

[Note]

Native language laughter transfer?: Language Notes on Cross Cultural Laughter in a Japanese High School Staffroom.

Richard John Walker

Abstract *This article focuses upon the role of laughter in a cross-cultural English language interaction between a NSET (native speaking English teacher) and two NNSETs (non-native speaking English teachers) in a private high school staffroom in Tokyo, Japan. Within the transcribed interaction, laughter patterns that resemble laughter from a Japanese speaker's L1/C1 (first language/first culture) are discovered in L2 (second language) speech and appear to have an overall positive effect on the talk. Using a Conversation Analysis (CA) approach, I seek to explore and increase awareness of two phenomena: the effect that laughter can have (locally and globally) in a bicultural interaction, and the effect of L1/C1 laughter patterns, from a type of laugh that is 'particularly prevalent in Japanese communication' (Hayakawa, 2006, p. 5), on second language speech. The importance that this laughter has on the mood and trajectory of the talk may make it worthy of consideration in future recontextualisations of communicative competences (Leung, 2005) in an emergent Japanese English.*

Key Words: discourse analysis, paralanguage, second language acquisition

Interdisciplinary Fields: ELT, conversation analysis, discourse analysis

1. Background to the research.

This piece of research on laughter in second language talk took shape after the author obtained permission to record English language conversations in a staff room at a private high school in Tokyo, Japan. He did this for personal research on 'turn taking' in English first language and second language conversation. The participants in the extracts below, therefore, were aware of the talk being recorded, yet were unaware that the recording would be analysed for traces of laughter. Indeed, the researcher himself was unaware at the time of recording that the data would be analysed for laughter as he merely wished to observe and analyse patterns in the sequential order of talk in interaction. After recordings were completed, a rough

transcription was created and detected patterns were given deeper analyses. It became apparent that the most notable factor of the talk was laughter constructed by NNSET 'J'; namely, laughter that appeared where laughter wouldn't have been expected in talk between two native English speakers. Participant NNSET 'J' was actually in conversation with participant NSET 'B' for the first time, after having been informed that he would work with 'B' in a team teaching project the following semester. This is an important factor to consider when analysing the talk, especially in light of the fact that J's laughter appears to change the mood between the two participants in a positive manner. Indeed, it was observed that he used laughter as a means to move away from face-threatening topics and towards mutually acceptable ones. To investigate further though, it became necessary to make a detailed transcription of talk and of each laughter peel, and also to research the issue of laughter created by second language speakers. Bearing in mind that J and another conversation participant 'JS' spoke Japanese as a first language, it then became necessary to research the use of laughter in Japanese. One study by Hayakawa (2006) claimed that a so-called 'meaningless' laugh exists in Japanese language interaction, a laugh that does not have a humorous purpose. Using her theory, I examined my transcript to look for traces of this 'meaningless laugh' in second language speech. There seemed to be several instances where laughter had been constructed that shared a similar nature to her 'meaningless laugh'. Could such laughter in the talk be indicative of a universal repertoire of laughter patterns found within world cultures, or could it be that J's laughter had its origin in laughter specific to Japanese L1/C1?

1.1. Introduction to 'L2 laughter in interaction'.

"Men have been wise in many different modes, but they have always laughed in the same way." (Samuel Johnson, in Halliwell, 1991, p. 279)

In times of limited cross-cultural interaction, the act of laughter was deemed to be a uniformly consistent and easily classifiable human phenomenon. Indeed, Samuel Johnson maintained that "Men have been wise in many different modes, but they have always laughed in the same way (Johnson, quoted in Halliwell, p. 279)". However, studies on talk in interaction have since revealed that though men have always laughed, they have done so to cover 'a wide variety of behaviours' and 'contribut(e) in a multitude of ways to human interaction' (Glenn, 2003, p. 8). In fact, though the relationship between laughter and humour is deeply connected, it is 'by no means coextensive' (Attardo, 2003, p. 1288). Developments such as Goffman's

frame theory (1974) and conversation analysis (CA) research (e.g. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974) on native speaker talk initiated the terminology required to analyse laughter in interaction and made it clear that laughter is constructed and co-constructed for complex interactional means. As a result of such research, centred on L1 English interaction, it has become clear that laughter is produced and signalled in, at least, the following situations: when constructing identities, when arguing a point, when threatening someone's face and also when saving one's own (Hartington, 2008, p. 1).

