extracts and transcripts, it is possible to display psychology in action, demonstrating how concepts such as prejudice or identity are constructed and reproduced on the page, along with interactional effects and outcomes (e.g. Speer & Potter, 2002). In the current thesis, for instance, jointly acknowledging teasing can be considered an interactional achievement, and thus an example of psychology-in-action.

Similarly, discursive psychology is strongly empirical (Potter & Edwards, 2001). It does not attempt to replace or replicate research, but takes the analysis of materials to be central to making claims and developing theory, as stated above. For that reason, a critique of the approach may be the application debate; whether the ‘findings’ of any project are of practical value or may be applicable in other settings. For instance, in reference to the aforementioned analyses of counselling on abuse telephone help lines (cf. Potter & Hepburn, 2003), one may question whether the way in which a child protection officer manages the competing tasks of soothing a crying caller whilst simultaneously extracting evidence for social services is generalisable to other telephone help lines in the UK, worldwide, or with different callers. As advocated by Myers (2000), while discursive research – and other types of qualitative research – is/ are not generalisable in the traditional sense of the word, it has other redeeming features which make it valuable in its own right.

One of which, for instance, is its acceptance of deviant cases; instances of interaction that do not ‘fit’ with the rest of the analysis. Whereas in statistical analysis these deviant cases – named ‘outliers’ – may be excluded from the data set in order not to skew results and as such may not represent the ‘true’ findings, in discursive research, deviant cases can in fact help validate the analysis, where claims

about any patterns or specific interpretations can be compared with instances where the patterns appear to be absent, thus confirming the analysis (Wiggins & Potter, 2007). As such, in the current thesis, the third analytical chapter is devoted to exploring such deviant cases to demonstrate what happens when teasing goes wrong, how this can impact on group dynamics, and conversely, what this can show us about normative teasing interactions.

1.5 Core methodological assumptions

So to turn to the analysis at hand, the aim of the thesis is to investigate the functions that teasing can serve group dynamics in problem-based learning interaction. To do so, both the methodologies of conversation analysis and discursive psychology are drawn upon, as I look at how teasing is a collaborative action, constructed by (at least) two people in interaction, and not something one person *does* to another. Unlike the cognitive approach to the study of teasing which defines the interaction based on intention; that it is a speaker's intention to upset or mock or provoke the target (e.g. Gorman & Jordan, 2015; Keltner et al., 2001; Mooney, Creeser & Blatchford, 1991), the current thesis takes a social constructionist approach; that is to say that participants' words are treated as constructions rather than as expressions of cognitive states, that serve a function in interaction. Teasing is thus viewed as a situated, discursive practice that demonstrates group dynamics in action.

As such, the current thesis adopts the position of methodological relativism, supporting the notion that there is no such thing as 'truth' or 'validity'; nothing can be 'proved'. Indeed, it is not the aim of this thesis to 'prove' what teasing is, but

rather, to demonstrate the function teasing can serve on group dynamics, *at that specific time and in that context*. For this reason, we do not need to be concerned with – or know – the mental states of speakers (such as, for instance, whether a group member *intends* to tease), but rather the focus is on how meaning is created in interaction. However, since we have established that there is no accepted definition of teasing – and even if there was, how do we know that it is definitely ‘teasing’ that is happening in interaction as opposed to something else – how do I as the researcher identify excerpts if I am arguing that there is no fixed truth regarding what teasing is? This is a tricky point to consider, and explained in greater detail in section 2.5.1, but fundamentally, teasing extracts were first selected on the basis that the target was present in the interaction, there was laughter either in the delivery or in orientation to the tease utterance, and the message of the tease was treated as provocative. However, as we will see in the analysis, not all of these interactions were treated as teases.

1.6 Section summary

In this first section, I have provided an overview of the methodological approach to the research. I have discussed the backgrounds and analytic methods of conversation analysis and discursive psychology within the framework of the perspective of ethnomethodology, and highlighted how the thesis will contribute to developing our knowledge and understanding of teasing as a discursive practice. This chapter will now move on to the practicalities of the thesis, by introducing the data collection and analysis procedures, before moving on to the actual analysis in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Part 2: Data collection and analysis

The data used for this thesis is taken from a corpus of naturalistic videorecorded problem-based learning student groups from two UK universities. Data was collected between October 2012 and December 2013, from thirty-one final-year psychology and interdisciplinary science students, totalling eighty-five hours of interaction. The initial project was focused upon how knowledge was constructed through talk in PBL, and had the following three objectives:

1. To identify the discursive strategies through which students engage in knowledge construction and collaborative learning
2. To create concrete and practical guidelines which can be used to support effective PBL development in other classes, for both students and staff
3. To apply psychological research on learning and teaching (cf. Upton & Trapp, 2010) to further the empirical grounding on which approaches such as PBL are based.

This was situated in the large body of work within discursive psychology and in PBL that focuses on such student interactions (e.g. Attenborough & Stokoe, 2012; Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Gibson, Hall & Callery, 2006; Hak & Maguire, 2000; Karakowsky, McBey & Miller, 2004; Koschmann et al., 1997; Koschmann et al., 2005; Linblom-Ylänne, Pihlajamäki & Kotkas, 2003; McCune, 2009; Stokoe, 2000).

2.1 Collaboration with the University of Leicester

As will be expanded on, three of the nine groups recruited for the study were from the University of Leicester. This collaboration was the result of a networking

opportunity at the 2013 Higher Education Academy STEM conference, where I established a research connection with staff from The Centre for Interdisciplinary Science at the University of Leicester, stemming from a shared interest of PBL. The contact for the collaboration was the Biology module leader for the Interdisciplinary Science programme that was primarily PBL based. Although I deem it a “collaboration”, there was no input from their side other than with regard to participants, and even then recruitment followed the same structure as at the home institution. In return for offering participants (assuming, of course, that they consented), the contact asked for acknowledgement of involvement in any presentation or publication regarding the research, which has been adhered to.

2.2 Ethical considerations

Full ethical approval for the research was gained from both the University of Strathclyde’s School of Psychological Sciences and Health ethics committee, and the University of Leicester’s ethics committee before commencement of the project. Any student wishing to participate had to fit the following criteria:

1. Be part of a class which used PBL (as the focus was specifically on PBL groups)
2. Be aged over eighteen years
3. Have English as their first language (to ensure comprehension of recordings, but this was negotiable and ultimately disregarded as one participant had English as their second language)
4. Be willing to be video- and audio-recorded, with images and speech extracts being used in academic presentations and publications (due to the

dissemination expectations that accompany a PhD project). Participants were advised that due to the type of analysis and focus on detailed features of social interaction (e.g. eye gaze, facial expression), it would not be possible to blur out faces to protect their anonymity, but that any details about them would remain confidential. Participants specifically gave consent for this.

In addition, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and if they so wished to do so, the whole group would cease being recorded and any footage deleted. Had this been the case, it may have been possible for a group to carry on without the withdrawing participant, but only if there was another group for them to join, and dependent on how far through the class this happened. Fortunately, no participants expressed an interest to withdraw during the data collection stage, and so recording was completed as first proposed.

It was important to emphasise that students' education would not be negatively affected due to being in a room separated from the rest of the class. Due to the fundamental nature of PBL, however, this was not considered likely as the focus was on collaborative group learning, and as such there were no lectures or wholeclass information dissemination that a group would miss out on from not being in the room. Any important information that groups needed (such as room changes or classwork deadlines) were given by the facilitators when they joined the groups, as per the role of the 'floating facilitator' (Duch, Groh & Allen, 2001). Those students in groups seven, eight and nine at Leicester had the opportunity to formally seek help at facilitator sessions twice a week, or drop in to see a tutor outside class time should

they have faced any difficulties, due to their PBL sessions being out with timetabled teaching hours (as detailed below in section 2.3.4).

2.3 Data collection

Data collection began with a request for participants, all of whom are finalyear undergraduates; details of which can be found below in table 1. The process of said data collection can be split into four rounds (further detailed in table 2), although all data contributed to the one analyses. All names have been pseudonymised, except for my own.

Table 1: Group information

Round	Recording period	University	Group formation process	Group number	Facilitator	Group members
1	Oct – Dec 2012	University of Strathclyde	Selfformed	1	Susan ²	Annabel (F) Ava (F) Ella (F) Kate (F) Raymond ³ (M)
1	Oct – Dec 2012	University of Strathclyde	Selfformed	2	Susan	Ally (F) Jackie (F) Jocelyn (F) Nadia (F) Regina (F)
2	Jan – Feb 2013	University of Strathclyde	Selfformed	3	Gillian	Damon (M) Jessie (F) Ross (M) Sophie (F) Suzanna (F)
2	Jan – Feb 2013	University of Strathclyde	Selfformed	4	Gillian	Ally (F) Jackie (F) Jocelyn (F) Nadia (F)

² This name is pseudonymised

³ Raymond gets called by his surname (Kingston) interchangeably

2	Jan – Feb 2013	University of Strathclyde	Selfformed	5	Gillian	Abi (F) Ava (F)
						Ella (F) Erin (F) Isla (F) Kate (F) Kim (F) Raymond (M)
3	Oct – Dec 2013	University of Strathclyde	Selfformed	6	Susan	Chloe (F) Deborah (F) Hannah (F) Katy (F)
4	Oct – Nov 2013	University of Leicester	Institution-formed	7	None	Donald (M) Phillip (M) Rachel (F)
4	Oct – Nov 2013	University of Leicester	Institution-formed	8	None	Jennifer (F) Steve (M) Tom (M)
4	Oct – Nov 2013	University of Leicester	Institution-formed	9	None	Euan (M) Stuart (M)

Each round of data collection will be further explained below, following further detail in table 2 regarding specifics of the data collected.

Table 2: Data collected

Group number	Subject	Class/ Module	PBL problem overview	Number of hours recorded	Number of sessions recorded
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1	Psychology	‘Qualitative Methodologies in Practice’	Reading qualitative psychology journal articles to familiarise with different methodologies, arguing strengths and weaknesses of each, analysing qualitative data, collecting and analysing own qualitative data.	21 hours: 7 weeks @ 3 hours per week	14 (1 x 1 hour session per week + 1 x 2 hour session per week)
2	Psychology	‘Qualitative Methodologies in Practice’	Reading qualitative psychology journal articles to	21 hours: 7 weeks @ 3 hours per	14 (1 x 1 hour session per

			familiarise with different methodologies, arguing strengths and weaknesses of each, analysing qualitative data, collecting and analysing own qualitative data.	week	week + 1 x 2 hour session per week)
3	Psychology	‘Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology’	Devising a research proposal containing no ethical constraints, reviewing another group’s proposal and critiquing whilst adhering to today’s ethics, adapting original proposal based on feedback from other group.	3 hours: 3 weeks @ 1 hour per week	3 (3 x 1 hour session over 3 weeks)

4	Psychology	‘Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology’	Devising a research proposal containing no ethical constraints, reviewing another group’s proposal and critiquing whilst adhering to today’s ethics, adapting original proposal based on feedback from other group.	2 hours ⁴ : 2 weeks @ 1 hour per week	2 (2 x 1 hour session over 2 weeks)
5 ⁵	Psychology	‘Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology’	Devising a research proposal containing no ethical constraints, reviewing another group’s proposal and critiquing whilst adhering to today’s ethics, adapting original proposal based on	3 hours: 3 weeks @ 1 hour per week	3 (3 x 1 hour session over 3 weeks)
			feedback from other group.		
6	Psychology	‘Qualitative Methodologies in Practice’	Reading qualitative psychology journal articles to familiarise with different methodologies, arguing strengths and weaknesses of each, analysing qualitative data, collecting and analysing own qualitative data.	21 hours: 7 weeks @ 3 hours per week	14 (1 x 1 hour session per week + 1 x 2 hour session per week)

⁴ This group should have been recorded for 3 hours as per the other CHIP groups, but one hour of footage was lost due to a faulty camera.

⁵ Ava, Ella, Kate and Raymond are the same individuals from group 1.

7	Interdisciplinary science	'Podcast deliverable'	Devising the wording of a podcast for an evolution exhibit at the local natural history museum.	7.4 hours ⁶	4: (Session 1: 43 mins) (Session 2: 90 mins) (Session 3: 234 mins) (Session 4: 75 mins)
8	Interdisciplinary science	'Podcast deliverable'	Devising the wording of a podcast for an evolution exhibit at the local natural history museum.	2.3 hours	2: (Session 1: 117 mins) (Session 2: 22 mins)
9	Interdisciplinary science	'Podcast deliverable'	Devising the wording for a podcast for an evolution exhibit at the local natural history museum.	4.3 hours	3: (Session 1: 39 mins) (Session 2: 123 mins) (Session 3: 98 mins)

2.3.1 Round 1

In the first instance (i.e. in the first round of data collection), two classes within the University of Strathclyde BA (Hons) Psychology curriculum were identified as possibilities for recruiting participants (3rd year 'Social Psychology' and 4th year 'Qualitative Methodologies in Practice'), and as the class leader for both of these was my PhD supervisor, I was able to begin seeking participants as soon as I had gained ethical consent for the project. To do so, I gave a short presentation regarding the research project and what would be involved as a participant at each of

⁶ Groups 7, 8 and 9 were responsible for their own recordings, hence the variation in total hours and sessions.

the aforementioned class's introductory lectures in October 2012, leaving behind information sheets for students to peruse (see Appendix B).

The classes were informed that the aim of the project was to investigate group work within problem-based learning by understanding more about the dynamics involved in collaborative knowledge construction. To do this, groups of around five students⁷ would be video and audio recorded as they worked through their problembased learning sessions. Each group would have their own, private room, and nothing within my control would be different for the group compared to any individual not taking part (for instance, the class facilitator would still visit each group, even though they would be separated from the main class). Students were advised that should they wish to take part, they would be expected to behave in exactly the same way as they would were they not being recorded. They were also told to identify themselves to me either through email, telephone or in person at the end of the lecture, and they could either be singularly put into a group with others willing to take part, or preestablished groups could take part, providing every member agreed.

With regard to the 4th year 'Qualitative Methodologies in Practice' class, PBL was the solely taught method (as opposed to the 3rd year 'Social Psychology' class which comprised of both group work and traditional lectures) and thus groups were encouraged to form as quickly as possible at the introductory lecture; regardless of whether they were interested in participating in the research or not. Between the end of the introductory session and the beginning of the first 'overview' class, I was

⁷ Five students per group was thought to be the ideal number, based on the Aalborg model (Aalborg MPBL, 2014)

contacted by a group of five individuals expressing an interest to participate. I met with this group at the end of the ‘overview’ class (the last class before ‘proper’ work began) and ran through the practicalities (i.e. signing consent, detailing what room the group should go to at the beginning of the next session). As this was nearing completion, another group of five expressed their interest and so the same procedure was explained to them too, resulting in two groups ready to begin recording at the first ‘proper’ PBL session.

I also introduced the project to the 3rd year ‘Social Psychology’ class at the beginning of the semester to gauge interest despite the PBL segment not starting until five weeks later. Despite students getting in contact to express an interest in taking part, I unfortunately encountered an on-going family crisis which resulted in my not being able to guarantee my presence at the university over the course of proposed recordings, and so data collection was cancelled for this class. Those students who had expressed an interest were informed of this, and thanked for their time. In sum, at the end of data collection round 1, two groups of five students were recruited (groups one and two; further detailed above in table 1).

To record, two small video cameras⁸ were set up in each of the two recording rooms, as far in advance of the groups entering as possible, but not so far that the cameras ran out of recording room before the end of each session. From this point on, the groups were left to behave exactly as they would if they were no cameras recording them. I always remained in the building when recording was taking place (apart from one or two sessions when I was unable to be at the university due to the

⁸ The cameras were Kodak Playsport Zx3, set up in the periphery of the room.

aforementioned family crisis, in which case my supervisor took over setting up/ retrieving duties), and would collect each camera as close to the end of the session as possible; ensuring, of course, that the group had finished.⁹ The images below detail the rooms used for the recordings of groups one and two.



Group one's recording room (for all but two of the sessions).



Group two's recording room (for all but one of the sessions).

Once recording for the session was over, the camera data was downloaded onto my hard drive, which was kept in a locked office with only me having first-hand access to recordings, although my supervisors would later have access at data sessions. This resulted in the first round of data collection consisting of groups one and two being video recorded for three hours a week during seven weeks of semester one (totalling forty-two hours' worth of data: twenty-one from each).

⁹ On the occasions that groups ran over the timetabled class time, they were permitted to remain in the room as long as they wanted (unless another class needed the room). I would discreetly check the room every ten minutes to see if they had left, leaving the cameras in place in the room until they did.

2.3.2 Round 2

The second round of data collection began quickly after the first was completed, in January 2013. This second round pertains to data collected from the 4th year ‘Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology’ class, which, although ran for a whole academic year, contained a PBL element of three sessions in the second semester. As before, the class leader was approached in the first instance to ask permission for the class to be contacted – which was duly granted following ethical approval – and so I again presented the project to the class, and gained three groups (three, four, and five). Again, student groups were advised of the aims of the project and their rights therein, and they signed their consent after reading the information sheet. Because my supervisor already had facilitation commitments for this class, I was appointed facilitator for the groups; the possible implications of which will be further discussed later.

As before, the three groups partaking in the project were granted their own rooms within the University of Strathclyde, as shown in the images below.



Group three's recording room (for all sessions).



Group four's recording room (for all sessions).



Group five's recording room (for all sessions).

As in round one, recording equipment was set up prior to each group's arrival at their PBL session, and was removed after their departure, with the recorded data being securely downloaded soon after. The groups met three times for one hour over three weeks, and while data was garnered from groups three and five for this period, group four was only recorded for the first two sessions (omitting the final session), due to a faulty camera resulting in lost footage. As facilitator for each of these groups, I divided my time as equally as possible between each of them, generally staying with a group for around ten minutes before moving to the next; continuing as such until the end of the session, as per the role of a floating facilitator (e.g. Duch et al., 2001). Of the seventeen individuals who made up these three groups, eight of them had taken part in the previous round of data collection, in a different group, for a different class (further clarified in tables 1 and 2).

2.3.3 Round 3

The third round of data collection was conducted between October and December 2013. A new ethics application was submitted and accepted, and the process of the recruitment and recording was the same as detailed above in round 1 – albeit with new students – as shown in the images below.



Group six's recording room (for all sessions).

This resulted in twenty-one hours of data from group six.

2.3.4 Round 4

The final round of data collection took place from October to November 2013, at the University of Leicester. The contact identified a potential module – the ‘podcast deliverable’ – that could be recorded if students were happy to participate, and as such, myself and the contact from the University of Leicester composed an ethics application to allow for data collection from her institution, following primarily the same course – and with the same aims – as in the first three rounds at the University of Strathclyde. The ethics application was accepted, and as such I visited the University of Leicester in early October 2013 to introduce myself to potential students. I gave a short presentation about the project one lunchtime, and laid on a selection of snacks for students as they listened, as an acknowledgement of

them giving me their time. Although the refreshments served as a recruitment incentive, there was absolutely no obligation for students to sign up to the project.

Unlike at the home institution, PBL groups in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Science at the University of Leicester were ‘institution formed’ – i.e. students were put in groups by staff members and as such not able to choose their own groups. Due to this, I emphasised to potentially interested individuals the importance of ensuring that every group member was willing to take part in the research. If, for instance, two group members wanted to take part and one did not, the group as a whole would be unable to take part. Of the four groups of final-year Interdisciplinary Science students, three signed up (after reading the information sheets and signing consent), resulting in groups seven, eight, and nine.

In addition to the groups being assembled by staff, there were two other important differences between the Leicester and Strathclyde PBL groups. Firstly, Leicester students were provided with recording equipment from their department, and were instructed to record themselves whenever they met to work on their PBL task. This meant that each group was responsible for their own recordings and I had no quality control over what was being filmed. As such, this resulted in varied data from the three groups; between 2.3 and 7.4 hours’ worth, with varying camera angles, sound quality, and possibly missing interactions. These PBL sessions took place outwith class time; the groups were expected to meet in their own time to work on the task, which may be a reason for why there was such a variance in recordings (i.e. some groups did not meet as often as others). It was made clear that for every hour of university teaching, students were expected to do two hours of their own study, and so work on the PBL task constituted this. The groups are shown below:



Varying camera angles from group seven.



Varying camera angles from group eight.



Varying camera angles from group nine.

In addition, the PBL model followed at Leicester¹⁰ did not include any tutor facilitation, as no tutors were present in any of the recordings. If students were unsure, they could formally speak to a tutor at the allocated times on the timetable, or informally drop by their office. There were three module leaders for the course in which the PBL task was part of; the contact was the biology leader, and in addition there was one for chemistry and one for physics, due to it being an interdisciplinary science problem. As such, students could approach whichever tutor they thought could help with whatever they were struggling with.

As detailed, recording times and lengths varied for groups seven, eight, and nine, as the groups were advised to record whenever they could, but without any stringent rules being applied. The contact at Leicester assumed responsibility for

¹⁰ The contact at Leicester confirmed that no specific PBL model was followed, although it was loosely based on the 'floating facilitator model' (Duch et al., 2001).

collecting the data cards on which footage was recorded, collating them until they were all returned, and securely posting them back up to Strathclyde. As stipulated by the ethics form, the Leicester contact had no access to any footage, and simply gathered the data cards to ensure they did not get lost. Once these were received, they were downloaded and stored securely within the University of Strathclyde, before transcribing of the footage began.

2.4 Data organisation/ transcription details

After each recording session was completed, I collated the recording equipment, removing the memory cards and downloading the data onto my university password-protected computer. All groups had two cameras recording them from opposing angles, with group two even being recorded by three frequently, due to the room they were in having inbuilt recording equipment. At these times, in addition to collecting the two cameras from the room upon completion of the session, I also collected the CD from the adjoining room which had been recording, too. The reason for having (at least) two cameras in each room was to ensure that no interaction was missed due to, for instance, a camera not working, which did happen from time to time. As recording progressed, I became more attuned to ensuring the optimal recording conditions, such as angling the cameras so that every participant's face and bodily gestures could be viewed, but not so that the cameras were blatantly obvious and constantly reminding each group that they were being recorded.

The next step was to organise the data into a coherent and manageable system. After the first recording session, there were already four lots of footage (two camera recordings from both groups), and as such, it was crucial not to let this get

confused, especially considering that the final corpus – from this first round only – consisted of sixty four recordings. It soon became apparent that external storage devices were going to be required to handle such a large amount of data, and so two two-terabyte external hard drives were purchased. Although one would suffice, two decreased the chance of losing any data through potential damage.

Folders were created pertaining to the name of the class, and then the name of the group (i.e. 1 or 2). In each, a third folder was created with the session's date, followed by the camera number (1, 2, 3 or 4), and so looked something like this:

*QMiP – Group 1 – 6th November 2012 – Camera 2 – *recording**

This way, it was easy to stay on top of the eventual huge amount of data, and each session could be easily accessed.

After each session was downloaded, I began the process of transcription. Although this began after the very first recording (so, at least two hours of footage), the data continued compiling while the transcribing process remained somewhat consistent. This was, however, not unexpected, and was complemented with literature reading, coding, and initial (although, now, irrelevant) analysis in an effort to break the monotony of simply transcribing constantly.

To begin with, every interaction between students was transcribed (to a words-only standard); from their entering the room to leaving at the end, including all 'off-topic' conversation including where they may be going for lunch or what they had watched on television the previous night. However, because the focus of the project was on collaborative knowledge construction, it soon became apparent that

this type of talk was not entirely necessary as it was not contributing to the foci of the research, and so any non-pedagogical talk was omitted (see below for discussion regarding categorising talk as such), although I clearly stated where and when this occurred, and what the focus of conversation was.

Whilst the transcribing was on-going, I took note of any particularly interesting interactions through preliminary coding, such as, for instance, the entrance and exit of the facilitator, the transition between on- and off-topic talk, and instances of atypical student behaviour, to name a few. To begin, I was as inclusive as possible in coding which resulted in a long list of possible phenomena to analyse, but as this is an iterative process, the more transcripts that were created and the more the originals were re-read, coding became more refined.

As data collection progressed over the following rounds, transcription was not undertaken immediately due to the backlog of transcribing earlier recordings. Although all eighty-five hours' worth of video recorded footage was coded, only data from round one (forty-two hours) was fully transcribed. This was due simply to the time constraints associated with such a large data set. Based on the coding process (as detailed below), however, data from all three other rounds was identified as exemplary of the phenomenon under investigation, and as such relevant extracts were fully transcribed and analysed when creating the data corpus.

2.5 Coding

The initial analytical focus of the project was, as detailed above, on how collaborative knowledge is constructed within PBL. As detailed, although we know that PBL is an effective learning method (e.g. Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009), we

are still unsure exactly how this ‘effectiveness’ is conceptualised, and as such a closer look at the dynamics of group interaction is needed. However, investigating collaborative knowledge construction is somewhat challenging due to the vagueness of what constitutes ‘knowledge’ and ‘learning’. For instance, how do we know that knowledge has occurred? Is it simply a matter of hearing a student say, “I did not know that before but now I do”? I thus determined that a better way to examine the group processes within PBL was to instead note the psychological interactions that were taking place, and could be further investigated, in alignment with the methodology of discursive psychology.

As such, through the preliminary coding, what became apparent was the frequency of laughter in PBL tutorials. This struck me to be of interest because, perhaps naively, I considered laughter and laughing as something we do socially; not within the remit of ‘serious’ academic learning. It seemed to me to indicate ‘nonseriousness’ taking place; when groups are hard at work, the talk is pedagogical and focused, and so laughter suggests that ‘something else’ is going on. I was intrigued that so much laughter was taking place in comparison to, for instance, lectures which are usually void of it. This suggested that the laughter was connected to interactions between group members, and so I wanted to consider how, why and when this was taking place, and to what end. Subsequent research in the area demonstrated that laughter has indeed been previously considered in the university tutorial setting (e.g. Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Tait, Lampert, Bahr & Bennet, 2014; Thonus, 2002) however, is often a by-finding of something other focus of analysis. As such, an initial ‘laughter’ data corpus was constructed, before being refined.

2.5.1 Data corpus

In the first instance, a data corpus was compiled and coded pertaining to the interaction in which laughter occurred. I was interested in the interactional properties of laughter; demonstrating that it is not random but is highly sequentially organised to perform certain functions within social interaction (Jefferson, 1979). I focused only on laughter that was bound within pedagogical talk; that is, talk that was ‘on topic’ and related to the PBL task the group were doing at the time. However, this presents a problem as classing talk as ‘on’ or ‘off’ topic means I, as the researcher, am categorising it (an etic approach), when the methodological approach proffers that any categorisation should be done by the participants (an emic approach). As Stokoe (2000) notes, this approach sets up a less interpretational basis for the analytical claims being made, since it comes from those actually involved in the interaction as opposed to an outsider commenting on something which they have nothing to do with. However, due to the large data set, there had to be some form of organisation, and so while I did not categorise each single utterance as either ‘on’ or ‘off’ topic, data was only transcribed on the basis of how the participants themselves made relevant ‘working’ and ‘break’ time; with ‘working’ time interactions being transcribed, and ‘break’ time interactions being omitted. This distinction was often tied in with the presence of the facilitator; commonly, groups would not make relevant the work they had to do until the facilitator had first visited them, at which point they would transition from social chatting to focusing on the work at hand.

Had the laughter corpus had been built up from any kind of talk – both pedagogical and non-pedagogical – the importance of PBL may have been less clear. For instance, if I analysed an episode of interaction in which laughter stemmed from

a discussion around what was on the previous night's television, there may be little difference between this talk and the talk produced from a group of friends meeting in any type of social situation (such as, for instance, in the pub). As such, all laughter interactions that occurred when groups were 'working' were recorded and compiled.

The next step, then, was to consider what function these laughter interactions were serving in groups. I thus broadly grouped interactions into working categories like 'teasing', 'sarcasm', and 'exaggeration', but these were only used as a rough guide, and it was not assumed that this was what was happening within the interaction. From this, I considered each 'grouping' in more depth, identifying patterns across and within the broad groups for what was happening within the interaction. As such, teasing as a social practice was identified across the data corpus, and it was this that became the focus for the thesis.

As discussed in chapter 2, teasing is problematic to identify in group interaction. What one individual may treat as a tease, another may treat as an insult. However, there had to be some focus as to how a tease was identifiable in the corpus, and so I adhered to the following three features that any possible teasing utterance must align with:

1. It must have been directed at someone within the group and currently present in the interaction. If it is not, such interactions are more akin to gossiping.

2. There must be laughter somewhere within the utterance or response.

Laughter demonstrates that what is being said is not a real or sincere proposal, and that laughter in response to a tease similarly identifies that the utterance has not be treated as a serious stance or suggestion. Drew (1987)

discusses how we demonstrate our recognition of teasing (as opposed to anything ‘stronger’) through laughing, and as such it clearly works as a marker of this ‘playfulness’ in both delivery and recognition of teasing.

There is one final strand to consider, and that is the issue around provocation. Past research has spoken about the importance of teasing utterances containing aggression/ provocation and being intentional, but like as discussed regarding ‘on’ and ‘off’ topic interaction, it is participants’ understandings of interaction that are wanted for analysis (Sacks, 1992), and so there is no value of me classifying an utterance as being aggressive or provocative because I do not have access to a participant’s inner mind. While we can only *conceptualise* provocation – as it is not an entity that we can see – we *can* identify it through the ways in which it is treated: if a participant constructs an interaction as aggressive or provocative, that’s when an outsider may comment. In his 1999 analysis of emotion discourse, Edwards (pp. 275) makes reference to provocation as serving “as an index of the extremity of the provocation”, meaning that the extent to which one responds to a provocative utterance suggests the extent to which it has been treated as provocative. This brings us to the third facet for identifying teasing interactions in the data; that an utterance:

3. Must be *treated* as provocative. This demonstrates the importance of considering teasing as interactional as opposed to something one person does to another. While we cannot say that one person is ‘being intentionally provocative’ to another, we can identify provocation based on how it is responded to by the target.

The juxtaposition of laughter and provocation is of interest, and is possibly what makes a tease a tease. While the provocation suggests hostility, the laughter mitigates this somewhat, and so together produces what we commonly regard as teasing.

As such, a data corpus of teasing interactions was produced based on the above which were subjected to Jefferson notation (2004; see Appendix C). Instances of teasing were grouped to consider the issues of how identities are occasioned through teasing, accounting for being teased, and what happens when teasing goes wrong. Individually, these chapters are analytically interesting as they inform us more about how teasing occurs in real time, and, put together, they demonstrate the functions that can be served for group dynamics on problem-based learning.

2.6 Section summary

In this section I have detailed the dataset and procedures that were involved in collecting and analysing the data. To begin, I provided an overview of the background to the research; its development from experiences in practice to the beginnings of data analysis. I discussed the ethical issues involved in conducting such a project, before detailing specifically the process of data collection across the two institutions, and organisation of the dataset. Finally, I talked about the focus of the project; how it stemmed from the broad area of looking at laughter in group interaction, to identifying teasing as a relevant social practice to pursue analytically, to inform us about the social functions that are served for group dynamics in PBL. This chapter will now finish with a brief summary, before moving onto the actual data analysis.

Part 3: Chapter summary

The purpose of this methodology chapter was to detail the steps taken when conducting the research. In this thesis, this was split into two sections comprising the theoretical framework, and data collection and analyses. The former focused on the methodological approach to the project, discussing the social constructionist framework in which the thesis sits and introducing the study of teasing in a way that is an analytically based alternative to social cognitive psychology (Hepburn & Wiggins, 2005). I then went on to detail the steps involved in data collection and analyses. I discussed the practicalities of this, before moving on to detail the intricacies of beginning analyses. Having now detailed *how* the research was conducted, I move on to displaying the actual thesis analyses.

In chapter 2, I discussed the ways in which the practice of teasing has been traditionally conceptualised, and the difficulties therein that come with taking a discursive psychological approach to research in the area. I also discussed some of the past research that has been undertaken that investigates the outcomes of teasing; the good, the bad, and the indifferent. However, what is clear from such research is that identifying such outcomes remains problematic. How do we know, for instance, that teasing has created group cohesion, or fostered social rejection? The following three analytical chapters use the qualitative methodologies of discursive psychology and conversation analysis to demonstrate the social functions that teasing can serve in PBL interaction; i.e. to demonstrate group dynamics in action in PBL. To do so, the analysis has been split into three chapters, focusing on formulating teasing, responding to teasing, and deviant case analyses, as entitled: *Academic identities occasioned in teasing*, *Accountability in teasing*, and *When teasing goes wrong*.

