

CHAPTER 4

Negotiating evaluative couplings

The previous chapter discussed how conversational participants laugh through ongoing talk, co-constructing phases of humour. It also showed that laughter relates to the negotiation of values and especially conveys attitudinal meaning, challenging or reinforcing evaluations provided in speech. Friends share much laughter together in conversation, but what causes the laughing is not so clear. In order to uncover what makes conversational participants laugh, this chapter looks to the surrounding linguistic text for evidence. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the way that appraisal and ideational meanings pattern together in the humorous phase, and it is proposed that it is a linguistic pattern of *evaluative coupling* that causes laughter in convivial conversational humour. This is pursued by considering the prosodic unfolding of the text, which concerns how interpersonal—and particularly, evaluative—meanings unfold and accumulate across a text to create an overall pattern that cannot be divided componentially. Furthermore, couplings (cf. Martin 2000a, 2008a, 2008b; Zappavigna, Dwyer & Martin, 2008) are introduced as the binding of linguistic meanings into particular combinations relevant to communities of the culture.

This chapter aims to describe how, in casual conversation between friends, there is a prosody of evaluative coupling (attitudes bound with experience) that supports bonding, and further, that laughter indicates that there is more behind the negotiation of bonding than simply communing as friends. It will be shown that it is these evaluative couplings that are the linguistic evidence for the cause of laughter in convivial conversational humour and that, through couplings, conversational participants enact a negotiation of community values (modelled in terms of *affiliation* in Chapter 5).

These goals will be pursued in three main sections. Section 4.1 explores laughter as a reaction to a prosodic pattern of appraisal merging with ideational experiences in a telos

of bonding (Stenglin, 2004) (which will be further differentiated into a social process of affiliation in Chapter 5). By focusing on patterns of evaluation towards experience that resonate across the humorous phase, it will be revealed how speakers construct bonding around these meanings leading up to laughter, and it will be demonstrated that humour puts bonding at risk. Combinations of appraisal with ideation are described as evaluative couplings in Section 4.2, and they are exhibited as the textual patterns surrounding laughter at varying degrees of explicitness in convivial conversational humour. Because evaluative couplings are often implicitly conveyed in humour between friends, this thesis will draw on the theory of “invoked attitude”/evaluative tokens in APPRAISAL (Martin & White, 2005) to propose strategies for their interpretation. After discussing the linguistic pattern of coupling in convivial conversational humour in this chapter, the next chapter will explore the social relations of affiliation by which couplings may cause laughter.

4.1 Unfolding meanings surrounding laughter

This section exhibits, through a consideration of the prosody of humorous phases, how laughter emerges in ongoing talk as a reaction to interpersonal and ideational meanings unfolding and patterning together for bonding. In the previous chapter, it was established that metafunctional meanings come together consistently in humorous phases (following Gregory & Malcolm, 1995 [1981]), but it is specifically the way that the *interpersonal* unfolds by binding together with the *ideational* at points in the unfolding phase that exposes what is being negotiated in humour. Chapter 3 also demonstrated that laughter is a social semiotic that co-articulates interpersonal meaning with language, and that in conversation it marks what is said as “funny”, identifying the presence of a humorous phase to be captured. The close relations between (especially evaluative) interpersonal meanings and laughter, and the nature of its relationship with ideational meanings in unfolding text, emphasize the usefulness of taking an interpersonal perspective on the *prosody* of the humorous phase.

Prosody will be described in Section 4.1.1. Section 4.1.2 shows how a prosody of interpersonal attitude binding with ideational meaning facilitates bonding in humorous

phases leading up to laughter, and laughter is shown to put this bonding at risk in Section 4.1.3.

4.1.1 Prosody in the humorous phase

In order to explore the prosodic patterning of humorous phases, it is useful to first provide a brief background on what focus is being taken on prosody. Prosodic patterning, which is associated with the interpersonal metafunction¹, can be divided into two complementary types of telos (or goal orientations) according to Martin (2000b). These are a *mood telos* (involving choices in the interpersonal semantic system of MOOD) which aims for closure, and suits pragmatic registers “where hegemonic institutional pressures favour non-negotiable solidarity”, and an *appraisal telos* that aims to expand the talk, and suits casual registers “where solidarity relations are put at risk” (Martin, 2000b, p. 38). In contrast to institutional genres that are oriented towards closure, casual conversation is motivated by the need to keep going (Burton, 1978; Eggins & Slade, 1997). Particularly in the chatty sections of conversation in which humorous phases occur, a dynamic sequencing of moves propels its continuity, and humorous sequences occur in phases. The structures of chat exchanges and phases of humour have a driving force that is different from institutional genres; they are driven by an interpersonal telos of evaluative meanings.

Appraisal prosodies are constructed through evaluative patterns that resonate across an unfolding text (Halliday, 1981; Martin & White, 2005), and they can be determined by picking up on repeated meanings as a text unfolds and visualising them in terms of a synoptic structure (Zappavigna, Cléirigh, Dwyer & Martin, forthcoming). Prosodic patterns of evaluation cannot be reduced to constituent units but are instead considered as they build across a text as it unfolds, aligning somewhat with notions in music such as chord progression (Macken-Horarik, 2003). More precisely, attitudinal meanings can be repeated through a text and when viewed together they gather into patterns that accrue an overall meaning, say of negative or positive attitude. For instance, Bednarek (2006) discusses an evaluative prosody of negative evaluation as an “overall attitudinal ‘halo’”,

¹ It is distinguished from the periodic organisation of the textual and the particulate—including “orbital” and “serial” (Martin, 1996)—organisation of the ideational metafunction (Halliday, 1979).

and notes that this “arguably has a bearing on the evaluations expressed in the whole text” (p. 209); and Zappavigna et al. (forthcoming) describe two evaluative prosodies running in parallel through their text, creating an “oscillating prosody” of positive and negative appraisal. Evaluation in this way has a “propogative” quality, as Lemke (1998) states, building up across the text and radiating meaning across it in a kind of “long-range evaluative patterning” (Zappavigna et al. forthcoming).

Martin and White (2005, pp. 19–24) introduce three types of prosodic realisation for texts characterised by an appraisal telos: saturating prosody, an opportunistic realisation that is strung across text at different points; intensifying prosody, amplifying meanings that reverberate through surrounding text; and dominating prosody, which is attached to meanings which colour and dominate the other meanings directly in their scope. These are three possible lenses on patterning in text that are useful for considering conversational humour. By taking a prosodic perspective on the unfolding of the humorous phase, this thesis looks to the accumulation of evaluative meanings across the text, and how they may present patterns that cause the laughter in humour. Attitudes colour the humorous text, variously saturating, intensifying and dominating it, but what is noteworthy in these phases is how attitudinal meaning interacts with ideational meaning preceding laughter. In Martin’s (2004b) terms, “sense bonds dynamically with sensibility” (p. 327), and the interpersonal meaning of the text (its “axiology”) unfolds around the experience being continuously valued; “the dialogue unfolds ideationally as a scaffolding for evaluation” (Martin, 2000b, p. 34). Friends not only share attitudes in conversation but express their evaluations of things, persons, processes, ideas, and so on, to co-construct what matters to them as members of a culture. Attitude is thus *invested* in activity (Martin & White 2005, p. 211) in humorous phases of conversation, and, in text leading up to laughter, participants present and co-construct attitudes towards experiences. The prosodic pattern that is built facilitates *bonding* as the participants share these values together.

4.1.2 Bonding and prosody

The combination of ideational meaning and interpersonal value was identified as an aspect of the theory of bonding (Martin, 2004b; Stenglin, 2004), introduced in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2 of this thesis. Bonding was described as a matter of *communing* (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.3.1 for elaboration), with interactants bonding together unproblematically within a community by sharing a value-infused experience (such as a bondicon). Correspondingly, friends present attitudes towards specific targets to bond with hearers into a community around this meaning in conversational phases leading up to humour and laughter. As the text unfolds, these meanings build a prosodic pattern motivated by bonding, or communing, until occasions for humour arise.

For instance, in the following example, the lead-up to laughter in the humorous phase consists of a discursive co-construction of shared positive appraisal towards the experiential meaning of a “pie party”, building a prosodic pattern for bonding. When F declares the end of the pie party that the three interactants have just enjoyed, the other participants share their love for this ritualised event in which they get together to chat and eat pie.

F: Party's over. For me;
N: I'm **disappointed** that there's no more pie party ==
C: == This was an **awesome** pie party guys
N: Pie parties are **great**
C: I'm **excited** to have **another fun** pie party

Example 4.1: Conversational participants build prosodic pattern supporting bonding around *pie party* (adapted from Table 2.12 in Appendix A) (Realisations of AFFECT coded in red; realisations of APPRECIATION coded in blue; GRADUATION coded in pink; see Transcription Conventions key for further APPRAISAL coding).

This example demonstrates how humorous phases are constructed around prosodic patterns facilitating bonding between the interactants and how speakers create a context within which they can present humorous values. The conversational text here unfolds interpersonally around positive attitudes and ideationally around pie parties, patterning together repeatedly. Once F declares the end to the party, N expresses her disappointment,

leading to the co-constructed bonding. The first part of this phase is driven by the speakers positively appreciating their shared pie party as something enjoyed by them (*awesome, great, fun*), generalising it as a recurring ritual (“I’m excited to have another fun pie party”) and propelling further intensified positive attitudes towards it in three consecutive moves. Talk is encouraged by the sharing and praising of the pie party ritual as attitudes given towards ideation form repeated points of attitudinal alignment (cf. Martin & White, 2005, p. 215) as the meanings unfold through the text.

It is around points of attitudinal alignment that interactants position one another into social groupings. In the above text, for instance, by setting up repeated positive attitudes towards the pie party, the interactants position themselves to align together into a community that shares this as a value. Figure 4.1 shows how the pie party serves as a point of attitudinal alignment in this social group, with the speakers interconnecting their attitudes towards the pie party into a prosodic pattern. By doing so, they position one another to adopt an attitudinal standpoint, bonding together as group members. The ideational meaning of *pie party* is represented in this figure as the pivotal point of alignment around which the text unfolds (from left to right) with shared attitudes.

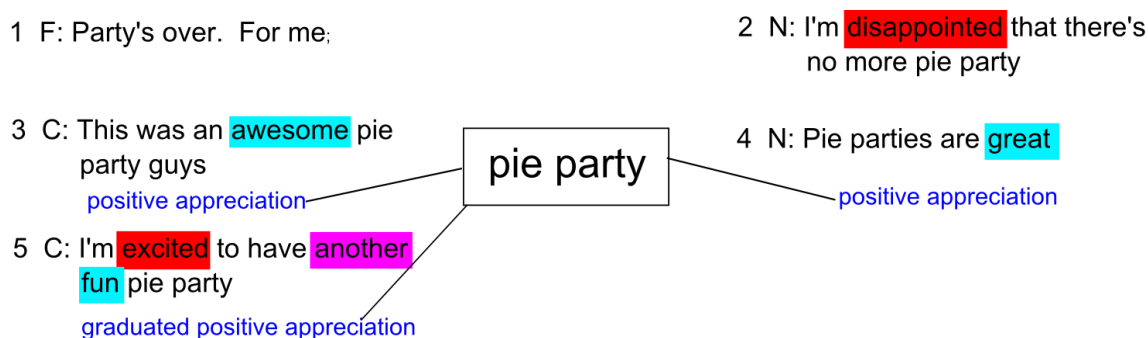


Figure 4.1: Prosody of positive attitudes towards *pie party*; connecting interactants in bonding around the pie party ritual.

In short, friends commune together in a community of like-minded persons around a particular point of alignment in conversation, presenting attitudes towards experience in a prosody that supports their ongoing bonding. This is a straightforward kind of bonding, whereby the interactants accept these meanings to commune around them into a social group, such as a group centred on having a recurring pie party.

4.1.3 Laughter reaction

Laughter signals that there is something around which the participants *cannot* straightforwardly bond. As conversational participants build a prosodic pattern facilitating bonding (i.e. communing), they construct humour by playing with values based on this patterning. When laughter occurs, it indicates that participants are not just communing within a community of like-minded individuals around a point of attitudinal alignment but are *laughing off* values around which they cannot commune in a single community.

It was argued in Chapter 3 that laughter can challenge the attitudinal position presented in the verbiage, and since these attitudinal positions are co-constructed through the prosody of the humorous phase, bonding is put at risk by this challenge. This is illustrated in the humour that occurs following from the prosodic build-up of positive attitudes towards the pie party ritual in Example 4.1. Speaker F changes the terms of the bonding to create humour by uttering the ritual phrase, “Next year in Jerusalem”, which is used to end the Passover seder (meal) for the Jewish community. Whereas the example above exhibited explicit, or *inscribed*, attitudes, this phrase *invokes* attitude (further discussed in Section 4.2.2), and the speaker continues to present invoked attitudes through the rest of the phase. As it occurs in a prosody of bonding around the pie party, the phrase puts bonding at risk by changing the values around which the participants can commune together.

F: Party's over. For me;
 N: I'm **disappointed** that there's no more pie party ==
 C: == This was an **awesome** pie party guys
 N: Pie parties are **great**
 C: I'm **excited** to have **another fun** pie party
 F: "**Next year in (LV) Jerusalem**"
 F,N: (L) ==
 C: == What?
 F: I mean next year **more** (LV) pie!
 N, F: (L)
 C: == Next time I'm ha-
 F: == It's-it's a Jewish thing y-ye-at the end of
 every Passover you say "next year in Jerusalem" in Hebrew.
 C: Mm...I don't get == it

Example 4.2: Laughter signalling negotiable bonding (Laughter coding: (L) laugh, (LV) laugh in voice; invoked attitude is marked by lighter shade, such as the lighter shade of blue for APPRECIATION here; see Transcription Conventions key for further coding).