Hartington's work was based on a corpus of laughter produced by native speakers and also made use of extensive research on laughter over the previous two decades, but as English is increasingly used in cross-cultural L2 interactions in commercial and state institutions worldwide, it would seem worthy to analyse differences in the production of laughter in second language speech. To do so, we need a better awareness of the differences in which laughter is used in other cultures, as well as during cross-cultural talk. Learning about laughter in other languages and within L2 interactions will allow language teachers to better understand cross-linguistic laughter patterns that may occur in the classroom. If speakers from one culture exhibit similar laughter patterns when producing L2 talk, then it would seem worthwhile to acknowledge and document it. After all, laughter is a form of paralinguage, like crying and gesturing, and further study may be fruitful for linguistic theories on L2 communication and acquisition. Certainly, recent L2 studies on 'gestures' have led to a recognition of 'interactions between communicative and cognitive, process-related constraints on L2 development' (Gullberg, 2008, p. 295-296), and research on similar constraints as regards the production of laughter(s) may prove fruitful. Such paralinguistic studies may even strengthen calls for recontextualisations of communicative competences in L2 speech and/or World Englishes. The below excerpts of laughter between 'J' and 'B' may assist in this by making initial steps towards building a better understanding of L2 laughter from one Japanese NNSET.

2. Laughter in the workplace

Below I shall discuss the issue of laughter in educational environments, including 'back-region' areas (i.e. staffrooms) and 'front region' areas (i.e. classrooms) (Goffman 1971 [1959]). Firstly though, section 2.1 below shows an excerpt of L2 laughter in the interaction under study. The laugh fits one of three types of 'meaningless' laughter in Hayakawa's study: type 'B' balancing laughter. Full details of all three types of laughter are shown in table

form in section 4 below. Within all excerpts, laughter is transcribed to as close to the exact sound as possible (e.g. in line 45: 'ehuh huh hhh hh hh h') and follow symbols found in Gail Jefferson's (1985) transcription system.

2.1. L2 laughter: Excerpt 1 (Type B laughter).

28. B: When you were at high school, did you get a lot of chance (.) to speak?
29. J: High school?
30. B: = Yeah.
31. J: :: (2) uhm *wa* not many
40. B: But you didn't .. get chance to speak.
41. J: Yeah. . .
42. B: - Ah: Coz I see you read a newspaper. You read the Japan Times I saw you today reading.(.) Yeah, so you can read the Japan Times(1) <<easily>>
43. J: [uhm:]
44. J: But uh I but oh:> but only sports:< =
45. J: =ehuh huh hhh hh hh h.
46. B: [Ye(h)ah(h)! ye(h)ah so you're interested in spor - =
- 47: J: =unn li- like urr::- rugby: =

The excerpt above occurred just after J had been introduced to B and informed that they would be team teaching partners in the following semester. In spite of this, B elects to ask questions that appertain to J's proficiency in English, and asks what might be considered a face threatening question about J's experience as a student in high school English classes (line 28). This is followed by a question concerning his present proficiency in reading English newspapers (line 42). J's response is one of initial hesitation followed by a long laughter peal. He decides to use laughter to end his turn, which elicits laughter from B (line 46) and stimulated a change in topic from English proficiency to a more felicitous one—J's sport of choice, rugby. Though B controlled the content of the interaction by his questions, J's laugh had the effect of positively altering the mood of the talk. He may have used laughter as a form of self-deprecation, as a means of self-amusement or due to a temporary inability in locating English words, but his use of the Japanese particle '*wa*' (line 31) suggests that he makes an intra-sentential code switch to fill a momentary linguistic need. The act of code-switching here (and elsewhere) reveals J's tendency to revert to mother tongue words, which may, in turn, raise the likelihood of his use of laughter patterns from his L1/C1.