Chapter 4 Academic identities occasioned in teasing

To begin, the focus of the first analytical chapter is on the delivery of teases, and in particular, how academic identities are occasioned through teasing. In extract F in the literature review, we encountered an episode of interaction taken from the data that was classed as ‘gossiping’ since the target of the conversation was not present at the time. We saw that the interaction between the two present members of the group pertained to the fact that they did not want to tell the absent member about something (we do not know what), because, according to Phillip, he might get “angry” and “smash things” (lines 21-26). In response to this, however, Rachel retorts that, “he’s Donald, he’s not gonna smash anything, he will find sources from every paper every written as to why you’re wrong” (lines 27-32). In speaking about Donald in this way, Rachel positions his academic identity (i.e. the extent to which he is ‘academic’) as a joke; as something to laugh at in the context of the interaction and in doing so, constructing Donald as ‘nerdy’; preferring to display anger academically as opposed to in more ‘usual’ ways, such as through “smashing things”. Why, however, is this particular identity formulated as something to laugh about, when the interaction takes place within an academic setting?

The topic of identity constitutes a broad range as it has been studied from a variety of perspectives. The current work takes a social constructionist approach, which conceptualises identity as a form of social action rather than a psychological construct (De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg, 2006). We cannot assume that we have knowledge of individuals that goes on beyond what we see in interaction at a given time, as we cannot demonstrate that they necessarily share this in different contexts

(Antaki et al., 1996). In this sense, identities are locally occasioned in talk-in-interaction, constructed and produced to serve a certain function, and consequential for the interaction at hand. Identity, therefore, is not considered a fixed entity but something that is negotiated through everyday practices (e.g. Harré, 1983).

The example above is not an uncommon finding in similar literature; discursive psychological and conversation analytical research has previously focused on students' academic identity constructions (e.g. Attenborough, 2011; Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; 2010; Brown, 2004; Brown, Reveles & Kelly, 2005; Ideland & Malmberg, 2012; Lytra, 2009; Pichler, 2009). In their 2002 publication, for instance, Benwell and Stokoe explored naturalistic student interaction in university tutorial settings and demonstrated how students position themselves as resistant toward having an academic or intellectual identity, arguing that through responding negatively to such an intellectual identity, the group reinforce the normative boundaries of student identity; rewarding any displays that orient away from academic identity as a means of regulating the behaviour of members within the group, and as such increasing group cohesion and making them more connected as a team (Benwell & Stokoe, 2002). This chapter is focused on just that: how academic identities are occasioned in teasing interactions to serve the function of addressing deviant behaviour in PBL.

Of all the possible identifiable identities we have available to study and analyse, this focus on academic identity was made relevant and observable in the data due to the focus solely on pedagogical talk. This chapter is thus split into two, with the first section demonstrating how teasing is used to construct academic identity as non-normative and so displays of 'being academic' are treated as

transgressive, and the second demonstrating the opposite of this: teasing to construct academic identity as normative and so displaying ‘non-academic-ness’ is treated as transgressive. The fact that these interactions even happen demonstrate the continually shaping nature of identity.

The teasing interactions throughout all three analyses chapters are marked with the following sideways arrow (→) to indicate where in the interaction it/ they occurred. As explained earlier, teasing interactions were identified on the basis that they were directed towards someone within the group, they were delivered with laughter or oriented to with laughter by someone in the group – although not necessarily the target – and were treated as being provocative by someone in the group.

Part 1: Academic identity as non-normative

We start then with the first section in which the focus is on group members being teased due to their non-normative academic identity constructions. As detailed by Keltner et al. (2001), violating group norms is considered one of the most common reasons for teasing (in addition to preventing conflict), but there is no limit as to how a norm deviation may manifest in interaction. One way in which to study them, therefore, is to consider how such norm deviations are made relevant in interaction. Let us consider the first example.

Here, a group of psychology students are peer-reviewing another group’s assignment, who shall be referred to as ‘group B’ for the purpose of this analysis. As we join them, the group appear confused about the topic under investigation:

77

78 *Extract 4A (Group 5)*

79 Kate: >thought they were talkin' about< gender
80 [not sexuali'ty
81 Ella: [exac'ly
82 (0.5)
83 Ella: sexuality or-or
84 (1.0)
85 Ella: sex I- ((shakes head)) yea:h
86 Abi: could jis' write [um unclear-
87 Ella: [UNCLEAR TERMINOLOGY
88 ((begins writing))
89 Abi: hypo- yeah un [clear hypothesis or
90 somethin'
91 Kate: → ((pointing at Ella)) [ɛ(hhhhh) ((covers
92 mouth with hand))
93 Raymond: hm hm
94 Ava: [ɛ(hhh)
95 Abi: [heh
96 Kate: → ((shaking head)) ɛAH DON' THINK WE SHOULD
97 should let ((points at Ella)) her
98 [loose on this
99 Kim: [d'ya 'hink that's ɛdiplomaɪtic
100 Kate: hah hah .hh hah hah .hh
101 Abi: could just write "the hypothesis could be-"
102 Ella: I-I CAN rephrase it
103 Isla: aheh heh
104 Ella: I c'n rephrase it

105

106 The tease in this extract is in response to a particular group member (Ella)
107 being too critical in her peer review. Such a task raises questions about power and
108 accountability considering that the group are of an equal academic level of the group
109 they are reviewing, and so it is an arguably tricky task they are faced with;

- 110 completing the peer review but not overstepping the boundary into being too critical.
- 111 The task is a collaborative effort between all group members, and as we join the

group we see them display confusion as to what group B's assignment is focused on: gender or sexuality (lines 79-83). Being a peer review, the task involves providing group B with feedback on their work, and at line 86 we see group member Abi put forth a suggestion as to how this group could acknowledge the issue of the topic which was causing some confusion. However, Abi's turn is interrupted by Ella who raises her voice to speak over her and announce, "unclear terminology" (line 87) as a way of orienting to the confusion within the document. In the next turn, Kate begins laughing and says "I don't think we should let her loose on this" in response to Ella's suggestion, making relevant the fact that Ella is acting out with the boundaries of normative group interaction. Let us break this down to examine it in more detail, and see exactly what functions are served by occasioning Ella's academic identity at this point in time.

To begin, without even uttering any words, Kate points at Ella and laughs (line 91). Goodwin (2000b) defines such a pointing gesture as a means of directing others' attention directly at something, and accompanied with the laughter she produces, she demonstrates the source of her laughter: Ella. Kate then covers her mouth with her hand, and so in doing this pointing-then-covering action, Kate acknowledges Ella's transgression without even saying anything.



Kate responds non-verbally to Ella's apparent transgression (lines 91-92).

Clearly marked as a tease (through exhibiting a number of off-record markers; Keltner et al., 1998), Kate announces that she does not “think (the group) should let her loose” on group B’s assignment (lines 96-98), suggesting that she considers Ella as being overly critical on group B’s piece of work, or taking the task too seriously, and as such positioning Ella’s academic identity display as being a negative thing. Her gesturing adds support to her utterance; shaking her head is a display of a negative marker (Schegloff, 1987), adding more credence to the meaning behind her words (that the group should not “let her loose”) while her pointing – identifying one individual amongst many – serves to alert the group to whom specifically she is referring (Goodwin, 2000b). In addition, Kate does not name Ella but instead refers to her as “her” (line 97), emphasising her speech as she does so. This is contrasted against Kate’s reference to “we”, simultaneously positioning Ella as separate to the group (in that she is not part of “we”) but also as holding authority over her and thus being allowed to tell her what (or what not) to do *because* she is part of the group. Speaking on behalf of others is a tricky thing to do. In stating, “I do not think we should let her”, Kate indicates that she considers the group as having authority over the individual; that Ella being “let loose” to criticise the assignment is dependent on whether others agree to let her.

Kate’s utterance that Ella should not be “let loose” on the peer review is an implicit acknowledgement of Ella’s academic strengths through making reference to her knowledge and ability, but at this point in time is constructed as being damaging; as something the group do not want. As Kate is finishing her turn, another group

member – Kim – speaks over her, asking Ella, “do you think that’s diplomatic?” (line 99), again making relevant the fact that Ella’s academic-ness is not appropriate in

89 this situation. The laughter in her voice as she asks constructs this utterance as more
 90 of a rhetorical question; one which has a seemingly obvious answer (Frank, 1990),
 91 that in this case means that it is not a diplomatic answer. Kate demonstrates
 92 understanding of this by laughing (line 100), at which point group member Abi
 93 offers an alternative suggestion as to how they could word Ella's "unclear
 94 terminology" (line 101). In a short space of time, therefore, Ella receives three
 95 verbal orientations (a tease, a question and a re-wording suggestion) that point to her
 96 transgression, and so Ella must respond. She does so by stating that she can
 97 "rephrase" what she has proposed (line 102), suggesting alignment with the group.
 98 This may be a simple first example, but serves to demonstrate how identities can be
 99 occasioned to serve functions.

100 We see this happen in the next extract, too. Here, group member Nadia is
 101 reading aloud to her peers. As we join them, Jackie has been observing Nadia's
 102 process of reading aloud and writing down what the group need to do in the session.

103

104 *Extract 4B (Group 2)*

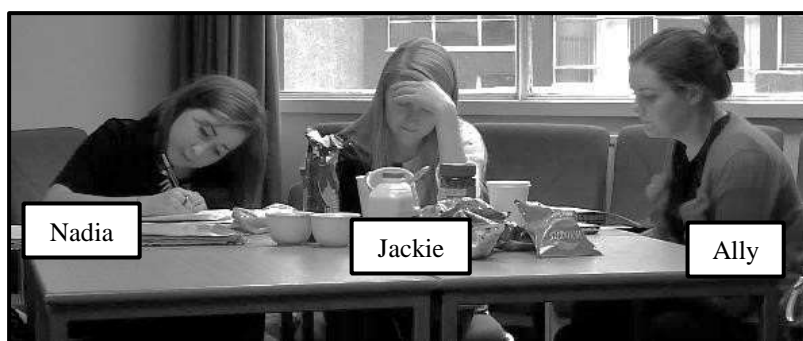
105 Nadia: ((reading out)) em "choosing yer dahta one
 106 or dahta two to focus on
 107 (0.5)
 108 decide on a research [[↑]question"
 109 [((picks up pen and
 110 begins writing))
 111 ((6.0: Nadia and Ally write silently))
 112 Nadia: "type ah dahta you're dea:ling with"
 113 (2.0)
 114 Nadia: "how this may influence your choi:ce"_____
 115 (1.0)
 116 Jackie: ((looks at Nadia, smiling))

117 Nadia: wha'
 118 ((looks at Jackie, smiling))
 119 heh wha' you laughing ah' ((goes
 120 back to writing))
 121 Jackie: fyou're like
 122 ((imitating Nadia writing))
 123 → fnext pe::n underline next pen heh
 124 [heh
 125 Nadia: [decide on a topic area (.) does this also
 126 impact analysi:s
 127 (1.5)
 128 Nadia: discuss what would be the best way to
 129 analyse
 130 ((2.0: writing)) the
 131 data
 132 Jackie: "what methodology would be most suitable"
 133 (1.0)
 134 Jackie: quick underline _____
 135 Ally: fhm[mm
 136 Jackie: [heh heh heh
 137 (2.0)
 138 Jackie: "come to a fdecISION" heh
 139 ((7.0: Nadia and Ally write))
 140 Nadia: em, "begin analysing" heh heh [heh
 141 Jackie: [((smiles))
 142

143 In this example, we see interaction between primarily two members of the
 144 group: Jackie and Nadia. The premise of the extract is that Nadia is noting down
 145 what the group need to do, and Jackie teases her for the formulaic way in which she
 146 does this; selecting different coloured pens for different notes and working through
 147 the list in an ordered manner. The first part of the extract is focused solely on Nadia

148 as she reads out each section of the assignment and takes notes (“choosing your
149 data”, “decide on a research question”, “type of data you’re dealing with” etc.; lines
150 105-114). While this has been happening, Nadia’s peers Jackie and Ally have been
151 apparently reading along, but at line 116, Jackie looks directly at Nadia, at which

point Nadia reciprocates with a smile, asking, “what are you laughing at”, acknowledging the out-of-the-ordinariness of being looked and smiled directly at.



(Lines 105-114) Nadia reads aloud and writes down the steps the group need to take to complete their task.

At this point Jackie formulates her tease of Nadia as an embodied imitation (lines 122-123). She responds to Nadia’s question of, “what are you laughing at?” by providing an exaggerated version of Nadia; physically copying her actions and audibly relaying what Nadia was doing (“next pen underline next pen” – line 123). These actions make it clear that her imitation is fun and not meant to upset or insult her, as imitating another person can be a tricky act to do successfully without causing offence (Keltner et al., 1998). In doing so, however, Jackie is using Nadia’s commitment to the task at hand – her ‘academicness’ – as a source of fun, as something to mock and use against her because she is transgressing the typical student ‘script’ of resisting academia (cf. Benwell & Stokoe, 2002).

Despite the tease, Nadia continues exactly as she has been doing, working through the list of pointers, verbalising that, as a group they must “decide on a topic area” (line 125), and determine “does this also impact analysis” (line 125-126). Nadia’s actions, therefore, could be interpreted as actively ignoring Jackie’s teasing

because not only does she not orient to it at all, she continues ‘transgressing’ in the same way.

Jackie continues the teasing, becoming more comical through exaggerating the immediacy of Nadia’s actions (“quick underline” – line 134), at which point the third member of the group, Ally, joins in with the interaction by laughing (line 135). Jackie reciprocates the laughter suggesting a joint understanding of the interaction at the time. The target, however, has still not responded in any way; not to defend herself, not to laugh along, and not even to retaliate. After a short pause, at line 138, Jackie goes on for a third time to imitate Nadia (following turns at lines 123 and 132), which is followed by a lapse in the interaction in which Nadia and Ally are writing, and Jackie is not.

There initiates a shift in dynamic for the group. Whereas prior to this display of ‘doing academia’ Jackie and Ally were positioned as ‘doing being students’ by not visibly working, Ally has swapped to align with Nadia; also embracing the ‘doing academia’ and as such resisting the ‘doing being a student’. Jackie, however, does not join in with this action and continues ‘doing being a student’ through not writing and just watching her peers as they do. Possibly because of this shift, Jackie ceases her teasing, which offers the next turn-at-talk as being available to anyone.



Na
dia

Jackie

Ally



“Quick underline” (line 134): Both Jackie and Ally laugh along with Jackie’s impersonation of Nadia (picture 1), although Ally quickly demonstrates alignment with Nadia by also demonstrating ‘doing academia’ (picture 2).

Nadia uptakes the turn, and although she has maintained a dignified silence in the face of Jackie's imitations so far, she goes on to align with the tease by making fun of herself in the same manner that Jackie was. Until this point, we did not know how she was treating Jackie's utterances, but in now laughing along, we can argue that Nadia has accepted Jackie's teasing, because she would be unlikely to display such reciprocal markers if she was not. Jackie reciprocates by smiling, suggesting a mutual understanding of the interaction. Why, though, did it Nadia so long to demonstrate a reaction to the interaction?

One interpretation could be that in not outwardly reacting, Nadia's actions were actually serving the function of diverting the topic. If the group do not make Jackie's teasing relevant to the here and now, it is not taken up as a topic of interaction, and as such conversation should (usually) move on. In responding as she did, therefore, Nadia acknowledges that in this particular environment, her academic identity is occasioned as unusual or transgressive and as such is constructed as being acceptable to tease about. Past research has shown that the ability to take a joke can play an important part in identity construction (e.g. Coates, 2003), and so Nadia handles the interaction well. Like in the previous extract, Nadia does not account for her apparent transgressive actions but instead aligns with the teaser, recognising that, importantly, although they are in a working group, her actions (i.e. taking the work seriously) are considered transgressive. This is an interesting phenomenon and will be discussed at the end of the section.

A similar display of 'doing academia' is seen in the next extract. Here, we join a group of interdisciplinary science students as they are reviewing their joint assignment on evolution and specifically discussing an extinct specimen's teeth.

Extract 4C (Group 7)

142 Donald: they've a lahrja jaw and lahrja molars

143 Phillip: chewin' like
 144 Rachel: [this- ((*pointing with mouse on big screen*))
 145 Phillip: [(fission) herbivores
 146 Rachel: this section [here (.) is good
 147 Phillip: [°that's the thing°
 148 (1.0)
 149 Donald: heh [heh .hh
 150 Phillip: [(*smiles*)]
 151 Rachel: [no I- not good but I mean [like
 152 Donald: → [bih-big
 153 you(h)rself u(h)p [.hh heh heh .hh
 154 Rachel: [THERE'S AN ACTUAL
 155 SENTENCE that we can [use for the rest of it
 156 Phillip: [HAH HAH HAH
 157

158 The tease in this extract stems from group member Rachel's assertion that a
 159 particular part of their joint assessment is "good" (line 146). The part in question was
 160 written by Rachel, and as such, her actions are interpreted as transgressive due to
 161 boasting; determined as one of the most common (if not *the* most common)
 162 precursors to teasing (Keltner et al., 2001). Particularly in academia where research
 163 has suggested that students downplay their abilities (e.g. Berry, Cook, Hill &
 164 Stevens, 2010; Guimond & Roussel, 2001), one way in which to address this with
 165 Rachel, is to tease her.

166 The transgression is first acknowledged with laughter from Donald, and very
 167 quickly (before Donald has even produced his second laugh particle), Phillip and
 168 Rachel join in with the interaction (lines 150-151). This speed of this is interesting,
 169 highlighting how obvious a transgression it was in that the group members responded
 170 to it so quickly. Rachel demonstrates this by starting to self-repair; a technique used

171 as a self-righting mechanism in social interaction (Schegloff et al., 1977), suggesting
172 that she is trying to correct the ‘trouble’ through backtracking on her boasting

statement (“not good but I mean” – line 151). As she does so, Donald begins the tease sequence, in which he orients to the fact that Rachel is ‘bigging’ herself up (line 152).

Donald’s tease is designed as playful; the laughter serves the function of indicating that what he is saying is not a vicious attack but rather an acknowledgement of what Rachel has said, of interest because it violates social norms. The comment “big yourself up” is not overtly negative or critical but rather orients to what Rachel did, but because of the way in which it is delivered – and the interaction that it has followed – it is treated as a tease; as something to be responded to because Donald is constructing Rachel’s previous utterance that “this section here is good” is evidence of her boasting.

Rachel responds by explaining that “there’s an actual sentence” that the group can use (lines 154-155), using the computer mouse to point to the part of the document she is referencing, so her talk both elaborates and is elaborated by the gesture (Goodwin, 2003). In directing her peers’ attention to the specific part of the text in question she is arguably accounting for her actions; if her peers can read the section for themselves and agree that it is indeed “good”, Rachel’s utterance will be justified as it will then be interpreted as a truth, as opposed to a boast or brag.



Rachel shows her peers what part she considers “good” on the main screen with the mouse (line 144).

Phillip orients to the interaction by smiling (line 150), before upgrading to audible laughter (line 156) following Donald's tease, indicating affiliation and validating that Donald's utterance has been treated, by him at least, as a tease. Had Phillip considered Donald's tease as too brutal or attacking, he may have defended Rachel (or at the very least, remained impartial and kept out of the interaction), but his laughter suggests that he considers Donald's comment as justified. The tease therefore is formulated in order to 'correct' the interaction; to position Rachel's academic identity construction at that point in time as a transgressive action, in that it is not usual for one a group member to promote their abilities and intelligence above others in the group. It is of interest to observe that Rachel backtracked as she did regarding the part she thought was "good" once her prior actions were treated as transgressive. While boasting about academic achievement has been noted in research (e.g. Dabney, 1995), it is not normative, and so orienting to such displays in such settings serves the function of addressing this unusual behaviour.

Arguably, however – and this point is the focus of analysis in chapter 6 – we could argue that this extract is not an example of teasing but of something else, if we base such a definition on how the 'target' treats the interaction. Voss (1997), for instance, advocates that in order for a tease to be a tease, it must be treated as playful, and here we see no indication from Rachel that she has, despite clear jest coming from her peers. This is something that deserves further consideration and will be discussed later in the thesis.

In a final example in this section, we refer to a group that are just beginning their session for the day. Group member Kate – who is the Chair for the session – is explicating how it will progress.

155

156 *Extract 4D (Group 1)*

157 Kate: there's points there t'like guide you like
158 through like (.) there's some issues to
159 °consider° so that can help you guide
160 yuhryuhr thoughts in yuhr readin'

161 (0.5)

162 Kate: an'en

163 (0.5)

164 Ava: → ((looking down at page)) °check you
165 [out°

166 Kate: [I think we [should come back together (.)

167 Ava: [°hh hh hhhh°

168 Ella: [°heh heh heh°

169 Kate: I don't no whether that's all we do ↑for (.)
170 part [one

171 Ava: → [who she think she is ay

172 Ella: £I(h) know eh heh heh

173 (.)

174 Raymond: → it's like Hitler

175 Kate: ((looks up from papers))

176 Ella: HEH HEH heh heh

177 Ava: Hhh hh .hh

178 Kate: £a(h)m the cha:↓ir

179 Ava: hih heh heh

180 (.)

181 Kate: am tryin' tae give everyone a structure to
182 their ↓day

183

184 This is the first example in which we have seen what can be considered a
185 'multi-party' tease (Lytra, 2007), meaning that more than one individual is doing the
186 teasing. Kate is talking the group through what they are going to do in the session
187 (line 157 onwards), and at line 164, Ava begins the teasing interaction by saying,

188 “check you out”. She does this while looking down at her own work, and her
189 utterance is quiet, indicative that she does not speak in order to take over the turn at

talk, but for another reason. The emphasis on “you” suggests that she is directing her speech at Kate, who is the only person talking at that time, and although her words are not insulting on the surface – she did not, for instance, class Kate as ‘bossy’ – the interpretation of them is treated as though they are.

Kate appears not to hear this, or if she does, she continues talking in the same manner that she has been; portraying her suggestions as to what the group should do in the session. Very quickly following Ava’s utterance, however, Ava and Ella begin to laugh (lines 167-168); the quietness of the act suggesting that this is something they want to keep between themselves as opposed to sharing with the group; suggesting secretiveness, as some kind of joke going on that only a few select people know of.

Kate continues talking (line 169) at which point Ava speaks again, this time in the form of a question to another group member (line 171). The recipient – Ella – could deal with it in one of two ways. Either, she could reject Ava’s utterance and defend Kate who, we later find out, is only doing her job by telling the others what to do, as she is the Chair person for the session. Alternatively, Ella could ‘get in’ on the joke with Ava, which is what she does by aligning with Ava’s second ‘critique’ of Kate (“who does she think she is?”/ “I know” – lines 171-172). As previously discussed, off-record markers such as laughing signify that an utterance is not to be taken seriously, so although Ella aligns verbally with Ava in that she agrees (line 172), she also makes it clear that it is ‘only a joke’, through her jovial voice and laughter particles in her speech (e.g. Clark, 1996).



The images are split due to different cameras being used for recording. At line 171, Ava turns to Ella and says, “who (does) she think she is?”

At this point, Kate still does not orient to the teasing that is going on, even though it is now coming from two of her four fellow group members. It could be argued that she did not hear what they were saying, or simply thought they were having a conversation between themselves, but due to the fact that yet another group member soon joins in and Kate’s forthcoming defence, it is probable that she did hear what they were saying but did not acknowledge it, possibly in an attempt to ‘save face’ (Goffman, 1955, 1967).

Raymond’s construction that Kate is “like Hitler” (line 174) is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it makes relevant the reason for the tease in the first place: Kate has been telling the others in the group what to do. Although she has been softening her directions by saying “I think” (line 166), “we should” (line 166) and “I don’t know...” (line 169) as opposed to more directive language, Raymond likens her to Hitler, portraying a dictatorial image, indicating that he interprets her ‘suggestions’ as commands. Intriguingly though, he does not say “she” is like Hitler; instead, he says “it”, presumably meaning the situation, possibly as a way of defending himself if Kate did take offence, as then he could argue that his tease was not specific to her as such, but rather the dictatorial situation.

Secondly, Ava and Ella's laughter responses to Raymond's portrayal of Kate demonstrate the interactive nature of this tease. Before now, their laughter was quiet, hedged and somewhat secretive, but perhaps because they have affiliation from another group member, Ava and Ella laugh more loudly. Had Kate been pretending not to hear them earlier, she definitely heard them now.

Thirdly, Kate's orientation to the interaction – finally – suggests that she had heard the earlier teasing, but had chosen to ignore it. Consider if she had not heard it; her defence that "I'm the Chair" (line 178) would not necessarily make sense in response to only "it's like Hitler", but does fit in the context of responding to Ava's earlier bites that she was overstepping her authority by telling the group what to do. While the preceding interaction had been going on, (lines 164 to 172), Kate had been focused on the notes in front of her as she had been talking. However, Raymond's utterance at line 174 coincided with her raising her head and looking at her peers, finally acknowledging the teasing.



Kate accounts for her apparent transgression by exclaiming that she is "the Chair" (line 178).

As such, we can see from the multi-party teasing in this extract that Kate's academic identity has been occasioned in the interaction to serve the function of teasing, by orienting to the way in which Kate is transgressing group norms by taking charge and telling the group what they should do. However, Kate's justification for this is that she is the Chair and as such is only doing her job, with her actions being

made relevant in this situation since she is speaking as ‘Chair’, not ‘Kate’. The laughter voice and emphasis/ elongation of the word “Chair” indicates that although she recognises (and matches) the joviality of the teasing, it is still appropriate to account for why she was behaving in this way. The next turn after Kate’s defence is laughter (line 179), which is treated by Kate as problematic as the laughter and ‘jovial’ speech are missing from her following turn at line 181. As such, it is clear that Kate considers her actions relevant in the interaction as she is doing ‘being academic’.

This situation is somewhat more intense than previous extracts we have considered, as Kate is receiving teasing attacks from not just one group member, but from three of her peers. Unlike in previous extracts where a student’s academic identity was occasioned as transgressive by peers, in this extract, it was occasioned by the target herself as a form of accounting (which will be explored in the next chapter). In occasioning her identity by making relevant the fact that she is Chair, Kate cannot be held accountable for bossing her peers, as she has the right to at this moment in time, and thus arguably the tease is not accepted by Kate, even though she aligns with the joviality of it through replicating the markers as she accounts. This is potentially problematic for the group though, as Kate may feel unable to do her ‘job’ as the Chair for fear of being further ridiculed by her peers, particularly since the teasing was coming from the majority of the group. However, as we will see in the next section, group members also get teased for resisting or rejecting their academic identity, so it is somewhat of a grey area to consider.

Section summary

In these first four extracts, then, we have seen how academic identities can be occasioned in teasing to serve the function of addressing group norm violations, when that norm is resisting ‘academicness’. Past research in the area has demonstrated how students resist their academic identity in favour of reinforcing the normative boundaries of ‘student identity’, such as in Benwell & Stokoe’s (2002) aforementioned publication in which a group member was asked, “have you swallowed the dictionary?” (pp. 447) as a way of orienting to the unusualness of formulating academic discourse in such settings. This is similar to the phenomenon seen here; teases being produced to orient to transgressions committed by group members through the promotion of their academic identities. This appears to be manifested in taking a task too seriously; whether it is critiquing a peer group’s work, taking notes for the PBL task, praising the work being done or organising the group’s activities for the session, such acts are constructed as transgressive and as such the individual doing them is teased as a way of orienting to the apparent misdemeanour.

What impact might this have for a group? Certainly, one issue that may arise is linked to the concept of status and authority. If and when group members transgress in a way that is treated by their peers as being evident of increased authority, this can cause trouble. Every member of the group in the above extracts were of equal standing, and so when one purports that their contribution to the group task was particularly good (extract 4C) or tells the other group members what to do (4D), this can be interpreted as unusual or disruptive behaviour. In occasioning such academic identities, therefore, teasers can reproach the transgressive member in a way that addresses the problematic action without being accused of bullying or criticising. As such, these interactions are potentially problematic for the target at the

centre of the teasing interaction, because their actions are constructed as transgressive despite being relevant to the interaction at the time. In each of the examples above, the group member was acting in a way that theoretically was

163 appropriate within the remit of PBL (such as ‘doing being the Chair’, or ‘doing peer
164 reviewing’), however, this was treated as deviant behaviour.

165 Targets in such interactions are therefore torn between adhering to such
166 norms and to embracing the task at hand within the context of PBL, and in the above
167 extracts we see them respond in both ways. In extracts 4A and 4B, the target group
168 member displayed affiliation with the message of the tease, indicating that they were
169 respectively accepting of the tease that was put to them (extract 4A) and even played
170 along with it (4B). In extracts 4C and 4D, however, the targets demonstrated defence
171 in that they accounted for their actions in a way that positioned their academic
172 identity constructions as relevant to the interaction at the time through highlighting
173 their usefulness for the whole group. In sum, it is of interest that such acts are
174 constructed as non-normative considering that, in the next section, we analyse the
175 opposite phenomenon; where academic identity is treated as normative and teasing is
176 a way of orienting to those who do not adhere to such a script.

177

178 *Part 2: Academic identity as normative*

179 Let us begin with a group of science students as they are composing a
180 podcast for their PBL task. Each group member has their own section to work on.

181

182 *Extract 4E (Group 7)*

183 Rachel: I think it

184 (1.0)

185 Rachel: if it's- (.) that-~~that~~ fossil that

186 skull is in the museum and that is- you're

187 walking past this skull=

188 Donald: =yeah

189 Rachel: an' it tells you about the skull and then it
 190 tells you about the rest
 191 (1.0)
 192 Rachel: °of-°
 193 (0.5)
 194 Phillip: ((to Rachel)) I have to refer to
 195 your argument
 196 → (.) so hurry up an' [fdo some work
 197 Donald: [heh heh heh
 198 Rachel: .hh .hh
 199 Donald: u(h)m
 200 Phillip: heh
 201 Rachel: ((to Phillip)) buh you c'n- you c'n
 202 infer what m(h)y a(h)-~~equ~~ment'll be heh
 203 Phillip: hm: hm:
 204

205 As we join them, the group are going over their work to date on their PBL
 206 task, and have their assignment open on the large monitor so they all can see it. The
 207 beginning of the interaction is focused on Rachel talking about what she is going to
 208 say in her part (lines 183-192), and the tease comes at lines 194-196 where Phillip
 209 admonishes her for seemingly not having done her bit yet, as he needs her to do so in
 210 order that he in turn can do his, as he needs to “refer to (her) argument”.

211 Phillip therefore implies that Rachel's lack of work is hindering his ability to
 212 do his own. His tease that she should, “hurry up and do some work” is delivered in a
 213 way that clearly marks it as not to be taken seriously – appearing critical but
 214 simultaneously jovial – and before Rachel has a chance to respond, the third group
 215 member, Donald, laughs, suggesting he has picked up on the playfulness of the
 216 utterance. Let us consider if Phillip was to make this same point in a more serious
 217 manner. He could have said, “I can't work until you've done your bit”, or something

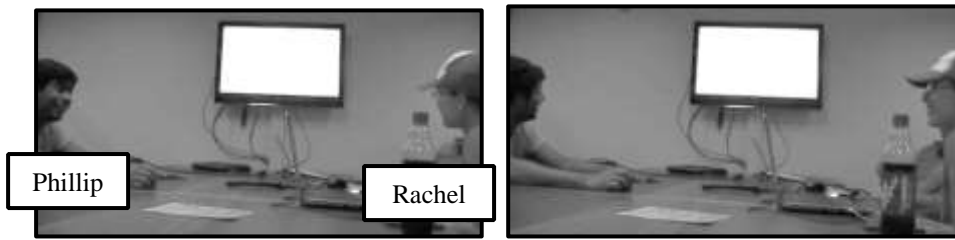
218 akin to that, which would have achieved the goal of alerting the group to why he has
219 not anything to show them, but may also be interpreted as somewhat attacking of

Rachel. Instead, through teasing, he can get his point across but without being positioned as being overly critical.

Fundamentally, then, Rachel is being teased for not having done the assigned work, and potentially letting the group down, due to the fact that since this is a PBL task, the group must work collaboratively. In response, Rachel accounts for her actions in a rather sophisticated way.