Positive appreciation is invoked in the phrase "Next year in Jerusalem" following from the previous establishment of positive attitudes towards the pie party. This is a phrase that is idiomatic to the Jewish community and so invokes particular attitudes (see Section 4.2.3.1.1 below), which F implicates in his explanation of the humour to C later in the text ("It's a Jewish thing..."). F marks that what he says is humorous by laughing within his own utterance, and this text exhibits how convivial conversational humour occurs through a developing pattern of bonding in a phase. This is important because it establishes the background of a social negotiation of shared values on which the humour is based, since humour relies on a congruent background context in order to create a contrast with an *incongruent* meaning (see discussion in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1.2). The laughter reaction that F shares with N in the example above signals that they recognise what he has presented as something that these interactants cannot accept, or commune around, for bonding (at least, not as a community construed around their love for pie parties) because he has changed the terms to something laughable. Their straightforward bonding is disrupted by humour so that the conversational participants can share a laugh.

Though laughter signals that the participants cannot commune around the value presented, the participants nevertheless continue to come together through laughter. Conversational participants share laughter together specifically around values that they negotiate as more or less laughable, and laughter interweaves with speech to challenge the attitudinal positions that speakers set up. The following text from Table 1.1 in Appendix

A is an example of how the participants continue to connect with one another by laughing around values in a developing prosody of attitudes towards experience. First, the female speakers commune around their positive attitudinal positions for the holidays that they have just spent away with their families:

U: Hey!
N: How are you
U: **Good good**
N: **Good!** How was your holiday
U: **Good** ==
N: == Yeah
U: Thank you
N: (L)
U: yeah
N: That's **good** ... So you **had a good time**
U: Yeah== it was **good**
N: ==Yeah was it **nice** ==
U: == Yeah I **saw like my family and friends**

Then, when U changes the terms of the bonding to positively appreciating eating, the speakers repeat this meaning to laugh together around it, implicating themselves as shared participants in this “bad behaviour”:

U: ...I ate **well** (SL)
N: We all ate **well**.
(LA)
N: (Dude) we all (LV) ate (CL-P) **good** pie!
U: Yes (CL-N) I agree. **On a diet** (LV) now.
(LA)

In her humour, U puts bonding around having a happy holiday at risk, and she does so to share a laugh about the eating activity that is involved in enjoying holidays. The discourse continues to unfold through the laughter as the speakers repeat this value and laugh around it, challenging their own positive appreciations for eating and indicating that this is a laughable value to them all. Their laughter conveys a negative self-judgement (discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2.2) underlying this text, so that they are no longer communing around positive attitudinal positions that align them around the holidays. Instead, U presents herself and all those present as in need of a diet (“On a diet now”) after their confessions of having eaten a lot of food, and this negative attitude follows not from the prosodic pattern of communing around positive attitudes towards the holidays, but from the prosody provoked by *laughing off* positive attitudes towards eating lots of food and desserts.

They are therefore construing a different community in which *dieting* is valued over eating, and it is in relation to this community that combining a positive attitude with the experiential meaning of *eating* and desserts such as *pie* is found humorous by these interactants. By laughing these meanings off together, they can then even laugh off a negative judgement of themselves (in reaction to “On a diet now”) and continue to bond together. In Figure 4.2, the changing points of attitudinal alignment are exhibited, with the ideational meanings (*holiday*, *eating*, *dieting*) labelled as connecting points for their shared (and laughable) attitudes. The participants first share positive attitudes towards the holidays, where lines show these attitudinal connections drawn straightforwardly to the ideational meaning; they then laugh around positive attitudes towards eating (also leading to their negative self-judgements being laughed off). This is shown by the laughter causing the connection lines to bounce between laughs and the ideational meanings of *eating* and *dieting*.

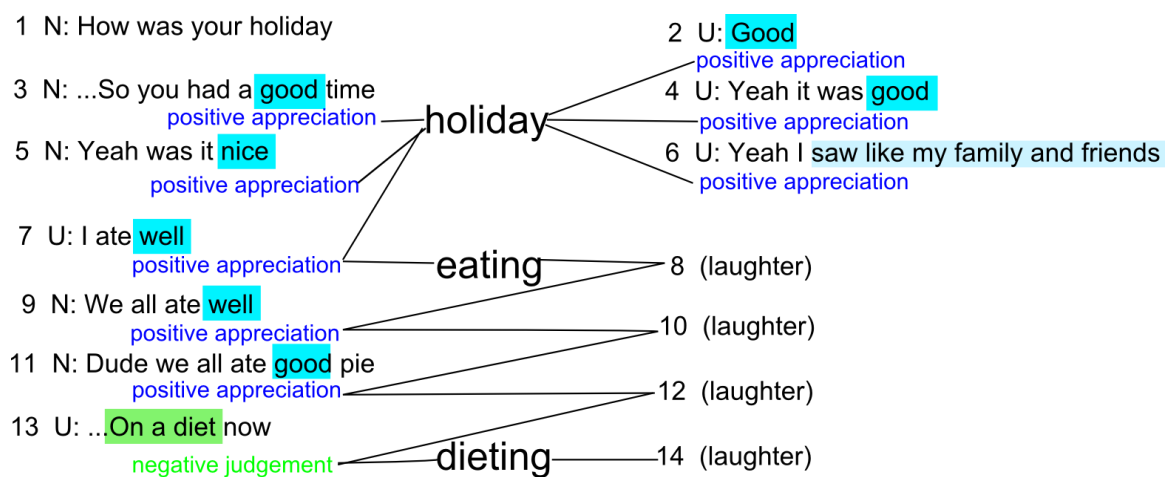


Figure 4.2: Interactants bond around positive attitudes towards the holiday; laugh around positive attitudes towards eating then dieting.

This demonstrates that though bonding is put at risk to create humour, attitudes towards experience continue to be discursively present and are negotiated through laughter. Specifically, conversational participants negotiate their attitudinal positioning together in communities in a prosody facilitating bonding that includes both communing together and laughing around values in text (or by rejecting values, which will be discussed in Section 4.2.3.3.1).

To summarise, convivial conversational humour builds on a prosody of attitudes towards experience that supports bonding. Based on the background of bonding around shared values, humour is created by playing with these combined meanings in text. The laughter reaction shows that bonding has been put at risk but also that the values which the participants negotiate in bonding may be negotiated as laughable (and not just commutable). When speakers combine attitudes with ideation in funny ways, those participants who can interpret the combinations in relation to different communities can understand the humour (as demonstrated in Example 4.2). This relation suggests that *particular* combinations of attitude with experiential meanings are intrinsically related to different communities and that they are interpreted as bound together by community members. Humour therefore reveals that there is a negotiation going on around specialised configurations of particular attitudes with particular experiential meanings. These combinations depend upon what the interactants can share and are in this way intrinsically related to contextual factors for their interpretation. Configurations of meaning such as these can be described as “couplings” (Martin, 2000a), involving functional linguistic patterns of meanings combined through the unfolding of the text. In the following section, couplings will be described and their role in convivial conversational humour will be developed.

4.2 Couplings as linguistic evidence

In humorous phases, interpersonal attitudes bind together with ideational meanings in the unfolding text as *couplings*, which are explored in this section. Coupling is the combination of meanings “as pairs, triplets, quadruplets or any number of coordinated choices from system networks” (Martin, 2008b, p. 39) at any point in delicacy within and across metafunctions, and may also occur across semiotic systems (Caple, 2008; Zappavigna, Cléirigh, Dwyer & Martin, 2010), strata, or ranks. In other words, different meaning choices in language combine together into couplings at different levels of generalisation (Zappavigna et al., 2008, p. 169) in systemic functional terms. These combined meanings are then read or heard together rather than apart. With coupling, our concern in looking at the linguistic text (or other semiotic form) turns to associated

meanings, and it allows us to consider why interactants might combine certain meanings and not others in a culture, or more specifically in communities of the culture.

Work on coupling has been developed in SFL primarily by Martin (2000a, 2000b, 2008a, 2010; Martin et al., to appear), and by Zappavigna et al. (2008, 2010, forthcoming), Zhao (2010; Zhao & Knight, 2009), Caple (2008; 2010), and Knight (2008, 2010, forthcoming b) (see also Bednarek & Martin, 2010).² Caple (2008; 2010), for instance, exhibits how images and verbiage form couplings in image-nuclear news stories so that newspaper editors can play with these intersemiotic couplings in order to bond with their readers.

For Martin (2008b), coupling is a perspective on instantiation, which he argues is “more than the more and less recurrent selection of features; it also concerns how they are combined” (p. 44). Rather than exploring choices that are made simultaneously and complementarily in a text (taking a traditional perspective on realisation in SFL), he argues that a perspective on instantiation compels the consideration of how choices are specifically coupled (Martin, 2008b, p. 40). Essentially, by modelling coupling in instantiation, we can begin to perceive associations of choices as a matter of specific instances of text that are affected by the culture (and not simply as discrete choices from the whole of the language system). This is important for convivial conversational humour because speakers do not just choose simultaneous semantic choices from the language system but bind them in funny ways to construe different communities with their interlocutors.

Coupling may be considered both paradigmatically and syntagmatically, according to Zappavigna et al. (2008), since a coupling “becomes the product of the process of instantiation” (p. 172).³ In these terms, we may consider couplings for how they unfold

² The earliest concept closest to coupling in systemic functional theory is in Nesbitt and Plum’s (1988) description of the combination of choices from system networks (specifically, the interaction of taxis with logico-semantic relations in clause complexes) through statistical probabilities. But, “coupling” is considered here through the logogenesis of an instance of text rather than in terms of probabilities and is described as both process and product.

³ This distinguishes the concept of “coupling” from the syntagmatic co-occurrence of lexical items, which is the concern of corpus linguistic studies of collocation, colligation and semantic association (Hoey, 2006) or “semantic preference” (cf. Sinclair, 1996, 1998). While these studies consider the statistic probabilities of lexical items binding with other lexical items (or items from more or less general semantic subsets) across texts, coupling focuses on the binding of paradigmatic options across systems and metafunctions at different levels of generality through the linear progression of the text. In this sense, coupling is not “flat” (Zappavigna et al., 2008, p. 171) and implies a process.

in the linguistic text and as units to be extracted for examination in a synoptic review of that text. They have thus been explored, for instance, in terms of clusters of couplings into “syndromes” (Zappavigna et al., 2008) and as patterns coming together in logogenesis (Zhao, 2010). This thesis aligns with Zhao’s (2010) process-oriented definition of coupling as a logogenetic pattern. Coupling is in her terms a time-based relation involving “the linking of at least two types of relations at one point in the logogenetic unfolding, e.g. ideational coupled with interpersonal...gesture with phonology...verbiage with image” (p. 206). By taking time into account, we can explore how meanings come together as the discourse unfolds (and, for instance, as humour is co-constructed) and interpret the coupling in relation to what precedes it and follows it in time. This may then also involve what meanings have been coupled together in preceding texts or conversations, which is often at stake in humour between friends in which “in-jokes” refer to meanings they have shared in conversations past. In conversation between friends, coupling unfolds as a pattern in a prosody of bonding and laughter.

Specifically, this thesis will draw on Martin’s (2000a) description of the combination of appraisal with experiential meaning as the *type* of coupling of concern in convivial conversational humour.⁴ This type of coupling was introduced by Martin in his consideration of humour and sarcasm:

Sarcasm raises the more general problem of humour and appraisal, which we cannot pursue here—how is it that we recognize that someone means the opposite of what they say, or that what they say is intended to be read as funny rather than real? This brings us back to the issue of couplings between ideational meaning and appraisal—at a particular point in the unfolding of a text, for the social subjects involved, at some moment in the evolution of the relevant institution...Perhaps humour and sarcasm can be further explored along these lines, as involving discordant couplings—either between appraisal selections and what is being appraised, or among the appraisal variables themselves.

(Martin, 2000a, pp. 163–164)

Significantly, this description of coupling results from the consideration of humour and so is clearly applicable to the study of conversational humour between friends in this thesis.⁵ It is when speakers in conversation present “discordant” couplings of appraisal with

4 Zhao’s (2010) process-oriented description is a development of the original description of coupling in Martin (2000a).

5 This has also been demonstrated by Swain’s (2003) work, discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3.2.

ideation that they put bonding at risk and cause laughter in convivial conversational humour. These couplings may be interpreted as discordant in relation to three perspectives according to Martin's description: at the particular point where the coupling occurs in the unfolding of the humorous phase of text; for the interactants involved in the conversation as social subjects construing different communities together; and in relation to how the communities in which they are bonding have evolved over time.

Coupled meanings can be reacted to in different ways, as was demonstrated in Section 4.1, and they vary in how explicitly they are presented by speakers. In order to develop how couplings are variously presented to cause laughter in convivial conversational humour, this section will describe the characteristics of these couplings in humour and their representation in the current study. Section 4.2.1 discusses how couplings are represented in humorous phases and how they are found to be "discordant". Because these couplings are so often implicit in humour, especially amongst friends, Section 4.2.2 focuses on implicit evaluative couplings, and Section 4.2.3 employs strategies outlined by Martin and White (2005) for "invoking" attitude to interpret them.