2.2. Laughter, humour and ELT workplaces.

The fact that the above except of laughter occurred in the staffroom is hardly surprising. Staffroom laughter is an integral part of 'back region' camaraderie, as shown by recent studies that focus upon laughter in educational institutions (e.g. Richards, 2006), and is something which is dependent upon local conditions and participant relationships within it. In 'front regions' (i.e. classrooms), humorous laughter has long been welcomed by students, and also by ELT practitioners (e.g. Muqan and Lu, 2006, Bell, 2009). Japanese EFL students have even claimed that EFL teachers possess a better sense of humour than teachers of other disciplines (Lee, 2010, p. 34). Yet the potential ambiguity of humour and the fact that laughter is both spontaneous and contrived (Ruch and Ekman, 2001) make laughter a double edged sword for students and teachers in both 'front' and 'back' regions' of ELT institutions. The inseparability of language and culture (Jiang, 2000) also makes culture-specific laughter patterns a potentially disharmonising force, for topics that provoke laughter in one culture may offend in another. We might wonder, therefore, how students from other cultures may react to the production of the Japanese 'meaningless' laugh within a second language context. Data from this research suggests that laughter which fits the patterns of the meaningless laugh, though changing in form as the talk progresses, can assist in the fostering of allegiance between native and non-native speakers.

3. Laughter and Socialized Norms

Laughter is affected by largely 'unselfconscious' socialized norms which vary cross-culturally (Smith, M., 2008). Hall's (1976) work on the communicative tendencies of low context cultures (e.g. the US) and high context cultures (e.g. Japan) revealed the evolution of considerably different communicative styles. The Japanese emphasis upon harmonious social relations, reflected within the semantics of key Japanese words such as *enryo* or (the noun) *wa* (Wierzbicka, 1997, p. 31), has continued despite a notable increase in individualistic behaviour in contemporary Japanese society (Imamura, 2009, p. 82). They underline the socialized preference for consensus and harmony rather than the independence highly prized in many Western cultures. Socialisation processes from different cultures create 'strikingly different construals of the self . . . (that) . . . play a large role in shaping individual experience (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 224)', and create cultures which normalise different cognitive, emotional and motivational reactions that are manifested through both linguistic and nonverbal behaviour—such as in 'patterned bodily motions' through the kinesic sys-

tem and by 'systematically analyzable vocalisations, or paralinguage' (Smith, H. L. 1959).

3.1. On kinesics and paralinguage.

Smiles, gestures and laughter are three bodily motions that are constructed during interaction and recent studies suggest that we have an undefined amount of agency over them. It would thereby seem prudent to research their effects in both L1 and L2 interaction. Variance in these bodily motions, within and between cultures, may provide data that can help us re-consider communicative competences and whether to revise the role of paralinguistic actions. Within L1 English language studies, laughter has been shown to have distinctive patterns and order within conversation (Glenn, 2003, p. 52), smiles to be constructed for social interactional needs (Kraut and Johnson, 1979, p. 1539), and gestures to have systematic relations to speech and language to the extent that they have been likened to a 'speech act' (Kendon, 2004). All of these discoveries were found in English language research, but one may postulate that variance will be uncovered in paralinguistic motions in other languages and in cross-cultural interactions. Indeed, when considering the difference between Japanese and western subjects in such research, Japanese subjects have consistently shown kinetic and paralinguistic behaviour that differs markedly from 'western' subjects.

3.1.1. Japanese kinesics and paralinguage.

One recent comparative study saw Masuda et al (2008) show that Western subjects perceived emotions far more as individual feelings than did Japanese subjects. This is unsurprising when we realise that the smile is considered inappropriate in many Japanese interactions, especially when the establishment of cooperation is the priority (Ozono et al, 2010, p. 17). In fact, the ability to control the production of paralinguistic actions is of immense importance in a society where nonverbal communication such as '*ishin denshin*' (implicit or telepathic communication) is prized and where the ability to emphasise and maintain harmony within a collectivity has high worth (Tanaka, p. 10, 1999). The popularity of the everyday phrase '*kuki yomenai*', i.e. 'you can't read the atmosphere' (Japan Probe, 2008) perhaps illustrates its use in contemporary discourse. However, although Maynard (1997) claimed that Japanese (and American) speakers conduct themselves in intercultural interaction much as they would in their own cultural context (1997, p. 213), Brown's (2008/2010) research on cross-linguistic speech and gesture suggested that bi-directional changes in speech and paralinguage can and do occur. She showed that L2 (Japanese) learners of English developed (object viewpoint) gestures that were characteristic of L2