Firstly, the fact that her response is peppered with laughter throughout is indicative that she is orienting to the ‘jovial’ nature of the interaction, and reciprocates, demonstrating that she ‘gets’ the non-seriousness of it and plays along, treating it as a tease. Had she responded more seriously – for instance without laughing – this may be interpreted as her treating the utterance as an attack or criticism. Her response could, however, be influenced by Donald’s prior laughter; because he laughs, arguably Rachel has to follow suit to demonstrate to her peers that she can ‘take’ the criticism without becoming offended. This retrospective marking following a tease has been seen at varying points across the analyses, and will be discussed later.

In addition, of interest is what Rachel actually says. She states that Phillip can “infer what (her) argument will be” (lines 201-202), suggesting that although she accepts Phillip’s tease (because it is true that she has not done the work), he does not need her to have done the work in order for him to do his bit, as it is presumably clear what she will be writing about. Rachel thus achieves two things here: not only does she defend herself and manages the blame put to her, but simultaneously highlights how Phillip is actually the one in the wrong.



Phillip teases Rachel (line 196, picture 1) for not having done the work he requires to do his. Rachel, in turn, reciprocates the joviality of the interaction, but defends her position (line 201202, picture 2).

In not responding in an overtly defensive or retaliatory manner to Phillip's tease – but instead laughing along – Rachel demonstrates her ability to keep cool, and as such her status is raised; she is the 'bigger person'. It would have been feasible for her to, for example, respond in a negative way to Phillip's assertion that she should "do some work" (line 196). Phillip, after all, is not of any more importance than Rachel within the group – they are all students at the same level – and therefore does not have the authority within the confines of the group to not only tell another member what to do, but in such a commanding way as to state that she should "hurry up". In invoking these shared social identities as university students, Rachel holds Phillip accountable for his own work while managing the blame for not having done her own, and in doing so achieves the feat of adhering to Phillip's critique whilst defending herself.

This first extract is in stark contrast to those in the previous section. Whereas teases in those extracts were formulated by way of treating academic identity displays as non-normative, in this section, teases are on the basis that academic identity displays *are* normative, and so those resisting them are constructed as being transgressive. We see a similar scenario in the next example. Here, group members

Jennifer and Tom are discussing the wording of a podcast they are composing pertaining to the evolution of man.

202

203 *Extract 4F(1) (Group 8)*

204 Jennifer: no I be- I think ih sounds be'er if it's
205 like
206 (1.5)
207 Jennifer: "the homo erectus pekinblahblah (.) shown by
208 (1.0)
209 Jennifer: the [skull"
210 Tom: → [you need to be able to say that y'know
211 [heh heh
212 Jennifer: [fI know heh heh heh
213 Tom: pekinensis
214 Jennifer: Eyep ((begins writing))

215

216 The tease here is the result of group member Jennifer's inability to pronounce
217 a crucial word ("pekinensis"). The extract begins with Jennifer discussing the
218 wording of a podcast the group are producing, until she hits trouble at line 207 where
219 instead of saying the name of the fossil species under investigation, she says, "homo
220 erectus pekinblahblah", replacing the tricky word "pekinensis" with the nonsense
221 words "blah blah". Person (1999; cited in Simpson & Hall, 2002) asserts that "blah
222 blah" sequences allow a speaker to create a space in which the hearer can determine
223 what is meant. Therefore, it is probable that Jennifer said this in order to save face by
224 not revealing she could not pronounce the actual word.

225 Jennifer holds the turn at talk, continuing her explanation of her wording until
226 her peer Tom interrupts her to assert that she needs "to able to say that" (line 210), to
227 which Jennifer aligns, "I know". This interaction between them is of interest for a
228 couple of reasons. Firstly, although Tom laughs at the end of his utterance, there is
229 no indication at the beginning that he is not being serious. To interpret the words he
230 is using without taking into account any markers or cues, it would appear he is

critiquing Jennifer for not being able to pronounce the crucial word, and as such it is fair to consider this a serious orientation towards Jennifer's transgression. Although he does go on to laugh at the end of his turn, Jennifer starts speaking by this point and so it makes sense that her response is directed at what was said before his laughter began. As such, we can assume that Jennifer's response to Tom's serious assessment that she "needs to be able to say that" should be a similarly serious response, because as far as she has heard, he is criticising her for not being able to say it. It is of interest, then, that Jennifer treats Tom's turn as a tease, as evidenced through her laughter and 'smiley voice' as she aligns with him (lines 212 and 214).



Due to the camera angle, we cannot see any of Jennifer's peers, but can see her seriousness (lines 204-209, picture 1), her jovial response to the tease (line 212, picture 2), before she returns to writing (line 214, picture 3).

In doing so, Jennifer highlights a potential way in which her actions could impact on the rest of the group; she needs to be able to say the species name in the podcast or else the rest of the group will be impacted through fault of this one individual. Despite her response suggesting that she is accepting of the tease – in that she aligns with Tom – Jennifer offers no explanation, justification, or defence for it. As such, she puts herself in the position of being accountable for *not* defending herself; in not offering an explanation for this transgression, she not only opens herself up to the possibility of being teased again, but also her peers cannot be certain

207 that she will not make the same transgression again, which is of particular
 208 importance to each individual as they are working on the same podcast. Tom goes
 209 on to state the correct pronunciation of the problematic word, possibly in an effort to
 210 offer Jennifer face-saving; because in saying the word himself, Jennifer can copy the
 211 way he says it. Although she simply responds with “yep” – acknowledging Tom –
 212 the following interaction occurs a little later:

213

214 *Extract 4F(2) (Group 8)*

215 Jennifer: p'kih~~n~~in sis (.) p'ke~~e~~nin
 216 (1.0)
 217 Jennifer: (hhh)
 218 Tom: pekinensis pekin
 219 Jennifer: pekin
 220 Tom: peking duck
 221 Jennifer: pe-pe (.) kin
 222 Tom: en sis=
 223 Jennifer: =en sis (.) pekinensis
 224 ((looks at Tom, smiles))
 225 Tom: °yeah°

226

227 Despite being told earlier by Tom how to pronounce the word (line 213),
 228 Jennifer continues to demonstrate her uncertainty as evidenced by the repeated and
 229 differing emphases she places on the word as she practices it (line 215). Her sigh at
 230 line 217 arguably serves the function of displaying her frustration and possibly
 231 anxiety; acknowledging the implications of her prior turn that she still cannot
 232 pronounce the crucial word (Hoey, 2014). In response, Tom employs a number of
 233 tactics in order to simplify it for her such as breaking it into smaller chunks (line
 234 218), and implying a word association (line 220). Tom and Jennifer work closely
 235 together over a number of turns, until at line 223 where Jennifer seems to have

finally got it, stating it fluidly and looking at Tom with a smile, possibly for clarification or confirmation.

Despite Tom's initial tease based on Jennifer's pronunciation difficulty, the interaction resulted beneficially for the group through Jennifer and Tom's collaborative actions creating a sense of cohesion or unitedness within the group. In not responding defensively to the assertion that, "you need to be able to say that" (line 210), Jennifer demonstrated her ability to remain calm under fire. There were no clues that Tom was teasing, and so laughing demonstrated her ability to play along with the criticism, despite her non-academic display being treated as a transgression. At the same time, through offering Jennifer face-saving tactics by helping break down the tricky word for her, Tom repaired any potential damage caused through his 'tease' by showing that he was not out to embarrass her because she could not say the word; on the contrary, he offered a series of methods to help her which ultimately lead to a satisfactory outcome for the group (in that Jennifer learned how to say the word, and Tom was not held accountable for targeting his peer). This is similar to the last extract in that one group member was held accountable for potentially disrupting the whole group's work, and so reaching an outcome that pleases all parties involved is of benefit to and for the group.

We now move to an example in which a group member's intelligence as opposed to ability is teased. We join a group of psychology students as they have been discussing the strengths and weaknesses of different qualitative methodologies, as per their PBL task. Kate is attempting to turn on Raymond's laptop.

225 *Extract 4G (Group 1)*

226 Kate: ((pressing button on Raymond's laptop)) it's
 227 not comin' o:n
 228 Raymond: that's the mute [heh heh
 229 Kate: ((covers mouth with hand)) [HEH HEH
 230 hah hah hah .hhh
 231 (1.0)
 232 Raymond: heh heh heh heh heh heh
 233 Kate: £.hh
 234 (1.0)
 235 Raymond: → d'you see 'er there she wis pressin' the
 236 mute bu'on goin'
 237 Annabel: ((smiles))
 238 Raymond: ((impersonating Kate)) "↑why is this not
 239 [coming oh:n" .hh huh
 240 Kate: [ah heh heh heh heh
 241 Ella: AH hih [hih hih
 242 Raymond: → [huh huh (.) an' she goes to u ni
 243 .hh huh huh huh
 244 (1.0)
 245 Ella: → £an' she's at the top of our [↓class
 246 Raymond: [heh heh heh
 247 Kate: hih hih hih
 248 Ella: [so::
 249 Raymond: [God heh heh heh
 250 Ava: → £God knows how ↓that happened ngg
 251 [heh
 252 Kate: [heh heh heh
 253

254 The extract begins with group member Kate using Raymond's laptop, but
 255 confusing the power button with the mute button, leading to an episode of joint
 256 laughter between the two of them (lines 228-229). Raymond goes on to alert the rest
 257 of the group to Kate's mistake by asking, "did you see her there" (line 235), and

258 sequentially teasing her by imitating her previous turn at talk through putting on a
259 silly, higher pitched voice supposed to emulate the way she speaks. In doing so,

Raymond both active voices (Wooffitt, 1992) and physically embodies Kate's actions of trying to turn on the laptop; demonstrating clearly that what he is doing and saying should be treated as jovial. Kate responds agreeably by continuing to laugh, indicating that she recognises and can 'handle' the teasing, and possibly because of this, her peers laugh too, demonstrating 'fun'; that they are all having a laugh at Kate's expense, but because she is going along with it, it is acceptable for everyone else to do so.

At line 238, Raymond proceeds to tease Kate again, highlighting the disparity between her actions (i.e. struggling to turn on the laptop) and the orientation to the fact that this is not something she should have been vexed by, as she is clearly intelligent enough to be at university. Emphasising that "*she* goes to uni" (line 242) serves to indicate that at that moment in the interaction, Kate perhaps was not acting in a way that corresponded with being a university student – as she could not turn a laptop on – reiterating the reason for the shared laughter between himself and Kate in the first few lines of the extract. As such, her non-academic actions are occasioned as transgressive; that although she goes to university, she is not very intelligent.



Kate mistakes the mute button on Raymond's laptop for the power button (line 226) and as such is teased for it by Raymond who imitates her voice and actions (lines 238-239).

By line 245, Kate has already been teased twice by Raymond; firstly through the imitation of her trying and failing to turn on the laptop, and secondly by the insinuation that as someone who goes to university, she should not have a problem with this task. This extract demonstrates another example of multi-party teasing (and happens to be the same group), as another group member – Ella – then goes on to tease Kate for a third time by emphasising not only does Kate go to university, she is at the “top of [their] class” (line 245). This added piece of information regarding Kate (i.e. a very good, able student if she is at the top of her class) serves to widen the imbalance between these two constructions of her; one who is the best in the class, and one who cannot even turn on a laptop. Again, Kate laughs in response to this assertion, before Ava delivers a fourth tease at line 250, saying, “God knows how that happened”, highlighting the disparity between the same individual not being able to turn on a laptop yet being the best student in the class. Like before, this multi-party tease is potentially dangerous because Kate could interpret it as being victimised and ‘ganged up’ upon. Indeed, we saw the same group multi-teasing the same target in extract 4D – however, there are clear markers from each of the speakers that what they are saying is in jest and should not be taken seriously, such as their smiling faces and jovial speech, laughter particles, and the similar falling intonation as they construct their tease, almost in the form of a three-part list – a technique used to summarise a general class of things (Jefferson, 1990); i.e. here, reasons why Kate should be able to turn on a laptop. This display of obvious joviality – and the target’s affiliative behaviour – is in contrast to the display in 4D in which teases appeared more discrete and underhand, thus pointing to the importance

perhaps of teasers using such markers to ensure targets can orient to the nonseriousness of the message. This point will be revisited later.



Kate's peers perform a sequence of 'multi-party' teasing (lines 235-250), although it is clear from their smiley expressions that it is not designed to be harmful.

The way in which Kate's peers join together to address her non-academic behaviour is arguably evidential of their strength as a group. In combining their identity constructions of Kate – both as an able student, but simultaneously unable to do a simple task – their teases serve the function of jovially demonstrating cohesion through working together to serve a purpose; i.e. tease Kate. If Kate had not laughed along with each turn, the group members could have been accused of ganging up on her, but in all playing along with the 'how can she not turn on a laptop when she's at the top of her class' game, the group – including Kate herself – demonstrate their closeness through being able to laugh at Kate's transgressive actions; transgressive in the sense that doing 'being academic' is treated as normative in this interaction, and so Kate's actions do not align with this. According to Keltner et al. (1998), to know someone is to know their weaknesses as well as their strengths, and so teasing can be a playful way of expressing that knowledge and as such reinforcing relationships and enhancing cohesion in the group environment.

The penultimate extract in this section and chapter returns to the same group again, as they are working in two sub teams. Annabel, Kate and Raymond comprise

249 one team, while Ava and Ella are in the other, though both are round the same table.

250 In this extract, the group are discussing how best to take their notes for the session.

251

252 *Extract 4H (Group 1)*

253 Kate: d'yi want mih t'write this down ↓yeah

254 ((flicks through notebook))

255 (1.0)

256 Raymond: o:r (.) d'yih want me t'do it an' that way I

257 c'n send it in an ↑email

258 Kate: ((nodding)) o[kay

259 Raymond: [that way- °will we do that°

260 Kate: °yeah°

261 ((3.0: Raymond retrieves laptop from bag))

262 Raymond: ((looks across table, then to Kate)) righ'

263 WE HAVE t'talk slow ah get flust'urd

264 Kate: heh huhuh

265 Raymond: [fhuh

266 Kate: → ((to other sub group)) [fSEE IN CHIPS

267 ['e was like

268 [((waves hands in air))

269 Raymond: huh hih hih

270 Ava: [fit's horribl:e

271 Ella: [HIH HIH HIH

272 Ava: 'cause it's- but 'cause you doh- you don't

273 want t'like (.) stop people fr'm (.) the

274 flow of their discussion but then you're

275 like ↑'ahh' =

276 Raymond: =yer like 'am trying tae write here'

277 heh heh heh

278

279 Here, we see group member Kate tease Raymond for getting “flustered”
280 when he has to take notes, as per the role of the Scribe¹¹ in PBL. Arguably, Raymond
281 initiated the tease on himself as we see him self-deprecate before the teasing itself

¹¹ The Scribe is the group note-taker in PBL; a role which is usually varied per session

begins, thus making relevant his transgression that leads to the tease. We can tell Kate's utterance at line 266 is a tease because of her precursory laughter (line 264), her increased volume which serves to get the attention of the rest of the group, and her animated impersonation of Raymond "being flustered" in the CHIPS¹² class. In return, we can see that Raymond – and others – treat the utterance as a tease, due to their laughter response which demonstrates they understand its non-seriousness. We can therefore see how Kate makes relevant Raymond's transgression of doing 'being non-academic'.

We see from the start of the extract that the interaction is serious. Kate and Raymond are discussing how to make notes for their section of the PBL task, and although Annabel is in their sub team, she largely excludes herself from these negotiations, as suggested through her averted gaze and lack of input (Goodwin, 1984). Kate initiates writing the notes before Raymond suggests he do it, so that he can distribute them via email to the rest of the group, apparently so that they all have a copy. There is a fairly long lapse in the interaction as Raymond begins to remove his laptop from his bag, which leads to the start of the self-deprecating and then teasing interaction. Raymond's actions here are subtle but interesting as he announces that the group has to "talk slow" because he gets "flustered" (line 263). Before he says this, however, we see him smile ever so slightly, before glancing towards the other sub team – who have not so far been involved in the interaction – and then to Kate. In prefacing his announcement with "right", he redirects the flow of conversation to initiate a new topic: managing potential blame that may ensue from his typing of the notes. Although he volunteered to type up the group's notes,

¹² CHIPS refers to the Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology class, as detailed on page 96.

he now has to account for why this may be problematic; in that he “gets flustered”, and so to counter this, he advises that the group must “talk slow”. Raymond even raises his voice and looks toward the rest of his peers as he does so, presumably to ensure they all heard. This way, if the group do not do this ‘talking slow’ he cannot be held to blame, since he warned them that if they did not speak slowly, he would get flustered, and presumably not be able to keep up with the typing. In doing so, he – not any of his peers – is the person who positions being non-academic (i.e. getting flustered) as troublesome, and as such, transgressive.

This is responded to with laughter by Kate, who then goes on to tease Raymond by impersonating him being “flustered” by waving her hands around. Like in extract 4B, Kate’s tease is formulated through comically replicating Raymond’s actions, and as such marks what she is doing as non-literal, much as in the way talk can be exaggerated (Pomerantz, 1986). In response to this, Raymond and Ella laugh, indicating that they have treated the impersonation as jovial, and not critical or biting, and understand its fun nature. Despite displays like this often being classed as mocking (e.g. Everts, 2003), Kate’s tease here serves the function of validating Raymond’s claim; that she has first-hand evidence of Raymond becoming flustered in another class, and so what he said should be taken seriously. Group member Ava then goes on to align with Raymond about the difficulties of typing notes when others are speaking by assessing that it is “horrible”, and then providing an account of why so. Doing such “script formulating” (Edwards, 1994) – in that she constructs the action of keeping notes as routine, as though everyone has experience of it – serves to validate Raymond’s concerns, and in return Raymond aligns with Ava to further manage the potential blame that comes with being the note-taker.

260



261

262

Kate impersonates Raymond “being flustered” (line 268).

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270

271

272

Because Raymond responds so well to the teasing, like Kate in the previous extract, the group are able to share a laugh, albeit at his expense. Doing so has been shown in past research to foster collegiality; the relationship between colleagues (e.g. Holmes, 2006), which is of particular importance in PBL when groups often spend long periods together and are reliant on each other to get through the class. This flaw of Raymond’s (i.e. not being able to do the role of the Scribe to its perhaps fullest potential) is thus made relevant in the interaction as a transgression due to it being, in the context of the environment, something that should be doable and so treating it as not is evidence of deviant behaviour.

273

274

275

276

277 *Extract 4I (Group 6)*

278

279

280

Susan: eh::m law or education that’s your
first choice
(3.0)

281 Deborah: °hmm°
 282 (2.0)
 283 Deborah: ah picked law in first year an' ah thought
 284 it wis gonna be like Legally Blonde an' (.)
 285 it ((*shakes head*)) wasn't
 286 Chloe: faw
 287 Hannah: he[h
 288 Chloe: [heh
 289 Susan: [a heh [hm
 290 Deborah: [f(hhh)
 291 Katy: ha ha >HAHA[HA:<
 292 Deborah: [ft(hhh)
 293 Susan: f(hhh)
 294 (1.0)
 295 Deborah: .hh an' it ruined ma first
 296 Katy: [hah
 297 Deborah: [year at univer[si'y
 298 Susan: [yea:h
 299 Katy: [>heh heh< HA HA HA HA
 300 (0.5)
 301 Chloe: wha' did you actually pick the
 302 ↑class law=
 303 Deborah: =yeah ↓oh:: wohted tah kill myself
 304 in first [year
 305 Katy: → [Deb'rah came in the first day wae
 306 a wee pink poodle in her [fhan'bag an' stuff
 307 Deborah: ((*throws head back*)) [HA HA HA HA HA HA
 308 .hh
 309 Susan: [((*smiles*))
 310 Chloe: [((*smiles*))
 311 Hannah: [((*smiles*))
 312 (2.0)
 313 Susan: fwha'a disappoin'ment that must've
 314 been
 315 Deborah: oh it was so bad ah used to jus' sit there

316 ((*looks around*)) 'wha:: this isn't like The
317 Good Wife at all heh heh heh
318

This extract begins with the facilitator, Susan, announcing that the group has two topics to choose between for their next PBL task: either ‘law’ or ‘education’. Following a brief lapse in the interaction, Deborah responds minimally (line 281), perhaps to display her acknowledgement of Susan’s utterance but without having to proffer an opinion or answer. However, in order for the group to make any progress, they must begin their discussions somehow and so Deborah begins relaying a story about her experience of law in her first year of university.

This story is based upon her expectations of what the law course was going to be (“like Legally Blonde¹³” – line 284) and what happened when she discovered it was not like that (“ruined my first year at university” – line 295), thus serving the conversational function of giving an opinion (i.e. choosing the topic of education over law) without actually stating it (Stokoe & Edwards, 2006). In telling the story, Deborah regales her vision of her first year of university being like it is in the film Legally Blonde, constructing herself as the ditzy blonde student who no-one takes seriously in the field of law. In regaling that her first year was “ruined” because it *was not* like that, Deborah constructs such an identity as being desirable which, in this context, is regarded as transgressive. As such, at line 305, Katy parodies Deborah as being the lead role in the film; that of a blonde, materialistic, bimboesque type of girl, and in doing so, provides the group with an image of a caricaturised version of Deborah, ultimately teasing her.

¹³ Legally Blonde is a 2001 comedy film about an American sorority girl who attempts to win back her ex-boyfriend by earning a law degree.



The group respond to Deborah's 'disappointment' that the first year of her university law course was not like 'Legally Blonde' (lines 286-293).

The way in which Katy formulates the tease – by speaking as though it actually happened – serves the opposite function of marking the ‘non-serious’ nature, by exaggerating to the point that it becomes a parody and obvious that, of course, Deborah did *not* go to her first day of law class with a dog in her bag (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2006). Clark (1996) discusses the notion of ‘fantasy layering’ as forming the basis of pretense and humour, and here we see laughter from Deborah in response to Katy’s ‘joining in’ with her alternate reality of being in *Legally Blonde*; although Katy could potentially be held accountable for insulting Deborah, she appears to be doing the opposite since Deborah throws her head back and laughs heartily (line 307).

Deborah’s response is interesting because although she is being teased about being likened to the character of a ‘dumb blonde’, she is the one who initiated it by conveying her disappointment that actually real life was not like the film. Certainly, she responds favourably by laughing which indicates she has not taken offence, despite being characterised in a seemingly negative way. Perhaps because Deborah

began this sequence by suggesting that she wanted her law class to “be like Legally Blonde”, Katy deemed her tease to be acceptable and ‘jokey’, as opposed to offensive and inappropriate. The fact that Katy teases Deborah suggests that even though Deborah has cast herself in a somewhat negative light, this is something the group can laugh at, and although we do not audibly hear a reaction from the rest of the group members in response to the tease (lines 309-311), their smiles indicate their affiliation with the interaction between Katy and Deborah.



(Line 307) Deborah responds to Katy's tease formulation of a parody of her.

This shared laughter at one member's expense again suggests rapport building in the group. That Katy teased Deborah is evidence alone that the dynamic in the group is open to such interactions because, again, doing teasing is tricky business in case the recipient responds negatively. In constructing the tease as she did, Katy joins Deborah in her constructed reality, reinforcing personal bonds between the teaser and target through displaying shared playful talk. In responding as she did, Deborah demonstrates not only acceptance, but also validation of the tease, considering she extended it to tag on an extra self-deprecating utterance (lines 315-317). Ultimately, in expressing disappointment at her law class not being like in the film, Deborah reveals much about her desires, which is used as the basis for teasing due to its construction as being non-normative within the context of the group.

Section summary

So, what have we learned from this section in which academic identity constructions are treated as normative, and so demonstrative that non-academic behaviour is transgressive? Fundamentally, this behaviour makes sense: all the group members partaking in this research are in their final year of study and as such their degree classifications are based on the results obtained in these – and other – classes. It therefore corresponds that it is within a student's best interest to embrace their academic selves, and so any displays that do not align with this are treated as transgressive; whether that's not doing work in a timely fashion (extract 4E), struggling with academic discourse (4F), being vexed by a seemingly straightforward task (4G), being unable to adequately adhere to a PBL role (4H) or glorifying the antithesis of academia (4I).

Despite the opposite phenomenon being reported too (as detailed in section one), this observation is not unique; research has shown that teasing, particularly in school children, has been used as a way to construct individuals as “poor” students, and by extension, the teaser as “good” (e.g. Lytra, 2009). This may be of particular relevance here due to the nature of the academic setting; that PBL is reliant on the contributions of the whole group, and so any misdemeanour by a single individual has potential consequences for others.

In extracts 4E, 4F and 4G certainly, we can see how one individual's struggles may affect the rest of the group. In being unable to pronounce probably the most crucial word of their podcast, for instance, Jennifer (4F) is held accountable for

the success or failure of the group as a whole. In teasing her, therefore, her peers can address the situation and ensure she acknowledges this transgression.

It is of interest to observe that following the teasing interactions in each of the examples above except one, the target demonstrated affiliation with the teaser; that is to say that they did not 'bite back' or retaliate, or even, in most cases, offer an account for their transgression. In the one extract that the target did account for their transgression (not having done the work and as such constructed as hindering her peer's ability to do his – 4E), the account demonstrated that the transgression she was held accountable for potentially was not valid, and so her actions did not actually impact the rest of the group.

Making mistakes is an inherent part of PBL and being a student, but doing so, as we have seen, can be treated as transgressive behaviour which is particularly interesting to consider when compared with the opposite phenomenon; taking academia too seriously. The chapter summary below offers some thoughts on this.

Chapter summary

This chapter demonstrates the social-constructionist perspective of identity as a dynamic, on-going process, emerging through discursive practices. As Holmes and Marra (2002, pp. 377) discuss, identity claims and ascriptions such as those demonstrated in this chapter can be considered as "one way in which social categories get done through talk", and so teasing can thus be considered as a resource to construct identities in interaction.

The chapter was split into two sections focusing on the following two opposing phenomena:

- positioning academic identity as being non-normative, and so doing
‘being academic’ is treated as transgressive, and
- positioning academic identity as being normative, and so doing ‘being non-academic’ is treated as transgressive

In the first section, we saw how group members were teased for their ‘academic-ness’; demonstrating such ‘academic-ness’ and ‘doing being a good student’ by way of taking tasks seriously and embracing PBL roles. This was occasioned in interaction as deviant behaviour; as actions out with the norms of the group. However, in the second section we saw how group members were also teased for not being academic enough; for getting ‘flustered’ in a tutorial or being unable to pronounce an important word, and at such times *these* interactions were also considered transgressions. Demonstrably, this shows the extent to which teasing is occasioned in talk and interaction; while an individual may violate group norms by appearing too eager one minute, they may violate them later for not being committed enough; a pattern seen in previous work such as Attenborough’s (2011) foray into the tension between ‘doing education’ and ‘doing being a student’.

Such identity constructions are of particular interest in group work, because of the impact one individual’s actions has on the rest of the group. In extract 4C, for instance, Rachel was teased for asserting that a certain part of the group assignment was particularly good, which at that point in time was treated as a transgressive action. However, in extract 4E the same individual in the same group was teased for supposedly not having done any work. This demonstrates the extent to which psychological phenomenon must be considered moment by moment and turn by turn

in interaction, and arguably shows how cognitivist approaches in such fields are at best, flawed, and at worst, redundant. Group norms constantly change and are changed as the result of interaction, often only becoming relevant when they are transgressed; whether that's promoting academia, or resisting it. Teasing, therefore, is a way for student groups to establish what is normative *at that time, in that circumstance*, to serve particular functions.

The importance of orienting to such norms in interaction cannot be underestimated. Research has demonstrated that a lack of group norms is associated with poorer performance (Langfred, 1998; in Dyaram & Kamalanabhan, 2005), and that in order for concepts like cohesion to be constructed, groups norms must be adhered to (e.g. Long & Manstead, 1997; Stommel & Meijman, 2011). In positioning a group member's 'academic-ness' as normative or non-normative, group membership is thus arguably strengthened through the highlighting of/ orienting to the ways in which the transgressive member is different, in order for them to re-align with the unspoken 'rules' of the group. In each of the extracts within this chapter, the transgressive group member demonstrated such alignment with the message of the tease. Although the extent to which they did so differed; for instance, some targets played along (e.g. 4B) while others offered justifications (e.g. 4D), the fact that they each did align suggests recognition of their behaviour as transgressive, which in turn posits that the teasing could be considered 'successful'. Successful teasing is demonstrative that a teaser and target treat the interaction in the same way, and will be discussed in further depth in chapter 6. For now, it is enough to say that such alignment is of particular importance in group work to ensure that group members

can work collaboratively to the best of their ability and encourage beneficial interpersonal relationships.

Now that we have seen an example of how teasing can be formulated, we turn our focus to how teasing can be treated in interaction, detailing the differing ways in which tease targets can display their acceptance of, defence for, or retaliation against, teasing.

Chapter 5 Accountability in teasing

Now that we have considered one of the ways in which teasing is formulated, we now turn our attention to the ways in which teasing is responded to, and how tease targets address the transgression they have been ‘accused’ of. Unlike the previous chapter, this one does not focus on just one ‘type’ of teasing (i.e. identity positionings), but rather, looks at how teasing is responded to, regardless of the cause.

Accountability is a central concern of discursive psychology, and refers to how individuals attend to their responsibility when giving their version of events of some topic or phenomenon, and how issues of blame are managed (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Accounting for a misdemeanour that is oriented to through a tease is interactionally and analytically interesting, because in ‘doing accounting’, a speaker simultaneously demonstrates their agreement with whatever was put to them – in that they explain or justify – but they also conversely demonstrate why the so-called transgression was relevant to the interaction at that time, fundamentally refuting the reason for being teased.

However, accounting for being teased is tricky, because if a target is too defensive it suggests they are unable to ‘take’ the tease, arguably constructing it not as a tease but as something ‘worse’, which in turn may have ramifications for groups such as, for instance, accusations of bullying. However, in not accounting for a transgression at all, the target may treat it as normative behaviour which in turn may position themselves as inviting further teasing attacks. As such, individuals tend to

respond to a tease in a way that allows them to demonstrate their acceptance of it, but still account for their transgressive actions, and as such demonstrate their ability to remain composed under fire; deemed inherently important in social interaction (Adam, 2014).

To continue the analyses of teasing, then, we are going to consider the differing ways in which targets respond to teasing, how they manage their accountability for why they were teased, and what function this serves for groups in the PBL environment. When considering how we respond to teasing, perhaps the most well-known research in this area is that of Paul Drew, whose 1987 conversation analysis of ‘po-faced receipts’ focused on recipients’ responses to teasing, and showed that of a large collection of teasing instances, recipients most commonly responded seriously, even when there was evidence that they recognised the tease was meant humorously. The data analysed in the current study, however, did not replicate this because – as we will soon see – recipients tended to respond favourably to teasing interactions. However, it is important to highlight that only instances of teasing which were oriented to with laughter by someone in the group were considered for analysis here (as discussed in chapter 3) which points to only favourable tease receipts and neglects those interactions that may have been responded to less approvingly. Therefore, teasing instances which were *not* oriented to with laughter were not considered for analysis (however, arguably, are not considered teases but something else – something ‘worse’ – if the teaser or target did not deliver or treat them as such).

The extracts we are about to discuss follow a continuum of responses regarding orienting to teasing, ranging from self-deprecation to retaliation. These are

not based on previous scales (e.g. Drew, 1987; Hay, 2001; Tholander & Aronsson, 2002), but have been drawn from the current data corpus, following the sequence as detailed below (with each ‘stage’ being explained in further detail as we progress through the analysis). The labels are purely for illustrative purposes but are supported by the extract examples:

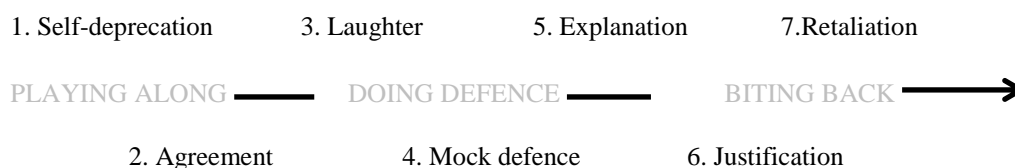


Figure 1: Continuum of responses from self-deprecation (agreeing with, and adding to the tease), to retaliation (defensively teasing back)

As we move from left to right along the continuum, teases are less readily accepted and treated more defensively, and so this chapter has been split into three sections to complement the scale; playing along, doing defence, and biting back, focusing on questioning what function this serves in the PBL group environment.