4.2.1 Coupling in humorous phases

In interpreting couplings, this thesis focuses on options specifically in the discourse semantic systems of APPRAISAL and IDEATION. In order to capture the humorous coupling of these meanings, the appraisal selection and the experiential selection will be described in units such as the following: "positive appreciation + eating pie" ("+" will hereafter denote the coupling of two meaning selections). These combinations of appraisal with ideation are referred to as "evaluative couplings" because they are the linguistic patterns by which we construe our community values in a culture (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). Humorous phases are characterised by contrasts between different evaluative couplings, which are deployed across phases so that speakers and hearers can variously bond and laugh around them together as points of alignment (and potential disalignment) in communities of the culture. A coupling in convivial conversational humour brings together positive or negative attitudes scaled in various degrees towards experiential targets.

Attitudes are specified in APPRAISAL terms according to the subsystems of AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION, and these may be combined with choices from the system of GRADUATION as well (by which they are scaled in various degrees). Ideational targets can be human or non-human, concrete or abstract, real or imaginary, and they include the events, experiences, processes, persons and animals, things and ideas that are constantly under negotiation as friends co-construct their shared social world.

To illustrate the possible coupling combinations that occur in humorous phases, the following examples are offered. Positive appreciations couple with ideational *activities*:

M ...strip aerobics are really fun ...	positive appreciation + strip aerobics
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Positive appreciations couple with concrete ideational *entities*:

N: (Dude) we all ate good pie!	positive appreciation + pie
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Negative appreciations couple with *abstract* ideational entities (such as the weather), and with intensified graduation:

N: Quebec's weather is extremely frigid.	graduation + negative appreciation + weather
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Negative *aesthetic* appreciations couple with *human* entities as well, as do *judgements*:

SH: ...th-this unattractive lady	negative appreciation + lady
... SH: Because she's helpless	negative judgement + lady

And entities and persons as Emoters or Triggers of emotion are also coupled with *affect*:

CO: Therapists empathize with clients	positive affect + clients
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Appraisal selections in couplings may be explicitly inscribed in conversational humour, such as in the above examples, but they are often implied through the expression of the ideational meaning to which the appraisal choice binds (this will be explored in Section 4.2.3 below). Evaluative couplings thus may be distinguished between explicit and implicit in humour, and they also differ in terms of *who* is being associated with the given coupling. Speakers present evaluative couplings both on behalf of themselves and by attributing them to others. In other words, evaluative couplings presented in humorous phases can be distinguished as “personal” attitudinal positions (or White’s (2004a, pp. 4–5) “1st person emotions”) that are associated with the speaker her/himself, and “projected” attitudinal positions (or “3rd party emotions”) associated with others. For instance:

U: ... I ate well ...	positive appreciation + eating much
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The speaker presents this explicit coupling as a personal position to be taken up and laughed off by her interlocutors, while the speaker in the following example presents an implicit coupling as a projected position of conversational outsiders (Asian women) to laugh off:

J: ...they love you if you’re white	positive <i>t</i> -judgement ⁶ + white men
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In addition, speakers in humour further distance themselves from attitudinal positions that are construed through couplings. Humour makes it possible for speakers to distance themselves from the serious message being conveyed because “the humorous inflection provides the excuse that they did not really mean it, they were only joking” (Eggin & Slade, 1997, p. 167). So, even couplings expressed as personal positions implicitly express an attitude of disengagement or self-distance towards an attributable assumption (Curcó, 1996, p. 90) in humorous phases of conversation. In this way, speakers can play with evaluative couplings by combining meanings that are discordant but laughable to the

⁶ The judgement in this example is invoked from the affectual inscription *love*. See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2.1 for discussion of “hybrids”. Invoked attitudes, otherwise known as tokens, are hereafter marked by “*t*”.

conversational participants “without strict accountability” (Eggins & Slade, 1997, p. 156).⁷

Laughter is an explicit signal that couplings are being presented in the conversation and that they are being negotiated as *discordant* in relation to the communities that the conversational participants can co-construe together. Couplings may be more or less acceptable for bonding because their combination is not free but constrained by the communities and the cultures of which they are a part. Martin (2008b, p. 42) notes that each culture has their own relatively “routine” combinations of meaning, and conversational participants play with these different combinations across communities in humour based on the fact that their selection is constrained by the particular participants at talk, who themselves are members of different communities. For example, in uttering “I love traffic” while stuck in a traffic jam, the positive attitude coupled with the experiential meaning *traffic* can be interpreted as discordant by those of us who share in (or can construe) a community of daily commuters rushing to work. So, though we cannot commune together around loving traffic, we can laugh at this coupling as sarcastic together because it contrasts humorously with our expected couplings as commuters. Only by sharing combinations that are otherwise *concordant* can participants interpret evaluative couplings as discordant in humour. It is because these meanings are bound together for particular communities and institutions that they can cause laughter when they are inappropriately combined.

It is therefore within the framework of the culture, and communities within that culture, that interactants may interpret couplings as more or less expected or *routine* to their memberships and cause laughter by defying attitudinal expectations. The incongruity in convivial conversational humour is thus between couplings and the value systems of different communities (developed in affiliation in Chapter 5), which friends are constantly negotiating in unfolding talk.

⁷ See also discussion of “characterisation” in convivial conversational humour in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2.

4.2.2 Implicit couplings

Speakers in convivial conversational humour present evaluative couplings that vary in explicitness and, especially when the participants share friendship, the attitudinal meaning coupled with experience is often highly implicit. This section will explain why and how friends present implicit couplings by drawing from a shared background of familiar values. This thesis will then draw on Martin and White's (2005) notion of invoked attitude/evaluative tokens as a method for identifying implicit evaluative couplings in the convivial conversational humorous text.

4.2.2.1 Familiar values in conversation between friends

Implicitness is crucial in joking and humour (cf. Attardo, 1994, p. 260, pp. 289–90), and “[i]n relaxed friendly circumstances, a speaker who responds to the meant rather than to the said risks killing the joke and appearing to lack a sense of humour” (Partington, 2006, p. 207). Apart from the fact that the “funniness” of humour is eradicated when one explains the meaning behind it, close friends know one another well enough to carry expectations about what attitudes they couple with shared experience. Thus, the close relationships and background that friends share enable them to imply couplings in conversational humour without having to explicitly express attitudinal meaning. As Kotthoff (2006) explains, it is their own values that conversational participants play with in humour, but this evaluation is “not explicit, but is jointly performed” (p. 299) through the implicit negotiation of norms. In humour, friends who share an understanding of what is concordant and routine can interpret couplings as discordant and unacceptable for bonding—as humorous. As they play with familiar combinations from past negotiations of couplings that they have had over time, they can interpret what the other is more likely to *mean* attitudinally. Consider the following example:

M: My boyfriend took me to **Macbeth** a little while ago

N: *Really?*

M: Yeah he's **not a play guy** obviously

N: (L)

Example 4.3: Implicit couplings in humour (coupled meaning in bold).

While the participants do not inscribe the attitudes that couple with the experiential meanings of *Macbeth* and *play guy*, these are interpreted as couplings by the hearer, N, because she can construe a community with M in which the meaning of the play *Macbeth* alone will necessarily construe a negative appraisal. Her questioning (“*Really?*”, expressed with a marked rise in pitch) of M’s boyfriend’s choice in plays shows that she has understood this coupling, and the implied negative appraisal is confirmed with M’s comment that he is “not a play guy”, negating a positive judgement of her boyfriend for having chosen the play. The resulting laughter shows that the participants cannot bond around M’s boyfriend as a guy who cannot appropriately appreciate plays (because he has a positive appreciation for *Macbeth*). This is because it is already coupled with negative appreciation for these participants as members of a theatre community. The ideational meaning alone implies a negative attitude coupling for those who share in this community and have therefore previously negotiated it as a coupling over time, which these participants show that they have. But, without this background, the interpretation of the couplings, and the humour, is challenged. While an analysis of APPRAISAL *inscriptions* in the text on their own would not reveal the attitudinal meaning behind this humour, which causes the laughter, the notion of invoked attitude/evaluative tokens accounts for how attitudes may be expressed implicitly in text.

4.2.2.2 Tokens and evaluative couplings

Implicit couplings in humorous phases of conversation may be interpreted through strategies that *invoke* attitude through experiential meanings⁸ (as introduced in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2.1; cf. Hood & Martin, 2007, p. 746). To review, attitude can be invoked in degrees from “provoked” to “flagged” to “afforded”. Attitude is *provoked* through lexical metaphors such as “she had a face *like a donkey*”; *flagged* by GRADUATION as in “we needed to get out of the *extreme* heat”, or *afforded* just by their implication in ideational meanings such as in “that doctor *couldn’t diagnose a cough*”. The attitudinal meanings in ideation will be interpreted by those who are positioned in communities of the culture so as to be familiar enough with the implication.

⁸ These invoking experiential meanings are also referred to as “tokens” of evaluation.

These strategies are employed by speakers to invoke attitudes, which then form implicit evaluative couplings with ideational meanings as members of a particular community implicitly negotiate their belonging to communities together (such as through humour). Thus, invoking strategies are particularly applicable to the interpretation of evaluative couplings in text as well. To interpret attitude in ideational meanings, a hearer must apply “some conventionalised system of norms” (White, 2004a, p. 7) specific to a particular social position in “communities of readers positioned by specific configurations of gender, generation, class, ethnicity and in/capacity” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 62), as well as by other aspects that differentiate communities in the culture. Though attitudinal inscriptions are familiar to anyone who understands the language, ideational meanings are differentially valued in different communities.⁹ Strategies used ultimately rely upon the implications and inferences that hearers may draw from them (White, 2004a, p. 6) based on their community positioning. So, once a speaker interprets an invoked attitude through his/her community positioning, the coupling of this attitude with the ideational meaning is enabled for speakers in interaction to negotiate this community membership with others. A hearer should therefore be positioned appropriately to interpret implicit couplings.

Invoked attitude gives the hearer more freedom to interpret and align with the attitudinal meaning according to Martin and White (2005, p. 67), but when the invoked attitude *couples* with ideation, the speaker is more dependent on the hearer’s positioning in the appropriate community in which to interpret the coupling. That is to say that the hearer must interpret the implicitly expressed attitude *as a coupling* in order to properly negotiate the community positioning at stake. For instance, if a speaker states “Dog shows are for dog lovers”, the hearer can potentially interpret this as invoking either a positive or negative attitude towards dog shows. However, if the speaker presents it as a coupling attempting to construct a community of dog lovers with the hearer, the hearer is under pressure to interpret the appropriate positive attitude towards dog shows as a coupling that unites them (and not to interpret just any attitudinal meaning nor the wrong one). So, while inscribing the attitude makes it more likely that hearers will pick up on the coupling if positioned appropriately, with the text doing a lot of the work, implying the attitude on the other hand depends entirely on the hearer’s inferencing. This is closer to White’s (2004a) classification of explicitness of attitudes “according to the amount of

⁹ The specific relation of invoking attitude to community is made clear in Hood and Martin’s (2007) reformulation of the system and its realisations for the academic community.

work being done by the text and the reader/listener respectively” (p. 7). Moreover, in convivial conversational humour, implicitness is even more emphasized for humorous purposes, and the speakers find further creative ways to imply couplings.

This thesis proposes that implicit attitude + ideation couplings may be interpreted with the strategies outlined by Martin and White (2005) for invoking attitudes. Laughter shows us that attitudes invoked in ideational meanings are presented as couplings, and that couplings may be both concordant (participants can bond around them) or discordant (they have to laugh at them) depending on the participants’ positioning in the communities being construed by them. Speakers deploy couplings to negotiate their positioning in community memberships, or their “co-membership” (Lipovsky, 2005), with a person or group that can interpret them as either shareable, funny or reprehensible (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.3 for elaboration).

Section 4.2.1 illustrated how speakers present couplings explicitly through inscribed appraisal, and in the following section, strategies by which speakers *imply* couplings in convivial conversational humour are proposed. These build on and are additional to those devices outlined for invoked attitude in appraisal theory, such as lexical metaphor and infused intensification, and are categorised along the cline of explicitness from “provoking” to “affording” couplings. These devices signal the couplings presented in humorous phases and also come into play in the creation of the humour in conversation, which will be shown through their exemplification.

4.2.3 Strategies for invoking attitudes in couplings

Following on from and expanding the realisations suggested by Martin and White (2005, pp. 61–68) for invoking attitude, speakers in humorous phases provoke, flag and afford attitudes in couplings through the following mechanisms and realisations:

Provoking

- Idioms
- Allusions

Flagging

- Realisations of all systems of GRADUATION

Afford

- Realisations of the system of ENGAGEMENT
- Inclusive and exclusive pronouns
- Naming

Furthermore, speakers use expletives, euphemisms and interjections to signal the presence of attitudinal meaning in humorous phases, indicating attitudinal polarity in relation to surrounding evaluative couplings. The devices will be discussed in turn, from the most provocative to those that colour the text with attitudinal polarity only.

4.2.3.1 Provoking attitudes in couplings: idioms and allusions

References to well-known linguistic constructions, famous personalities, quotations, names, and general cultural knowledge are popular and common ways of sharing common interests and cultural memberships in casual conversation. This is because they refer specifically to those identifiable meanings, persons and semiotic entities that iconically represent those memberships. By reiterating known references to others, speakers bring in the values already associated with those references as culturally appreciated and repeatable symbols of the culture. These can be in the form of idioms (Chang, 2004) or allusions/intertextual references (Dienhart, 1999; Lennon, 2004; Norrick, 1989), which are references to other texts, persons, or events both popular and historical.