(English) culture, whether they had studied abroad or not. In her study, some Japanese participants even used gestures characteristic of L1 English communication (and not characteristic in Japanese) when talking in Japanese (Brown, 2008, p. 272). The discovery of a potentially bidirectional influence in gesture and speech (2010, p. 114) leads one to conjecture that bidirectional patterns (L1 to L2; L2 to L1) may be found also in the production of laughter within speech.

4. The Japanese ‘meaningless’ laugh explained.

Type of Laughter	Communicative Function of ‘sub-types’. (S = speaker ; L = listener).	Whose ‘field’? (S = speaker ; L = listener).
Type A : Joyful laughter for joining in-group.	Promotes conversation : A1 : S-appeal, A2 : L-agree and, A3 : L/S-realise shared joy	A1 : S field A2 : S field, A3 : S/L field
Type B : Balancing laughter for easing tension.	Easing tension : B1 : S-‘breakdown of privacy’ B2 : S-‘instruction’/‘criticism’ B3 : S-‘laughter as protocol’	B1 : S field B2 : L field B3 : S field
Type C : Laughter as Cover-Up.	Desire <i>not</i> to reveal one’s field without cutting the channel : C1 : S-evading laughter. C2 : L-perplexed laughter	C1 : S field C2 : S/L field.

Table one: Hayakawa’s ‘non-humorous’ Japanese laugh.

4.1. L2 laughter: Excerpt 2.

42. B: - Ah: Coz I see you read a newspaper. You read the Japan Times I saw you today reading.(.) Yeah, so you can read the Japan Times(1) <<easily>>
43. J: [uhm:]
44. J: But uh I but oh:> but only sports:< =
45. J: =ehuh huh hhh hh hh h.
46. B: [Ye(h)ah(h)! ye(h)ah so you’re interested in spor - =
- 47: J: =unn li- like urr:- rugby: =

Section 4.1 (above) shows an example of one of three types of the Japanese ‘meaningless’ laugh. This laugh is *B1* laughter, i.e. laughter constructed to ease tension, and is created in response to B’s question about J’s English reading habits (line 42). Alongside B laughter, there is also ‘A’ laughter and ‘C’ laughter which are explained in tabular form above. The B1 tension releasing laugh is constructed in response to B’s unnecessarily direct ques-

tioning. The one second pause (indicated as (1)) that follows B's uttering of 'Japan Times' and 'easily' indicates self-awareness that the question may be inappropriately direct. J's reply, 'uhm' (line 43), which performs the role of a main clause to intimate a hesitant agreement, is followed by a modification through the production of a subordinate clause form: the conjunction 'but' is repeated three times and followed up by the revelation that he only reads the sports pages. Upon revealing this he elects to laugh and emits powerful laughter peals that fade out and elicit laughter in B's next turn (line 46). By laughing in response to a question about a personal matter related to his profession, he eases tension and, therefore, fulfills the criterion of a B1 Japanese laugh. It could also be interpreted as self-deprecation, and it is important to bear in mind that what may appear to be a difference on one level may be a 'manifestation of a deeper commonality' (Tanaka, 1999, p. 226). It may fit Holmes's (2000, p. 163) definition of L1 humorous laughter, as that produced 'on the basis of paralinguistic, prosodic and discoursal clues, (and) . . . intended by the speaker(s) to be amusing and perceived to be amusing by at least some participants', but what is certain is that J's decision to use laughter here eased tension and harmonised the talk, thereby fulfilling one criterion of the 'B1' Japanese laugh.