Part 1: Playing along

This first section will focus on extracts that represent the left side of the continuum; teasing interactions in which the target ‘plays along’ with the tease that is put to them:

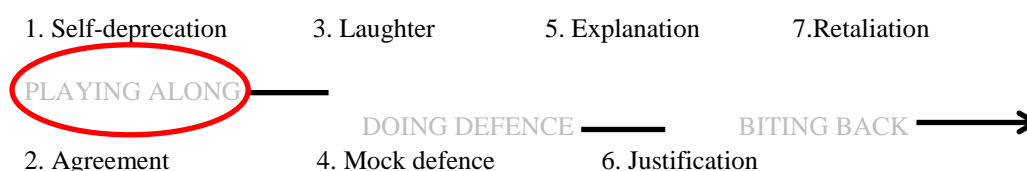


Figure 1: Continuum of responses from self-deprecation (agreeing with, and adding to the tease), to retaliation (defensively teasing back).

310 This can take a number of different forms, beginning at the far left in which
 311 total acceptance is displayed, and working towards to the right where we will, in later
 312 sections, see more defence and then retaliation being displayed. To begin, though, we
 313 focus on an instance of self-deprecation following a tease. In this extract, two group
 314 members have been discussing a deadline for a piece of work, and as we join then,
 315 group member Stuart is about to write the deadline in his diary.

316

317 *Extract 5A (Group 9)*

Stuart: today's (0.5) Tuesday isn't it=
 Euan: =Tuesday yep
 (0.5)
 Stuart: tt what the ff
 (1.5)
 Stuart: my (.) my calendar's out (h)like heh
 ((turns diary to show Euan))
 (1.5)
 Stuart: the(h)y've (h)said it's the twenty eighth
 (1.0)
 Euan: Tuesday (.) it's the tw(h)enty ninth today
 (0.5)
 Stuart: ye(h)ah
 ((Euan looks at his watch))
 (0.5)
 Euan: yeah °it's the twenty ninth°=
 Stuart: =ssstupid calendar
 (1.0)
 Stuart: ohh ↓it's
 (2.0)
 Stuart: ((tut)) aww
 Euan: → ((smiling)) >fyou sure it's two thousand
 an' thirteen<
 ((Stuart looks at front cover of diary))
 Stuart: two thousand fourteen diary (.) oh right
 (0.5)
 Stuart: that's me being stupid sorry

318

This first example provides an illustration of how a group member accounts for their transgression by self-deprecating. Such an act involves the less-positive positioning of the self in relation to others, and often occurs within the same interaction as an episode of teasing, with one prefacing the other (Pomerantz, 1984). Such interactions can be problematic, however, because they raise questions about authority; for instance, if an individual speaks negatively about themselves, it does not automatically give a peer the authority to do so too.

The gist of the interaction is that group member Stuart is trying to find a date in his diary, but unbeknownst to him (until line 341 anyway), he is looking at his diary for the coming year, not the present year. Stuart's confusion is displayed in a number of ways; he checks with another person that he has got the right date, he (almost) swears, and he projects blame onto the diary (lines 318, 321 and 334, respectively). In addition, the interaction is peppered with pauses which indicate trouble. At line 339, we see Euan ask him, "you sure it's two thousand and thirteen", at which point Stuart appears to recognise the mistake he has made (i.e. looking in the wrong diary), and account for it.

As discussed in the literature review, teasing utterances can take many different forms. Before even considering the words that were used in this particular tease, we can see that the utterance was marked with clear indicators (smiling, 'smiley voice' – line 339) that it was jovial, light-hearted, not to be taken literally. When we consider the words Euan says, we get even more indication of his playfulness; Euan could have simply said, "you're looking at the wrong diary", but

in formulating the tease as a question, he is encouraging Stuart to realise on his own, in a way reminiscent to allowing children to take responsibility for their mistakes (e.g. Fraser, 1987), and teasing him through arguably patronising him and treating him like a child. In response, Stuart orients to his mistake by looking at the front cover of his diary (which displays the year) and saying, “two thousand and fourteen diary, oh right”. This action works as a second pair part (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013), signalling that Stuart has acknowledged Euan’s prior turn, and has realised his mistake. Having been teased, past literature proposes that it is the norm for the tease target to go on and account for their transgression, as a way to save face (Geyer, 2010; Schnurr & Chan, 2010). Although Stuart does account, he does not do it in a way that saves face; rather, he does the opposite of this by declaring, “that’s me being stupid sorry”.

Let us consider this utterance.



Euan’s tease at line 339 pre-empts Stuart checking the year on his diary (picture 1), before he demonstrates recognition of his mistake through stating that he is being “stupid” (line 344/ picture 2).

In declaring that he was “being stupid”, Stuart is acknowledging that he was in the wrong. So what function does this display of self-deprecating serve within the interaction? Past work in the area has produced somewhat opposing findings, with some research identifying that self-teasing can foster solidarity between the speaker and hearer (e.g. Bell, 2009; Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997) and can serve to signal modesty and approachability (Nesi, 2012), and with others demonstrating that it can

have a negative effect on both the speaker and hearer (e.g. Andeweg et al., 2011).

Here, it serves the function of accounting for his transgression; that he made the

331 mistake because at that time in interaction he was “being stupid”. The addition of
 332 “sorry” at the end demonstrates Stuart’s responsibility; we do not tend to apologise
 333 for things we are not to blame for, and so in doing so at this point in time, Stuart
 334 shows that Euan’s tease has not only been accepted, but was relevant within the
 335 interaction. As such, the group dynamic is not negatively affected by Stuart, for
 336 instance, taking offence, and the group can move on.

337 This first example then, on the continuum of ways to respond to a tease, sits
 338 at the far left because not only does the target not defend against the tease, he
 339 actually supports it by self-teasing and thus justifying its appropriateness in the group
 340 interaction. We see a similar pattern in the next extract. Here, we join a group of
 341 students as they are reporting back the research they have done individually, as per
 342 the remit of PBL. The group facilitator, Susan, is present, and the class register is
 343 being passed round the group for the group members to sign.

344

345 *Extract 5B (Group 1)*

346 Ella: um
 347 (2.0) ((Ava hands Ella register))
 348 Ella: as far as (.) kin’a I looked at research
 349 (0.8) ((begins signing register))
 350 in IPA:
 351 (2.5) ((pulls face as signs register))
 352 Ella: um
 353 (1.0)
 354 Ella: um ((passes register to Susan))
 355 Susan: °thanks°
 356 Raymond: → c’yih’not multi[task
 357 Ella: [grou(h)nded- hih
 358 Raymond: hih

359 Ella: GROUNDED- [((*shaking head*)) [ah can't (.)
 360 Kate: [hah hah hah
 361 Raymond: ((*looks at Kate*)) [hih hih
 362 Ava: [heh heh heh
 363 Susan: [((*smiles*))
 364 Raymond: [heh hih hih hih hih hih
 365 Ella: [multitask [°*aht* all°
 366 Kate: [heh he heh
 367 Raymond: hih
 368 Ella: grounded theory an' (.) and IPA are quite
 369 similar
 370

371 As we join the interaction, group member Ella is managing the competing
 372 tasks of talking whilst simultaneously signing the register. We know that this is a
 373 troublesome task for her; her hedged speech (lines 346-354), the lapses between
 374 utterances (lines 347, 349, 351, and 353) and her physical gestures (i.e. her strained
 375 face, line 351) indicate trouble which is heightened when her peers and the group
 376 facilitator look towards her. This act of shifting eye gaze to look at Ella – perhaps for
 377 a visual clue as to what is causing the disruption – is indicative that others in the
 378 group are aware that the regular conversational dynamics have ceased; that there is a
 379 break in normality, and as such this must be addressed.

380 After she has signed it, Ella passes the register to Susan, the group facilitator
 381 (line 354), and it is at this point that the teasing interaction from Raymond begins,
 382 when he asks her, “can you not multitask?”, addressing the situation that due to
 383 Ella’s multitasking, the group interaction has ceased. Unlike in the previous extract
 384 where Euan’s ‘smiley’ voice was indicative that what he was saying was jovial, here,
 385 there are no clues to suggest that Raymond’s utterance was designed as a tease; he

386 speaks in a serious manner, appearing to ask a serious question. However, despite
387 this absence of markers, Ella treats Raymond's turn as a tease, as evidenced by the
388 laughter particle in her voice: although she talks over him, Ella acknowledges

Raymond's turn by repairing her own utterance to laugh ("hih" – line 357), before continuing her point (line 359) but then stopping and aligning in a reciprocal jovial manner that she cannot, indeed, multitask.

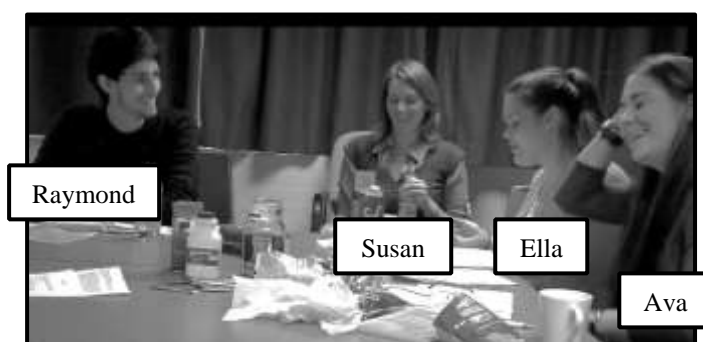


(Lines 346-354) Ella's stuttered speech indicates trouble, as shown by Raymond's and Susan's gaze orientations, and Ella's 'strained' face as she attempts to multitask.

We can thus argue that Ella accepts Raymond's tease through aligning with it. Ella's response would be positioned between points 1 (self-deprecation) and 2 (agreement) on the above scale because she self-deprecates by agreeing with Raymond's tease, but does not initiate it herself unlike Stuart in the previous extract. In 'extreme case formulating' her response (Pomerantz, 1986), Ella adds credence to her reason for disrupting the group; accounting for it in the most convincing way (i.e. it is not that she cannot multitask a little, she cannot multitask *at all*) and thus her behaviour – causing the discussion to lapse – is accounted for. Her peers' laughter serve to indicate the 'teaseness' of the tease; that they treat the utterance as something acceptable to laugh about, possibly taking their cue from the target in that if she is laughing, it is OK for them to do so too.

Raymond's tease is of interest to comment on briefly here. On the one hand, the absence of markers in its delivery suggest it is not a tease but something else; at worst a critical remark or at best an assessment of the situation. Certainly, it is relevant to the interaction at that point in time; that Ella's inability to "multitask" is

affecting the group, and in aligning as she does, we can surmise that Ella treats it as a provocative comment. On the other hand, delivering the utterance at all suggests that Raymond regards it as a comfortable or acceptable environment in which to do so – particularly in the presence of the facilitator – suggesting that he knows Ella will respond well and that their relationship is strong enough for such interactions. It also highlights the differing functions of teasing. Although such utterances can be formulated in order to embarrass the target – which perhaps it does here – we also see that in teasing Ella, Raymond is paradoxically supporting her by producing a ‘laughable’ (Glenn, 2003), possibly to detract from the tension that has been created due to her struggle to complete the different tasks. The link between tension and laughter has been analysed since the time of Descartes (e.g. Hayworth, 1928), with research suggesting that laughter can serve to release built up tension (Rothbart, 1973; Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009). In saying this at this point in the interaction, Raymond lightens the mood through the resultant laughter elicited which in turn gives Ella a bit of breathing space to restart her point.



(Lines 357-366) Raymond's tease towards Ella is acknowledged with laughter.

The key point here is that in accounting as she does for her transgression, Ella endorses the tease, treating it as something not only to laugh about but even expand upon. In accounting through self-deprecating – like we saw in the previous extract –

Ella orients to the relevance of the tease in the interaction; treating it as acceptable and going along with it, which in turn is beneficial for group dynamics as it positions

360 Ella as able to take the provocation without treating it as a criticism or attack. Being
 361 able to laugh along in such an interaction is inherently beneficial for group morale
 362 (e.g. Martin, 2007), and so audibly displaying agreement as Ella does suggests this
 363 is even more advantageous for the group.

364 In the next extract, we join a group of psychology students as they have been
 365 discussing their progress with the facilitator (Susan), and are about to start on their
 366 next PBL task. This extract displays another example of a tease target laughing
 367 along, but not quite to the same extent as in the previous two:

368

369 *Extract 5C (Group 6)*

370 Susan: things should start to make °bih° more sense
 371 second time round (.) but I'll come back
 372 (0.5)

373 Susan: in a li'l while and eh:m (.) °help you work
 374 through some oh the issues°
 375 (2.0)

376 Katy: ((*shaking head*)) oh ah ha- ah have issues

377 Hannah: ((*'confused' face*))

378 Susan: [ahah hah

379 Hannah: → [(hhh) y'always [have >issues<

380 Katy: [°fhaaaa°

381 Deborah: [((*smiles*))

382 Susan: [hm hm hm

383 (1.0)

384 Susan: yeah maybe I'll rephrase that 'I'll help you
 385 work throu::gh' fa[heh heh

386 Hannah: [heh

387 Katy: ha ha ha THE JOURNAL >a ha [ha ha ha ha ha<

388 Susan: [some-some of

389 the que:stions

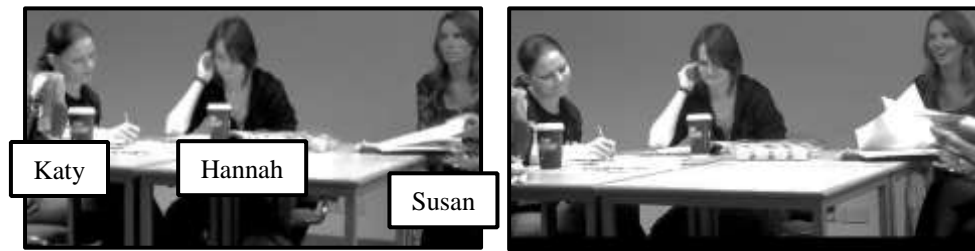
390 Katy: £.hhh

391 Susan: you've got

392

The extract here begins with the facilitator Susan preparing to leave the group to start their new task, which is almost an exact replication of their previous task in that they have to choose a qualitative methodology that they do not know much about, and collaboratively learn about it. Although Susan states that “things should start to make a bit more sense the second time round” (lines 370-371) – presumably because they have done the task before – she somewhat contradicts this by assuring the group that she will return to the group shortly to help them work through some of the “issues” involved (line 374).

At this point, group member Katy self-deprecates by stating “I have issues” (line 376). In extract 5A we encountered an episode of self-deprecation following a tease, with the self-deprecation serving the function of accounting for the target’s transgression (i.e. that he was “being stupid”). When it happens *before* a tease, it serves quite a different function in interaction as the target positions themselves as being open to teasing attacks from others since he or she initiated it. As identified by Pomerantz (1984), orienting to self-deprecation with an agreement or indeed a disagreement is tricky to manage. If a recipient(s) is to agree with a critical statement, (such as “I have issues”), they are endorsing prior criticisms as their own, which is potentially problematic for the group as tension could be displayed between the self-deprecator and the respondent. Conversely, if group members disagree with an individual’s self-deprecation, they demonstrate support towards them in that they actively voice their opposition to the claim. However, this too is not always straightforward and can be tied up with issues regarding ingratiation (Jones, 1964).



(Line 376) Katy states she has “issues” (picture 1), which is oriented to with a ‘confused’ face from Hannah (line 377) and laughter from Susan (line 378).

The way in which Katy delivers her assessment that she “has issues” is quite serious: there are no clues to indicate that she may be joking, and her utterance could be interpreted as though she was talking to herself out loud as she does not look up from her page to gauge a reaction from anyone. It is nonetheless treated as nonserious by the group; as we see in the screen shot, Hannah pulls a ‘confused’ face upon hearing Katy’s declaration, and the facilitator Susan laughs. It is at this point that Hannah uses Katy’s self-deprecation as a basis for teasing her by stating, “you always have issues” (line 379), and as such is potentially initiating trouble for the group since self-teasing does not automatically mean others are permitted to do the same. The accentuation on “always” indicates that Hannah regards that Katy “having issues” is a common occurrence, something that the group – or she at least – are used to, and by extreme case formulating (Pomerantz, 1986), Hannah legitimises her claim that this is not something that happens occasionally; it is frequent. The marker here to demonstrate the non-seriousness of the utterance is Hannah’s prefacing laughter (line 379); in laughing before her utterance, she shows that what she is saying is in jest. Katy demonstrates her understanding of the joviality of Hannah’s assertion through the simplest way possible: laughing.



(Line 379) Hannah states that Katy “always [has] issues”, which is oriented to with laughter from the target (Katy).

Past teasing literature suggests that laughing in response to a tease is clear evidence of ‘playing along’ (Drew, 1987; Tholander & Aronsson, 2002), and indeed, here, Katy makes no attempt to defend herself or correct Hannah’s assertion about her ‘having issues’; she does nothing except laugh in this turn. At this point, other members of the group join in the interaction. Although she does not speak, Deborah smiles and as such non-verbally orients to and acknowledges the interaction. Susan audibly laughs, and then picks up on the point that different interpretations of the word “issues” are being referenced. Although Katy goes on to state something else (line 387), her primary response to the tease is to laugh. Unlike in the previous extracts, though, Katy does not add anything extra to the interaction other than laughter and so although she does not defend herself, she also does not actively accept the teasing like in the past two extracts. So, what function does such laughter serve?

Possibly because Katy prefaced the teasing interaction with a self-deprecating comment, she is not held accountable for her actions; i.e. she does not need to justify

or explain a transgression, or manage blame for something she did, because what she did was state a personal quality of hers (having “issues”). Perhaps it is the case, then,

376 that if the target orients to the transgression first, they are prospectively accounting;
377 managing blame in advance. In doing so, there is no need for Katy to account again,
378 and so her response of laughter is appropriate, suggesting she has picked up on the
379 non-seriousness of Hannah's assessment of her. As before, playing along in such a
380 way positions Katy as an exemplary group member; not in terms of her academic
381 status necessarily, but in terms of her apparent ease at which to be the 'butt of the
382 joke'.

383 The final extract in this first sub section still exemplifies 'playing along' with
384 a tease, but in a way that is starting to demonstrate defence; more examples of which
385 will be considered in the next sub section, as we continue to scope the length of the
386 continuum detailed above. Here, a group are planning how to record the podcast they
387 are in the process of developing for their PBL task. They have been talking through
388 different recording options, until group member Donald suggests recording through
389 his iPhone.

390

391 *Extract 5D (Group 7)*

392 Donald: >°w'll° have ↑either've you< tried iPhone
393 speaking
394 (0.5)
395 Phillip: °no°
396 Rachel: we should try
397 Donald: [I will try (.)
398 Phillip: [could do
399 Donald: right now
400 Rachel: (good)
401 Donald: I'VE GOT- I've even got a recording app on my
402 phone
403 (1.5)

404 Rachel: → ((*looks at Donald*)) doesn't ev'ryone
 405 (1.0)
 406 Donald: fshut up Ra(h)chel [heh heh heh
 407 Phillip: [((*smiles, laughs silently*))
 408 Rachel: [heh heh is it jus' voice
 409 mem↑os
 410 (1.0)
 411 Donald: ((*holds phone up to Rachel*)) it's called
 412 'Voice Record Pro:' ac[tually] heh heh Rachel:
 413 [foh you've got a different one
 414

415 The extract opens with group member Donald asking his peers whether they
 416 have tried using an iPhone to record speech (line 392), leading to the consensus that
 417 they should try it, with Donald orienting to his mobile phone. It is at line 401 that we
 418 see the transgression that ultimately leads to the forthcoming teasing, when Donald
 419 announces that he's got a recording app on his phone. We see that Donald selfrepairs
 420 in order to include a boast particle; his initial utterance on line 401 begins,
 421 "I've got...", presumably going on to state that he has said recording app on his
 422 phone. However, he corrects this by saying, "I've *even* got..." (the recording app),
 423 and it is this insertion of "even" that constitutes the boast, thus transgressing group
 424 norms through suggesting that having this app is unique to him, and at that moment
 425 in time, his status as a group member should be particularly appreciated as he has a
 426 tool which will be of benefit to everyone. However, the lapse that follows instead of
 427 fluid turn-taking indicates some sort of interactional trouble; something that needs to
 428 be addressed (line 403).

429 In response, Rachel comments, "doesn't everyone" (line 404), with no
 430 indication that what she is saying is not a straight-forward, serious question,

431 pertaining to Donald's previous turn. There is no laughter in her voice at any point or
432 presence of other 'off-record' markers to indicate playfulness. In asking, "doesn't

everyone”, Rachel highlights the fact that Donald has transgressed by boasting about something quite commonplace, something that “everyone” has, with her extreme case formulation that “everyone” has a recording app on their phone serving the function of counterbalancing Donald’s boast by suggesting that having this app is regular, usual, and common (Sacks, 1992; Edwards, 2000), and ultimately reads as a straight-forward response to Donald, as opposed to a tease.

Despite this, however, Donald responds by jovially telling her to “shut up” (line 406), all the while laughing. This laughter serves as a marker to indicate that he has treated what Rachel has said as something to laugh about, as opposed to something inviting a serious answer. His actual verbalisation of, “shut up” demonstrates his orientation to Rachel’s utterance as a tease, as it implies a response to a provocative comment; we do not tell people to “shut up” if we like what they are saying about us. In addition, the verbalisation of Rachel’s name – peppered with laughter – conveys informality (Billig, 1999), indicating that Donald does not consider the interaction between him and Rachel as serious, and as such is another indication that he is treating Rachel’s previous turn as jovial. Put simply, he is demonstrating ‘playing along’.

As he laughs, both other group members do too, which supports the playfulness of the interaction, as opposed to it being attacking or biting. Rachel then goes on to ask Donald, “is it just voice memos” (lines 408-409), referring to the voice recording app he mentioned. In doing so, Rachel further downplays the value of the app, providing support for her previous assessment that it is something that

“everyone” has, and as such is of no particular importance to the recording issue they are currently facing. It is at this point that Donald accounts for his transgression; he turns his phone to Rachel and as such uses it to physically justify his position; if he can demonstrate that his app is different (i.e. that it is “Voice Record Pro actually” – line 412), it justifies why he was so keen to show it off and excuses his transgression.



From left to right, the pictures show Donald's initial orientation to his phone (picture 1, line 392), followed by Rachel's tease and Donald's subsequent jovial response (picture 2, lines 406), and finally, Donald's 'playing along' (picture 3, lines 411-412).

Donald demonstrates clearly that he has accepted the tease, however, he is not quite so compliant as in the extracts we have looked at so far. Although he plays along, he also defends himself by offering an account to explain why his iPhone may be of particular use, with the word “actually” serving the function of correcting the version of events put forward by Rachel (Smith & Jucker, 2000). This serious message – serving the function of defending himself – is, however, countered by the playful markers in his speech, perhaps in an effort to demonstrate that he can ‘take’ the teasing. As such, Donald defends himself but in a way that aligns with the playfulness of the situation. In response to this, Rachel concedes that Donald has a

“different” app to the standard one that “everyone” has, perhaps in an effort to save face; now that she is aware that Donald’s app could potentially be a beneficial resource for the group, *she* is the one who must do the accounting for why she ‘targeted’ Donald with a tease.

This demonstrates the fluidity with which social interaction occurs; over the course of only a couple of turns, blame and accountability are interchanged between participants. In this sequence, we see that through retaliating slightly as Donald does, the dynamic shifts so that the teaser becomes accountable for teasing. Although Donald was initially treated as transgressing group norms though boasting, in providing a justification for it, the teaser is then the one who has to defend why they teased when it was not interactionally appropriate. In laughing along, however, Donald diffuses any potential animosity at being picked on for no reason, again serving the function of maintaining the current group status quo; there was no sign of discontent before the teasing interaction, and so in treating such teasing as something to laugh about, there should be no discontent after it, either.

Section summary

In summary of this first section regarding ‘playing along’, then, we can argue that in doing so, the group is benefitted simply by a tease target not taking offence at whatever assertion is put to them through said teasing. In ‘doing laughing along’, targets display their ability to take the implied criticism, even in instances when it is not entirely clear that the teaser was joking, and embrace the sense of ‘fun’ created within the group based on the joviality of the interaction. Such straight-forward acceptance of – and laughing along with – teasing is, however, rather rare, with most

interactions involving at least some accounting, as detailed by Drew (1987), and as we saw in extract 5D. This chapter thus turns next to considering those interactions in which the tease target more demonstrably does ‘doing defence’.

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Part 2: Doing defence

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If we return to the continuum at the start of this chapter, teasing instances in which targets demonstrate ‘doing defence’ arguably begin between points 4 (mock defence) and 5 (explanation).

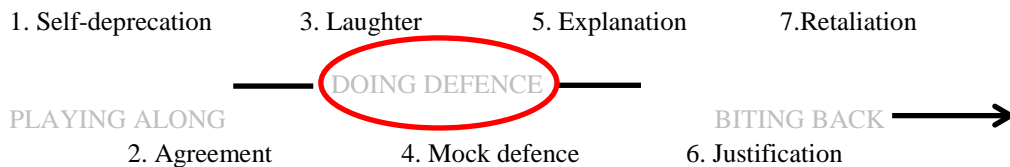


Figure 1: Continuum of responses from self-deprecation (agreeing with, and adding to the tease), to retaliation (defensively teasing back)

The previous extract (4D) was the first in which we saw a target do any kind of defensive account work in that he offered an explanation to excuse the tease, and from here on we see the extent to which targets ‘do defence’ developing. The following extract example demonstrates how individuals manage the seemingly competing tasks of accepting a tease, but justifying it too. Whereas Donald did this somewhat in the previous extract, his actions were very jovial. In this example, the teaser accounts slightly more seriously. As we join them, a group of students are jointly constructing the wording of a podcast.

Extract 5E (Group 8)

Jennifer: ((handing paper over)) Tom (.) you have a read now

Steve: yea:h there's >bits in brackets< where you should ↓talk (.) if that (°makes [se(h)nse°)

Jennifer: yeah

((Tom turns paper over))

Jennifer: ((gesturing)) NO ignore all that it's jus'

422 [THAT IS WRITTEN UP IN NEAT
 423 Steve: ((pointing)) [it's underneath the wi-
 424 underneath the
 425 Jennifer: [heh
 426 Steve: → [aMA:zing line that she's [decided to
 427 Jennifer: [heh yeah
 428 Steve: ((pointing)) DOUBLE UP and do zigzags
 429 be[tween
 430 Jennifer: [hehehehehe
 431 Steve: f.hh
 432 Tom: lots of lines
 433 Jennifer: °I know° (.) I'm saving paper guys
 434

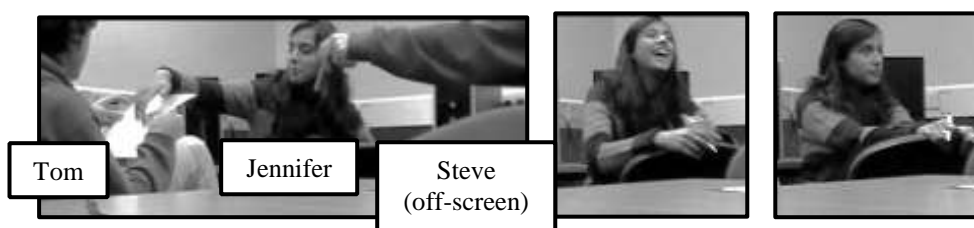
435 Here, group members Jennifer and Steve have been working on the wording
 436 of the group's podcast, and as the extract begins, Jennifer is handing over the work to
 437 the third group member, Tom, so he can read what they have done (line 415). While
 438 Jennifer simply hands over the document and commands Tom to read it, Steve
 439 delivers instructions that construct this simple task of reading as something much
 440 more complex: his direction that there are "bits in brackets" to direct Tom to where
 441 he should talk (line 417) suggest that this may be a slightly confusing document. This
 442 proposition is supported by Steve's quieter and slightly laughing utterance "if that
 443 makes sense" (line 418), indicating that it probably does not, because if it did, it
 444 would have been unnecessary to add this disclaimer on.

445 Tom goes on to turn the paper over, presumably to see if there is anything on
 446 the other side of it. Jennifer immediately assures him that he should not do this, and
 447 there follows a sequence of interaction that constructs the document as rather
 448 confusing (lines 421-429). Jennifer directs Tom to the "neat" part (line 422), which
 449 intuitively suggests that if there are neat parts, there must also be messy parts.

450 Jennifer and Steve's joint work in gesturing and pointing to the page at this point is
451 reminiscent of Koschmann and LeBaron's (2002) work into learner articulation

which demonstrated how individuals use their bodies (and particular their hands) to display knowledge. In doing such actions, Jennifer and Steve work together to direct Tom to the appropriate piece of text he should be looking at for his section of talk, but in doing so, construct this action as problematic since the paper is apparently so confusing. It is at this point that the tease is formulated through a display of sarcasm by Steve to Jennifer. Traditional theories of sarcasm treat it as meaning the opposite of what one says (e.g. Attardo, Eisterhold, Hay & Poggi, 2003). Like the difficulties of defining teasing, we cannot make claims about the intentions of sarcasm, but at this point in time it serves the function of addressing the messiness of Jennifer's writing by constructing it as "amazing", thus describing it as the opposite of what it really is and in doing so, tease Jennifer for the lack of clarity on the page. In addition, Steve enhances this tease by emphasising the "doubled up" lines and "zigzags" (line 428); all of which construct an image of the sheet being confusing and messy.

In response, we see Jennifer display recognition that what is being said is to be taken jovially, and is not meant as a harsh criticism. Before Steve's first tease has even been delivered, Jennifer laughs (line 425) which alerts us to a disruption in the usual interaction pattern. As Steve goes on to tease her, we see Jennifer respond favourably through aligning and laughing (lines 427 and 430). However, she does not proffer an account for the transgression until after the third group member, Tom, also orients to the sheet, simply saying, "lots of lines" (line 432).



Both Jennifer and Steve show Tom what he should be looking at in amongst the “lines” and “zigzags” (lines 426-428, picture 1), making relevant Jennifer’s transgression. When teased about it, Jennifer responds favourably by laughing (line 430, picture 2), before accounting seriously (lines 433, picture 3).

Jennifer aligns with the implied criticism, before telling her peers, “I’m saving paper guys” (line 433), which serves the function of accounting for her transgression of producing a confusing document. In stating this, Jennifer excuses the messiness by claiming that in producing zigzags, ‘doubling up’, and the out of place “amazing” line that appear on the sheet, she has saved paper at the expense of clarity on the page for her peers. This helps to build an image of what the sheet must look like; a jumble of words and sentences that are difficult to interpret, and as such, we can more easily understand why both Steve and Jennifer accompanied the action of handing over the paper to Tom with the directions of where to look (lines 421-423). Because the nature of PBL is that work is collaborative, producing something deemed so confusing is representative of the group as a whole. In doing accounting, therefore, Jennifer manages the blame that has been put her way by reconstructing it as being beneficial – a “good” thing – as in having such a messy page, at least she is saving paper. The vocative “guys” at the end of her utterance (line 433) suggests informality between the group, which is juxtaposed with the serious way in which she accounts, unlike in the previous example. When doing her accounting (“I’m

saving paper guys” – line 433) there is no laughter in her voice to display joviality;
although Jennifer laughed through the teasing, when it came to the business of

427 accounting, she became serious despite audibly agreeing with the criticism put to her.
 428 This pattern is observed in the next extract also, so before I offer some comment on
 429 the function this has in interaction, let us consider Extract 5F.

430 Here, we join a group that has been struggling with some of the work, and so
 431 the facilitator Susan is explaining some qualitative methodology concepts to them.

432

433 *Extract 5F (Group 6)*

434 Susan: as a broad pointer (.) conversation
 435 analysis is more about structure
 436 Deborah: °structure°
 437 Katy: sentence structure=
 438 Susan: =an' organisation
 439 (0.8)
 440 Susan: an' discourse analysis a little bit more
 441 about
 442 Katy: the over all mean_↑in'=
 443 Susan: =topic ((nodding))
 444 Katy: (to[pic])
 445 Susan: [yeah sort of- yeah
 446 (2.0)
 447 Katy: ((inaudible))
 448 Susan: so (.) °I'm not really f_supposed to tell you
 449 this° [stuff buh
 450 Deborah: → [((looks at, and points to cameras))
 451 fOH [O::H
 452 Chloe: [((smiles))
 453 Katy: [haaa::h
 454 Hannah: [heh heh [heh
 455 Susan: [I know I know
 456 Deborah: .hh heh heh
 457 Hannah: (hhh)
 458 (0.5)

459 Katy: £that admission of guilt there
 460 Susan: £HAH yeah (.) yeah
 461 (0.5)
 462 Susan: but it's just- well it's-it's a fairly small
 463 thing (.) but that will help-help you kind
 464 of carry that on
 465 (1.0)
 466 Susan: but it is tricky 'cause they're very similar
 467 (.) an' they do overlap
 468

469 This interaction is somewhat different in that the tease is directed towards the
 470 group facilitator, as opposed to a group member. The facilitator (Susan) holds
 471 somewhat of an ambiguous status in that although she is not part of the group as she
 472 is not a student of the class, she is also removed from the traditional sense of being a
 473 lecturer or class leader, since the pedagogical approach of PBL is that it is
 474 studentlead. As such, when she is in the group environment she is more of an
 475 observer than an active participant or teacher. Within this extract, we see Susan get
 476 teased because she transgresses her role as facilitator by providing the group with too
 477 much help with their task.