Idioms are composite meaningful linguistic constructions used for particular interpersonal purposes as “communal tokens that enable speakers to express cultural and social solidarity” (Grauberg, 1989). A process of “iconisation” is “the basic instantiation principle behind the genesis of playful headlines, metaphors and idioms” according to Martin (2010, p. 21), so that idioms have been discharged of their ideational meaning and charged with interpersonal attitude. While in verbal play the ideational meaning that has

been discharged is momentarily restored (Caple, 2010; Martin, 2010), in convivial conversational humour speakers use idioms to couple *as attitudes* with other ideational meanings. Using idioms instead of attitudinal inscriptions is useful for humorous purposes because it adds another layer of interpretation and relies upon specific cultural memberships between the interactants. Speakers also replace and manipulate linguistic elements (as in relexicalization, cf. Hoey, 1991) or recontextualise their references to create humorous play (Chang, 2004; see also Caple, 2010).

Allusions to persons and events, which are known for certain reasons in the culture (often because they are famous or have some notoriety) are also associated with particular attitudes to members of a culture. An allusion is a “remembered language chunk” with infused or encoded interpersonal meaning (Caple, 2010, p. 123), and by its recontextualisation in discourse its meanings are transferred to inform a similar coupling of meanings. Allusions have not been “discharged” of their ideational meaning, but rather their ideational and interpersonal meaning together inform couplings amongst members of a shared culture. In a way, allusions are themselves well-known couplings to communities that imply similar couplings more specific to the conversational context in humorous phases. They are useful for humorous purposes because they bring new and potentially funny meanings out from their placement in a new context and can also be manipulated for humorous play (cf. Caple, 2010).

Idioms and allusions as mechanisms that provoke attitude in evaluative couplings in convivial conversational humour are described in turn in this section.

4.2.3.1.1 Idioms

Conversational speakers often employ colloquial expressions in this everyday form of talk, presenting idioms to provoke attitudes in couplings by which they co-construct themselves as members of a culture with their hearers. In humour, the associations that come with these idioms are brought out and played with as they are applied to new and different contexts in the talk, such as in M’s misinterpretation in the following excerpt:

M: My two friends Monty and Shelley...Well like they're going to Ecuador cause they're getting in- they're volunteering ==
 N: == Coo::l
 M: to change- to help change the education curriculum over there...but they have my- they've been going out == since September
 N: == As a missionary?
 [pause- 2 secs]
 M: Do they **do the missionary**? == ()
 N: == Are they missionaries?
 L, C: (L)
 L: == I have the (mind) of a child
 N: == E::w (L)
 M: **So** dirty. That's **so** bad.

Example 4.4: Idiom (in bold) in convivial conversational humour.

Though N has asked about the classification (as “missionaries”) of the couple that M is talking about, M seeks clarification, showing that she has interpreted it instead as the idiomatic phrase about sex—to do “the missionary position”. Following Chang (2004), an idiom is a conventionalised, multi-word fixed expression that derives its meaning from the whole and is institutionalised as a formulation that is recognised as a lexical item in the language. In this case, the formulation “do the missionary” is recognised compositely and is charged with negative attitude since it connotes a kind of “prudish” sexuality. This negative judgement is then coupled with “Monty and Shelley” who are being discussed. Though there is no inscribed attitude in this text, it is clear that once the identifiable idiom is brought into the talk, it signals a laughable coupling of negative attitude with the otherwise wholesome and positively-judged pair (as volunteers) along with the association with prudish sexual intercourse. The coupling is laughed off and made explicit by the inscribed negative attitudes that follow (“So dirty. That’s so bad.”). By taking the full expression rather than interpreting N’s word *missionary* on its own in terms of its literal ideational meaning, M brings the interpersonal sexual connotations into the context of the talk and creates tension with her misinterpretation.

The above example exhibits how idioms provoke attitudinal meaning to couple in convivial conversational humour because they are themselves mechanisms used by speakers to negotiate relationships with hearers in relation to the broader social context of community memberships. According to Eggins and Slade (1997), like humour, they provide “a resource for indicating degrees of ‘otherness’ and ‘in-ness’” (p. 155). Because idioms are meaningfully interpreted as relatively fixed structures that consist of more than

one component and are intrinsically tied to evaluations, conversational participants create humour by relating those meanings to the current situation and by playing with the component parts of these constructions (it is in the fact that they are usually non-compositional that this can be interpreted as funny).

Idiomatic play is demonstrated in Examples 4.5 through 4.8, which present a humorous phase between four young Canadian males in which they discuss their lack of funds and jobs while celebrating their friend’s birthday. In Example 4.5, the participants begin the humorous phase in which they negotiate group memberships around attitudes in couplings provoked by idioms. The male speakers toast their friend, J, and wish him a happy birthday with the beers that J has provided to them, creating a tension that initiates the humour:

CO: Cheers Jordan, happy birthday...	positive <i>t</i> -judgement + J
W: == (SL) Thanks for the beers! (LA)	negative <i>t</i> -judgement + J’s friends

Example 4.5: Idioms (in bold) provoking JUDGEMENTS that couple (from Table 10.2 in Appendix A) (Discordant couplings hereafter represented in red font; tokens of attitude marked by “*t*”. Invoked attitudes are marked by lighter shading; see Transcription Conventions key for further coding).

The phase begins with an idiom, as “saying *happy birthday* to someone is not significant in its ability to make their birthday any happier, but because it labels them as a member of the group to whom you feel it is appropriate to give good wishes” (Chang, 2004, p. 159). This initiates the negotiation of group memberships around couplings with attitude provoked by idioms. In this case, *happy birthday* can be interpreted as provoking a positive judgement toward the receiver, transferred here to J, which is then humorously revoked by the fact that the other interactants have not sealed this ritual in the proper way as part of the idiomatic *Cheers*. They have not been the givers of the beer with which they are toasting; instead, the birthday boy has provided them, creating a tension between the positive and negative couplings of judgement provoked by the idioms in their regular constructions.

Following from this, the interactants discuss their lack of jobs, which leads to a wishful discourse about money through the expression of an altered idiom (Chang, 2004, p. 172), “money tree”. This example shows how speakers can turn couplings around with an idiom, provoking attitudes towards ideational meanings that they all can identify with (as opposed to having a job in this case):

CO: Ah no when it gets (CL-W) expensive at the bar who's paying though	positive <i>t</i> -judgement + J's friends
W: (L) None of us (LA)	negative <i>t</i> -judgement + J's friends
W: None of us has a job == (L)	negative <i>t</i> -judgement + J's friends
CO: == I ha- / have no money . Serge has a job	negative <i>t</i> -judgement + CO positive <i>t</i> -judgement + S
J: He's got a money tree	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having money tree
CO: Serge has a money tree	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having money tree
J: Yeah that's alright . I was thinking about that money tree the other day and I really wanna own one	(positive appreciation, positive affect) positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having money tree
W: A whole money tree	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having money tree

Example 4.6: Altered idiom provoking APPRECIATION in evaluative coupling.

W's negation first signals negative judgement coupled with J's friends as jobless, which leads them to a reference to a *money tree*, a truncated form of an idiomatic phrase that provokes an attitude that these participants can share as a coupling. The construction *money tree* is a nominalisation of the idiom (with a verbal process) “Money doesn't grow on trees”, an English expression that means that money cannot be plentiful or easily obtained (*The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms*, 2004). In this way, it is charged up with positive attitude towards obtaining money in the culture, and by using it to imagine that S and then the others may own a tree full of money (without necessarily having a job), the positive appreciation for money conveyed by this idiom is transferred to the context of their joblessness. The participants bond together around a “positive appreciation + having money tree” coupling. In changing its grammatical function from a verbal process to a noun group¹⁰, the speakers also exhibit an expectation that the hearers will be highly familiar with its original meaning to apply to the conversational context (Chang, 2004, p. 181).

10 The negation of the process (as money “doesn't” grow on trees) is also elided, showing that this is an imaginative discourse about the possibilities that the opposite might provide.

As the humorous phase continues, however, it demonstrates how speakers can also play with the meanings of the idiom along with its form by substituting its constituents, and this further suggests that idioms are devices that provoke attitudes in evaluative couplings. The speakers manipulate the construction by changing both the form and meaning of the (already nominalised) idiom in substituting the first constituent (*money*) with another noun:

W: Or even better , a weed tree (LA)	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having weed tree
W: (LV) If only weed grew on trees	positive <i>t</i> -affect + having weed tree

Example 4.7: Substituted idiom provoking positive attitudes in evaluative couplings.

And then later, they continue to substitute the ideational meanings into other more ridiculous “wished for” items:

CO: I'd rather like a gold tree or like a- a shirt tree ==	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having gold tree positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having shirt tree
W: == A shirt tree	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having shirt tree
CO: Or something like- something that isn't just money cause if it's just money I'm gonna ==	negative <i>t</i> -appreciation + money
W: == Shirt tree	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having shirt tree
CO: (L)	
W: “ God* look at all these (LO-CO) shirts!” == (L)	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + having shirt tree

Example 4.8: Substituted idioms provoking further positive attitudes to couple.

It is because the idiom itself incorporates items that are wished for, charged with positive appreciations, that items like “shirts” may be considered humorous to these interactants. Shirts are functional and much less desirable than money or gold in the consumer culture (cf. Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 167), and this idiomatic manipulation thus provokes a positive attitude that is laughable to these interactants when coupled with this new ideational meaning. Following from its original instantiation in the nominalisation “money tree”, the idiom provokes positive appreciations that couple with different ideational variations that are shared and laughed at and that continue to be related to the

original meaning of the idiom. This humorous phase illustrates how idioms are utilized by speakers to convey couplings related to their construed communities in the conversational context (e.g. a money tree for the jobless).

Idioms are thus powerful provoking devices that inform the interpretation of implicit evaluative couplings. Provocation relies upon a well-established value within the linguistic cultural community, and so couplings that are signalled by the use of idioms are widely accessible to those who are members of this community. In conversation, idioms are frequently presented in truncated forms (e.g. *money tree*) so that the hearer is expected to fill in the missing information by perceiving the cultural references they make; in humour speakers manipulate their meanings as well to cause laughter (e.g. *shirt tree*). So, to interpret the evaluative couplings, hearers must bring in linguistic and cultural knowledge.

4.2.3.1.2 Allusions

Allusions also provoke attitude in couplings in convivial conversational humour, since they are infused with interpersonal attitude for members of a culture. The combined ideational and interpersonal meanings of allusions together inform similar couplings in the conversational context for members of the culture who can interpret them. Allusions contain a short stretch of discourse that is “a deliberate play on a piece of well-known composed language or name so as to convey implicit meaning” (Lennon, 2004, p. 1). According to Caple (2010), allusions also include certain associations by which authors (or speakers) and readers (or hearers) forge bonds and build communities. These associations are attitudinal, drawing upon the interactants’ cultural, popular and general knowledge for their interpretation. In humour, these allusions inform the couplings at stake.

Allusions occur at different levels of the linguistic hierarchy, including the level of genre, in convivial conversational humour. Norrick (1989) notes that intertextuality “occurs any time one text suggests or requires reference to some other identifiable text or stretch of discourse, spoken or written” (p. 117). Further, intertextuality is a form of allusion (Deinhart, 1999, p. 116). Example 4.9 shows how the speaker, AD, alludes to another genre associated with particular evaluative couplings, recontextualising these meanings in

the unfolding humorous phase. Another speaker recalls an occasion in which an overweight female customer approached her at the snack bar where she worked, presenting an intensified negative aesthetic appreciation coupled with the customer. Hearer AD then reacts by jokingly provoking the same negative attitude as a coupling with overweight females through an allusion to a “fat joke”:

<p>SH: ...a:::nd this really skinny man and his little skinny kids get out of the car and they run onto the bus cause the bus takes you out to the berry field and the:::n ...the-th-this big big big hu:::ge lady walks outta (LV) the car like == AD: == "How* big == was she" L,N: (L)</p>	<p>positive <i>t</i>-appreciation + man, positive <i>t</i>-appreciation + kids</p> <hr/> <p>graduation + <i>t</i>-negative appreciation + lady</p> <hr/> <p>graduation + negative <i>t</i>-appreciation + lady</p>
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Example 4.9: Allusion to genre provoking APPRECIATION in coupling (infused GRADUATION marked by pink outline around “How big was she”).

A “fat joke” may be defined similarly to an “ethnic joke” as a joke at the expense of a group, in this case, overweight people (and particularly women). It is directed from a dominant group to associate a minority group with some undesirable quality (Davies, 1993, p. 30) and is often expressed in stereotypes (Brzozowska, 2007, p. 88). The evaluative couplings are evident in this genre if we review the stages and their expected realisations: in the *fat joke*, a speaker sets up a female target as grossly overweight, and this triggers the formulaic phrase “How big was she?” from the audience, so that the speaker can formulate a response that includes a negative aesthetic appreciation of the woman in question for her size, usually to a ridiculous degree.¹¹ By repeating the phrase, “How big was she?”, AD alludes to this genre, also mimicking the way the joke is commonly expressed by stressing the first and third lexis.¹² To those familiar with this kind of joke in the culture, her allusion provokes a negative appreciation that couples with a female target to project onto the “big big big hu:::ge lady” the participants are discussing. In referencing a different genre than the one being construed in the conversation, which is in this case an overall gossip genre (with a humorous phase), AD also furthers the humour by giving the expected staging and phrasal realisation of a joke genre. This “abandoning” of the goal of the gossip genre through AD’s intervention

11 This construction was popularised by comedian Rodney Dangerfield (cf. *Tribute to Rodney Dangerfield*, 2004).

12 Marking a humorous contrast (cf. Attardo et al., 2003).

causes an additional incongruity (Simpson, 2003) that adds to the tension created by the evaluative couplings that she conveys. This example displays allusion at the level of genre, but to one that provokes specifically negative evaluations coupled with overweight females in particular, which may not be common to genres in general (but see Eggins & Slade, 1997, Chapter 7, for pejorative judgement in gossip).