4.2. The meaningless laugh?

Table one above shows the three types of Hayakawa's 'meaningless laugh' together with their sub-types, their communicative function, and information on when a participant's 'field' (i.e. private issues) has been broached (2006, p. 228). Sections 2.1 and 4.1 have already showed an example of 'B' laughter to *ease tension* within the interaction. The other two types are analysed below: 'A' laughter to signify joining a group, and 'C' laughter to help cover up something. The effectiveness of all three types is dependent upon the position of the laugh.

4.3. Positioning of the laugh.

Early work on L1 studies revealed that the communicative effect of a laugh is dependent on its position within a turn. Within her data, Hayakawa looked at how frequently the 'meaningless' laugh was positioned in initial, middle and final position. She discovered that in almost seventy per cent of instances, the meaningless laugh was disproportionately positioned at the end of a speaker's turn, a position where a response is anticipated in L1 English interaction. She found that just under twenty percent of laugh tokens were found in the middle of the speakers turn, and just over ten percent at the beginning (2006, p. 171), figures which mirrored J's L2 laughter patterns in the staffroom interaction. The below examples in 4.4 and 4.4.1

show laughter produced in the most common place: at the end of J's turn (lines 157, 166 and 168).

4.4. L2 laughter: Excerpt 3 (Types A2/3: Joyful laughter).

156. B: Aha haah: aha hah ha(.) Waseda were very good.

157. J: Very good **huhhuh**

4.4.1. L2 laughter: Excerpt 4: Type A3

166. J: *Maa* every time I see rugby I got oh I get excited **ahurr**

167. B: Yeah. Yeah =

168. J: = Oh Ga:d:!**Ahehehehe**

169. B: Go, go,go!

The above excerpts occurred after J had already declared his love for rugby. He elects to use A2 joyous laughter in 4.4 (line 157) when talking about rugby teams at Japanese universities, and in 4.4.1 (line 166) he mentions that watching rugby excites him before using A3 laughter to finish his turn when he realizes that his joy is shared. He does something similar in his follow-up turn (4.4.1, line 168) which also sees him use the Japanese word '*maa*' (line 166). '*Maa*' is a positive interjection in Japanese and occurred after both interlocutors had been talking about rugby for a while. In consideration of the time spent on this topic, the laughter in lines 166 and 168 appear to be examples of 'A' laughter, i.e. joyous laughter produced after a participant realises that the topic is mutually satisfying and enjoyable.

4.5. Laughter as a listener.

4.5.1. L2 laughter: Excerpt 5 - Type A3

112. B: Just just for hh just to for fun (.) he plays yeah. But erm yeah > it's never on TV, is it? <=

113. J: = Oh **ahuhuhu**

114. B: = Mmm.(.) Rugbys never on TV but > it's a good game=

The non-humorous laugh also occurs from participants in listener mode. Above, in 4.5.1, we see J laugh in response to B's comment that rugby is not broadcast on Japanese television. Though J is expected to take his turn, his response is to laugh. Meierkford has shown that this has already been used by L2 speakers for 'back-channelling' purposes (2000, 2002) and it may play that role here: otherwise, it is unclear why laughter occurs. J had already affirmed his status as a rugby fan (above, 2.1., line 47), and his decision to laugh may appear incongruous and surprising, but appears to fit the category(ies) of A2 or A3 'agreeable' laughter or even C2 laughter to denote 'per-

plexity' at B's somewhat negative turn of the talk (line 112).

5. Laughter and sociolinguistic competence(s).

The use of humor and laughter in intercultural interactions is one aspect of sociolinguistic (and communicative) competence that is prone to misinterpretation by L2 students (Bell, 2007). Linguistic difficulties and the risk of inappropriate topics being raised reduces the chance of full participation by L2 speakers in humour talk (Bell, 2007, p. 38), but collaborative laughter remains the 'ultimate locus of conversational involvement' (Davies, 2003, p. 1362) and it may be worthwhile increasing awareness of L1 laughter norms to help assist in the development of methods that help L2 speakers develop 'laughter appropriacy' in a second language. The participatory problem that Bell raised is not insurmountable though because Vygotskian scaffolding techniques can be applied to help L2 students understand and perform humour to fit first language norms (Davies, 2003, p. 1381), or even for laughter that does not arise from humour. To do this, we need a deeper understanding of paralinguistic differences between languages and to consider the benefits (or otherwise) of bringing attention to paralinguistic differences between L2 students.