478 If we break the extract into two sections leading up to the admission of the
 479 transgression at line 448 and then following it, we can see some interesting
 480 interactions taking place. Working backwards, although we see Susan admit that she
 481 should not be telling the group this “stuff” at lines 448-449, actually, in the turns
 482 preceding this, the student group members are contributing to the discussion. Katy,
 483 for instance, demonstrates her engagement with the discussion by offering her
 484 interpretation of the topic under investigation; at line 440, Susan begins to explain
 485 what discourse analysis is, with Katy completing her sentence in the following turn.

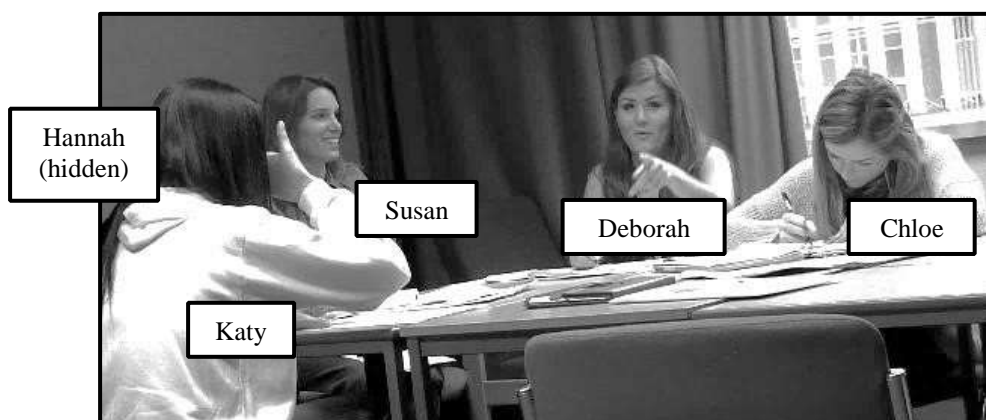
486 Although she does not use the same words that Susan does, we see alignment on both
487 parts; with Katy reiterating the previous point Susan made (line 444), and Susan
488 nodding and orienting to Katy, demonstrating joint understanding. Susan even goes

as far as to self-repair what she said in order to support Katy's understanding; at line 445, she cuts herself off from saying "yeah sort of" (a downplayed agreement) to the more confident and assured "yeah". There follows a lapse in conversation, after which point Katy says something inaudible, before Susan goes on to orient to her transgression; that she has been providing the group with too much information.

The role of the facilitator in PBL is one in which they should facilitate students' learning rather than convey knowledge (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980), and so it is Susan herself who makes this relevant by saying, "I'm not really supposed to tell you this stuff" (lines 448-449), highlighting the fact that she has overstepped her mark as a PBL facilitator and acted more so like a typical tutor. At this point, group member Deborah diverts her gaze from the work in front of her, to look directly at and physically point to the cameras in the room that are recording the interaction (for the purpose of this PhD project), whilst uttering the words "oh oh", indicating that the cameras have caught Susan's transgressive actions.

"Oh oh", at this particular point in time therefore serves the function of teasing, as it makes relevant the transgression (through orienting to the fact that Susan's actions are caught on camera), and is responded to with laughter from other members of the group. The way in which Deborah delivers this makes it clear it is not a serious utterance; the 'smiley' voice, increased volume, and elongation of the second "oh" work to display her jokiness. The actual words she uses also demonstrate the playfulness of her utterance; although "oh oh" is indicative of some form of trouble (Keisanen, 2012; Loftus & Pickrell, 1995), this meaning is

juxtaposed with its simplistic formulation; a saying usually acquired in early childhood.



At line 450, Deborah point to and looks directly at the camera, making relevant the fact that Susan's transgressive actions have been recorded.

We see Susan, too, treat “oh oh” as a tease, as she goes on to account for her actions, aligning that she “knows” (line 455) that she has erred in giving the group the answers, with Katy confirming, “that admission of guilt there” (line 459), reiterating that what Susan did was inappropriate. Following this, Susan aligns again (“yeah yeah”) to show that she agrees, but then goes on to account for why she did this transgressing (i.e. that it was a “small” thing to help them – line 462). Put simply, although she acknowledges that she should not have given the group the ‘answers’, because it was only a “fairly small thing”, it is constructed as excusable.

What is of interest in this extract is that it analyses a piece of interaction in which the group facilitator is the tease target, as opposed to a group member. As alluded to earlier, although Susan is potentially jeopardising her position as the group facilitator (because she admits to doing something wrong), actually, there are benefits from doing so. Firstly, it suggests that the relationship between the facilitator

and the students is – for want of a better word – a good one. Susan demonstrates her ability to reveal weaknesses in front of this group (i.e. admitting when she is in the wrong), and in return, the students demonstrate being comfortable with her to tease her for it. Good relationships between students and teachers are important for motivation and academic achievement (e.g. Cornelius-White, 2007; Klem & Connell, 2004; Roorda, Koomen, Split & Oort, 2011) and so the teasing here demonstrates the relationship between the facilitator and the students; that they are able to treat her as one of their own, just like them, stripping away the superiority of being the class facilitator to reveal that she, too, can make mistakes. However, although Susan displays that she acknowledges the group are ‘only joking’, she is – like in the previous extract – not quite as forthcoming with her acceptance of being teased as we have seen earlier. Her minimal laughter and immediate reorientation back to the topic at hand suggest that is time to turn back to the ‘serious’ business of the task, and that although she is willing to partake in some ‘fun’ interactions, she does not linger on it. Like Jennifer in the previous extract, she shows that she is happy to laugh along to some extent, but when it comes to accounting, that is when talk turns serious. So what function does this serve with the group?

Arguably, such serious accounting could be evidence of face-saving (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Goffman, 1955, 1967, 1971; Schnurr & Chan, 2011). In the previous section, laughing along with a tease enabled the target to keep the peace, as it were, through demonstrating their ability to ‘take’ the criticism without becoming offended. Here, it would appear important to targets to justify or defend why they committed the apparent transgression; whether that was producing messy work, or

encroaching on their role. While laughing along may demonstrate an ability to keep cool in the face of adversity, accounting saves face for individuals as it goes some way to excuse or pardon behaviour. In doing both, then, participants are constructed

459 as favourable group members for being able to play along, but also as having the
460 ability to defend themselves by acknowledging the deviant behaviour.

461 What happens, though, when the seriousness of the accounting begins to
462 overtake the ability to laugh along with the tease? In the next extract, we encounter
463 group member Rachel who is informing her peers of the work she has done on their
464 joint PBL task. The document she has been working on is displayed on the large
465 screen so the whole group can see it.

466

467 *Extract 5G (Group 7)*

468 Rachel: this is where I stopped writing things prop'ly
469 an I'w's jis noting things [°down°

470 Phillip: → [is this 'cause you
471 were hungry (.) [o::r

472 Rachel: [well I thought it-it would-
473 ((points to screen))

474 Rachel: NO I [don't

475 Donald: [heh heh [heh heh

476 Phillip: [heh heh [heh

477 Rachel: [£I

478 Donald: £heh heh

479 Rachel: don't think it'd flo::w very well if we talked
480 about the temporalis muscle involved in chewing
481 an' then went on to talk about the teeth an'

482 jaw

483 (1.0)

484 Donald: [yes

485 Rachel: [but I didn't know how to make it flo:w

486

487 Rachel has been talking her peers through the work she has done, and the
488 extract opens with the utterance that reveals the transgression that leads to the tease.

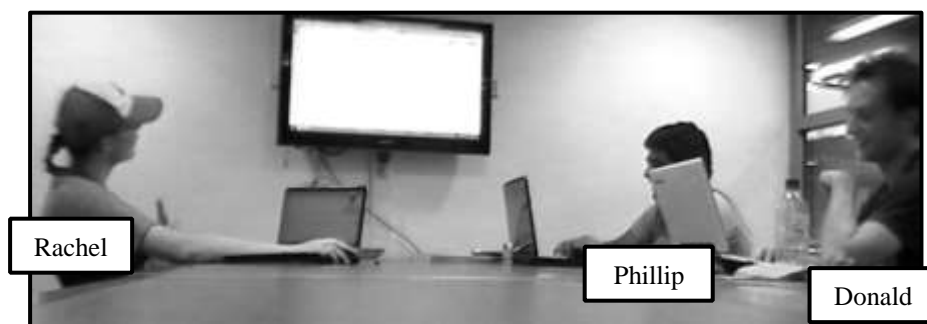
489 Whilst talking through the document on the screen, Rachel states, “this is where I
490 stopped writing things properly and I was just noting things down” (lines 468-469),

to which Phillip responds, “is this ‘cause you were hungry” (lines 470-471), orienting to the reason behind Rachel’s cessation of “properly” writing. At this point, we see that Rachel treats this utterance as a serious enquiry; she begins to answer through justifying her position (“well, I thought” – line 472), and as such, Phillip’s question does not become a tease until line 474 when Rachel cuts off her point to acknowledge the jokiness of what Phillip just said, followed shortly after with laughter from her peers.

The way Phillip’s utterance is structured certainly suggests it was serious; as we have seen before, the lack of markers to indicate joviality and the structure of the utterance in the sense that it is the first part of an adjacency pair – and as such requires a response – constructs it is something that Rachel should respond to, following normal conversational interaction (Sacks et al., 1974). Rachel’s response is of interest because although she begins to answer Phillip, she stops to repair her utterance. Doing so suggests a delay in her recognition of Phillip’s utterance as a tease; her raised voice when saying “no” at the beginning of line 474 refutes Phillip’s point and directly addresses his utterance as something to be defended. It is not until this point that another group member joins in with the interaction; at line 478, Donald begins laughing at which point Phillip does too, suggesting that his utterance at line 470 – although delivered seriously – was non-serious despite a lack of markers to identify it as such. What makes it a tease is the provocation directed at Rachel through Phillip suggesting that the reason she stopped writing “properly” was because she was hungry, supposedly suggesting that Rachel’s hunger would take precedence over her work. The fact that Rachel does not treat this utterance as a

tease straight away gives Phillip and Donald even more reason to laugh; in treating it as a serious question before ‘clicking’ that it was meant in jest, Rachel arguably adds fuel to the fire.

Thus, we see Rachel’s transgression of admitting to being lazy, before she gets ‘teased’, demonstrating the collaborative processes involved that turn an utterance into a tease. If Rachel had not oriented to the joviality of the utterance, would that render it as *not* a tease, as something else, if we work on the basis that a tease is only a tease if the target treats it as such? This point will be returned to later.



(Line 472) Rachel begins to answer Phillip’s question seriously before repairing her utterance to orient to the joviality of the interaction.

Drew discusses the notion that “even when there is evidence that (tease targets) recognise that the tease was meant humourously, recipients nevertheless usually deny and correct the tease” (Drew, 1987, pp. 219). Putting aside the issue of intention, this is seen quite clearly in this extract as Rachel begins to account for her transgression. If we consider lines 479-482, we see that the point Rachel is making is that she “didn’t know how to make it (the document) flow” which was the reason behind her supposed laziness/ not continuing to write things properly. As she begins this explanation, Rachel’s voice is ‘smiley’ (line 477), reciprocating the

nonseriousness of her peers' laughter responses. However, it is short-lived, and as she continues with her account, and cues that she is being non-serious disappear,

466 indicating the opposite (i.e. that what she is saying *is*, in fact, serious, valid, and a
467 good enough reason to have stopped her from “writing properly”).

468 In response to her account, Donald departs from his laughter to provide
469 Rachel with support (line 484), suggesting that he has taken what she said seriously,
470 and accepts it as a valid explanation of the supposed transgression. As such, Rachel
471 achieves the function of emerging from the interaction as the ‘bigger person’; as
472 winner of a status contest in which another participant attempted to ridicule her, but
473 in responding as she did, showed the ways in which the tease was unjust. She did not
474 laugh like the extracts we have seen earlier – and so she is possibly not quite as
475 accepting of the tease as we have seen previously – but the prefacing smile at the
476 beginning of her account suggests recognition that Phillip’s comment was not meant
477 harmfully. Although not as playful as earlier extracts, the target still, importantly,
478 demonstrates that they have treated the interaction as a tease, and not, for instance, as
479 an attack.

480 This is seen in the following interaction too where there are visible markers
481 that the target ‘gets’ that the utterance is a tease, but the lack of reciprocal joviality
482 suggests a more defensive position within the interaction. As we join them, a group
483 of psychology students have just been given their first PBL task.

484

485 *Extract 5H (Group 2)*

Regina: are we- so I dohn understand (.) are we
 doin’

(2.0)

Regina: is any ah this gonna go towards our grade
 are we doin’ somethin’ on this

Nadia: [yea:h

486

492 Ally: [well the whole thing
 contributes to the
 493 e:nd piece so you're learnin' as you go
 494 along
 495 Nadia: [((*nods*))
 496 Regina: → [yeah ah course (.) that's what
 university
 497 is
 498 Jackie: ((*looking down, smiles*)) hm hm
 499 Regina: fbut
 500 Nadia: >he he he [he he he<
 501 Regina: [heh (.) e(h)m .hh
 502 Ally: ((*smiles, gaze downwards*))
 503 Regina: like wha(h)t [sort of- 504 Ally:
 [yeah but everythin'-
 505 everythin' that you're learning for this
 506 Regina: yeah
 507 Ally: accumulates so that you can
 actually write
 508 (.) the paper a' the end of it
 509 Regina: mm hm

The extract begins with group member Regina displaying uncertainty as to what the group should be doing. She begins by stating that she does not understand (line 486) before asking her peers a couple of questions (line 489-490). Group member Nadia responds agreeably to Regina's questions in lines 491 but without any follow-up information, whereas group member Ally offers an explanation as to what they are doing; in that everything they do for the current and future PBL tasks will contribute to their final assignment (lines 492-494).

The first part of Regina's response to Ally at line 496 can be considered as a display of alignment or confirmation with what Ally had previously said, about

“learning as you go along” (line 493-494). However, in doing so and although appearing to agree, Regina indicates that what Ally has just said is obvious, that it is known by everyone, and as such Ally has offered no further insight into Regina’s confusion. After a short pause, Regina then goes on to expand on this point by stating, “that’s what university is”, emphasising the ‘obviousness’ of Ally’s last turn.

At line 498, Jackie smiles, and subtly laughs although does so while still looking down at her page, perhaps in an effort to appear not overtly laughing at Ally. We can see that Regina considers it still her turn at talk as at line 499, she begins to develop her argument by stating “but”, presumably to add to what she had previously said in order to obtain more clarification for her peers because, after all, Ally had added no further insight. However, this is said with a jovial tone, possibly due to Jackie’s turn just before. At this point, Nadia begins to laugh more obviously (in comparison, for instance, to Jackie) and instead of continuing her point, Regina joins in with this laughter. The collaborative actions therefore by Jackie, Regina and Nadia construct Regina’s turn at line 496 as a tease, which again demonstrates how teasing is a collaborative effort; had Jackie not oriented to Regina’s utterance with laughter, Regina may well have continued her point, further expanding it to glean more information from Ally. In doing so, however, the utterance was transformed into a tease by three of the group members, and so the target must respond in some way to demonstrate either her acceptance or rejection of the tease.

Ally’s reaction is the most subtle of the whole group (line 502), but is still indicative that she ‘gets’ that she is being teased. How she responds, therefore – to all of her peers laughing at her transgression – is important for resultant group dynamics and the social relationships within the group, because if she responds too

defensively, she will construct herself as not being able to ‘take a joke’. Before we see how Ally verbally responds, we can propose some inferences from her nonverbal gestures. Keltner and Buswell (1997) would define Ally’s non-verbal displays at this point as indicative of embarrassment; the averted gaze, ‘coy’ smile and submissive, bowed head show signs of appeasement that suggest a reconciliation response. Had she not acknowledged the situation with a smile, she may have been viewed by her peers as rather uptight and not able to take the criticism, so her smile suggests acceptance of the tease given that she does not refute it, but goes on to account for her supposed transgression (stating the obvious) in her next turn.



From lines 486-494, business is ‘serious’ as the group are focused on Regina’s confusion (picture 1). At line 496, Regina responds to Ally’s last utterance, which is treated as a tease towards Ally as the rest of the group laugh (picture 2).

Although still laughing somewhat (line 503), Regina re-formulates her initial query to possibly add more detail and as such invite a response from her peers that will presumably be more informative. At this point, Ally could have simply said nothing and waited for Regina to finish before offering a response, but instead begins to speak over her, accounting through explaining why her previous utterance was actually valid. It is important for Ally to prove her worth here – especially as it is the first PBL session – and show her peers that she is a valuable and helpful member of the group. As such, she begins, “yeah but” (line 504), indicating that she has heard what Regina has to say, and is now going to demonstrate the way in which she is

wrong by providing a convincing argument. Ally then goes on to explain her original point, that “everything that you’re learning for this accumulates” (lines 505-507), effectively rewording her original offering, allowing her peers to see that she *can* actually provide an informative answer. This, in return, is seemingly accepted by Regina who aligns with her (lines 506 and 509), and as such Ally actually comes out as the winner of this status contest through demonstrating her ability to keep cool despite being teased.

Unlike in previous extracts, Ally does not ‘laugh along’ with the joke, but manages the interplay between ‘taking’ the tease and defending herself through displaying proactive response work, and thus constructing herself as the more superior through ‘standing up’ to Regina’s tease. Underpinning this is the target’s resultant alignment with *her* – much like Donald in the previous extract – and so although she was the one who initially did the teasing, the interaction ends with Regina on Ally’s side, as it were. Comparing the last two extracts with those in the first section of this chapter, we can see the shift from the tease targets being totally open to – and even at points, adding to – teasing, to the ways in which they account for their actions by defending what they did.

Section summary

Although targets in the first section of this chapter may be constructed as favourable group members for their ability to ‘take a joke’, in not offering an account for their transgressive actions, they demonstrate that they do not necessarily treat it *as* a transgression but rather potentially as normative behaviour. As such, other group members are put in the position of not knowing whether the transgressive

member has actually acknowledged that their actions are deviant. A more functional way to respond to teasing, therefore, is to still display ‘laughing along’, but also offer an account that defends the behaviour, as we have seen in the examples in this section. Doing so allows for a target to maintain the ‘fun’ within the group, but also protect their status as a group member; that they are not just the group fool who cannot multitask or who uses the wrong diary, but they can account for their transgressive actions at that time in interaction. Demonstrating such ‘doing defence’ can take differing forms, and as we encountered the extracts in this section, the extent to which the target moved along the continuum from playing along with the tease to seriously accounting became noticeably more defensive. What happens, however, when tease targets take their accounting too far, to the point that they retaliate against the group member who teased them? This will be considered in the next, final, section of this chapter.

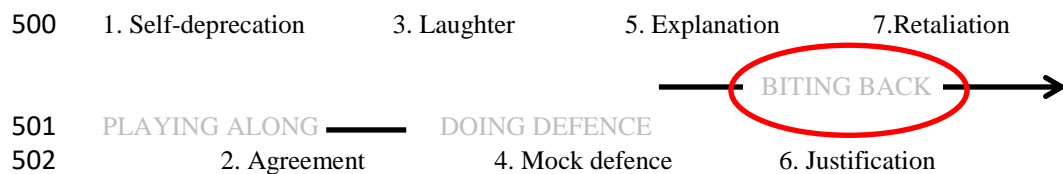
Part 3: Biting back

The previous two extracts (5G and 5H) are arguably the first in which we have seen a resistance to aligning with the joviality of the tease. Although Rachel and Ally demonstrated their understanding that the utterance was not meant seriously, their minimal alignment with the joviality of the interaction suggests less acceptance of being teased. The accounting in these extracts does not reject the tease as such, but rather serves the function of demonstrating why, in fact, it is not deserved. Because the ‘fun-ness’ was only reciprocated minimally, group peers could potentially be held liable for taking the tease ‘too far’, which has connotations with

bullying. However, the fact that even slight jovial alignment could be recognised marks that the interaction was not taken entirely seriously.

What happens, then, when targets' responses become not just defensive, but retaliatory? This final section focuses on interactions towards the right of the continuum as detailed below:

499



505

506 To begin, we encounter a group who are discussing the pressures of taking on

507 the role of the Scribe or note-taker in PBL:

508

509 *Extract 5I (Group 1)*

510 Ava: 'cause it's- but 'cause you doh- you don't

511 want t'like (.) stop people fr'm (.) the

512 flow of their discussion but then you're

513 like ↑ 'ahh' =

514 Raymond: =yer like 'am trying tae write here' heh heh

515 heh

516 Ava: heh heh

517 (2.0)

518 Annabel: ah hink [ah just talk really fast

519 Raymond: → [especially when you've

520 got Ella in ((looks at Ella)) yer ear goin'

521 "did ye get that did ye get that

522 Ava: [ɛhm hm

523 Raymond: [did y ge(h)t that"

524 Ella: ((smiling, but not looking at Raymond))

525 [I ONLY DID THA' a coupla' ti:mes

526 Ki:ngston¹⁴

527 Raymond: [ah will jus shut up heh heh (.) heh heh heh

528 Ella: AN I thought it was necessary

529

¹⁴ Raymond is routinely called by his surname Kingston by his peers instead of his first name

As we join the group, Ava is discussing the difficulty associated with taking notes for the group when multiple people are talking, orienting to the ‘struggle’ of keeping up with what is being said, but without stopping the “flow” of the discussion. Raymond demonstrates his understanding of what she is saying by completing her sentence when she – instead of verbalising the difficulty – displays frustration at line 513 (Yu, 2011). His turn, continuing immediately from Ava’s, establishes affiliation with it (Edwards, 1994), and as such the two of them together build up this picture of what it is like to be a Scribe.

There is brief lapse in interaction at line 517, at which point group member Annabel uptakes the turn at talk to contribute to the discussion, beginning to purport that she talks quickly and as such provides support for the argument that note talking is a difficult thing to do. However, as she is talking, Raymond speaks over her, and it is his turn that ultimately wins out. Despite the lapse in interaction at which point Annabel begins speaking, Raymond begins his turn with “especially when”, indicating that what he is saying is a continuation from his last point. To exemplify this, Raymond goes on to reference an example, using group member Ella, and serving the function of teasing her.

The tease is constructed as an imitation; an act that has been classed as the epitome of teasing in past research (e.g. Eder, 1993). Raymond ‘active voices’ Ella (Wooffitt, 1992), and in doing so depicts her as adding to the strain of note-taking by constantly checking that the writer is noting everything down. He does so by repeating the same thing – “did you get that” three times, which serves the function here of constructing Ella’s speech as ‘doing nagging’; saying the same thing over and

over as a repeated reminder (Boxer, 2002). This is a potentially troublesome thing to do; picking out one individual in the group and constructing her as being a source of pressure/ annoyance/ irritation. Although Raymond's utterance is not marked as 'just playing', Ava treats it as such at line 522 when she smiles and minimally laughs in alignment with Raymond, but we do not know how the target has treated it until we see how she responds.

Ella smiles, but does not meet Raymond's gaze as she accounts for her transgression of 'nagging'. This non-reciprocal gaze is of interest. Goodwin and Heritage (1990) note that mutual orientation between speaker and hearer is the most basic social alignment in spoken interaction, and so in looking at Ella, Raymond is arguably seeking a response to his utterance (which is contrasted with extract 4D earlier where we saw that some of the teasing was done arguably behind the teaser's back). Ella responds by talking over Raymond as he continues his active voicing. Overlapping talk is a much-studied phenomenon within conversation analytic research (cf. Schegloff, 2000), serving different functions in interaction. It can be accidental in that a second speaker may incorrectly infer that the first speaker is finishing up their turn, but here Ella's overlap is arguably on purpose to serve the function of accounting for the transgression for which she was teased. This is an interesting account because Ella appears to admit to more than she was being accused of by highlighting that it had happened a "couple" of times, suggesting that this could be something that has been referenced in group discussions before. She softens the accusation by stating it was "only" a "couple" of times (line 525), before

managing the blame by reflecting it back to Raymond; that it was “necessary” for her to do (presumably because he was not doing a good job of note-taking).



As in extract 4D, the images are split due to different cameras being used for recording. In picture 1 we see Ella accounting for ‘doing nagging’ (line 525), while Raymond/ “Kingston” laughs following his assertion “I will just shut up then” (line 527).

This blame projection is what differentiates this extract from those we have seen earlier. While the extracts until this point have focused on the target accounting for their own actions, here, Ella manages the accusation put to her that she was ‘nagging’ by constructing it as being necessary to do because of the failings of someone else. In accounting in this way, she not only defends against the tease put to her, but retaliates through orienting to the short-comings of the teaser himself. Her smiling and nickname usage suggest that she is on-board with the joviality of the interaction, however, she demonstrates that teasing can only be taken so far before it crosses the boundary into ‘something else’; an issue to be discussed later. In turning the tease round and projecting it back onto the teaser, Ella demonstrates acceptance of it much less readily.

This brings up the argument of whether there is a connection between the acceptance of a tease, and its success. In order for a tease to be ‘successful’, it must be treated as such by its recipient and not as a display of, say, bullying. Therefore, in acknowledging the joviality of such an utterance, the target demonstrates that they

have accepted it as a tease. Here, Ella displays acknowledgement of the utterance as a tease – as opposed to a bullying remark – through her reciprocated jovial markers of smiling, but the meaning behind her utterance was designed to, at the least, tease

506 back, and at the most, insult her peer. There is a big shift, then, from the first few
 507 extracts within this chapter where teases were responded to with laughter to now,
 508 where responses are much more defensive. Ella's actions could potentially be
 509 troublesome for the group, not least because in projecting the blame onto her peer,
 510 she is constructing herself as having more authority over an equal; that she felt she
 511 "had" to do nagging because Raymond was not doing his role properly. In PBL
 512 where group members are reliant on each other to produce the work, this is a real
 513 problem, with research in the area highlighting the issues around social loafing (e.g.
 514 Dolmans, et al., 2001; Scherpereel & Bowers, 2006; Vickery, 2013). In responding
 515 as she does, therefore, although Ella demonstrates acceptance of the tease ("I only
 516 did that a couple of times"), in retaliating that she "thought it was necessary" (i.e. to
 517 nag Raymond), she is reinforcing her transgressive behaviour (i.e. overstepping the
 518 boundaries of her role as 'group member'), in the same way as we saw in part one of
 519 chapter 4.

520 The final extract of this chapter constitutes an example that is arguably the
 521 most defensive way to respond to an utterance that can still be classed as teasing (as
 522 opposed to, for instance, bullying), due to the presence of laughter in the interaction.
 523 This example is similar to the previous extract in that we see the tease target retaliate,
 524 but in a way that is more serious. As we join them, the group are at the start of the
 525 session in which they are about to begin reporting back the work they have each done
 526 individually, and so are deciding who is going to speak first.

527

528 *Extract 5J (Group 1)*

529 Raymond: ri' who's gonna go furst
 530 (3.0)

531 Ava: ((*looking at Kate*)) you decide 'cause you're
532 the (.) the †Chair [hm hm
533 Kate: [oKAY let's ha::ve (.)
534 Annabel: ((*sniffs*))
535 Kate: grounded theory first
536 Ella: he [he he
537 Raymond: → [jus'so you can talk____
538 (0.5)
539 Ella: heh hih
540 (0.5)
541 Kate: †l-lookit- ((*picks up and flicks through*
542 *Raymond's papers*)) lookit this guy's
543 no:†tes (.) he's got hundreds ____
544 (1.0)
545 Ava: what HAppened to you King↓ston¹⁵=
546 Raymond: =am working (.) [ah †know
547 Kate: [Kingston-Kingston
548 cares these ~~days~~____
549

550 The extract opens with Raymond's invitation, "right who's gonna go first",
551 orienting to the fact that the group must decide who of the five of them are going to
552 begin the day's session by reporting back the individual study they did at home.
553 Following this, there is a problematic pause in which no one offers to begin, and so
554 Ava nominates Kate to make the decision, because she is "the Chair (person)" (lines
555 531-532). Kate uptakes this suggestion, making the decision to "have grounded
556 theory first" lines 533-535) which is responded to with laughter by Ella, perhaps
557 because of the unusualness of the speed of the decision making (Stasser, 1999),
558 confounded by the fact that only a few seconds prior no one made a decision.

¹⁵ Raymond is routinely called by his surname Kingston by his peers instead of his first name

559 Raymond then formulates a tease directed at Kate, implying that she made this
560 particular decision for selfish reasons; so that she could talk.

Kate responds to Raymond in a way the analysis has not yet encountered; by not orienting to the tease at all, and instead retaliating by teasing the teaser back. We encountered retaliation in the previous extract, but this example is entirely different in that the retaliator does not first account for her own apparent transgression (i.e. selecting a course of action for the group for selfish reasons), and as such ignores what was put to her. What is of interest is the way in which Kate does her retaliatory teasing; she picks up on something of relevance to Raymond that has absolutely nothing to do with the current topic of conversation, and so appears to be arbitrarily teasing him, probably as a defence for potential embarrassment from the first tease (though this is speculative).



As in extract 4D and 5I, the images are split due to different cameras being used for recording. At line 541, Kate responds to Raymond's 'tease' by teasing him back.

The structure of Kate's retaliatory tease is quite clearly playful. She speaks with a 'smiley' voice, exaggerates, and refers to Raymond as "this guy" instead of using his name. The subject of her tease is that Raymond has done too much work, and is fundamentally being 'too academic'; a reason for being teased that has been observed in similar research (e.g. Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Attenborough & Stokoe, 2012), and constitutes the previous analytical chapter.

Despite the somewhat stuttered, hedged formulation, Kate's retaliatory tease serves the function of detracting the focus from herself to Raymond. Ava orients to

Kate's assertion of Raymond having worked hard (line 545), constructing it as something out of the ordinary, in that something must have "happened" to him to stimulate such work flow. Although Kate's response to her tease was retaliatory and thus at the far right of the continuum, Raymond's arguably is at the far left in that he does not offer an account for getting the work done, but instead accepts the assertion put to him. In doing so, he acknowledges that his actions (having lots of notes) transgress the group's norms. However, Kate's final comment appears to contradict her tease; in stating that "Kingston cares these days", she constructs Raymond's current status – working hard and having lots of notes – as being a positive thing, which does not align with her previous tease if the intention was to provoke. Drew (1987) suggests that retaliation to teasing is more frequent in interaction than just letting it go yet in this one bit of interaction we see examples of both, demonstrating the variability of teasing within turn-by-turn interaction.

Section summary

So what does such retaliation mean for the group? Tholander and Aronsson (2002) argue that retaliating at all suggests that the target perceives the teasing as malicious and as such 'bites back'. We have seen in the first two sections the importance of group members keeping their cool in response to teasing, and so retaliating suggests that this does not happen. Certainly in extract 5I, the tease target, although smiling, retaliated in a way that actually reinforced the tease put to her. The retaliation in the above example (5J) appeared arbitrary, but seemed to work if the target's intention was to divert attention from herself. Such retaliation suggests that

the target is not able to ‘take’ the teasing, which in turn suggests that they have not treated it as something to laugh along with. This, in turn, suggests that the teaser and target have different perceptions of what is and what is not acceptable to joke, laugh and tease about, highlighting misalignment between them. While laughing along with a tease suggests a recipient may be an easy target, retaliating like we have seen here may suggest the opposite of this; that as a group member, they are not able to engage in such joking environments. As such, the cohesive properties of the group – i.e. their connectedness and mutual support (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008; O’Reilly & Roberts, 1977) – are on shaky grounds. Put simply: the target’s lack of ‘playing along’ with the utterance demonstrates their construction of it as inappropriate to tease about – and possibly treatment of it as not a tease but as something else – and so a misalignment of the treatment of the interaction occurs between the teaser and target. Cohesion is considered the most important variable within small groups (Lott & Lott, 1965), but responding as they do in these last couple of extracts implies a lack of cohesion, which has potentially negative consequences for the group.