Allusions can also include references to names of persons or figures, events in popular, historical or political culture, and recognisable discourses and quotations. In humorous phases, these references provoke attitudes that couple with ideation and indicate the community memberships that the participants are co-constructing. For instance, as the participants continue the humorous phase from Example 4.9 in the following text, a speaker alludes to “Rita McNeil”, a famous singer in Canada known to these Canadian participants. In doing so, MR plays with the singer’s role in the culture in relation to her overweight body size, provoking another negative aesthetic appreciation to couple with the *big lady* being described (as in the “fat joke”):

<p>SH: Gah. No. Okay I'm sorry. (SL) But anyways. She comes up == MR: == So basically like Rita McNeil N: (L) SH: Close another person ==</p>	<p>graduation + negative t-appreciation + lady</p>
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Example 4.10: Allusion provoking negative attitude with ideation to couple (from Table 9.2 in Appendix A).

While Rita McNeil is known to these interactants as famous in the Canadian culture, and they can appreciate the reference and share in this, at the same time she is coupled with a negative appreciation for her overweight appearance. The participants have already negotiated negative aesthetic appreciation (White, 2001) couplings with the “big big big hu:::ge lady” who they continue to talk about here, so MR’s allusion to Rita McNeil provokes further negative appreciations with a well-recognised ideational meaning (Rita McNeil) to further amplify the couplings that they are laughing at with the big lady.

In this way, the allusion works as a provoking device, both to further the negative attitudes they are presenting as couplings with the big lady and to reinforce their Canadian membership together by being familiar with Rita McNeil as an overweight

female. Speakers refer to famous personalities in the culture to provoke both positive and negative attitudes coupled with them depending on their status in the culture (e.g. movie star vs. criminal), and this text exhibits how they may create humorous play with this status and the attitudes they share towards them. The use of allusions in convivial conversational humour therefore depends on the interactants' ability to share cultural references in relation to the subject of talk as it unfolds, so that hearers can grasp the evaluative couplings that are humorously made in comparison.

To summarise, in conversation, allusions and idioms provoke attitudes from the attitudinal associations that they convey to members of the culture who interpret them. By playing with these meanings in humour, interactants couple idioms as attitudes with new ideational meanings in the conversational context or present new couplings similar to the coupled meanings of allusions. By doing so, they create laughable couplings that are only interpretable to those who can share in the original reference. As provoking devices, idioms and allusions are powerful methods to construe values without inscribing them in the text. Though the attitudinal meaning being coupled is not explicit, it is widely accessible to those who know the references and use them as couplings to construe their membership to the culture. Friends share many different memberships to sub-communities within a culture as well, and hearers are forced to interpret even more implicit couplings of communities when they are invited—flagged or afforded—rather than provoked.

4.2.3.2 Flagging attitudes in couplings: realisations of all systems of GRADUATION

Realisations of GRADUATION in humorous phases point toward evaluative couplings in text with which participants laugh and bond together. In addition to lexical items that infuse intensity, realisations of all systems of FORCE (both infusing and isolating) and of FOCUS in GRADUATION flag attitude in couplings in convivial conversational humour (see Figure 4.3).

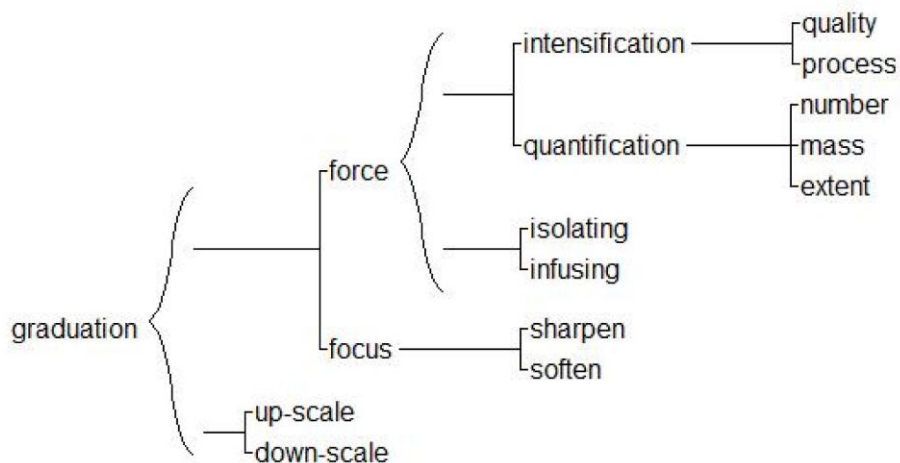


Figure 4.3: GRADUATION system network (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 154).

By grading ideational meanings, these realisations signal that attitudes are being invoked, because attitudes are inherently gradable (Martin & White, 2005, p. 65). Whereas attitudes in couplings that are *provoked* in the conversation derive from the linguistic expressions or references themselves for members of the culture, realisations of GRADUATION rely more upon the hearer’s ability to determine the attitude in a *particular* community perspective. Realisations of GRADUATION surround and even participate in the couplings to flag attitudes. In addition, the use of GRADUATION exhibits how conversational participants negotiate extremes in humour.

4.2.3.2.1 Intensifying attitudes

Friends negotiate the “borders” of acceptability—of what is extreme enough to be laughable—in humorous phases through couplings with attitudes that are flagged by their intensification. The GRADUATION system of INTENSIFICATION involves the grading of processes and qualities. Both infused intensification (i.e. upscaling or downscaling that fuses with meaning serving another semantic function) and isolated intensification (i.e. scaling realised by an isolated lexical item) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 141) of processes and qualities are used in convivial conversational humour as signals to evaluative couplings being played with in the text. Example 4.11 shows how speakers flag coupled attitudes by realising downscaled and upscaled intensity. The attitude flagged here is a

negative judgement of the speaker’s theatre group who cannot properly appreciate a “coin game”:

C: () We played the coin game though. With the <i>chips</i> ,	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + playing coin game
N: YOU played the! COIN GAME,	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + playing coin game
C: == Yeh!	
F: == Tried to play the coin game.	negative <i>t</i> -judgement + C’s play group
C: Dude* they’re SO STUPID THEY DON’T KNOW HOW TO DO ANYTHING RIGHT!	graduation + neg judgement + C’s play group
N: (L)	

Example 4.11: Upscaled and downscaled intensification flagging attitudes in couplings (from Table 2.1 in Appendix A).

When F realises downscaled intensity by mitigating *play* with an additional lexical process *tried to* in the verbal group, this flags a negative judgement to couple with the theatre group in that it shows they were not able to properly engage with (and appreciate) the coin game (trying but not fully succeeding). This is also combined with a range of intensification given by the other speakers, flagging a positive appreciation coupled with the coin game through N’s intensifying high volume (“YOU played the! COIN GAME,”), and *combining* with a negative judgement coupling with the theatre group by C (“they’re SO STUPID”). The interplay of downscaling and upscaling in intensification exhibits the contrast between couplings around which these speakers build their humour. When C’s utterance is met with laughter, it indicates that the coupling and its extreme intensification is beyond the borders of straightforward acceptance by this group, and the example shows how realisations of GRADUATION also participate in the couplings and the humour.

Whereas realisations of the system of INTENSIFICATION show how speakers flag attitudes that couple by upscaling and downscaling intensifications of processes and qualities, entities are also scaled, or quantified, for this purpose in humorous phases.

4.2.3.2.2 Quantifying attitudes

Beyond INTENSIFICATION, QUANTIFICATION as a system of FORCE also flags the presence of attitudes in couplings in convivial conversational humour by measuring ideational

participants in terms of number, mass, and extent (proximity and distribution in time and space) (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 150–151).

Conversational participants commonly play with relations of quantification as they value both abstract and concrete entities in their social world, construing communities around size values. They negotiate sizes of things as good or bad, often playing with the couplings associated with being *too much*. The contrast in costs in the following example exhibits how what is coupled with positive and negative attitude may be affected, and flagged, by quantification. The speaker in this example jokingly imagines her meal order in a fast food restaurant, projecting her own attempt to order healthier foods, but she is thwarted by the upscaled expensive price of a fruit cup in relation to the free french fries:

<p>AD: And then you say “Can I have a <i>fruit cup</i> instead of <i>fries</i>, they be like “I’m sorry that’s a dollar extra” and y’like “Alright I’ll just take the fries for free and gimme* a MASSIVE ASS TOO” (LO)</p>	<p>positive <i>t</i>-appreciation + fruit cup negative <i>t</i>-appreciation + fries negative <i>t</i>-apprec (expensive) + fruit cup positive <i>t</i>-appreciation (free) + fries grad: mass + neg <i>t</i>-appreciation + ass</p>
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Example 4.12: Realisations of GRADUATION: QUANTIFICATION flagging attitudes in couplings (from Table 9.1 in Appendix A).

While in her imagined order AD counter-expectantly presents a positive appreciation coupling for a fruit cup, preferring this healthy option over the usual side of french fries, the projected reply instead flags a negative appreciation for the fruit cup by being “a dollar extra”. By quantifying the amount of cost for this food item, AD flags a negative appreciation to be coupled with it by the imagined salesperson as too expensive for her, also signalled by the apology “I’m sorry”. AD contrasts this with the positive appreciation she is forced to couple with the french fries as *free* (flagged by GRADUATION: FOCUS: SOFTEN in “just”, see Section 4.2.3.2.3) and makes humour from the over-intensified consequences of this forced choice: a “massive ass”. Not only does she present a body part in the form of a swear word (*ass*) in the imagined service encounter genre¹³ (as something unexpected), she creates humour to laugh off the forced coupling for fast food. Though the speaker attempts to present couplings of health values, the costs force

13 See Ventola (1987) for discussion of this genre; see Chapter 6, Section 6.1.2 for discussion of how counter-expectancy, genre and conversational moves also impact upon the evaluative couplings presented in this text.

her to change her couplings and result in her further presenting a negatively appreciated large body size, and the participants laugh at the contrast of values.

Example 4.12 also further indicates how important communities are to the negotiation of couplings, and how realisations of the systems of FORCE in GRADUATION only flag attitudes that couple to hearers who can interpret the construed communities through the unfolding text. Those who have a great deal of dispensable income to use on fast food may not interpret the negative attitude coupled with “a dollar extra”, and would therefore not connect this forced coupling with the consequences of weight gain as do the students in this text. The boundaries of community are further explored according to typicality when speakers flag attitudes by grading otherwise non-gradable meanings.

4.2.3.2.3 Sharpening and softening attitudes

In their realisations of the GRADUATION system of FOCUS, which involves sharpening and softening an ideational meaning that is otherwise non-gradable, conversational speakers mark the relevant meaning as a coupling with attitude that is graded according to how “typical” it is to some kind of categorisation. As Martin and White (2005, p. 139) suggest, focus may flag attitude towards otherwise non-attitudinal meanings, and whether these are positive or negative depends on the specific semantics of the target as well as contextual influences. Speakers create humour by coupling meanings together in some unexpected or otherwise incongruent categorisation, using the GRADUATION system of FOCUS to signal the presence of these couplings through linguistic markers and to create categories for these couplings to negotiate together as community members. The following example exhibits how a speaker sharpens the meaning of *girls* with her realisation *such*, creating humour by indicating that the males in her social group are “prototypical” to the category of girls, and flagging the negative judgement (*girly*) that couples with this prototypicality:

G: Does he hang out with your crowd? C: Yeah he makes- he's the bad one that they all hate	negative judgement, negative affect + Mike
... M: Why? C: Cause they're ga- they're such girls! They're the girliest boys I've ever met in my life ==	negative t-judgement + guys graduation + negative t-judgement + guys
G: == Really? M: == Why don't they like him C: They all talk shit about each other like == woo::: t they're really girly	negative affect + Mike negative t-judgement + each other negative t-judgement + guys

Example 4.13: Realisations of GRADUATION: FOCUS: SHARPEN flagging attitude that couples (from Table 8.2 in Appendix A).

A sharpening focus in “they’re such *girls!*” flags a negative judgement that couples with the “boys” being discussed by categorizing them as too much like girls. This is due to their propensity to gossip (“They all talk shit about each other”), which suggests that the boys couple negative judgement with one another (despite their friendship) just as *girls* might normally do. So, the flagging device offers this interpretation of the evaluation as a coupling for hearers who can construe a community in which gossiping is “girly” and therefore negatively valued. Example 4.13 displays how an ideational meaning like *girls* can be scaled in degrees and how this provides for humour, especially when certain unexpected targets are presented as typical to this category. Sharpening typicality in this case flags a negative judgement for “girly” boys, and ideational meanings may also be softened to flag attitudes in couplings.