5.1. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic effects in the talk

An increased understanding of paralinguistics has to consider sociocultural issues as well as sociolinguistic ones. In 5.1.1, an older full time Japanese English teacher (JS) enters the conversation and makes a distinct impression on both J and B. This impression is conveyed by sounds rather than words.

5.1.1. L2 Laughter: Extract 6 - Type A3

((Senior Japanese teacher, JS, enters the staffroom))

131. B: = hmff h

132. J: **Oh(h):: huhu**

133. B: hff huhum

(1)

134. J: **Oh: ts(h)c hh**

(1)

135. JS: Are you using this computer?

Immediately prior to JS's question about whether B is using a computer (line 135), B and J produce several nonverbal sounds (lines 131 to 134) in reaction to JS's entrance into the room. Significantly, it is 'J' who laughs though, despite 'B' reacting first. Also, while 'J' laughs, 'B' is quick to apol-

ogise to 'JS' for an unspecified reason (5.1.2, line 136, below).

5.1.2. L2 Laughter: Extract 7 - Type A?

135. JS: Are you using this computer?
 136. B: No, no, no (.) no, no, no. no (.) no no sorry hh sorry =
 137. JS: [[[belly laugh)]] hurhurhurhurhur. har
 138. B: = Ahu huhuhuhuhu hu. .hh
 139. JS: [I'd like to use]
 140. B: No feel free. Hehehehe hur
 141. JS: [hurhurhur hur h.]
 142. B: Sorry! Ah hehe.
 143. JS: We are (xxx)
 144. B: No: no:,not sill(h)ly hurhurhur. (0.5) Oh:
 ((printer sound begins))

Above, in 5.1.2, NNSET 'J' is conspicuously absent from the talk, whilst NNSET 'B' and NNSET 'JS' interact with, what appears to be, non-humorous laughter. B is not using the computer and, when considering the several short 'no's' given in response, appears to be taken aback at JS's question (line 136). The response is met by a raucous belly laugh (line 137) and a long laughter peal by JS. JS's imposing laughter appears to be a form of 'A' joyful laughter, and his higher status may afford him the cultural licence to construct such laughter (line 137). J is noticeably quiet and B apologises before giving several laughs (lines 136-144). In addition, JS's full blooded 'hurhur' laugh in line 141 also contrasts well with the higher pitch 'huhu' laughs that both J and B constructed.

5.2. A senior ushers in a cross-cultural allegiance.

JS's attempts to enter the talk are not overtly encouraged by J and B in the above extracts—or indeed in other unpublished parts of the conversation. Instead, it would appear that his imposing laughter acted as a means to increase allegiance between the two younger teachers. Below, in 5.2.1, we see JS's laughter ignored by J and B (line 184 to 186).

5.2.1. Laughter: Extract 8 - A1 laughter from a senior.

175. B: Can (.) Can I call (.) should I call you Mr. Kudan? Or: should I call
 you your first
 176. J: Oh uh first name is Naoki
 177. B: Oh, Naoki? Naoki. Naoki.
 178. J: [Naoki]
 179. B: But at work I should say Mr. Kudan.

180. J: Mmm=

181. B: =Mr. **** (.) Mr **** is.

182. J: *Soo demo OK*. Mm. (.) Some people - some people call call me Nao..

183. B: Nao? Nao: ahurhur

184. JS: [hehehe] (belly laugh hehe)

185. R: Nickname=

186. K: =Yeah nickname

The reason for JS's belly laugh is perhaps due to a desire to enter the talk and perplexity at the unusual workplace interaction he is observing. While JS uses the computer, B decides to ask how he should address J. After asking if he could use his family name (5.2.1, line 175), J informs him that he can use his first name, Naoki. Further clarifications follow before J shows agreement towards B's question with 'soo demo OK' (that's OK) in line 182. Following J's talk about his nickname (Nao), JS releases a long laughter peal and a belly laugh (line 184). JS is unlikely to have heard J converse with a native speaker before and the divulging of such information makes him laugh. It is unclear what type of laughter this is, but J's junior status to JS is one reason for it. It may be related to A1 'appealing' laughter, but has an added sociocultural (and hierarchical) twist. J does not laugh: instead, he merely agrees with B's statement that Nao is a a nickname (line 186).