Chapter summary

Within this chapter, then, we have worked through a continuum of ways in which a tease target may respond to, and account for, being teased. How an individual responds to a tease can have ramifications for the rest of the group, because if a tease is treated as something other than a tease – like an insult or bullying comment – the repercussions for a group could be potentially damaging; particularly in PBL when groups work together for extended periods of time. So, as

we have moved from left to right along the continuum, what is happening? There are two phenomena to comment on here; firstly, how the tease is responded to and treated, and secondly, the function the account work serves in interaction.

The extracts in part one, '*playing along*', detailed a target's complete acceptance of a tease, due to the way that both the teaser and target display alignment in their understanding of the interaction. In extracts A and B we saw self-deprecation tied up with teasing, in which a tease target did not just accept the tease, but extended it by joining in. As established, self-deprecation often goes hand-in-hand with teasing (e.g. Pomerantz, 1984), but can be a tricky thing to negotiate interactionally. In these extracts, the self-deprecation came following the tease and as such served to validate the meaning of it, demonstrating that targets agreed with teasers; if they had not, they would not have done this extra work. In extract C, although the target did not go quite as far as adding to the tease, her laughter response demonstrated her playing along and as such suggests acceptance of the tease in that she recognises it as a tease, and nothing worse. Extract D demonstrated what I term 'mock defence' in that the target still plays along with the joviality of the interaction, but is the first time we see an element of defence/ accounting beginning to appear.

Part two, '*doing defence*', focused on instances of teasing in which the target oriented to the interaction as teasing, but not quite as acceptingly as in part one as responses began to indicate a level of defence. As we worked through extracts E, F, G and H, the 'laughing along' displays that we saw in part one grew increasingly minimised, as accounts became more explanatory and defensive. By part three, '*biting back*', we reached interactions in which the tease target was demonstrably

defensive and retaliatory. Tholander and Aronsson (2002) discuss how retaliating requires more planning and perspective taking than minimal responses or denials because the target must take into account both the underlying criticism, and the way it is formulated. Retaliating at all, however, suggests that the tease has been treated as malicious which arguably transforms it from a tease to something 'worse'.

So what function does accounting serve for group dynamics within PBL interaction? Primarily, it allows the target to respond to the accusation that they have transgressed in some way, whether that's boasting, displaying a personal weakness, flaw, or negative quality, or making a mistake. In playing along, tease targets construct themselves as favourable group members who are able to laugh at themselves and not take offence. Past research has shown laughter in such working groups can positively affect the learning process and performance (e.g. Bisson & Luckner, 1996; Hayes & Nazari, 2011), as in engaging in such playful environments, groups are given the chance to bond and build rapport, which ultimately leads to a better working dynamic (e.g. Huff, Cooper & Jones, 2002). However, in laughing along without providing an account for why the transgression occurred, individuals are leaving themselves open to, at the best, future teasing episodes, or at the worst, being categorised as the 'group fool' (e.g. Klapp, 1949). Conversely, however, if targets retaliate to teasing, they are at risk of not only constructing themselves as not being able to take a joke which has its own social ramifications (Collins, 1988), but also may be held accountable for treating the interaction in a more serious way than the target did. Again, this relates back to the discussion in the literature review regarding the variability with which teasing is treated; what one person may consider a joke, another may consider as a

critical remark. In teasing, the teaser presumably thought the target could ‘take’ it, and so in retaliating, the target displays a misalignment in understanding with the teaser, and as such a deconstruction of group cohesion.

It would thus appear that groups are best served in teasing interactions in which targets display an ability to laugh along, but also proffer a justification for their transgression, such as those in part two of this chapter, because in doing so, the target both aligns with the ‘fun’ of the interaction, but also maintains status as a group member. For the individual, this allows for them to validate themselves as a group member despite transgressing, and for the group, enhances social bonds developed from such playful interactions. This will be returned to in the discussion, so for now, the analysis will move onto the final chapter: considering what happens when teasing goes wrong.

Having considered the functions served for PBL groups through the occasioning of academic identities and accounting in teasing, we now move on to the final analytical chapter which focuses on a pattern noted throughout the analysis so far; what makes a tease successful? How do we know whether a tease has been treated as a tease, how are misalignments in understandings occasioned in talk, and, crucially, what can such analyses tell us about the group functions we have already identified? To investigate this, the analysis turns now considering what happens when teasing goes wrong.

Chapter 6 When teasing goes wrong

This final analytical chapter focuses on teasing interactions that ‘go wrong’. We have seen so far some of the functions that can be served for groups in occasioning academic identities and accounting in teasing, but the final analysis chapter is slightly different in that its aim is to further demonstrate the functions that have already been noted, by highlighting deviant cases in the interaction.

Through analysing how teasing can be formulated and treated, we have seen how different group functions are served such as signalling deviant behaviour, enhancing social bonds, and demonstrating status. In considering teasing going wrong, then, we can show whether the points already discussed can be somewhat generalizable, or whether they break down. It is important, however, firstly, to clarify that there is a distinction between teasing going ‘right or wrong’ and the success and failure of a tease.

Whether a tease has been successful or unsuccessful has been considered before in research, though much of that pertains to the interpretation of intention; for instance, focusing on why participants think a tease occurred, and what the reasons for it were (e.g. Alberts, Kellar-Guenther & Corman, 1996; Scambler, Harris & Milich, 1998). Discursive psychology, however, does not align with this approach, and so any interpretation of successful or unsuccessful teasing is not based on

perceptions of a speaker's intent. Instead, we can look at the functions that are being served in interaction when teasing goes wrong.

The perspective taken here is that teasing is a collaborative action, and deemed ‘successful’ only when both parties (teaser(s) and target(s)) achieve a mutual understanding that an utterance is a tease, because if the target responds in a hostile manner, teasing may escalate to ridicule and as such is transformed into an action more akin to, for instance, bullying (Voss, 1997). Such ‘success’ is demonstrated through a recipient’s treatment of an utterance; if they display jovial markers in their orientations (such as laughing along) this is evidence that they are treating the utterance as a tease. If, however, their response is void of such markers, they could be treating it as ‘something else’, as we have already discussed in this analysis. To exemplify, consider the following extract excerpt that was analysed earlier:

548 *Extract 4C (Group 7)*

549 Rachel: this section [here (.) is good
550 Phillip: [°that's the thing°
551 (1.0)
552 Donald: heh [heh .hh
553 Phillip: [(*smiles*)]
554 Rachel: [no I- not good but I mean [like
555 Donald: → [bih-big
556 you(h)rself u(h)p [.hh heh heh .hh
557 Rachel: [THERE'S AN ACTUAL
558 SENTENCE that we can [use for the rest of it
559 Phillip: [HAH HAH HAH
560

Here, we saw that group member Rachel was constructed as transgressing by boasting about a particular part of the group's assignment being "good" (line 549). This was oriented to by Donald by way of assessing that Rachel was "big(ging) yourself up" (lines 555-556). The utterance was marked as a tease by way of the laughter peppered throughout it, it can be regarded as provocative because of the way

in which Rachel does defence work, it is directed at someone present in the interaction, and it is treated as a tease by another member of the group. However, because the target – Rachel – does not display markers to indicate her jovial treatment of it, arguably, this is not a ‘successful’ tease, which in turn makes it an ‘unsuccessful’ tease, which it turn renders it not as a tease, but as something else.

As such, we can say that ‘successful’ teasing interactions take the following form:

1. Routine interaction is interrupted by something happening (e.g. a transgression to normality)
2. Teaser orients to the ‘something happening’ by teasing, where speech is accompanied by markers to demonstrate joviality despite a provocative message
3. Target reciprocates understanding that tease is meant non-harmfully through smiling/ laughter
4. Target accounts for transgression to demonstrate their treatment of it as transgressive, and not usual interaction
5. Interaction continues

However, despite such ‘successful’ teasing displays, interaction can then go ‘wrong’. What impact is there for PBL group interaction, for instance, if teasing goes on for too long? This is what this chapter aims to demonstrate. There are a variety of ways in which this can happen, and as such this chapter is not split into any particular sections. In order to better demonstrate the distinction between teasing being ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’, the first extract exemplifies an ‘unsuccessful’ tease,

549 like 4C above. As discussed in the methodology chapter, the corpus for this thesis
550 was compiled around interactions that contained laughter, whether that was from the
551 teaser, the target, or another member of the group. Extract 6A contains laughter
552 (which is why it is included in the corpus) but only from the teaser, and so in not
553 reciprocating the laughter, I argue that this tease is unsuccessful in that the target has
554 not demonstrated understanding of the interaction as being teasing, as opposed to
555 something worse.

556 In this example, a group of students are discussing the best sources to use for
557 their PBL task:

558

559 *Extract 6A (Group 7)*

560 Phillip: there's a book (.) from nineteen eighty
561 three called "australopithecus afican- uh
562 africanus" (.) I'm not sure we should use
563 that but
564 Rachel: [that's-
565 Phillip: [it might (.) give us a start
566 Rachel: that's the wrong one (though °isn't it°)
567 (1.0)
568 Donald: yeah we do afarensis (.) so
569 Phillip: oh oh- what
570 (1.5)
571 Rachel: → have you been fdoing your research on the
572 wrong thi(h)ng heh [heh heh
573 Phillip: [oh no I haven't this is
574 the first- this is the first time
575 (inaudible)
576 (10.0)

577

578 We join the interaction as group member Phillip is informing his peers of a
579 book he knows of, which presumably will help the group with their current PBL task
580 (lines 560-561). Immediately after mentioning its title, however, he backtracks and

displays uncertainty as to whether they should use it, claiming that it “might give (them) a start” (line 565). In response, Rachel puts forth that, “that’s the wrong one” (line 566), presumably orienting to the book, although she softens her assertion towards the end by quietly adding “isn’t it”. Such tag questions are used to weaken or mitigate the force of an utterance (Lakoff, 1975); in doing so here Rachel manages potential blame put her way in case it is found that actually Phillip is correct, and the book is suitable.

This contrast between the louder and quieter speech is stark, and is followed by a relatively long gap in the interaction which signals trouble; either Phillip is correct (that the book may be appropriate) or Rachel is correct (that the book is not appropriate), and somehow the group needs to correct this and come to a consensus. As such, Donald aligns with Rachel that Phillip may be looking at the wrong topic, as the book Phillip mentioned pertains to ‘*africanus*¹⁶’ whereas they “do *afarensis*” (line 568). Donald verbally agrees with Rachel but does so in a way that suggests he can understand where Phillip’s confusion may have stemmed from, placing emphasis on the differing parts of the similar words.

Thus far in the extract, there has been no laughter or any other indication that this interaction should not be taken seriously. The group are facing a problem in that one of them has potentially been studying the wrong topic, as demonstrated by the mere mention of a book title. After we see Donald and Rachel work together in an attempt to correct Phillip (lines 566-568), the conventional turn-taking process would suggest that the turn at talk would shift to Phillip, to allow him the opportunity to justify why he suggested using a book which has been deemed ‘wrong’ by the rest of

¹⁶ ‘*Africanus*’ and ‘*afarensis*’ refer to fossil species; the topic of the group’s PBL task.

the rest of the group (e.g. Sacks, 1992). At line 569, Phillip's apparent confusion comes to light; Trihartanti & Damayanti (2014) suggest that one of the reasons we use "oh" in conversation is to clarify something that has been mentioned previously, and so by saying "oh" at this point in the interaction, in addition to the self-reciprocal "what", Phillip positions himself as being somewhat puzzled. This confusion is picked up on by Rachel who 'teases' him, by asking whether he has been doing his research on the wrong thing (lines 571-572). Rachel could have asked this as a serious question, but instead laughs as she asks, indicating she is not 'serious' or what she is saying should not be taken literally (e.g. Keltner et al., 1998). Rachel has clearly marked her utterance as non-serious, but how does Phillip respond to this?



(Lines 571-572) Rachel teases Phillip for having done research "on the wrong thing".

Phillip responds to Rachel by refuting her assessment of the situation. Unlike in other examples where the tease has been straight-out accepted, or accepted through justification, in this case, it is not. Phillip works hard to assure his group that he has not been studying the wrong topic. Research has demonstrated the importance of organised turn-taking (e.g. Schegloff, 2000), and so the fact that Phillip begins talking even though it is still Rachel's turn, emphasises his urgency to correct the claims made against him. He goes on to explain, "oh no no I haven't" (line 573), and then further explains the confusion, although the interaction becomes inaudible.

However, we do know that what he says is delivered seriously, and is followed by a lengthy lapse in interaction.

What makes this an unsuccessful tease is the misalignment in treatment of the utterance. Although Rachel clearly marks her teasing utterance as just that, Phillip does not respond in an equivocal manner, suggesting that he has either not recognised the non-seriousness of the tease, or if he has, he does not consider it something to tease about, reflected in his serious treatment of the interaction. The work he does to demonstrate to his peers that he has not, actually, been ‘doing research on the wrong thing’ is rather defensive, and the fact that it is followed by a lapse in the interaction highlights its problematic nature. The difficulty with such misalignments is that they could escalate to something beyond teasing.

So what does this ‘unsuccessful’ teasing show us? Certainly, it reinforces the difficulties faced in studying a phenomenon such as teasing. We can argue that any utterance is a candidate tease until its status is ratified by the recipient. In not doing so here, Phillip rejects the utterance as a tease and presumably considers it a criticism. This is problematic for a group in which the onus is on collaborative work; on the one hand, Phillip may feel victimised for the blame projection by a peer who holds no authority over him and does not have the right to tell him what to do, but on the other hand, in “researching the wrong thing”, Phillip is potentially jeopardising the group’s work. In treating the interaction in such different ways, therefore, the group members create a working which is not conducive with a united, cohesive group.

It is probable that there are other, similar, instances of group interaction like this in the data, and one of the recommendations for future research in the discussion

chapter is for more focus on ‘unsuccessful’ teasing. For now, we can establish that in order for teasing to be successful, both the teaser and target must demonstrate that they treat the utterance in the same way. Now that ‘unsuccessful’ teasing has been more clearly demonstrated and differentiated from teasing ‘gone wrong’, we can return to the focus of this current chapter: what happens when teasing goes wrong? In each of the extracts below, I will first talk through what happens in the interaction to lead up to the tease, how it is evidence of a ‘successful’ tease, but then also what happens to evidence teasing going wrong.

571 Let us begin with a first example. Here, a group of students are about to begin
572 the day's session, and as we join them they are discussing what they should be doing
573 next in terms of their work. The interaction begins with Chair Raymond asking one
574 of his peers about her self-study (line 577).

576 *Extract 6B (Group 1)*

577 Raymond: right' Kate what d'you find (.) what-
578 Ava: ((coughs))
579 Raymond: in terms of narrative analysis
580 Kate: em well w-wha' d'you mean° by narrative°
581 Raymond: like what- what was like the research
582 question the aims oh the papuhr
583 Kate: >but is that not what we< do to- [next-
584 Raymond: [that's
585 part one
586 (1.0)
587 Ava: we're just talk-
588 Kate: ((flicking through work sheet)) I thought we
589 jus' talked in general I thought we did
590 Ava: ((points to Kate's work sheet))

591 Kate: [all tha' next time
 592 Ava: [yeah if you look at e::m- where is it
 593 Kate: → ((coughs)) shite Chair ((looks at Raymond))
 594 £.hh
 595 Ava: ((smiles))
 596 (1.0)
 597 Raymond: she's- ((turns to look at camera, rests head
 598 on hand, smiling)) rih' ahm not talkin'
 599 Kate: ((grabbing Raymond's arm)) £AHM KIDDIN ON
 600 do(h)n't get angry [heh
 601 Raymond: [las' week's happ'nin'
 602 again
 603 Kate: ((pushes Raymond)) heh heh £sha(h) ahp
 604 [heh heh .hh
 605 Raymond: [heh heh heh
 606 Kate: ((shaking head)) £don' get angry
 607

608 The tease in this extract is the result of a discrepancy between what the Chair
 609 thinks group should be doing in the session, and what the rest of the group think they
 610 should be doing. This is evidenced by a series of turns from Kate, Ava and Raymond
 611 verbally demonstrating their confusion and opposing views; for instance, at line 580
 612 Kate asks, “what do you mean?” and Raymond has to expand on his initial direction
 613 of , “what d’you find?” (line 577), to “what was like the research question, the aims
 614 of the paper?” (lines 581-582). This need to expand on his initial question could be
 615 viewed as an example of membership categorisation gone wrong. Sacks (1972), for
 616 instance, discussed membership categorisation in terms of the recognisability of
 617 people as belonging to certain groups, and how this recognisability as a resource for
 618 members in the dealings with each other. Here, Raymond clearly did not detail

619 specifically what he was asking Kate and as such asked the rather vague, “what
620 d’you find?”, presumably assuming that because they were both, at the time,
621 belonging to the same membership group (i.e. students in a PBL group), she would

be able to answer. Because she was not able to, this highlighted a problem in the interaction, which leads up to the tease.

Kate goes on to acknowledge why she does not understand Raymond's question to her by stating that she thought they were meant to do "that" in the next session (lines 583/ 588-589). This is supported by Ava, who directs the group to look at the hand-out which will provide the answer and reveal who is correct. The role of the Chair is generally held to ensure the smooth running of the meeting/ session and keep order, but the preceding interaction does not align with this definition, as the hedged talk, pauses and questions do not represent a fluid conversation. As such it could be argued that Raymond is transgressing the role of Chair.

To acknowledge this, at line 593, Kate coughs and simultaneously says, "shite Chair" – an intriguing action that requires a little expansion before moving on. Anecdotally, this precursory cough followed by a negative tease or insult is designed to appear like the cough is covering the utterance, but actually it serves the opposite purpose: to ensure the target hears it. There is, to the researcher's knowledge, no literature exploring this type of action, but we can draw some conclusions about its function in interaction based on the response to it. Let us consider firstly if Kate had not 'coughed', and had simply classed Raymond as a "shite Chair". This may not have been so readily accepted by Raymond (as we will soon see) as it may come across as aggressive and attacking. However, by 'coughing' beforehand, Kate is evidencing that what she is saying is jovial; her accompanying hand movements and situated turn to look at him (line 593) serve to show Raymond that she is not being

serious; if she was, she would most likely not have gone to such efforts to ensure she was heard. Ultimately, this display is a marker to demonstrate her non-seriousness; the significance of which has been discussed throughout these analyses chapters.



(Lines 588-590: picture 1) Ava flicks through the notes to find out what the group should be doing, making relevant Raymond's inability to Chair the session, and Kate covers her mouth in advance of her "cough". In the second image, we see Kate, despite laughing, working to ensure Raymond knows that she was 'just teasing' (lines 599-603).

Raymond's response is of interest. After Kate's turn, Ava smiles, suggesting an orientation to the non-seriousness of the interaction. Raymond's next turn at talk suggests he was going to say something, but then self-repaired in order to respond to the tease; announces he is "not talking", but smiling and slumping his chin into his hand. There is a wealth of literature on action and embodiment in human interaction, focusing on how the body is used to perform gestures (e.g. Goodwin, 2000a). In this case, Raymond looks like he is in a "huff", although crucially, does not provide any kind of account for his purported transgression (i.e. that his skills as a Chair were flawed). So far, we can say that this is evidence of a successful tease: the target transgressed (failing to effectively do the job of Chair), was teased ("shite Chair"), and demonstrated acknowledgement of the tease as a tease (smiling). It is at this point, though, that something happens which evidences it as 'going wrong'; the teaser 'retracts' her tease somewhat by telling the target that she was "kidding" (line

599). Within the teasing episodes we have observed so far this 'backtracking' has not occurred in that the teaser has not had to make it clear to the recipient that what they

588 said was in jest, so why does Kate do this here, when we know that Raymond has
589 acknowledged the interaction as teasing?

590 Perhaps Raymond's next turn might hold a clue. He goes on to state that "last
591 week's happening again" (lines 601-602), in reference to something that happened
592 previously, presumably in the group. Although we do not know what it was, the fact
593 that he occasions it in his talk at this time suggests that he treats the current situation
594 in the same way as whatever happened before. We do not need to know what it was;
595 the fact that it has been referenced at this point in time demonstrates how Raymond
596 constructs it; as something – for want of a better word – bad. Although we see both
597 Kate and Raymond laugh following this, functionally, something went wrong in that
598 Kate felt the need to save face by asserting that she was "kidding". This has
599 happened in other teasing scenarios, so before I offer any comment on it let us
600 consider the next two extracts.

601 In the next extract, a group of students are jointly transcribing an interview
602 that they conducted for their PBL class, in which group member Jackie was the
603 interviewer. The group are listening to the audio, pausing it, and typing; checking
604 with each other as to what they heard.

605

606 *Extract 6C (Group 2)*

607 ((recording plays))

608 Jackie: ((typing)) "°just°

609 (2.0)

610 Jackie: °basic'ly°" (.) did ah say "jus' basically
611 like start off"

612 Nadia: mm hm=

613 Jocelyn: =£hm hm [huh huh huh

614 Jackie: [a heh a heh

615 Ally: ((*laughs silently*))
 616 Nadia: ((*smiles*))
 617 Jackie: "say like"
 618 Jocelyn: ahh hah hah .hh
 619 (1.0)
 620 Ally: it's funny when you do [(inaudible)]
 621 Nadia: [REPETITION OF THE
 622 word 'li:ke' aheh (.) fshows that (.)
 623 ((*looks at Jackie*))
 624 Jackie: ((*pointing to the screen*)) so
 625 [like-
 626 Nadia: → heh the [interviewer's a bit confused
 627 Ally: ((*smiles*))
 628 Jocelyn: [heh heh heh
 629 Jackie: [so it's 'talk about your routines
 630 like'
 631 (2.0)
 632 Jackie: 'like just basically like
 633 Jocelyn: heh
 634 Jackie: fsta(h)rt off' [heh heh heh
 635 Nadia: → [>hih hih hih< .hh it sounds
 636 ridiculous when it's written down doesn't it
 637 Jackie: fo:h
 638 Jocelyn: heh heh [heh
 639 Nadia: [doesn't sound that bad played
 640 though
 641 Jackie: fno: it does heh heh
 642

643 We join the group as audio is playing, and group member Jackie is typing
 644 what is being said, with help from her peers. It is a collaborative effort; at line 610
 645 we see Jackie check what she heard on the audio, ("did I say 'just basically like start
 646 off'"). While group member Nadia responds in a preferable way that demonstrates
 647 affiliation (Pomerantz, 1984), group member Jocelyn's response is more problematic

648 in that she begins to laugh (line 613), before each of the group members follow suit
649 to align with laughter. As we follow the interaction over the course of the next few
650 turns, the source of the laughter becomes clearer; that Jackie's interviewing

technique is constructed as something to laugh at due to her over-use of discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1987). This laughter, though, is problematic for the interaction as it interrupts the process of what the group should be doing; i.e. transcribing the audio.

This is made relevant by Jackie herself at line 617 when she imitates her own speech on the recording (“say like”). Ally appears to be orienting to the interaction too at line 620, but is cut off by Nadia who emphasises the source of disruption, through raising her voice and saying, “repetition of the word like”, highlighting the detail of Jackie’s speech on the recording due to the act of detailing verbatim what is being said for the purpose of the transcript. This is not something one would usually pick up on, but because the task requires the exact wording of speech, Jackie’s transgression is made relevant at this point.



The group members all laugh in response to the audio recording of the interview (lines 612-615).

Nadia’s laughter, however, demonstrates that this is a jovial interaction, and after she highlights the “repetition” of Jackie’s, there is a short pause in which she looks at Jackie, before going on to tease her by saying, “shows that the interviewer’s a bit confused” (lines 622-626). What Nadia is doing is actually demonstrating her understanding of the task in that she is looking at the words used by a participant (in

this case, the interviewer), and analysing their possible meaning or function in interaction. As she says this, her speech overlaps with Jackie's but ultimately wins out in that Jackie stops what she was saying, and restarts in her next turn. While Jackie does not orient at all to Nadia's utterance, Ally smiles and Jocelyn laughs, so this brings us back to the discussion of what makes a tease a tease if two parties treat it differently (i.e. something to laugh at versus treat seriously). Certainly, Nadia's utterance appears provocative in that she is asserting Jackie is 'confused' on the audio, but if Jackie does not orient to the interaction at all, does that mean it has been accepted as a tease? This point will be returned to in the discussion.

We see Jackie orient back to the task at hand (line 629) by reiterating what was being said. This begins by being serious, but when Jocelyn treats it as something to laugh at (line 633), Jackie does too, again orienting to her overuse of the word "like" when she was conducting the interview. Such an act has been regarded as unprofessional in such situations (Russell, Perkins & Grinnell, 2008), and this makes relevant Nadia's earlier assertion of the interviewer appearing confused. Despite Jackie not orienting to Nadia's previous utterance – despite it being acknowledged with laughter from her peers – Nadia goes on to say, "it sounds ridiculous when it's written down doesn't it" (line 635-636). This is a potentially damaging thing to say within the context of the group; although she does not direct the comment at Jackie specifically in that she does not, for instance, say, "Jackie you sound ridiculous", Jackie is still the target as she is the one on the recording. This assessment is, however, framed as non-serious due to the accompanying laughter. Although the rest of the group and even Jackie herself have been laughing at the overuse of "like" on the recording, Nadia takes it further by verbalising what the source of disruption to

the group is; that the words sound ridiculous. She is arguably holding Jackie to blame for the interruption to the transcribing process as it is not going smoothly; as evidenced through the consistent laughter whenever another “like” is heard.



Nadia points out Jackie's overuse of the word "like" in the interview (lines 621-622; picture 1), before looking directly at her, possibly to obtain a receipt of her provocation (picture 2).

As such, in orienting to this, Nadia has teased Jackie twice; once in relation to the confusion of the interviewer (line 626) and again when stating how “ridiculous” the transcript reads (line 635-636). She has not received any response from her though, and so, like in the previous extract, goes on to offer face saving tactics by stating that it “doesn’t sound that bad played though”. As discussed earlier, the act of teasing poses potential threats to a target’s face (e.g. Geyer, 2010; Schnurr & Chan, 2010), due to the very definition of a tease as being designed to provoke some kind of response from a recipient. According to Brown and Levison’s (1978) politeness theory, individuals will engage in ‘face work’ to maintain others’ faces through avoiding actions or topics deemed threatening to the face of another, or in other words, to avoid embarrassment. Why, then, does Nadia do this at this particular point in time? It does not actually matter how Jackie responds; what is of interest is why Nadia, like Kate before, seems to ‘backtrack’ on her teasing and offer Jackie facesaving right here, right now. As before, since this is an identifiable pattern in the

data, let us consider one final example before offering any analysis of what is happening in the interaction when this happens. In this third example of face-saving

638 a group are choosing between different journal articles to analyse. Of the four they
 639 have been given, they must choose two to read.

640

641 *Extract 6D (Group 1)*

642 Kate: °'ight° so we're like lookin' f'r di:scourse
 643 analysis an' conversation [analysis
 644 Annabel: [.hhh
 645 (0.2)
 646 Ava: yih
 647 Annabel: all the good ones a(h)re ↓grounded theory
 648 an' [IPA(h) heh
 649 Kate: [(ah like grounded)
 650 Annabel: (°it makes me sad°)
 651 Raymond: ((looking up from paper)) you don't know
 652 that (.) you've not read it aw ↓yet
 653 [(.)aheh
 654 Annabel: [(inaudible)
 655 Ella: "workplace emotion" that jus' sounds really
 656 ↓duhl1
 657 (0.5)
 658 Ava: °what's conversation ana[lysis°
 659 Raymond: → ((looking at Ella)) [you sound really
 660 dull
 661 Kate: oh: IPA
 662 ((Ella looks up at Raymond: 1.0))
 663 Ella: [HEY (.) I HAVE an exciting accent¹⁷
 664 Raymond: [am kiddin' on you're very interestin'
 665 (0.5)
 666 Raymond: heh heh
 667 Ella: and a DELIGHTFUL VOICE [(pulls face))
 668 Kate: [ahih
 669 Raymond: ((looking at Ella)) i:t's turnin' Scottish

¹⁷ Ella is not from Scotland and as such does not have a Scottish accent.

697 he has simply insulted Ella based on a personal quality of hers. As so, Ella responds
698 in a relevant way with the defensive “hey” prefacing her justification that she has an

“exciting accent”. The discourse marker “hey” has been discussed by Beach (1995) as a technique used to gain attention, and the fact that she raises her voice here in its delivery shows that Raymond’s utterance is the focus for the succeeding conversation; as something that requires orientation to, demonstrating the interactivity of conversation and how it is jointly produced.

At the same time, Raymond claims that he is “kidding on” (line 664). Kowalski (2000) discusses how ‘just kidding’ claims are used to defend oneself against an utterance that is not received well, which is exactly what happens here and presumably in extract 6B where the target’s embodied actions of ‘going in a huff’ – despite smiling – were treated as evidence of this. In not using markers when constructing his utterance of Ella as having a dull voice, Raymond positions himself as being serious, and as such is held accountable for rectifying the situation since ultimately he has insulted his peer. Claiming that he is “kidding on”, however, does not necessarily justify why he delivered this particular line in the first place, and so he goes on to make amends by assessing that Ella is “very interesting”.

It is at this point that Ella simultaneously constructs herself as having an “exciting accent”, before going on to mention her “delightful voice”, ultimately justifying why Raymond’s assessment of her is wrong. However, the way in which she formulates it is interpreted by her peers as not to be taken seriously. Her raised voice and emphasis on ‘key’ words describing why Raymond is wrong, (i.e. that her accent and voice are “exciting” and “delightful”; lines 663 and 667 respectively) are responded to with laughter, and when she finishes her ‘defence’, she pulls a face indicating that what she has said is not to be taken literally. Ironically, these are the

kinds of key cues that Raymond should have delivered in his initial utterance, that if he had, would have clearly demonstrated to Ella that he was not being serious, and as such, would not have insulted her (e.g. Keltner et al., 1998).

Until this point, no other group member had been involved in Ella and Raymond's interaction, but had been engrossed in sorting out the papers in front of them. However, at line 668, Kate laughs, which is interesting because it suggests that either it is more acceptable to join in with a tease when it is self-directed, but perhaps not so when it is delivered from another person, or else it easier to laugh when it is obvious that the utterance is one that is permissible to laugh at. For instance, Kate did *not* laugh in response to Raymond's turn perhaps because it was unclear whether or not it was serious, and as such Ella may have considered it as support for Raymond and as such a further attack on herself. Again, these laughter receipts would have been beneficial at an earlier point; had Ella laughed following Raymond's utterance at line 659, she would have demonstrated her acknowledgement of his nonseriousness and possibly avoided the upcoming awkwardness.

Raymond then goes on to provide his own assessment of Ella's voice – not overtly positive or negative, just that it is turning more Scottish – which Ella, interestingly, interprets as further criticism, as she goes on to self-deprecate by aligning that it is “horrible” (line 672). As identified by Pomerantz (1984), orienting to self-deprecation with an agreement or indeed a disagreement is tricky to manage. If a recipient(s) is to agree with a critical statement, they are endorsing prior criticisms as their own, which is potentially problematic for the group in that one

member can be held accountable for insulting or upsetting another. Perhaps because Ella's self-deprecating utterance was formulated as the first part of an adjacency pair requiring an answer ("isn't it" – line 672), it leaves Raymond with no choice but to respond. However, Raymond's answer as demonstrated through his averted gaze, 'smiley voice' and quietened speech (in contrast to Ella's loud "hey" earlier) suggest insincerity. Indeed, there follows a long silence in the group before the conversation is redirected by Ella (line 676), suggesting she is keen to move on from this interaction.



Raymond teases Ella (line 659), who responds mock-defensively, at which point Raymond saves face by stating he was kidding. However, such face-saving tactics do not appear to be successful, and interaction continues rather awkwardly.

This is an interesting scenario, because although Ella appears to acknowledge Raymond's initial utterance was not meant seriously (in that she has been able to 'take' the joke), she positions herself as agreeing with it, and that she does, in fact, have a "horrible" voice. Raymond, therefore, has repair work to do by telling Ella that her accent/ voice is "great" (line 674).