In sum, realisations of this system along with the rest of the systems of GRADUATION are flagging devices that particularly demonstrate the way that communities are co-constructed through evaluative couplings in convivial conversational humour. Though they do not provoke attitudes that couple as strongly as metaphors, idioms and allusions, they provide signals in the text that not only surround the evaluative couplings but may also combine in these couplings. Participants create humour around extremes, intensifying and quantifying attitudes to couple (such as appreciated prices and body size), and negotiating the boundaries of categories specific to their construed communities (as in the importance of a rehearsal game to a theatre community). By negotiating

coupled attitudes in extremes, conversational participants exhibit how the borders of communities can be co-constructed, and GRADUATION as a flagging device allows for the negotiation of *degrees* of these communities.

Affording devices, on the other hand, do not offer explicit clues but rather signal the presence of value orientations by which hearers must interpret the couplings associated with these orientations. Rather than flagging attitudes in couplings by negotiating value extremes, speakers afford attitudes by setting up the communities being negotiated in the text. This will be demonstrated in the following section.

4.2.3.3 Affording attitudes in couplings: ENGAGEMENT, pronouns and naming

In the previous sections on provoking and flagging devices for attitudes that couple, it was emphasized that the negotiation of communities is a significant aspect of the humorous interaction. The more implicitly speakers present attitudes in couplings, the more reliant they are upon the hearer's positioning in the appropriate communities for their interpretation. However, while idioms and allusions provide specific attitudinal meanings known to members of a culture to couple, and realisations of GRADUATION grade ideational meanings to flag their attitudes to community members (and even participate in their coupling), some evaluative couplings are only signalled in relation to value positions made relevant in the text. Attitudes in evaluative couplings are only afforded for hearers who can interpret and properly align with the value positions being identified.

This section explores devices for affording attitude in evaluative couplings in convivial conversational humour. These include realisations of the APPRAISAL system of ENGAGEMENT, which captures “whether [speakers] present themselves as standing with, as standing against, as undecided, or as neutral with respect to these other speakers and their value positions” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 93). Specifically through heteroglossic resources of dialogic expansion and contraction, conversational participants set up value positions around evaluative couplings that are in contrast, which will be discussed in

Section 4.2.3.3.1. Attitudes can also be invoked through the use of inclusive (e.g. *we*) and exclusive (e.g. *they*) pronouns as tools that can both include and exclude to establish solidarity with hearers (cf. Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), discussed in Section 4.2.3.3.2. Finally, couplings are created through the use of the involvement resource of naming, which is the focus of Section 4.2.3.3.3. Naming provides evidence of shared group knowledge (Eggins & Slade, 1997, p. 148) in terms of evaluative couplings, since speakers name persons and communities to negotiate their differential values in humour.¹⁴ With each of these affording devices, speakers invoke attitude in couplings as they create humour around what more or less constitutes “them” in relation to what “we” can share. They make clearer the community memberships that are being construed, relating value positions to broader categories of people.

4.2.3.3.1 Opposing points of view in ENGAGEMENT

The system of ENGAGEMENT accounts for the ways that “speakers/writers adjust and negotiate the arguability of their utterances” and includes “values which have been analysed in the literature under headings such as attribution, modality, hearsay, concession, polarity, evidentiality, hedges, boosters and metadiscursives” (White, 2001). ENGAGEMENT includes heteroglossic systems that contract and expand the dialogic space between speaker and audience, illustrated in Figure 4.4.

14 This differs from allusions because the evaluative meaning is further removed in naming— that is, the evaluation afforded by naming is not tied up with the reference that is alluded to (as in e.g. “negative appreciation + Rita McNeil”) but is drawn out as an associated aspect of the named individual or communities. Rather than coupling with the reference, naming signals couplings that are related somehow to the named persons or communities. Naming may also include more specific references such as individuals known to the specific interactants in the situation but not generalisable as a “cultural” reference.

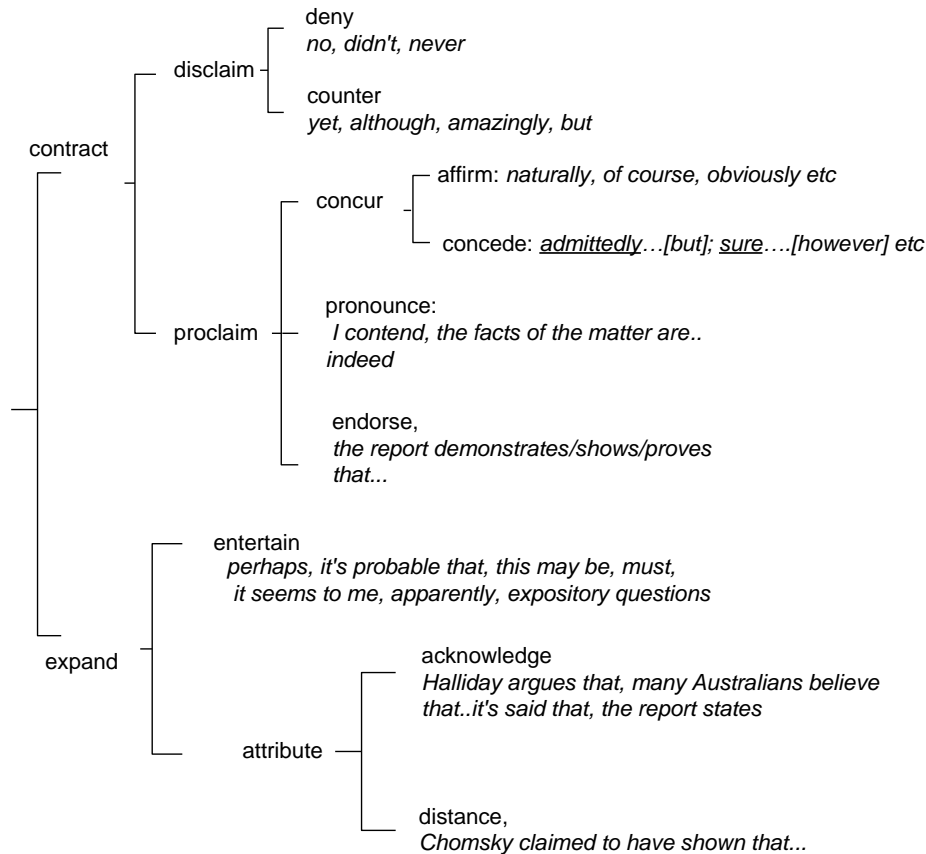


Figure 4.4: ENGAGEMENT system (taken from Martin & White, 2005, p. 134).

ENGAGEMENT resources are used in humorous phases to afford attitudes that couple and to enhance the humorous play. Like evaluative couplings, ENGAGEMENT resources have a fundamental relationship to how participants construe community because they concern the ways in which speakers/writers align or disalign themselves with particular value positions referenced by the text (Martin & White, 2005, p. 95). ENGAGEMENT realisations in discourse show that value positions are being compared and variously dis/aligned with, and speakers use ENGAGEMENT resources to adopt a stance towards and to negotiate their own positioning around the beliefs and viewpoints of others (White, 2001). In convivial conversational humour, speakers co-construct their positioning with hearers through evaluative couplings, and by using ENGAGEMENT devices they can mark their presentation of these couplings as values in contrast to the positioning of another.

Assertions of community positionings are played with in humour, as illustrated in Example 4.14. Here, the participants have just bonded together around couplings of

positive attitudes towards both men and women as equal, and CO creates humour based on this by telling them about the contrast of couplings with his friend’s girlfriend. The projected speaker, “Jess’ girlfriend”, construes her membership to the category of women through a positive evaluative coupling with *sewing*, presenting it as naturally related to this membership through her realisation of the contractive ENGAGEMENT system of PROCLAIM: CONCUR: AFFIRM.

<p>CO: == I don't know this one girl sh- (SL) I think we bo- Jess' girlfriend this one girl == N: == On? CO: with my friend, he had a bunch of clothing that was ripped he's like "Ah I have to take this to get this sewed up I don't know how to do that" and his girlfriend's like was like uh "Oh I could do it" and he's like "Oh you know how to sew?" And her answer to that was- to the question "d'you know how to sew," she was like "You know I am a woman of course!" K: == (LV) Oh my gah ... CO: She's like "I'm a woman of course I can sew!" (LO-K,N)</p>	<p>positive <i>t</i>-judgement + Jess' girlfriend; positive <i>t</i>-appreciation + sewing positive <i>t</i>-judgement + Jess' girlfriend positive <i>t</i>-judgement + Jess' girlfriend; positive <i>t</i>-appreciation + sewing</p>
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Example 4.14: Realisation of CONCUR: AFFIRM (in bold) affording attitudes that couple (from Table 11.10 in Appendix A) (Attitude that is invoked by another attitudinal realisation is indicated by a coloured outline, so the blue outline around “know how to sew” for instance indicates invoked APPRECIATION).

By realising the subsystem of AFFIRM (*of course*), the speaker presents her value as widely or even universally shared. The realisation of *of course* construes an audience which shares with Jess’ girlfriend the view that being a woman essentially entails the ability to sew, affording a positive attitude towards sewing as a coupling shared by women (and without which she would not be positively judged). It also excludes anyone who offers an alternative viewpoint (such as Jess in this story) as “dissident” and at odds with what is generally agreed upon (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 122–124). ENGAGEMENT here works to set up competing values, so that the realisation of *of course* establishes a value position that is opposed to the dissident position of Jess (that sewing may not necessarily be coupled with positive appreciation for a woman). In this way, the ENGAGEMENT device affords a

positive appreciation towards sewing as a coupling that is known to construe a woman's community and one that should be generally agreed upon in the culture as a "woman's activity". This coupling, and Jess' girlfriend's proclamation setting it up as essential to the woman's community, is funny to these participants because they can interpret it from the "equality" positioning they have previously co-constructed together. Despite the fact that there are no widely recognisable textual constructions (such as idioms) or GRADUATION markers to interpret the positive appreciation, because the speakers have been constructing communities of gender values and have aligned together within one community, they can interpret the affordance simply through the way that the realisation of ENGAGEMENT sets up a contrasting community of values in this phase.

Speakers also play with couplings that have already been established in the discourse by setting up the *alternative* position, affording opposing attitudes as couplings in humorous phases. Evaluative couplings are often interpretable through realisations of the contractive ENGAGEMENT system of DISCLAIM: DENY, which brings in both the positive position and its alternative through negation. It is "a resource for introducing the alternative positive position into the dialogue, and hence acknowledging it, so as to reject it" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 118). In convivial conversational humour, this resource may be used to jokingly reject a position or to indicate the borders of what couplings the participants can and cannot laugh around together. By affording attitudes as couplings in opposition, the participants' use of DISCLAIM: DENY makes explicit the tension that is worked out through laughter in humour but also distinguishes between whether the tension may be too serious for a shared laugh.

Examples of the use of realisations of DISCLAIM: DENY are given below, exhibiting the degree to which this device creates a tension that is laughed off easily in Example 4.15 and not as easily in Example 4.16. In Example 4.15, one of the research participants in the current study jokingly negates his endorsement for the recording by pretending not to have signed the release form.

CO: Get- get people to stop talking and once you record you have to start recording I already signed.	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + recording in advance
N: I already signed.	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + recording in advance
B: Okay. I didn't sign nuthin.	negative <i>t</i> -appreciation + recording in advance
CO: Anyways	
N: (L) Don't (LV) say that!	

Example 4.15: Realisation of DENY (in bold) affording negative attitude in coupling (from Table 3.1 in Appendix A).

This is a common way of laughing off the tensions presented by the recording device and research situation in conversation, as shown by Hay (1995), and in this phase the speakers create humour around their need to endorse the recording ahead of its occurrence. First, CO and N (the recorder) afford positive appreciations as couplings with the recording by realising the ENGAGEMENT system of PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE (in that *already* in “I already signed” exhibits each speaker’s asserted investiture in the research), emphasizing their own voices as in agreement with the position of the research. In the research community that they are construing, the participants interpret these as couplings because signing release forms is a highly valued activity that allows N’s recording for research to go ahead. By bringing in information from the discursive situation in terms of the recording happening and release forms that have been signed, these participants show that they understand that their pronouncements afford positive attitudes as evaluative couplings with the recording itself. Rather than aligning with the pronouncements given by CO and N, B counters them by denying agreement through his negation in “I didn’t sign nuthin”. B creates an opposing position to that clearly shared by the others in the conversation, presenting a negative appreciation coupling which would in serious talk make the recording unethical. N demonstrates that this is in fact a coupling when she pleads for B to negate what he has said, but because B presents it in humour, they can laugh it off as a laughable tension together.

Contrary to laughing it off, Example 4.16 shows how denials are used to reject couplings altogether and to afford attitudes in couplings to replace them. While speaker K continues to attempt to create humour around heterosexual Brazilian men’s positive appreciation for

dressing “like women”, the Brazilian participant in the conversation brings these couplings into the text to deny them and to assert what he feels are more accurate values of the community. Though K in this phase presents the same coupling to laugh off with the hearers, T’s realisations of DISCLAIM: DENY function to reject it instead in relation to his opposing position as one affiliated with this community.