6. Conclusion: laughter and -positive effect.

The use of laughter by the senior teacher (JS) in 5.2.1 above had the inadvertent effect of bringing J and B closer together, a movement which began earlier in the conversation (see 2.1; 4.1) when J used laughter to express joy at a mutually enjoyable topic and to reduce tension within the interaction. The effect of this and the (unsuccessful but aggressive) attempt by another teacher to enter the talk has brought the two closer. Indeed, as the final excerpts below show, both episodes helped to pave the way towards friendly and playful talk through word play centred on J's nickname. B connects J's surname to an English word J is unfamiliar with ('kudos'), one which has a clear positive meaning, and laughter emitted in reaction to this may be an example of (C2) perplexity (line 205) as J doesn't know the definition of the word (line 206), but it also may be an expression of joy at the turn of the conversation.

6.1. L2 Laughter: Extract 9 - C2 laughter from J?

204. B: Mr. Kudos. Ku:do (2) hh mmm >kudos<! Do you know this word?
Glory. =

205. J: [Ooh: hurhur]

206. J: Glory?

207. B: = High (.) h.Mr. Kudo h(h)I think of kudos.(.)

208. J: [Oh y eah. (xxx) tschhuhu]

J soon discovers the positive meaning of the word and upon realising it he creates joyful 'hoho' laughter (line 213, 215), which is soon reciprocated by B (line 218). Both share joy at the positive word association between J's surname and the word 'kudos'.

212. B: Ah: >kudoss< (.) Is that you, right?

213. J: [Ooh: Oh Ohohoho .hh] (1) Fame, glory]

214. B: Fame, glo:ry:=

215. J: = Ooh:ahohoho

216. B: Ah Mr. Glo: ry! ah Mr. Fame

217. J: [hahaha haha hah .h]

218. B: Mr. Kudos! I will remember through kudos, kudos (.) hahahur so:=

219. J: [h(h)]

220. J: =Glor--gl- I am I am glory ahee ahahaha=-

221. B: = Yeah! yeah: (.) You are Mr. Glo: ry heheheheh .hh (1) kudos, Mr. Kudos =

222. J: [ahuahu]

223. B: [XXXX]

6.2. Final words

This short discussion on laughter in interaction looked at the effect of laughter in a bicultural interaction and posed the question of whether L2 laughter is transferred, in any way, from Japanese mother tongue norms. Using analysis from talk in interaction between a NSET and a NNSET, evidence suggests that the NNSET used laughter patterns associated with his L1. The question of whether the laughter is transferred from the L1 has not been conclusively answered though. Ambiguity over the reason for laughs and the small amount of data used in this study leaves this question open for continued discussion. However, there does seem to be similarities between L2 laughter shown in this study and Hayakawa's meaningless laugh, but how far these laughs are specific to Japanese L2 English speakers is unclear at this stage. To answer this, research will need to be undertaken on a larger scale, with more participants and a wider range of locations—in the classroom and the staffroom. Such research would help shed light on whether J exhibited something universal or something specific to Japanese L2 speakers. Further studies on second language laughter will have to be

undertaken before one can say this with certainty, but at this stage it looks like L1 (Japanese) laughter patterns may play significant roles in the construction of L2 (English) laughter. Future research on a larger scale will allow the writer to move towards a clearer picture of the situation.

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*** Author/Researcher's Profile**

Richard John Walker M. Sc is a lecturer at Reitaku, Meiji Gakuin and Shibaura Institute of Technology. His research interests include discourse analysis, bilingual education, paralinguage in second language acquisition and the use of new media to improve course content.