The crux of this extract is Raymond having to defend that he is "just kidding" in order to account for an utterance that may be taken the wrong way. In doing so, Raymond demonstrates his understanding that Ella has not received his utterance well. Teasing is interactionally negotiated, and so no matter how it was treated, both

Raymond and Ella had work to do to ensure the dynamics and relationship between the two of them remained positive/ friendly, and did not impact on the rest of the group. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and towards the end of the extract we can see how problematic the situation becomes, ultimately resulting in an extended period of silence, and orientation to a different topic. Ultimately, it created an uneasy atmosphere in the group which could have been avoided had Raymond and Ella worked closer together to reach a joint understanding of what was happening. Let us now consider the last three examples together, questioning why the teaser, following a tease, offered the target face saving, and what function doing so serves a group as a whole.

Analytically, the extracts are all fairly similar in that the teaser is targeting a group member for a particular flaw, whether that is their skills as the group Chair, their ability to conduct an interview, or the tone of their voice. However, there is quite a variance in the way in which the teases are delivered; the tease in 6B was accompanied with a physical marker (purposeful coughing), 6C was accompanied with a verbal marker (laughter), and 6D contained no marker at all. Perhaps 6D is actually the simplest to understand; because the utterance was not framed as a tease, it is of little surprise that the target treated it as a serious insult. Therefore, in facesaving as he did by saying, “I’m kidding on”, Raymond ‘resets’ the interaction so that both parties are aligned in their understanding; Ella does not need to account for her ‘transgression’ (sounding ‘dull’) because Raymond has decreed the transgression as untrue.

What was it about the interactions in extracts 6B and 6C, though, that made the teaser backtrack on their teases, even though they made it clear that what they were saying was not to be taken seriously? One interpretation could be that it is to do with the lack of mutual treatment of the interaction from the target. The teasers here display clear indications that what they have said is in fun, and so to not have that reciprocated by the target suggests that it has not been treated as a tease. In chapter 5, we examined the ways in which tease targets respond to a tease, and although this covered a broad spectrum, the one thing that was common throughout was that targets either offered an account for the transgression that caused the tease, or at the very least they displayed recognition that the tease was just that, and nothing more. In extract 6B the target neither reciprocates the joviality of the interaction, or offers an account for why he is being a “shite Chair”, and instead demonstrates ‘going in a huff’. In 6C, the target does not immediately orient to either of the teaser’s references to the ‘bad’ interviewing, and thus did not reciprocate the playfulness or account for her questionable interviewing technique. As such, the teasers had to account for their teasing actions, through either asserting that they were ‘kidding on’ or that the subject of the tease was not as transgressive as they said, in order to establish a joint understanding of the interaction. If this did not happen, the teasers may be held responsible for any disruption to the group interaction due to the target’s misunderstanding. In being unaware, therefore, of how a target has treated an utterance, it is the teaser’s responsibility to re-establish this.

From all three analytic chapters, then, it seems important for teasers and recipients to achieve and demonstrate a mutual understanding of the interaction.

Perhaps doing such mutual understanding is evidence of cohesion in action, as it suggests a sense of connectedness (O'Reilly & Roberts, 1977). The analysis now moves on another example of 'teasing going wrong'. Here, a group of psychology students are with the facilitator as they are discussing the task they are working on. At the third line in, Susan (the facilitator), asks the group whether they have their course handbooks with them.

676 *Extract 6E (Group 1)*

677 Kate: °kay° we should start thinkin' °about
 678 that°
 679 Susan: so tha' might be worth think- 'ave you got
 680 the: student handbook for the class with
 681 ↓you
 682 Ava: mm [((reaches for bag))
 683 Kate: [mine's is in my other fol[der
 684 Ava: [yeah
 685 Susan: oh
 686 Ava: so's mine
 687 Susan: → exc(h)uses excuses
 688 Kate: ahih hih [hih hih
 689 Raymond: [heh heh heh
 690 Ava: [((smiles))
 691 Susan: [it should be THERE
 692 Kate: ((looking down at notes)) aheh
 693 Susan: in yer diary
 694 Kate: fhmm
 695 Raymond: heh
 696 Susan: refer to ev'ry now an' again for a bit of
 697 comfort
 698 Kate: ohh
 699 (0.5)
 700 Susan: em (.) maybe you c'n- so that might be
 701 somethin' is to start to plan ahead think
 702 'okay'
 703 (0.5)
 704 Susan: I mean you can't really decide what
 705 methodology you're gonna use for the next
 706 task until you see the data

707
 708 The tease in this extract comes in response to Kate not having her student
 709 handbook with her. As we join the interaction, the group appear to be starting to

710 “think” about something, as acknowledged by Kate and Susan (lines 677-679),
711 before Susan orients to the student handbook and asks the group whether they have
712 it

with them. Group member Ava appears to verbally and physically demonstrate that she has through minimally aligning (“mm” – line 682), and reaching for her bag, presumably to retrieve the handbook. Group member Kate on the other hand demonstrates the opposite; not through refuting that she has it but through accounting for where it is (“mine’s in my other folder” – line 683). Buttny (1993) notes that seldom is there a simple ‘agree-disagree’, or ‘acceptance-rejection’ in such interactions, and that instead respondents discursively account for their positioning. Here, in response to Susan’s seemingly straightforward question of “have you got the student handbook [...] with you?” (line 680-681), Kate does not respond with “no” (which would be correct), but instead accounts for why she does not (it is in her other folder). Susan orients to this by saying, “excuses excuses” (line 687), which is constructed and treated as a tease.

The phrase “excuses excuses” is somewhat difficult to untangle. Unlike sarcasm which is treated as meaning the opposite of what one says (Attardo et al., 2003), in saying, “excuses excuses” the speaker is orienting to the actual interaction (in that they regard their conversational partner(s) as excusing their actions). The phrase is, however, constructed as a tease. It is produced as provocative, but is evidence of being jovial; the laughter in Susan’s voice serves this function. These factors combined serve the function of addressing Kate and Ava’s transgression of not bringing their handbooks, but in a way that does not appear too critical or attacking. In responding as they do with laughter and smiles, Kate and Ava (and other group members, such as Raymond) similarly display that they have treated the utterance as a tease and not as an attack.



The group laugh along with Susan's tease that they are providing excuses for not having the correct materials with them (line 688-690).

So far this interaction is playing out as a 'typical' tease: an utterance is delivered as a tease, and the recipient(s) respond to it as a tease. In formulating the tease, Susan is demonstrating 'doing social control' in action'; making relevant that that the group should have their handbooks, but in a way that is not too domineering. However, what makes this an example of 'teasing going wrong' is what happens as the interaction continues.

Following the tease and laughter response from the group, Susan reorients to the issue of the student handbook, albeit this time void of markers to demonstrate any joviality. At line 691 she says, "it should be there in your diary", raising her voice to emphasise the 'there-ness' (as opposed to being absent), and highlighting the relevance of the student handbook in the current PBL tutorial. Following this, each of the group members who had previously displayed acceptance of the tease through laughing along with it still do so, but in a much more minimised way. After this, Susan continues her turn by referring to the function of the handbook ("for a bit of comfort" – lines 696-697), to which there is no aligning laughter, but just the

acknowledgement token “ohh” from Kate at line 698. Put more straightforwardly, over the course of a number of turns:

1. The teaser offers a criticism, but with markers demonstrating ‘joviality’, and the recipients align with the ‘joviality’, demonstrating their recognition of the utterance as a tease as opposed to a criticism
2. The teaser expands on the criticism but without markers, and the recipients align less readily, more minimally
3. The teaser continues criticism for a third time, and the recipients do not align whatsoever.

In other words, although the tease was arguably accepted at lines 688-690, the more Susan does it, the group are less open to it, and the more the interaction moves away from being a tease (as evidenced through jovial markers) the more it moves towards being an attack on the students. As such, by line 703, the interaction becomes problematic as evidenced by the lapses in conversation and the lack of response from other group members, and so Susan’s next turn is crucial in determining how the interaction moves on. The targets have demonstrated that they no longer treat Susan’s utterances as teases, as they do not respond favourably, but similarly, Susan does not construct her utterances as teases but rather as criticisms void of joviality, and so the group as a whole are at somewhat of a stalemate. Susan goes on to change the subject; she drops the criticism/ tease of the students not having their handbook without asking for an explanation, and instead goes back to the point she was making at the start of the extract, before the issue of the handbooks came to prominence. The pauses, self-repairs and tentative speech, however, indicate

trouble (Schegloff et al., 1977); perhaps in direct reflection of the group's interactions: when the teaser laughs, the targets laugh, but when the teaser does not laugh, the group does not laugh and so the teaser becomes unsettled, as evidenced in her talk. The teaser's status as tutor also troubles this; she is not on equal footing with the group and so teasing can easily be interpreted as criticism.

So what does this tell us about group dynamics when interaction does not run smoothly? It goes back to the importance of both teasing parties (teaser and target) being aligned in their interpretations of an interaction so that 'successful' teasing can take place; 'successful' being defined as achieving joint acknowledgement of some transgression in a way that invokes fun or at least an air of non-seriousness. The importance of this alignment cannot be overlooked; as we have seen here, as soon as the two parties begin to differ in their interpretations of an utterance, problems can arise. Susan's contributions shifted from obvious teasing about not having the student handbooks, to utterances more akin to critical remarks. In response, the targets' affiliative laughter dissipated, until the group as a whole were left with this awkward interaction in which the teaser had to make amends by dropping the whole issue of the handbooks and returning to the topic at hand. As such, no real conclusion was drawn about the importance of the handbooks, and arguably, it was not Susan's responsibility to chastise the group for not having their handbooks, since PBL is student-oriented and as such the group make relevant themselves the resources they do and do not need in each session.

Ultimately, had Susan moved on after addressing the transgression of not bringing their handbooks at line 687, the group would not be left with this awkward

interaction with Susan telling them what they should and should not do. Her teasing was accepted to begin with, but the more it went on, the less the group readily responded to it, suggesting that there is a cut-off point at which time teasing becomes less appropriate.

699 In the penultimate example of ‘teasing going wrong’, we refer to an
 700 interaction in which the target responds defensively, suggesting that they have not
 701 treated the previous utterance as a tease but as something else; an insult, or criticism.
 702 This thesis has already discussed in detail how markers are used in jovial talk, but
 703 that some utterances are still treated as teasing talk even in the absence of these.
 704 Consider the following interaction, which occurs in the same session as extract 4F:

705

706 *Extract 6F (Group 7)*

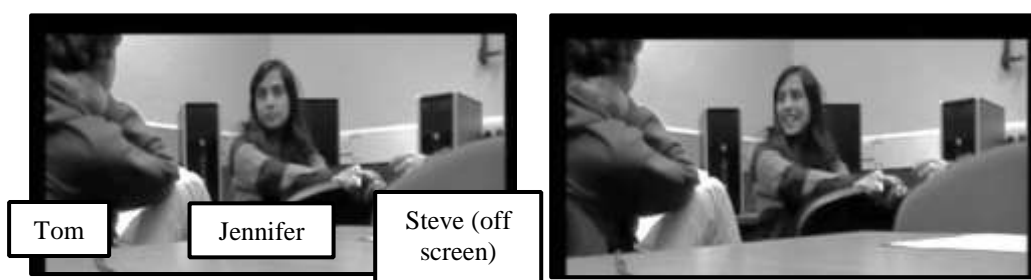
707 Tom: → ((looks up from reading)) what’s the species
 708 ↑called
 709 (1.0)
 710 Jennifer: £DON’T TEST me:
 711 Tom: no [it’s-
 712 Jennifer: [heh heh heh heh
 713 Tom: £ho(h)w do you pronounce it
 714 (1.0)
 715 Jennifer: °I’m gunna practice at home°
 716

717 This extract was also used in chapter 2 to exemplify how utterances that are
 718 not marked as teases can still be treated as teases, due to the somewhat rather
 719 innocuous utterance, “what’s the species called” being treated by the recipient as a
 720 tease. Here, we see Tom pick up on the issue from earlier – that Jennifer cannot
 721 pronounce a crucial species name – and Jennifer respond much more defensively
 722 than before.

723 It is of interest that Jennifer constructs Tom’s utterance as a “test”. Although
 724 most definitions consider teasing as containing an element of provocation, we rarely
 725 see targets verbalise what it was about the utterance that they regarded as
 726 provocative. Here, we see that Jennifer regards Tom to be “testing” her due to her

established inability to say the name of the species under investigation, as detailed in extract 4F, and as such, Jennifer demonstrates why she considers Tom's utterance as provoking. Why, though, does Jennifer respond more defensively here than in the earlier extract where a similar interaction took place, and as such, why does this demonstrate teasing going wrong?

To begin, it could be quite simply because of the formulation of the utterance. Based on our working definition to identify teases within the data corpus, there must be evidence of its joviality. Here, there is none, and instead the utterance is structured as a question requiring an answer. When we encountered a similar interaction in 4F, although there were also no cues to imply non-seriousness, Tom did not directly ask Jennifer the name of the species. Instead, he summated that, "you need to be able to say that" which, while somewhat directive, does not put Jennifer in the position of having to answer straightaway. Indeed, then, she responded jovially with, "I know", and the interaction between them continued. Perhaps here, because it is delivered as a question – and Tom looks up from reading to directly look at her – Jennifer feels more pressured and accountable to answer, which is why she responds defensively. This interaction is a clear example of a dispreferred second to an adjacency pair (Levinson, 1983), and as such breaches conversational norms. Usually, when asked a question, the recipient would answer in a way that satisfies what was being asked, so here Jennifer would name the species. However, before she even utters a single word we can identify that something is wrong; the pause at line 709 indicates trouble within the interaction, and indeed we see Jennifer respond in a way that does not satisfy the posed question.



At line 707, Tom asks Jennifer how to pronounce the species. Jennifer first responds defensively (line 710), and then laughs, so it is unclear whether she treats the utterance as a tease or not.

Jennifer's response in itself quite contradictory, if we look at it closely. On the one hand, the words she uses – constructing herself as being 'tested' by her peer – and her raised voice signify defensiveness; that she is under attack, it is inappropriate for Tom to ask her, and it is her own prerogative not to answer. On the other hand, she prefaces this with a smile, and the elongation of "me" towards the end of her utterance is reminiscent of a whiney voice put on by a child when they do not get their own way. What is clear, however, is that something has changed and whereas before Jennifer could laugh along at her inability to pronounce the important word, here, her immediate reaction is to defend herself and construct the issue as something Tom should not be doing (i.e. testing her) as opposed to something she should be doing (i.e. answering).

At line 711, we see Tom go on to respond to Jennifer's assertion that he was testing her. He appears to refute the notion, but his speech is cut off by Jennifer as she laughs, demonstrating that despite her previous 'defensive' turn, she has since treated the utterance as jovial. Tom then goes on to do something potentially risky; he again asks Jennifer how to pronounce the species. This is of analytical interest for two reasons. Firstly, the fact that he labours the point – despite Jennifer's previous turn – suggests it is an important issue for the group. Fundamentally, if she cannot

pronounce the crucial word on the group's joint podcast, this will have repercussions for the whole group. Tom therefore seems to be faced with two options here: let the issue slide, or press Jennifer for an answer, with the latter winning out. Although – again – we cannot comment on a speaker's intent, the fact that he repeats the question would suggest that in his first turn he was actually looking for an answer, and not just winding Jennifer up because he knows she has trouble with pronunciation. This takes us to the second point; that although he does press Jennifer for an answer, this time he makes it clear that it is in a playful manner; his 'smiley' voice and laughter punctuating his speech serve the function of demonstrating this, and as such show Jennifer that he is not out to embarrass her unduly.

The sequence following this, however, is very similar to the sequence at lines 707-710. Tom asks a question, which is followed by a pause indicating interactional trouble, before Jennifer responds in a dispreferred manner. This time, her turn at talk can be seen to accomplish proactive response work (Tholander & Aronsson, 2002). In stating that she is going to "practice at home", she protects herself against possible future teasing because she has already accounted for her (possible, future) transgression (Potter, 1996).

As such, we see how Jennifer manages the blame attributed to this interaction; that although she cannot currently pronounce the important word, she is taking steps in order to do so. It also demonstrates the importance of how a 'teasing' utterance is delivered, especially in the absence of speech markers. In asking a direct question, Tom holds Jennifer accountable to answer, and despite the fact that she does not, in stating her intention to "practice at home", Jennifer is protecting herself

from further ridicule as she proffers a valid excuse why she should not be targeted anymore (i.e. that despite not being able to pronounce the species just now, she is

698 taking steps to change this). However, if Jennifer still cannot pronounce the word the
 699 next time they meet, there could be consequences for her with regard to not keeping
 700 her promise of practising. Although it is valid for now, she is held accountable for
 701 her future actions. The teasing, therefore, has gone wrong as it has not produced a
 702 satisfactory outcome for the group; Tom is unsure if Jennifer can actually pronounce
 703 the crucial word, and Jennifer constructs herself as being “tested”/ put on the spot by
 704 her peer.

705 The final extract pertains to an example in which a group member is teased,
 706 and the group treat it as something unacceptable to tease about. Although this has not
 707 happened a lot in the data, it is of analytical interest here because of what it tells us
 708 about the group’s dynamics. Although this extract is an example of ‘teasing going
 709 wrong’ because of the orientation to the inappropriateness of the topic as a source for
 710 teasing – and as such demonstrative that there is disagreement within the group with
 711 regard to acceptable topics to tease about – it is arguably an extract demonstrative of
 712 cohesion within the group. We join the group as group member Raymond begins to
 713 tease Kate.

714

715 *Extract 6G (Group 1)*

716 Raymond: → she not- she’s not chosen she’s got autism
 717 (.) she’s focused on this
 718 Ella: [ha ha ha ha
 719 Ava: [heh heh heh
 720 Annabel: [((smiles))
 721 Kate: ah [heh heh heh heh
 722 Raymond: [hih hih hih hih hih
 723 Ella: fa(h)w a(h)w [INAPPROpriate
 724 Kate: [awww

725 Ava: [that's a shame
 726 Kate: [I don't've (.) autism
 727 Raymond: [aw crap am gettin'- I'm gettin' recorded
 728 here as well
 729 Kate: heh
 730 Ella: ((nods))
 731 (0.5)
 732 Raymond: ((slaps own hand))
 733 Ella: [fA HIH
 734 Raymond: [heh heh
 735 Kate: [hih

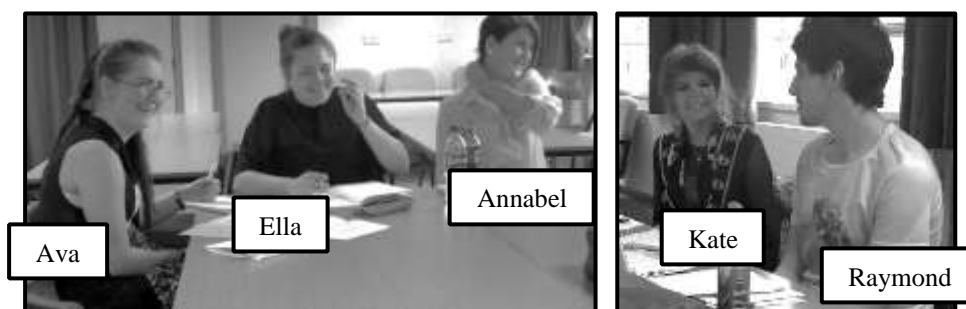
736

737 As we join the group, Kate has been discussing how much she enjoys the
 738 subject she studies at university (psychology), and that it is perfectly suited to her, as
 739 it is the only thing she considers herself to be good at. Just prior to the start of the
 740 extract, another group member suggests that Kate made a good choice since it is
 741 something she enjoys, and something she is good at, at which point Raymond
 742 suggests that the reason she is so good at it is because she has “got autism” and is
 743 “focused”, thus deconstructing the aspect of choice and instead assigning Kate the
 744 identity of being autistic; that her abilities in the subject are the result of adopting the
 745 autistic trait of ‘topic perseveration’ or inflexibility of thought (Prizant & Rydell,
 746 1993; Wing & Gould, 1978).

747 The response to this utterance is one of laughter, and as such it is treated as a
 748 tease, despite being delivered in a serious manner. We see at lines 718-722, not only
 749 the target (Kate) and the teaser (Raymond) laughing, but peers Ella and Ava too,
 750 while Annabel smiles. Such joint behaviour suggests that everyone in the group is
 751 ‘in’ on the joke together. Despite this, however, Ava, Ella and Kate’s facial
 752 expressions at this point suggest that something is amiss and that this is not ‘joyful’

753 laughter due to their frowning eyebrows, as such acts have been associated in the
754 past with maliciousness (e.g. Hofmann, 2014), although, of course, we cannot infer

anything from facial expressions. Indeed, in the next turn, Ella verbalises the “inappropriateness” of Raymond’s utterance (line 723).



As in extracts 4D, 5I and 5J, the images are split due to different cameras being used for recording. At line 716, Raymond suggests that the reason Kate is so focused on her studies is because she has “got autism”.

This is a departure from the norm of the extracts we have viewed throughout this thesis, because there is no other example of an individual verbally detailing what is and what is not appropriate to talk or tease about. No matter what the subject, if a speaker makes it clear they are joking as they talk, presumably almost any utterance could be recognised as a tease. Not doing so raises ambiguity as to whether the message of the utterance was serious. Throughout the analyses we have encountered utterances that are void of such markers but are treated as teases. Although this still happens here, it is followed up with an assessment that this is an unacceptable topic to tease about. Perhaps this is because of the subject of the tease; that ascribing a real life developmental disability to someone is simply not socially acceptable, and as such is treated as a kind of ‘taboo’ topic. Although we cannot say for sure why it happened, what we can do is discuss what impact it has on the group.

After the initial laughter response, Raymond’s peers begin to remove themselves from this joint laughter behaviour. Although still laughing a little, Ella

classes Raymond's utterance as "inappropriate", overlapping with Ava's assessment that, "that's a shame" (line 725) and Kate's "aww" (line 724); both building pity (e.g. Ellis, 2009; Smith & Thomas, 2005), and therefore adding credence that this is a topic that should not be joked about. Each of these utterances contribute to constructing what Raymond said as violating the norms of the groups, as something that should not be laughed about. As such, their preceding laughter here serves the function of demonstrating their treatment of Raymond's utterance as non-serious, but at the same time, not necessarily aligning with it.

Kate then goes on to do what we have seen previously in such interactions: respond to the tease. However, the way in which she does so is a departure from the way in which we have seen similar instances play out. To begin, she constructs what she is saying as serious. Like the 'po-faced' responses that Drew (1987) details, there are no markers in Kate's utterance to demonstrate portrayal of 'joviality', and as such, we can interpret what she says as being serious. In addition, in defending herself, she does not offer an account or explanation, but instead simply refutes it by saying, "I don't have autism". This is likely because there is no clear reason for Kate to be teased – she did not commit a transgression – and so there is no reason for her to offer any further explanation or account. At the same time as Kate is speaking, Raymond too orients to his comment, verbalising that this his utterance has been caught on camera and as such subtly aligning with his peers that what he said was unacceptable. As such, Raymond slaps his own hand (line 732) which serves the dual purpose of acknowledging his inappropriate remark, but also adding some light relief for the group in the form of a slapstick display, resulting in more laughter.

As discussed earlier, when a tease is delivered in a way that could be interpreted as serious (due to a lack of markers), the interaction becomes less playful, blurring the lines between teasing and something more problematic, unless the speaker corrects it or unless the target accounts for the supposed transgression. Here, however, Kate did not commit a transgression yet still was teased which is unusual in interaction because it could be interpreted as an unprovoked attack on her. Certainly, when an individual commits a transgression such as violating a group norm, this lays the foundation for them to be teased about it, so when a tease comes out of the blue – especially one on such a potentially sensitive topic – more work has to be done by both parties to ensure a mutual understanding of the interaction.

In treating the tease as inappropriate, the group highlight what is and what is not okay to tease/ joke about, for them, which might suggest that this is an example of teasing going wrong. However, in aligning as a group to construct this stance, the group actually demonstrate a mutual understanding and closeness. Understanding the boundaries of acceptable teasing is required to engage in successful teasing (Aronson et al., 2007). Even the teaser acknowledges this both through his speech (“aw crap I’m getting recorded” – line 727) and through his actions, and in return, his peers offer him some supportive laughter towards the end of the interaction (lines 733 and 735). Therefore, despite the tease being produced as “inappropriate”, the group demonstrate their cohesiveness through their treatment of it.

Chapter summary

So what have we learned from the analyses of teasing going wrong? Fundamentally, in analysing deviant cases such as these it adds analytical support for

the patterns detailed in chapters 4 and 5; i.e. the functions that are served in interaction for groups through responding to teasing, and formulating teasing. The chapter began with demonstrating the difference between unsuccessful teasing, and teasing going wrong. Although these might sound similar, they are actually interactionally quite different.

In order for a tease to be successful, both teasing parties must demonstrate their treatment of the tease in the same way. Because the purpose of teasing is (usually) to direct attention to a transgression, the teaser only knows if their utterance has been successful (i.e. that the target understands the point they are getting at) if it is responded to. Teasing ‘softens the blow’, as it were, in delivering a critique of something. It allows us to address an issue or a norm violation without coming across as overly critical, or attacking, or cruel (Drew, 1987, Keltner et al., 2001, Tholander & Aronsson, 2002). This is why achieving joint understanding is so critical; if the teaser and target are misaligned at all in their interpretation of an interaction, the message may not be received, and as such, the teaser may as well have addressed the situation with a more straightforward insult, without hiding behind conversational markers in order to save the face of the recipient. Unsuccessful teasing, therefore, pertains to interactions in which the target has not treated it as teasing, but as ‘something else’ (cf. Voss, 1997). This was shown in this chapter by a lack of reciprocal markers on the target’s part, and serious account work taking place instead.

Teasing going wrong, however, refers to instances that have played out as ‘usual’, but then something happens in the interaction that causes a disruption to normative teasing patterns; the teaser may verbalise their non-seriousness (e.g. 6B, C

and D), the teasing may go on for too long (6E), or the target may assert that the tease topic is unsuitable, despite perhaps displaying recognition that the interaction is in jest. If we treat both a teaser and target as mutually responsible for the creation of a tease, we can see that in each of these examples of ‘teasing going wrong’, it has been the fault of the teaser, not the target.

In extracts 6B, C, and D, we encountered episodes in which a group member transgressed in some way, and was teased for it. However, in each of these, the teaser appeared to ‘backtrack’ on their tease by offering face-saving tactics. As mentioned earlier, this is likely because of the lack of reciprocal markers; in not being directly shown that the target ‘gets’ the non-seriousness of the interaction, the teaser could be held accountable for upsetting/ bullying/ criticising them. We saw in chapter 5 that targets who can laugh at themselves and demonstrate ‘playing along’ are constructed as valuable members of the group, so in not displaying this behaviour, the targets must make it clear that the interaction was in jest.

Of interest is how quickly such ‘backtracking’ happened in the abovementioned extracts, though, because in 6E the opposite phenomenon happened. In 6B and D in particular, the teaser verbalised their ‘kidding-ness’ in the turn immediately following the target’s display of taking the interaction seriously, and engaged in face work to accentuate the non-seriousness. In 6E, however, following a ‘successful’ tease, the teaser began labouring the point to the extent to which the group members’ affiliation with the message of the tease dissipated, and the interaction became more akin to a group of school children being told off by the teacher. This supports the importance of accounting for supposed transgressions; as discussed in part two of chapter 5, although a group member may be desirable for

their ability to be the butt of a joke, it is when they do this but defend themselves at the same time that the most optimal functions are served. Following the first tease in extract 6E, had any of the group members accounted for their actions (i.e. why they did not have their student handbook), this may well have halted the recurrent teasing/criticising from the facilitator. Indeed, in not offering an excuse as such, the targets leave themselves open to further attacks.

Extract 6F arguably demonstrates the importance of markers to indicate teasing talk. In this extract, we saw a group member treat a question as a test. If the question had been formulated more jovially, the receiver may not have responded so defensively. The way in which she does so, though, is of interest, because the message of her utterance (that she is being put on the spot through being tested) does not align with the delivery ('smiley' voice, followed by laughter). This deviant case suggests that the academic identity occasionings we considered in chapter 4 are perhaps not as clear cut as it seems; that even though such occasionings are made relevant to address transgressions, they are not always accepted, and as such can produce potential negative consequences. In 6F for instance, although it was appropriate in the context of the interaction to occasion Jennifer's 'academic-ness', in responding so defensively, she is undermining the extent to which she actually has an academic identity.

Finally, extract 6G offered an example of an 'inappropriate' topic to tease about. Of interest is the way in which the group, perhaps counter-intuitively, demonstrated cohesion, and the importance of aligning. Following the assertion that one group member was autistic as a reason for why she is so focused, we saw the rest of the group treat this as a tease by orienting to it with joint laughter. In the next turn,

however, the group – again jointly – started to construct the interaction as wrong to laugh at/ tease about, with even the teaser aligning. This is evident of teasing going wrong due to the fact that – similarly to those ‘backtracking’ extracts – it was relevant to verbalise that this topic was “inappropriate”. Usually groups do not make reference to *why* teasing has occurred as it is rather obvious in its message, and so doing so here indicates trouble. However, the trouble is vindicated by the alignment of the group in demonstrating they treat it in the same way, and although it was constructed as “inappropriate”, the fact that even the teaser recognises this is inherently beneficial.

What this chapter has shown, therefore, is that teasing tends to go wrong when the teaser and target are not aligned in their treatment and understanding of an interaction; if a teaser does not make it clear that they are teasing, or a target does not orient to the non-seriousness of the interaction. Clancy (1986) discussed how different research perspectives consider successful communication to be the responsibility of either the speakers, or the listeners. The approach taken in this thesis would argue, however, that making sense of communication is a collaborative action, and that appears to have been evidence in these teasing interactions. This will be considered again in the following, final, chapter.

Chapter 7 Discussion

This thesis has examined the social functions that teasing can serve within PBL. While there is growing empirical research to demonstrate that PBL ‘works’ in that it enhances self-directed learning skills and retention of knowledge over a longer time period than more traditional methods (e.g. Clouston, 2007), there is limited research on the processes involved in understanding exactly *how* PBL works. The current research took a relatively unique discursive psychological approach to understanding the interactional practices that are at the heart of PBL, as, while it is established as a credible learning method (Hmelo-Silver, 2004), there is a lack of consideration of the more naturalistic side of the approach which does not look for cause-and-effect outcomes of the approach, but rather what happens in PBL, in real time.

To do so, the phenomenon known commonly as ‘teasing’ was investigated. Teasing in groups has been shown to foster social rejection and aggression (e.g. Boulton & Hawker, 1997; Randall, 1997), but has conversely also been shown to create socialisation and affiliation between individuals (e.g. Campos et al., 2007; Keltner et al., 1998). However, it is unclear exactly *how* this happens, as literature has often studied the practice of teasing based on retrospective reports and not actual real-time experiences.

This research, therefore, has highlighted a gap in the literature: analysing teasing as it happens in real time in PBL, and discussing the differing functions teasing can serve within such group interaction. While teasing has been investigated within the context of groups previously (e.g. Eder, 1991; 1993; Lampert & ErvinTripp, 2006; Tholander & Aronsson, 2002; Walsh et al., 2009; Yu, 2013), it is not a common focus within PBL literature, and so the findings here, although relevant to groups more generally, can specifically be considered in terms of the context in which the study was conducted.

The analysis was split into three sections. The first considered how teasing is formulated, focusing on one 'type' (academic identity constructions) to show how doing so can serve the function of attending to deviant behaviour and as such highlight group norms and identity. The second section focused on responding to teasing; how group cohesion can be constructed and deconstructed depending on how teasing is treated in interaction. The final section considered what happens when teasing goes wrong, in order to further exemplify how such 'traditional' group dynamic foci such as cohesion, norms and identity can be evidenced in interaction. Such deviant case analyses can add credence to what is normative in teasing constructions, and can show whether a generalisation is robust (Potter, 2012).

This chapter, therefore, will involve a review of each of the analytical chapters to highlight their main findings, a critique of the research as a whole, a consideration of possible future directions work in the area could go, and an overview of the ways in which the research has contributed to each of PBL research, teasing research, and discursive psychological research.

Part 1: Revisiting findings

To begin, I will recapitulate the main analytical arguments.

1.1 Academic identities occasioned in teasing

The first analytic chapter began the demonstration of how teases can be constructed to perform certain functions in interaction. In this chapter, the function that was being served was signalling deviant behaviour. ‘Group norms’, conceptualised cognitively, refer to the unspoken rules that govern a group through which behaviour is controlled (e.g. Forsyth, 2006). The discursive approach adopted within this thesis, though, posits that group norms are constructed in interaction – not as an underlying process – and one way in which to do so is through identity positionings.