K: Yeah but you see a lot of guys in Brazil who aren't necessarily gay who like to dress like women an	positive appreciation + dress like women
T: No! But they- if you uh- everyone dresses ==	
K: == Because I remember being at ==	
T: == Oh you're talking about (festival) right	
K: the Carnival and like a whole group of guys they were all dressed like women ==	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + dress like women
T: == Yeah but they're not men dressed like women; they're like in a <i>costume</i> like a little costume like you know whaddamean? You can li- they're not reading into this about women's feelings you know what I mean? They-they don't wanna know what it's about to be a woman. They-they wanna just have fun an-an I don't know pick up girls that's the idea of the thing. Well that's how they () ==	negative <i>t</i> -appreciation + dress like women positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + wearing costumes negative <i>t</i> -apprec + empathizing with women negative appreciation + being a woman positive appreciation + have fun positive appreciation + pick up girls
K: == °Dressed like a girl° (SL) ==	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + dress like girl

Example 4.16: Realisation of DENY (in bold) affording attitudes that couple; distinguishing boundaries of laughability (from Table 11.11 in Appendix A).

In his realisations such as “they’re not men dressed like women” and “they’re not reading into this about women’s feelings”, T negates the attitude that K has inscribed as a coupling to construe the Brazilian heterosexual men’s community, implying different couplings instead. These include negative appreciation couplings with dressing like women and empathising with women’s feelings and a positive appreciation for wearing costumes. T’s constant denial invokes opposing coupled evaluative meanings to that given by K, but this opposition also sets up a laughable contrast between K’s coupling and those that T asserts are shared in the Brazilian heterosexual men’s community (e.g. positive appreciations for picking up girls). An opposition is set up between the perspectives of the conversational participants as T attempts to establish more masculine heterosexual values to construe this community, while K furthers the humour by acknowledging the tension with the value that she presents (“Dressed like a girl”).

Whereas K laughs off this tension, T's denials reject it altogether, exhibiting a more aggressive use of humour (cf. Norrick, 1993a) on K's part whereby she pushes the boundaries of what T finds "laughable". However, this is still accomplished through the negotiation of evaluative couplings, and the resources of ENGAGEMENT clearly offer various ways of aligning in communities through couplings in text. These examples indicate that evaluative couplings may not only be communed around and laughed off, but also rejected altogether when they are negotiated as values between conversational participants (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.3.3 for further discussion). Realisations of ENGAGEMENT set up value positions, but to interpret the actual values in couplings, the hearer must align all at once between, for instance, the researcher's community and the friendship group to find B's denial "funny".

As these examples have shown, speakers afford attitudes coupled with experiential meanings through ENGAGEMENT to set up the communities around which they are variously aligning in humour, without explicitly stating the values at risk. By playing with value positioning in this way, conversational participants can laugh about the evaluative couplings around which they cannot commune as contrasting values, but they can also open a space for negotiating these values around the communities that they have set up. ENGAGEMENT shows the play between voices, that there is more than one position involved and that in fact convivial conversational humour concerns the way that *many* communities are *related* to one another. Hearers must therefore interpret the couplings of each position that is set up to be able to laugh off the appropriate meaning—to align—while in the next section, these positions are slightly more transparent when speakers use pronouns to set up an opposition of "us" in relation to "them".

4.2.3.3.2 Dividing and aligning: inclusive and exclusive pronouns

Similarly to the use of ENGAGEMENT, inclusive and exclusive pronouns establish value positions that afford attitudes as evaluative couplings in humorous phases. The first-person plural pronoun *we* is a useful tool for establishing inclusiveness and solidarity with readers and hearers (cf. Fairclough, 1989) when used towards an audience, and it may also be used to exclude (cf. Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; see also Duszak, 2002, on the distinction across language and cultures). In conversation, the interplay between the "inclusive we" and the exclusive "they" and its variants (along with some uses of "I/you")

signals evaluative couplings by identifying differential groupings being compared in humour and showing that there is a contrast between their values. Inclusive pronouns are powerful resources for the negotiation of community and they direct attention towards ideational meanings as couplings that are of interest to the communities being shared as “we” in relation to “they” in humour. By setting up a distinct opposition between what constitutes *us* and *them*, interactants can negotiate their shared memberships to communities in degrees through couplings.

In the following text, the evaluative couplings expressed combine positive attitudes with what has been jokingly established as “women’s duties” (see Example 4.14 above) along with positive judgements for women based on these couplings, and they are signalled by the use of exclusive pronoun *they* by a male speaker. After the conversational participants share couplings together around equality of the sexes, CO tells how his friend’s girlfriend positively appreciated sewing as a “woman’s activity” and they build on the humour targeted at women with exclusive pronouns.

CO: I just hope one day it does find its way to be like we’re equal ; but we’re totally different sexes and it’s like y’know <i>both</i> are celebrated for their own thing and whatnot.	positive judgement + men and women
...	
CO: She’s like “I’m a <i>woman of course</i> I can sew! ” (LO-K,N)	positive <i>t</i> -judgement + Jess’ girlfriend; positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + sewing
“I can clean too you know” (CL-K,N)	positive <i>t</i> -judgement + Jess’ girlfriend; positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + cleaning
You know (LV) it’s like	
T: You know and they can cook!	positive <i>t</i> -judgement + women; positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + cooking
CO: Yeah they can cook! (CL-N) == It’s like you know	positive <i>t</i> -judgement + women; positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + cooking
K: == (LV) Oh my god (L)	

Example 4.17: Inclusive and exclusive pronouns (in bold) affording attitudes in couplings (from Table 11.10 in Appendix A).

This example demonstrates how opposing communities are set up in humour based on different sets of couplings and how these are revealed by the interaction between inclusive and exclusive pronouns. The community that has been construed around equality in the beginning is marked by CO’s use of *we*, including all present as both males and females who can bond around equality values. But, this is countered first by the projected speech of his friend’s girlfriend who presents a coupling around sewing as a

woman, and then by the males in the conversation who use the exclusive pronoun *they* to refer to women in general. In T’s utterance “You know and they can *cook!*”, *they* signals a broadening of the subject from Jess’ girlfriend and Thai women to *all* women as “they” against the equality of men and women as “we”. The pronoun works to set up an opposition between an *us* and *them* that is constructed by Jess’ girlfriend, affording attitudes that couple with sewing, cooking and cleaning as the basis of positively judging women. The use of the pronoun conveys a contrast between equality values and the subordination of women and also creates a dividing tension between the male and female conversational interactants; however, because they had previously bonded together as “we” around equality values, this is a humorous division that they can laugh off together.¹⁵

Inclusive and exclusive pronouns thus create a space of contrasts for humour, affording coupled attitudes that are in this case jokingly associated with outsiders. On the other hand, the following example shows a humorous claiming of couplings by “insiders”:

C: == I loved that game	graduation + positive <i>t</i> -apprec + coin game
F: Sorry I-I-I never liked it that == much .	negative <i>t</i>-appreciation + coin game
C: == I love it.	graduation + positive <i>t</i> -apprec + coin game
N: I love it too.	graduation + positive <i>t</i> -apprec + coin game
C: We played like (LO-N) four rounds ==	graduation + pos <i>t</i> -apprec + playing coin game
F: == Well* why don't you two play!	negative <i>t</i>-appreciation + playing coin game
N: <i>Fine!</i> ==	
C: == I think we will!	
N: Yeah.	
C: We'll have a == mass warmup	graduation + pos <i>t</i>-apprec + playing coin game
N: == Without you!	
C: At the (LV) beginning of (LO-N) ==	
F: == (the week)	
C: before the shows (LO-F) And we'll play the coin game with like twenty people .	graduation + pos <i>t</i>-apprec + playing coin game
N: Yep.	

Example 4.18: Pronouns (in bold) excluding and affording attitudes that couple (from Table 2.1 in Appendix A).

¹⁵ This phase also shows that the hearers must understand that “they” refers to a broader community of women in relation to the preceding co-construction of “we”, but also bring in information from the discursive situation. Specifically, it is the male interactants who use this pronoun to further the humour by creating a laughable division between them and the females in the here and now. The pronouns here add to the humour, furthering the couplings as representative of a larger community (i.e. women) that has changed in terms of its values and subcommunities (e.g. feminists) over time (at least in the Canadian culture that they construe).

The pronouns in this example work to humorously exclude one participant from the communities being construed, setting up an opposition between a wider theatre group that includes N and C as *we*, and F alone as *you*. After F has presented a negative appreciation coupling for the fun coin game shared by N and C, he sarcastically removes himself from the grouping around the coin game using the second person pronoun *you* with numeral *two* in “Why don’t *you two* play”. C and N play along by co-constructing his exclusion (e.g. “Without *you!*”) and upscaling their own grouping without him (“*mass* warmup”, “with like twenty people”), affording upscaled positive attitudes towards the coin game as a value that bonds the whole theatre community except F together as *we*. The inclusive pronoun *we* works to include C and N while excluding F as an individual, emphasizing his lack of affiliations with any community for humour. Because their coupling around the coin game is so *extreme* (see Section 4.2.3.2.1), and their relationships together in the theatre based on so much more, they can tease F in this way as a hearer that understands that his contrast of couplings with the coin game, and thus the division between them, is a laughable one. This text makes it clear that setting up oppositions between us and them signals that there are values at play in humorous phases, and as the speakers position themselves between these points of alignment and division, they laugh off the couplings together.

In short, evaluative couplings work as points of comparison between the two represented “sides” that can be negotiated in humour. It is this interplay between the pronouns “we” and “they” or “you” that signals how participants negotiate different relations of solidarity through evaluative couplings. More importantly, it shows how the participants construct who “we” are together by laughing off any values that are likely not to be shared or bonded around—that contrast with those values of shared communities. To interpret the afforded attitude in couplings, hearers must align themselves around the communities referenced by inclusive and exclusive pronouns, and this can involve bringing in information from the discursive situation (e.g. speaker genders).

The resources of realisations of ENGAGEMENT and inclusive and exclusive pronouns offer the textual construction of different *sides* for couplings to be interpreted, and speakers may also name the specific communities, persons and groups at risk in the negotiation of couplings. By doing so, they afford attitudes as couplings between different individuals or

in relation to those named communities for hearers who recognise them. Naming will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.3.3.3 Naming persons and communities

The semantic resource of naming (cf. Kress & Hodge, 1993; Poynton, 1985), which has been given as a feature of the discourse semantic resource of involvement (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 34–35), affords attitudes that couple in convivial conversational humour by clarifying the positions involved. This includes named individuals, groups and communities, and these are also expressed to assign couplings to different perspectives. It is also a useful tool in convivial conversational humour for making explicit the metadiscourse that is going on—that the speakers are construing communities through these couplings, and that they may do so within and across communities in humour. For instance:

P: Oh I got a page at three in the morning. It was Shannon (SL)	grad: extent (late) + positive t-appreciation + paging
G: <i>Really</i> ? (CL-P) What ==	
P: == It was like- it's so funny b'cause usually Tobi 'll just if something happens Tobi 'll just call us the next day and let us know but (LV) Shannon paged me right away ==	grad: extent (day) + positive t-appreciation + calling grad: extent (late) + positive t-apprec + paging
G: == Oh god	

Example 4.19: Naming individuals (in bold) within community construing differential couplings (from Table 6.2 in Appendix A).

G names two individuals, Shannon and Tobi. Shannon is the boss of G and P, both residence dons (student supervisors) at university who receive pages at all hours from residents, and Tobi is Shannon's boss. By naming these individuals, P sets up the contrasting perspectives and, importantly, the differential value positions of each individual. By doing so, she signals the differential couplings being negotiated that do not align within the don community, since Shannon has sent her a late-night page that these participants couple with negative appreciation, while Tobi always positively appreciates daytime calling instead. In her comparison of these names, P shows that the conversational participants align with Tobi's values in the don community rather than

Shannon’s values, affording these evaluations as contrasting couplings around appreciated contacting activities. Through her use of naming in this example, P sets up a kind of “us” and “them” contrast (as discussed above), attempting to align with G based on contrasting values that they can identify with specifically through two known persons.¹⁶ While the couplings are also interpretable through GRADUATION and other strategies, the naming of the individuals aids in affording the attitudinal orientation of the implicit couplings. It makes the alignment around couplings clear but, importantly, it shows how individuals may be named to construe values *within* a community as well as across communities. Humour here revolves around the tension created by Shannon’s coupling, but this must be interpreted in relation to the don community as a whole, made evident by P’s additional mention of Tobi.

Speakers also use “non-name based” vocatives (Poynton, 1984) in convivial conversational humour as “attending” moves to gain attention (Egins & Slade, 1997, pp. 193–194) and draw attention to an interactant but more importantly as a marker of solidarity in identifying one’s intimacy with the other interactants and grouping together as friends. These vocatives reinforce evaluative couplings presented in the text and underscore the communality on which convivial conversational humour is based. For instance, speakers use terms to refer to the conversational participants and emphasize their inclusion in a construed grouping, such as “dude”.

U: I ate well (SL)	positive appreciation + eating
N: We all ate well. (LA)	positive appreciation + eating
N: (Dude) we all (LV) ate (CL-P) good pie!	positive appreciation + pie

Example 4.20: *Dude* as vocative construing community and reinforcing couplings (from Table 1.1 in Appendix A).

N’s utterance of *Dude* reinforces the solidarity being negotiated between the interactants as they laugh around eating a lot during the holidays, indicating that they are all together in sharing a value about their behaviour. Along with the laughter, this indicates the negative self-judgement that is being shared by all (clarified in U’s final utterance, see Section 4.1.3 above) and through this vocative, N addresses the initial speaker as one who

¹⁶ See also Table 8.25 in Appendix A for contrast between named actor *Chris Farley* and named association *Chippendales*, signalling couplings that are laughed at by the participants.

can share intimacy with everyone present as a co-participant in the bad activity. The participants are also brought together in bonding around a coupling with the vocative “guys” in Example 4.21.