To do so, the chapter was split into two sections focusing on two opposing phenomena; constructing academic identity as non-normative (and so displays of ‘being academic’ were treated as transgressive), and constructing academic identity as normative (and so displays of ‘being non-academic’ were treated as transgressive). In both cases, we saw how teases were formulated to address these norm violations, and as such evidence ‘group dynamics’ in practice.

Such deviant behaviour displays are important to orient to particularly within the likes of PBL, as each group member is reliant on the others to, at the very least, get through the class, but possibly even pass an assignment. Provan (2011) distinguishes between ‘real’ and ‘idealised’ PBL, arguing that whilst in theory, students should learn everything themselves by engaging in group discussions this does not always happen. Additionally, research has identified that educators may be

reluctant to implement PBL in their teaching for fear that groups veer ‘off topic’ (e.g. Jennings, 2006), so it is heartening to see that the students themselves will attend to deviant group behaviour.

1.2 Accountability in teasing

The second analytical chapter demonstrated the variance of ways in which a tease target responds to being teased, ranging from playing along to the extent that they self-tease, to retaliating against the teaser by teasing back. These findings are not new; Tholander and Aronsson’s (2002) research into response work, for instance, demonstrated a similar continuum in which they classed responses as ranging from ‘defensive’ to ‘offensive’. The current analysis split such responses into the following broad groups; ‘playing along’, ‘doing defence’, and ‘biting back’, to demonstrate the functions that are served by responding in each of these ways.

The analysis of ‘playing along’ responses demonstrated that doing so serves the function of creating ‘fun’ within the interaction. Such displays were evidenced by a tease target’s complete acceptance of a tease, joining in with the joviality of it, and demonstrating that they ‘got’ the tease-ness of the interaction, even in interactions where it was not entirely clear that the speaker was teasing. Barrett (2005), for instance, views such fun displays in PBL not as something separate from work and learning but as occasioned within it, and certainly here we can see that in responding to teasing in such a way, group bonds are strengthened through the shared laughter, and ultimately treatment, of the situation.

Moving on from demonstrating ‘playing along’, the analysis showed the functions served through accounting for transgressions. Accounting as we saw here

gives the target the chance to ‘repair’ the interaction where they are held responsible for some sort of disruption, but in a way that demonstrates their ability to remain composed and as such be constructed as a respected group member. There is a balance, however, between remaining composed and accounting for transgressions, and if targets respond to teasing too defensively, they are positioned as not being able to take a joke.

So what does this mean for PBL? Fundamentally it shows us the importance of ‘successful’ teasing. Particularly within group work – and specifically PBL when the same group often works together for prolonged periods of time – it is important that peers have a reciprocal understanding of the interactions that are taking place. If, for instance, a speaker delivers an utterance that, to them, is a tease but is treated as a criticism by the target this is potentially troublesome for the ensuing interaction, as we saw in those extracts towards the end of the chapter. The speaker, in delivering what he considers a tease, if not acknowledged as not, may do so again in the future, unaware that the recipient has regarded it as a criticism. If the recipient does not acknowledge how they have treated the utterance, they may consider it as normal interaction from the speaker, and as such construct them as a bully. Research does not really distinguish between teasing and bullying other than to state that teasing is a form of bullying (e.g. Mills & Carwile, 2009), however, bullying is an action which (rightly so) is taken very seriously in the world we live in. If group members are treating interaction in different ways, there could be troublesome consequences. However, when group members demonstrate joint treatment of the interaction, we can argue that this is a display of group cohesion in action.

1.3 When teasing goes wrong

The final analytical chapter was designed to support the findings of chapters 4 and 5; i.e. to demonstrate through deviant case analyses how cohesion, norms and identity can be constructed in PBL interaction through teasing. To begin, we differentiated between unsuccessful teasing (a misalignment between the teaser and target in terms of their treatment of the interaction) and ‘teasing going wrong’ (‘successful’ teasing, followed by something happening to disrupt the normative teasing interaction patterns). The chapter used deviant cases from the data to demonstrate how instances such as ‘backtracking’ on a tease by verbalising that an utterance was in jest, teasing for too long, and teasing about something deemed ‘inappropriate’ can tell us more about normative teasing behaviours, and the functions they can serve.

This chapter also demonstrated the importance of joint alignment within teasing interactions, achieved through both the teaser and target marking their talk to signify how they have treated it (Clark, 1996). Not doing so is fundamentally the main reason for ‘teasing going wrong’, and can have impactful consequences. For instance, PBL research has shown that it has the potential to produce bettermotivated students than its traditionally-educated counterparts (de Graff & Kolmos, 2003; MacDonald & Isaacs, 2001), but because of the premise of working collaboratively, this is of little value if students are not aligned in their understanding and treatment of what they are to do. This deviant case chapter, then, was helpful to see how the normative teasing activities – both formulating and receiving – play out.

1.4 Summary of findings

To return to the aims of the thesis as stated in the introduction:

1. What is a tease and how is it defined?
2. How is a tease constructed as such, and how does it play out in interaction?
3. What function(s) does teasing serve in PBL interaction?

Arguably, any utterance can be considered a tease until its status is ratified by the recipient. Even something as seemingly innocuous as, “you look nice today” – which could, in other circumstances, be treated as a compliment – could be considered a tease by the recipient depending on the context of the interaction. Past literature in the area defines teasing based upon intention and provocation (e.g. Keltner et al., 2001), but these categories cannot be evidenced, and so the discursive approach to the study of – and thus definition of – teasing is based upon considering the functions that teasing can serve. Therefore, instead of asking, “what is a tease?”, it is perhaps of more interest to ask, “what can teasing do or show?”.

Teasing is collaboratively constructed by what we have termed a ‘teaser’ and a ‘target’, to refer to the speaker and the recipient of the tease. These labels are perhaps unfounded, however, if an utterance is not treated as a tease; if a ‘target’ does not orient to a tease despite the teaser marking it as such, they are arguably not considered a ‘target’. Again, this suggests that the classifications of such interactions are not the part to focus on, but rather what happens as a result of such interactions. However, we need to be able to refer to such interactions as something so for now we will continue to discuss teasing as an interactional action, although this debate regarding definitions will be picked up again in part three.

In its simplest terms, a teasing interaction can be identified as a collaborative action between (at least) two individuals. Although past research has posited that teasing is something one individual does to another (e.g. Eder, 1993), this does not fit with the approach of discursive psychology and conversation analysis which posits that interactions are understood through considering what the last speaker ‘did’, what the current is ‘doing’, and what the next speaker will ‘do’ (Schegloff, 1972). Therefore, we can only know that teasing has ‘happened’ in interaction if the speaker and recipient orient to it as such by treating it in the same way. Arguably, the fact that there is such difficulty defining what teasing evidences the extent to which it is a collaborative action: if its definition was reliant only on how the speaker formulated it or how the target responded to it, it would be easier to identify in interaction. The fact remains that teasing always occurs as a next turn, as a response to something, not just out of the blue, which demonstrates its interactivity, and that it’s serving some kind of function.

As it is, this thesis has demonstrated teasing as a collaborative action and discursive device, used to interactionally negotiate ‘group dynamics’ such as cohesion, group norms, and group identity.

Part 2: Thesis critique

This chapter now moves on to critique the thesis, discussing the difficulties faced throughout the process of conducting the research.

2.1 Method critique

Technical challenges

As this research was dependent on a number of technologies for data collection, it seems apt to begin the critique with this.

Video recordings allow access to the fine – seemingly slight – details of teasing such as eye gaze and gesture, showing how they are inextricably embedded within interaction. The current research, I believe, has benefitted from the inclusion of video data both in terms of collection and analyses, particularly when teasing interactions contained embodied gesturing (cf. Goodwin, 2000a) in the delivery of, or response to, teasing. However, the use of such technologies is not without challenges (Luff & Heath, 2012). Particularly with groups 7, 8, and 9, there was a wide variance of quality of recordings and length. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that groups were responsible for their own recordings, and so there was no quality control from either myself or the contact at their institution. This meant that there were problems with audio and images which ultimately made it more difficult to analyse the group interactions taking place. In addition, because groups could record when they wanted, there was no record of sessions; i.e. as the analyst, I did not know what ‘stage’ of PBL they were working on in each recording. This was not necessarily problematic as the analytical focus was not concerned with this, but had it been more so directed at, for instance, the educational outcomes of PBL, this would have been helpful to know.

At the home institution, luckily, there were few technological issues to contend with. I was fortunate enough to use two recording devices per recording room in most instances, which arguably halved the chances of failed recordings

(although this did happen once in group 4's session). There were occasions in which the sound quality dropped and it was difficult/ impossible to hear what was being said in interaction, but for the most part, recordings went well.

Participants

There are a number of criticisms that could be made with regard to the participants in the study, primarily because of the naturalistic approach to data collection. To begin, we must consider the fact that all participants were aware that they were being recorded as part of a PhD project. In extracts 5F and 6G of the analysis, we encountered instances in which a group member made this point relevant to the interaction at hand, through specifically orienting to the cameras recording the interaction. As such, the research could be criticised for not being a 'true' reflection of group interaction, due to the fact that students were aware of the cameras recording in the room (e.g. Gardner, 2000). The students could potentially be held accountable for changing behaviours to 'fit' with their perceived norms of how students should behave. In particular, because they knew the project supervisors – departmental staff members (from the University of Strathclyde) – would be viewing the footage for data analysis, again, the research could be criticised for not being a 'true' reflection of their interactions if the cameras were not present.

However, this potential criticism can be countered in two ways. Firstly, the whole premise of discursive psychology is that it adopts the stance of methodological relativism; there is no 'truth' that one is trying to discover (e.g. Potter, 2012).

Although one may accuse a participant of, for instance, changing their behaviour in order to appear more studious (especially considering the PhD supervisor was the class leader/ facilitator for three of the groups and thus had access to the recordings) in doing whatever they were doing in front of the cameras, the students' actions were relevant to the time and context. Additionally, within the transcripts there were identified episodes in which it would appear that students had forgotten that they were being recorded, based upon the subject of some of their discussions. Although this is not evidenced, anecdotally it would suggest that students were not aware of the cameras at all times. Video-recording PBL interaction has been identified as advantageous for providing insights into group and tutor activity (Moore & Poikela, 2011), and so the more widespread this becomes, perhaps the more routinely it will be treated.

On a similar note, in relation to groups I personally facilitated, it could be argued that I may have un/intentionally attempted to encourage interaction from the groups that was beneficial for the PhD project. Potter & Hepburn (2005) promote the value of reflexivity as one key element of the discursive approach, advocating that researchers must attend actively and reflexively to their own involvement with, and creation of, data. The analytical focus for the project was not established until around a year following the last recording, and so at the time of facilitation, I did not know what aspect of interaction was going to be the primary focus, and so could not have possibly influenced the groups as such.

Representation

A further possible critique of this research – and similar research – is whether the groups under investigation are representative of ‘real’ groups. Research such as that by Gregerman and colleagues (1998) posits that university students who engage with student-faculty research are more likely to be committed to their course (Gregerman, Lerner, von Hippel, Jonides & Nagda, 1998), and so we can broadly surmise that the students who partook in the current research may be more aspiring than their non-participating peers. As such, however, this could be deemed as not necessarily representative of all types of PBL groups, and that arguably, it would have been of more interest/ value to analyse the interactions that take place in other types of groups too, to obtain more of a conclusive overview of PBL groups-ininteraction. However, as stated earlier in this thesis, it is not the aim of discursive psychology to produce generalisable findings, but to contribute to developing theory and supporting past claims, although the application debate is one that persists within this field, such is the empirical-ness of the approach (Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007). The discussion now moves on to consider some of the challenges and issues in relation to the methodological approach.

2.2 Methodology critique

Data categories

The first issue to address is one which has already been noted, and that is the difficulty in defining what teasing is, and as such how it was possible to create a corpus of teasing instances. Although the focus of the thesis is on teasing within PBL, the fact that I have categorised such interactions as evidence of teasing is somewhat problematic. It is not the fact that I have deemed them ‘teasing’ when they

should instead be 'joking' or 'bullying'; the actual name of the category is irrelevant. The problem is that in even composing a data corpus of such instances, I am adopting an etic approach to the interaction, when such categories should come from those actually involved in the interaction as opposed to an outsider commenting on something which they have nothing to do with (Stokoe, 2000).

In creating the corpus, I first identified episodes of laughter within the transcripts. My justification for this was to learn more about what was happening in groups when laughter was present. Perhaps unfounded, I had previously considered laughter akin to social talk – not pedagogical talk – and so I questioned what interactional functions were being served for a working group in doing so. Contrary to beliefs that it is spontaneous and involuntary, laughter is actually organised and precisely placed; deployed at specific moments to achieve certain actions (Jefferson, 1984), and so to discover that laughter was bound up in institutional talk was of interest to me, as it seemed to bridge the gap between academic and social interaction. Put simply: if laughter was present when groups were on-task and doing PBL, this intuitively suggested that group members were engaging with each other in some way.

As such, the teasing corpus was established based on the premise that a tease was a tease if it was bound up with laughter; with laughter being the key marker to identify jovial delivery or jovial treatment of the utterance, which in turn classed it as a tease (as opposed to anything else). As the analysis has shown, however, laughter is not a certified response to teasing, and so only analysing those extracts in which laughter is present neglects the interactions that could be still be treated as teasing, but just void of laughter. However, this raises an intriguing question that links back,

again, to the issue of definition: perhaps it is the presence of laughter that distinguishes teasing from other types of interactions. If an utterance is delivered seriously, and responded to seriously, neither party displays playfulness which is arguably what differentiates teasing from more critical constructs such as bullying (Alberts, 1992; Connolly, Baird, Bravo, Loyal, Pepler & Craig, 2015; Drew, 1987).

This raises another question – how do we define a group as being ‘on-task and doing PBL’? Again, this makes relevant the issue of the emic/ etic debate regarding who determines what talk is categorised as. Just because groups are in the PBL setting does not necessarily mean that everything they say is pedagogical talk, and similarly, when groups take a break and so are ‘officially’ social chatting, it does not necessarily mean that what they are saying can be separated from the PBL environment. In her 2000 analysis into topicality constructions, Stokoe, for instance, argued that identifying and coding categories of talk along the lines of being “effective”, “successful”, “off-task” or “on-task” can actually miss the point of such constructions. From a conversation analytical stance, she states that treating topics as discrete, identifiable units is problematic, because most topics do not have identifiable boundaries and so defining something as “on” or “off-topic” is subjective. The fact, then, that the data corpus in the current thesis was treated in this way is detrimental to the analysis and arguably undermines its validity. This is just one of the methodological issues that has been highlighted by other research (e.g. Jahoda, 2013).

In relation to some of the issues we have acknowledged with regard to the current thesis, this final chapter now moves on to consider some of the direction future research could take.

Part 3: Future research

There are a number of ways in which research in this field could be extended, which is out with the scope of this thesis, but still merits brief discussion.

Defining a definition?

Firstly, there is still debate as to how to define teasing. Although this analysis has demonstrated what teasing ‘looks like’ in interaction, it has also demonstrated the huge variance with which teasing can be formulated and treated. Within this thesis, we have seen teasing displays by way of questions, assessments, imitations, sarcasm and exaggeration to name just a few. In response, we have encountered laughter, smiling, agreement, self-deprecation, defence and retaliation. However, each of these categories faces the same kind of criticisms regarding definitions.

As such, it would be loath of me to offer a single definition of teasing, not least because the methodology used in this thesis follows an emic approach; that is categories (such as teasing) are created by those who are actually involved in the practice, and how they perceive and categorise the world (e.g. Potter & Hepburn, 2007). This is why people treat teasing differently, and one of the real difficulties of analysing such a topic, because although I as the researcher considered teasing to be happening in the data, the group members actually involved may consider it as playing or joking in one instance, and bullying and insulting in another. The DP approach therefore starts with considering how teasing is constructed in interaction in

particular settings, showing how it is constructed to perform certain functions such as addressing deviant behaviour.

Future research, therefore, may want to pay closer attention to how teasing is conceptualised, but possibly more importantly, differentiated both *within* what we class as teasing (so the ways in which a tease can be malicious, or biting, or friendly), and also in comparison to other, similar *types* of interactions (such as criticising, mocking, bullying etc.). It may be that there is no differentiation, but in a climate where the likes of bullying is (rightly) taken so seriously, it seems important to at least engage in such discussions.

Other 'categories'

The current analyses focused only on in-group teasing, when it would be of interest to consider the interactional functions served through teasing between groups. Gockel (2007), for instance, demonstrated that group cohesion can be enhanced through group members' shared amusement at the expense of someone else outside the group. An in-press publication by myself and my PhD supervisors has begun to consider this; how established concepts such as 'group cohesion' can be discursively constructed through the likes of teasing and gossiping. Again, this is of particular importance in environments like PBL where there has been little past work into the more 'social' interactions (like teasing and gossiping) that take place, and so demonstrating in real time how such interactions play out – and to what end – we are better placed to support group interaction in our role as educators/ class leaders/ facilitators.

In addition, future research in the area may wish to take a broader view of the ways in which teasing is formulated. We know that teasing most commonly occurs in response to norm deviations (cf. Drew, 1987), but how does teasing demonstrate this? The current thesis focused on only one way of categorising this – through occasioning academic identity as normative or non-normative – but there are many other ways in which such norm deviations can be attended to. Future research, therefore, may wish to focus solely on this to demonstrate more closely how such interactions are formulated turn-by-turn.

The structure of teasing

Despite the above recommendation, arguably it is pointless to consider just the delivery or just the receipt of teasing, because the fundamental argument of this thesis is that teasing is a collaborative action, and not just something that one individual *does* to another. As such, there is a need for more of a focus on the structure of teasing interactions. We know about the importance of ‘successful’ teasing, in that it is important for both the teaser and target to align their understanding of the interaction. We also know that teasing can be *constructed* in different ways (such as, as stated above, imitations, sarcasm, and questions), but what about the *delivery* of teases in interaction? In this thesis we observed the following:

1. Utterances marked as teases, and treated as teases (e.g. 4I, 5E, 6E)
2. Utterance not marked as teases, but treated as teases (e.g. 4F, 5B, 6G)
3. Utterances marked as teases, but not treated as teases (e.g. 4C, 6A)

It is of interest to question why these variances occurred, and what we can learn from it. These will be considered consequentially. To begin, as in point 1, utterances that are marked as teases and treated as teases are, as we know, evidence of ‘successful’ teasing. Both parties display their treatment of the interaction as the same, and as such the teaser is not positioned as insulting the target, and the target is not positioned as not being able to take a joke.

Considering point two, however, some targets respond to utterances as teases when they are not displayed as such. Perhaps doing so saves face (Brown & Levinson, 1978); in treating an utterance as jovial but that is delivered more like a criticism, targets are able to use laughter as a way of deflecting or downplaying the ‘seriousness’ of what is being put to them. However, this questions the importance of markers in teasing activity; despite past research emphasising the importance of marking speech to indicate non-seriousness (e.g. Clark, 1996), if targets are treating interactions as teases without these, perhaps this renders them somewhat redundant. Certainly, of all the extracts considered in the analysis chapters, over a third of the interactions were not marked as teases, but were treated as teases nonetheless, so perhaps instead of focusing on the way in which the tease is delivered, we should look at the message of the tease.

On the other hand, however, we also encountered instances in which a tease was marked as playful or jovial, but the target did not reciprocate such markers. This would suggest they have not treated the interaction as teasing but as something else. What we need to remember is that the recipient has options regarding how they can respond, whereas the speaker does not; if a speaker marks his utterance as jovial, he cannot then claim that he was being serious. However, upon hearing a jovial

utterance, a recipient can respond in a variety of ways which impacts the resultant interaction. In not responding jovially to a marked utterance, therefore, the recipient is potentially accountable for the misalignment, which we know is detrimental for the group.

However, that is not to say that just because a target responds in one way at one certain time that they will continue to treat the utterance as such. Referring back to extract 6F, for instance, we saw a group member respond defensively to an utterance in her first turn (suggesting she treated it as something more offensive than teasing), but then laughed in her next turn (suggesting she recognised the ‘teasiness’) of it. In the same, but opposing, way, just because a tease recipient laughs along with a tease at one point in time, does not necessarily mean that they do not, at a later time, consider the interaction as harmful as opposed to playful (Ahmed, 2006; Lawrence, 2001). Future research should therefore consider the significance of marking speech in teasing interactions – from both the speaker and receiver – focusing in more depth on the functions that these can have.

These are just some of the directions future research could take, and although not conclusive, would help to broaden the research area in terms of learning more about the intricacies of teasing in groups. The chapter – and thesis – concludes now with a final summation of the key points raised within the thesis, and how the research has contributed to literature in the area.

Part 4: Chapter summary

This chapter has talked through the analytical findings, providing a critique of the thesis, and discussed possible future research directions. The chapter will come to

an end now by considering the ways in which the research has contributed to the fields of PBL, teasing, and discursive psychology.

PBL

As established, much past research in PBL has focused on the educational ‘outcomes’ of the approach. While it can be encouraging to learn that, for instance, PBL students can perform significantly better than their traditionally-taught counterparts (e.g. Distlehorst, Dawson, Robbs & Barrows, 2005), we are somewhat unaware of how this ‘better-ness’ manifests in interaction. Although more qualitative approaches to the study of PBL are beginning to become more prevalent in research (e.g. Chan et al., 2015; Jin et al., 2015; Visschers-Pleijers et al., 2006), there are still great claims being made about group dynamics within PBL, which often are methodologically questionable. As such, this thesis has contributed to the plea for more qualitative research in the field (e.g. Clouston, 2007), by focusing on an aspect of interaction that is not necessarily specific to PBL, but that can inform us about the group processes that are taking place therein. As such, this thesis contributes to the knowledge and understanding of PBL as a pedagogy by analysing the intricacies of talk-in-interaction, but also contributes to the expansion of our knowledge about group work in general, too.

Teasing

The thesis has demonstrated how, far from considering it as something one person does to another, teasing is a collaborative interaction, constructed to serve different functions in interaction. Past research has detailed how teasing has the

power to, for instance, “influence” (Mills & Babrow, 2003) or “bully” (Keltner et al., 1998), but it has been rather unclear how this happens. In conceptualising teasing as a discursive device, therefore, we saw more clearly how concepts like cohesion and norms were demonstrated in interaction; through ‘doing laughing along’ and ‘doing academic-ness’.

The analysis also demonstrated the importance of alignment between (at least) the teaser and target in teasing interactions; that two treating the interaction in the same way is inherently more advantageous for the group as a whole than if it is treated differently. This raises questions about what teasing actually is, and how it is defined in interaction, because it remains problematic to offer a definitive definition that covers the whole spectrum of teasing, primarily due to the individual differences in the way in which we experience teasing. Despite this, the thesis has arguably highlighted some of the main issues within the field, particularly since there is relatively little that considers it from a discursive perspective.

Discursive psychology

This leads us to the final area of literature in which the thesis is placed. It is the aim of discursive psychology to reconceptualise the way that topics have traditionally been treated in psychology (cf. Potter & Edwards, 1992). As such, this makes the current study of group processes and group dynamics as relevant and topical within the field. Discursive psychology adopts a social constructionist approach to research; that is to say that it examines the world in terms of jointlyconstructed understandings, that there is no one ‘truth’ that shapes who we are and what we do. In considering teasing from this perspective, then, it allows us to

conceptualise it as a way of accessing such 'group dynamics'; that teasing as an interactive practice demonstrates group dynamics based on participants' treatments of the interaction. In adopting such an approach to the study of teasing, we have raised the issue of the difficulty of offering a definition as to what teasing actually is, as it has historically hinged on one individual's intentions towards another. However, raising such questions is not necessarily a negative thing, and contributes to the evolving field of research (Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007).

Conclusion

"Sticks and stones may break my bones
But names will never hurt me" (Cupples, 1872, p. 78)

Is this well-known adage true? As with offering perspectives on probably anything, the answer is a tentative 'possibly'. While there are certainly benefits from teasing such as criticising without being too critical, and constructing 'fun', there are also detriments as demonstrated through misalignments in the treatment of teasing. Certainly, teasing as a social practice is not something to be out-rightly recommended due to its inherent links with bullying, but then again, it can be beneficial in certain circumstances. For PBL groups, who often work together for prolonged periods of time and are reliant on each other for academic outcomes, teasing can be a good way to negotiate relationships and manage interactions, although it will probably never achieve a universally-accepted definition simply because everyone responds differently to it, at different times, and depending upon who is doing the teasing and what it is about. Although teasing may seem less

important to study than, for instance, how students learn, such social interactions can play a huge part in the relative ‘success’ or ‘failure’ for PBL. Perhaps, then, all future PBL research should dismiss analysis of the educational outcomes of the approach, and instead focus on incessant ‘picking on’ one group member, to see what interactional functions can be served for the group in doing so.

...just kidding.

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Appendix A: Maastricht University's '7 step' model to PBL

	What to do?	What to do in detail?	Why?
Step 1	Clarification of terms and concepts	<p>-Ask for explanation of words of concepts that are not understood</p> <p>-If illustration: discuss what picture shows</p>	-Provides common starting point, i.e. every group member should understand the assignment text as it stands

Step 2	Formulation of Problem Statement	-Provide “title” for the session or formulate wider research question, i.e. “what is it about”	-Students dive into topic and grasp the “ <i>underlying problem</i> ” of the assignment -By discussing in the group, students establish a common ground of the problem – they not only name it but discuss it and also examine its wider relevance
Step 3	Brainstorm	-Everything is allowed: collection of ideas, potential explanations in regard of problem statement, etc.	-To establish and contrast: what does the group already know – what does the group want to find out -Students spontaneously name aspects that THEY consider as interesting and relevant -Activation of prior knowledge and real-world experiences – students should link the problem statement to existing knowledge
Step 4	Categorising and Structuring of Brainstorm	-Keywords from Brainstorm are put into similar categories (e.g. according to question type: why, how, what consequences etc.)	-Structuring first creative collection of ideas to find patterns and facilitate the formulation of <i>few</i> learning objectives
Step 5	Formulation of Learning Objectives	-Use categories of structured brainstorm to formulate single questions, or research task (e.g. “look for x”)	-Provide clear focus in reading the literature by having smaller research questions guiding the learning process -Clear and guided assessment of what is needed to answer the posed questions
Step 6	Self-Study	-Students read literature, look for additional sources, prepare answers to the formulated learning objectives	-Student as self-directed and responsible learner
Step 7	Post-discussion	-Students report back on how they answer the learning objectives’ compare results but also exchange arguments	-By formulating acquired knowledge in own words and by exchanging arguments with peers, deeper understanding is facilitated in contrast to pure memorising; -Students become aware of potential misinterpretations of (empirical) material in being confronted with reports from other peers

	Reflection on Learning Process	-Self-assessment of students in learning process and peer assessment, especially in roles of Chair and discussant	-By becoming aware of what works well and what could be improved, first step to improve learning process -Not all experiences students have to make themselves, but they can learn tremendously by observing and providing feedback to each other
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Taken from Maurer, H. & Neuhold, C. (2012). *Problems everywhere? Strengths and challenges of a Problem-Based Learning Approach in European Studies*. Paper presented at the Higher Education Academy Social Science Conference, “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Learning”, Liverpool, UK, Retrieved from http://www.mcegmaastricht.eu/pdf/MCEG_part%20PBL_link2_%20PBL%20implementation%20challenges.pdf

Participant Information Sheet

Name of department: School of Psychological Sciences and Health

Title of the study: 'Constructing knowledge through talk: Unpacking the dynamics of group interaction in problem-based learning'.

Introduction

My name is Gillian Hendry and I am a PhD researcher at the University of Strathclyde. I am conducting this research project, under the supervision of Drs. Sally Wiggins and Tony Anderson to investigate the dynamics of group interaction in problem-based learning within psychology at Strathclyde.

What is the purpose of this investigation?

The purpose of this investigation is to examine group interaction within problem based learning groups in order to provide practical guidance for students and staff in this learning environment.

Do you have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part. It is entirely your decision to take part in the investigation and your participation is voluntary. If, whilst participating in the recorded group sessions, you decide you want to withdraw from the study, you will be given the option to move to another (unrecorded) group, and recordings from the group you leave, which you appeared in, will be destroyed. Regardless of whether you take part in the study or not, your education will not be affected in any way.

What will you do in the project?

You will be asked to participate in between five and twenty recorded PBL sessions in your group, depending on the number of PBL sessions undertaken within the class. You should act as you normally would whilst in recorded sessions as the aim is to understand what normally happens in PBL groups. Each of these recorded sessions will take place in the Graham Hills building here at Strathclyde University (room TBC), and as a reward for your participation, you will be entered into a prize draw to receive up to £50 worth of gift vouchers. The first session will take place over the coming weeks and will end at an agreed time between your group and the researcher. It is unlikely that you will be recorded for all twenty sessions.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part as you are a student in either C8307 (Social Psychology) or C8413 (Qualitative Methodologies in Practice). The inclusion criteria for the study are that you are part of a class which uses PBL, you are happy to be video-recorded and English is your first language.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

There are no potential risks to you in taking part in the project.

What happens to the information in the project?

The information gathered via video recordings from you, your group and other participants will contribute to my PhD thesis, which is focused on constructing knowledge through talk by unpacking the dynamics of group interaction in problem-based learning. The PhD is funded by the Higher Education Academy, and the findings will be used to support effective teaching practices across the UK. Your involvement in the study will be helping students across Psychology and other disciplines to better understand how group dynamics can impact on learning in PBL sessions. Pseudo-anonymity (where names are changed in order to make participants unidentifiable in transcripts) is assured to all participants in video transcripts. However, stills from video footage may be used over the course of the research in presentations which may identify you. The data gathered has the potential to be published upon completion of the project in 2015. All recorded data will be securely stored on the university hard drive, and any hard copies of data (e.g. video recordings) will be kept in a locked drawer in a locked office. Only the three investigators involved in the project (myself, Dr Wiggins and Dr Anderson) will have access to the raw data.

The University of Strathclyde is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office who implements the Data Protection Act 1998. All personal data on participants will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Thank you for reading this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written here.

What happens next?

If you are happy to be involved in the project, please complete the consent form to confirm this.

If you no longer wish to be involved with the project, thank you for your attention thus far.

Once the project is completed, if you are interested, I will be happy to inform you of the findings by way of posting or emailing you my report.

Researcher Contact Details:

Gillian Hendry
PhD Researcher
School of Psychological Sciences and Health
University of Strathclyde, Graham Hills Building (6.54)
40 George Street
Glasgow G1 1QE
Tel: 0141 548 2873
Email: gillian.hendry@strath.ac.uk

Chief Investigator Details:

Dr Sally Wiggins
Lecturer, School of Psychological Sciences and Health
University of Strathclyde, Graham Hills Building
40 George Street
Glasgow G1 1QE
Tel: 0141 548 4461
Email: sally.wiggins@strath.ac.uk

This investigation was granted ethical approval by the School Ethics Committee (SEC).

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the investigation, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

Dr Susan Rasmussen (School Ethics Committee chairperson)
School of Psychological Sciences and Health
University of Strathclyde
Graham Hills Building
40 George Street
Glasgow G1 1QE

Tel: 0141 548 2575

Email: s.a.rasmussen@strath.ac.uk

Consent Form

Name of department: School of Psychological Sciences and Health

Title of the study: 'Constructing knowledge through talk: Unpacking the dynamics of group interaction in problem-based learning'.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no written information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to video images or audio/video extracts being used in presentations or published material and for the purposes of teaching and/or research.

Yes/ No

- I consent to being a participant in the project.
- I consent to being video recorded as part of the project.

I (PRINT NAME)	Hereby agree to take part in the above project.
Signature of Participant:	Date

Appendix C: Jefferson transcription notation

(.)	Just noticeable pause
(1.0)	Timed pause
A: word [word	Overlapping talk
B: [word	
.hh	In-breath
wor-	Cut-off word
>word<	Faster speech
WORD	Louder speech
°word°	Quieter speech
<u>word</u>	Emphasised speech
£word	“smiley” speech
wo(h)rd	(h) denotes laughter bubbling within word
wo:rd	: denotes stretching the preceding sound
A: word=	= denotes no discernible pause between two speakers’
B: =word	turns
((action))	non-verbal action

Adapted from system developed by Jefferson, Jefferson, G. (1984). On the organisation of laughter in talk about troubles. In J.M. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (pp. 346-369). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.