F: Party's over. For me;	
N: No more pie party ==	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + pie parties
C: == This was an awesome pie party guys	positive appreciation + pie parties
N: I love pie parties	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + pie parties
C: I can't wait to have another one	positive <i>t</i> -appreciation + pie parties

Example 4.21: Guys as vocative construing community around loved pie parties (from Table 2.12 in Appendix A).

In using the term *guys*, C positions the others as ones who can align around the positive pie party coupling and so reinforces their grouping while negotiating their shared coupling together.

Naming can also be considered at the level of communities, since explicit references to particular groups in convivial conversational humour inform the interpretation of couplings related to that membership. The naming of individuals (such as *Shannon* and *Tobi* given above) is distinguished from the naming of communities because communities do not need to be set up as *contrasting* to aid in the interpretation of their associated couplings. Community categorisation is an area that has been considered in membership categorization theory (cf. Sacks, 1992), and the explicit naming of communities in text would be considered a salient signal for identifying interactant identities in this theory. Sacks describes a model for determining the textual construction of identity in terms of “membership categorization devices” (MCDs), which serve as tokens identifying interactants within particular organised sets of social categories. The explicit naming of groupings, roles and communities in the text, and/or their associated features, would thus reference meanings—such as couplings—that are relevant to those memberships.

An example of how couplings are signalled when communities are made explicit, and of how this can affect the inclusion the conversational participants, can be seen in Example 4.2 of Section 4.1.3 above in which it was explained how speaker F gives the phrase “Next year in Jerusalem” following from the interactants’ bonding around a pie party. In

the example, the speaker explicitly names the Jewish community and thereby affords the positive evaluations as couplings that are associated with this community membership. In Example 4.2, F presents a coupling of positive appreciation for the phrase as something said in the Jewish community at the end of Passover, and in explaining the meaning to an interlocutor who doesn't understand the humour, F gives the name of the community:

F: == It's-it's a **Jewish** thing...

He follows this by presenting the positive evaluative couplings by which he construes this community, affording positive attitudes coupled with the holiday of Passover, the repeated phrase and the language of Hebrew in which it is said:

F: ...at the end of every **Passover** you say "**next year in Jerusalem**" in **Hebrew**.

Since the joke that he has made involved a few associated couplings for the Jewish community, by naming this community he makes this clear to those who can interpret its associated value sets. Members can interpret "Next year in Jerusalem" for its couplings of positive appreciation for the phrase, the holiday, the language and the place, so that the discordance between these couplings and that around simply *pie* is made funny in the conversational context. This is an example of how humour can be unpacked in convivial conversational humour to reveal couplings that combine together into communities of values, and it underlines the importance of community construal in the presentation of couplings. This excerpt also exhibits how naming becomes a particularly useful tool for demonstrating the process of affiliation, which will be further developed in Chapter 5. Those who know each other's social networks in affiliation will be able to share a great deal of associated valued meanings amongst their shared networks, and they can also identify with the name of the social network itself.

Affording devices like naming bring to light that what is at stake in the negotiation of couplings are different communities and these in relation to one another. Conversational participants laugh around how persons and groups can have opposing couplings, and it is this contrast or "incongruity" that creates the humour and allows them to negotiate their community memberships together in various ways.

Just as naming signals the presence of couplings and aids in the interpretation of attitudes that are implied through other strategies as well, outbursts by speakers in the form of expletives, interjections and euphemisms colour the humorous text to aid in the interpretation of attitudinal meaning throughout. These expressions do not realise specific choices in ATTITUDE as do the strategies that were discussed above, but they indicate attitudinal polarity, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

4.2.3.4 “X-phemisms” indicating attitude

It is important to acknowledge the many different ways that speakers in convivial conversational humour communicate evaluation, since this type of humour is based on the interaction between different evaluative orientations. Alongside evaluative couplings, further attitudinal meaning is suggested through “bursts” of attitude that occur amidst surrounding couplings in the conversational text. Expletives, euphemisms, and interjections are treated by Martin and White (2005) as “outbursts of evaluation which are underspecified as far as type of attitude is concerned” (p. 69), but they indicate particular polarities of attitude in relation to their co-text in convivial conversational humour. The term “X-phemism” is introduced by Allan and Burrige (2006) to cover the whole set of degrees of offensive language including “dysphemisms” (e.g. expletives), euphemisms and “orthophemisms” (i.e. direct stating of taboo terms). As Allan and Burrige (2006) explain, the classification of these terms as more or less offensive or impolite is “wedded to context, place, and time” (p. 25), so that the interpretation of their evaluative meaning is only possible through a consideration of the context, the unfolding text of couplings and its particular use by the speaker. X-phemisms will be briefly considered in this section as devices that colour the conversational humorous text with attitude alongside couplings.

Swear words, euphemisms and interjections are frequent in casual conversation, and Eggins and Slade (1997, p. 153) contend that they are somehow associated with group membership. They distinguish the functionality of these meanings according to their placement and explicitness (i.e. intensification) in text, so that swear words within a clause can realise GRADUATION by amplifying the ideation they modify and can be graded themselves. This grading is distinguished by the classifications “orthophemism”, “euphemism” and “dysphemism” by Allan and Burrige (2006) which range from those

expressions that are formal and direct (e.g. *faeces*) to those that are more colloquial and figurative (e.g. *poo*) to the most explicit offensive, derogatory comments (e.g. *shit*) found in spoken discourse. These expressions, however, do not systematically relate to any particular attitude except in regard to specifically identified registers (cf. Jordens, 2002, cited in Martin & White, 2005, p. 69). Especially expressions that are autonomous to the surrounding clause (e.g. “Dammit!”) cannot be tied to a specific attitudinal construal without identifying their context, and these are described by Martin and Rose (2007, p. 46) as feelings that become so amplified they explode and create a “short-circuit that disengages amplification from what is being appraised” and are “‘cut loose’ as a swear word”.

When considered in relation to surrounding evaluative couplings in humorous phases, however, these outbursts indicate particular orientations to attitude that support the meanings of the humour. Conversational speakers use X-phemisms to indicate attitudinal meaning while modifying their intensity so as to maintain relations of rapport with hearers, such as in the following utterance from Table 1.2 in Appendix A. Within a humorous phase, the speaker emphasizes her negative attitude towards the cold weather in Quebec and at the same time tones down the offence it might cause to her hearer:

P So uh gaw... in Quebec it's so↓ ***frickin** cold* ...

The euphemism “frickin” is a cross-varietal synonym (Allan & Burrige, 2006, p. 23) of the dysphemism “fucking” but allows the speaker to accomplish her graduated negative evaluation coupling without causing offence with a taboo word. In this example, its use indicates the negative attitude that is clarified in her realisation *cold* but also maintains politeness conventions between the interactants (cf. Allan & Burrige, 2006, p. 31). Similarly, in the following excerpt from Table 7.18 in Appendix A, the speaker inscribes a negative appreciation as a material process (*screwed*) coupled with radiation and at the same time conveys a euphemism that does not cause offence to his hearers:

F: *Radiation screws* with your DNA ...

By using the realisation “screws with”, this speaker conveys a negative attitude that might not otherwise be communicated (such as with a realisation like “alters”), indicating the attitudinal potential of euphemisms in conversation.

X-phemisms further have the potential to communicate both negative and positive polarities of attitude in discrete realisations. A common X-phemism is the use of “oh my god” and “God” as autonomous reactions to (often humorous) utterances. These expressions indicate negative attitudes as in the following example from Table 8.25:

M: The funniest thing I've ever seen is- do you ge- it was like a really really old
SNL skit and Patrick Swayze was on and they were doing this um
C: Chippendales?
M: This Chippendales ==
C: == With Chris Farley? == Yeah
M: == with Chris Farley!
G: == Oh::: yeah::: ew:::
L: == **Oh my (LV) god!**

The expressions can also indicate positive attitudes, as in W's sarcastically excited reply to CO's call for a positively appreciated coupling with an imaginary “shirt tree” in Table 10.2:

CO: Oh::: just you. I'd rather like a gold tree or like a- a shirt tree ==
W: == A shirt tree
CO: Or something like- something that isn't just money cause if it's just money I'm gonna ==
W: == Shirt tree
CO: (L)
W: “**God*** look at all these (LO-CO) shirts!” == (L)

Interestingly, the speakers' deployment of X-phemisms in the conversational humour data aligns with Allan and Burridge's (2005, p. 27) Middle Class Politeness Criterion (MCPC), as interactants used euphemisms rather than dysphemisms (or expletives) most often and especially in conversations with the opposite sex. One speaker makes this explicit in Table 11.11 when he prefaces the use of dysphemism “whore” with two polite pardons, conveying negative attitude:

T: The costumes they wear are like **I'm sorry excuse me a whore** or something like (LO-N) th-
they wear like costumes == (all the time)

Though they carry the potential to convey both positive and negative attitudinal polarity, the terms used in the conversational data overwhelmingly construed negative meanings

and could be seen along with the verbiage to colour the attitudinal orientation of the surrounding text. This negative orientation has to do with the associations with X-phemisms as “taboo” or “impolite” terms in the linguistic culture so that they may perhaps be considered as coupled generally with a layer of negative attitude. So, when X-phemisms are deployed in humorous phases, they indicate attitudes in relation to the context but also convey particular meanings by being used despite their taboo status in the culture. Their use is in this way telling of interactants’ construal of ideological community memberships in that these terms are coupled together with negative attitude in the ideologies of a culture (e.g. use of dysphemisms like “shit” may construe “lower class” ideologies (cf. Hughes, 1992)).

This is one way that X-phemisms may be considered in relation to convivial conversational humour, but their full weight in relation to couplings requires further exploration from an analytical perspective. Because these terms are difficult to classify in particular appraisal systems and always depend on the situational context of use, they are generally given similar treatment as by Martin and White (2005, p. 69) as outbursts of evaluation and coded according to the individual texts. The link between attitudes, X-phemisms, and group identity work remains a promising topic for future research.

4.2.3.5 Summary of strategies for invoking attitudes in couplings

This section has considered the range of strategies used in humour for invoking attitude that couples. In exploring these strategies, we gain a perspective on how these textual patterns cause laughter and also how the interpretation of couplings has an intrinsic and significant relation to alignments within and across communities. By focusing on the way that conversational speakers variously provoke, flag and afford attitudes as evaluative couplings in humorous phases, a number of features have surfaced that shed light on important aspects of convivial conversational humour. To begin with, the coupling of attitudes that are provoked through idioms and allusions has shown that the size of the communities being negotiated ranges, so that participants can interpret attitudes that are provoked as members of a wider linguistic culture while constructing subcultures with them as well. This includes the construal of ideologies in the culture, as suggested by the consideration of X-phemisms. In addition, particularly those coupled attitudes flagged by

(and further coupled with) realisations of GRADUATION exhibited how communities may be negotiated in *degrees* in terms of the extremes of their boundaries. Participants construe their relations to communities by creating humour around what is *too much, too large, not enough*, and so on. Attitudes that are afforded in couplings, which rely the most upon the hearer's ability to infer the values based on the positions set up, exhibited more visibly that there are *many* communities being negotiated all at once and in relation to one another. Speakers construct humour by creating humorous divisions based on alignments, distinguishing what can be shared as "us" with what is construed as "them", and laughing these contrasts off together. The tension that is laughed off is therefore intrinsically related to communities of the culture, and how conversational participants affiliate *within* and *across* them through particular value/experience combinations. When these contrasts, tensions or incongruities are not laughable, however, ENGAGEMENT resources (DISCLAIM: DENY in particular) exhibited how participants could alternatively reject the couplings presented in the text. This indicates that there are boundaries to what couplings can be laughed at and suggests that they can be differentially negotiated depending on their relation to the communities being construed by the conversational speakers. While they can commune together around couplings straightforwardly (as shown in Section 4.1.2), when couplings somehow create a tension, conversational participants will laugh it off as funny or reject it as too serious a contrast.

4.3 Conclusion of Chapter Four

This chapter has demonstrated that attitude + ideation couplings are the textual evidence for the cause of laughter in convivial conversational humour and that couplings can be found both explicitly and implicitly in the unfolding of bonding surrounding laughter. Convivial conversational humour is about the negotiation of alignments based on these couplings, and this is evident from the importance that communities play in the humorous negotiation. Friends come together around couplings through humour by negotiating degrees and boundaries of communities and their belonging to them. Laughter allows them to laugh off those values that create tension with their aligned communities, exposing an orientation to reinforcing solidarity through the ongoing text.

In examining phases of humour, and the way that couplings are negotiated through laughter in these phases, a number of questions remain to be explored. First, what are funny couplings discordant *with*? It has been proposed that the tension created by these couplings lies between them and the communities of values in which participants are affiliating, but the sociality construed by the participants in these communities needs to be systematically modelled and theorised. To put it another way, we acknowledge that couplings construe values in a social system, but this social system and the process through which humour is created compel further explanation. Secondly, when discordant couplings are presented in humorous phases, *why* do conversational participants find them funny? It is evident now that discordant couplings cause laughter by creating a humorous tension, but it is not as clear why this is necessarily taken as funny by the conversational participants (and not, for instance, as too serious to laugh off). These questions will be addressed in Chapter 5, in which a social model of *affiliation* will be presented. Affiliation describes the social process of which humour is one strategy and offers a social framework of the value sets of communities in the culture that are construed through couplings in the linguistic text.