

**REPORTED SPEECH AND TALK DRAMATIZATIONS AS
MEANS OF HUMOUR IN *LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN
O'BRIEN***

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

by

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KIELTEN LAITOS

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Tutkielman aiheena on huumori amerikkalaisessa keskusteluohjelmassa *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. Tutkielman tavoite on selvittää keskusteluanalyysin keinoin, kuinka ohjelman juontaja, Conan O'Brien, ja vieraat käyttävät suoraa ja epäsuoraa esitystä sekä puheen dramatisointeja humoristisissa sekvensseissä. Suora ja epäsuora esitys tarkoittavat jotakin aikaisemmin sanottua, jota sen hetkinen puhuja lainaa. Suorassa esityksessä puhuja lainaa suoraan alkuperäistä puhujaa, kun taas epäsuorassa esityksessä puhuja käyttää rakenteita kuten 'hän kertoi, että...'. Puheen dramatisointi puolestaan on hypoteettisen ja kuvitteellisen, ei todellisesti sanotun puheen lainaamista.

Tutkielman aineisto koostuu neljästä haastattelusta kahdessa jaksossa *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* -keskusteluohjelmaa. Haastattelut valittiin sattumanvaraisesti. Haastattelut videoitiin, muutettiin digitaaliseen muotoon tietokoneelle sekä litteroitiin tutkimusta varten.

Tulokset jaettiin kahteen pääkategoriaan: vieraan vuorot ja juontajan vuorot. Vieraat käyttivät suoraa ja epäsuoraa esitystä sekä puheen dramatisointeja huumorin keinona yhdellä tavalla: hauskan tarinan huipennuksena. Juontaja puolestaan käytti suoraa ja epäsuoraa esitystä ja puheen dramatisointeja neljässä erilaisessa sekvenssissä luodakseen huumoria. Ensiksi hän käytti suoraa ja epäsuoraa esitystä taustatietona seuraavalle keskusteluaiheelle. Toiseksi hän käytti puheen dramatisointeja sekvenssissä, jossa hän teki yhteenvedon tai selvensi vieraan vastausta. Kolmanneksi hän käytti puheen dramatisointeja laajentaakseen vitsin aloitusta. Neljänneksi hän käytti suoraa esitystä ja puheen dramatisointeja sekvenssissä, joka arvioi jotain asiaa, joka oli noussut esille vieraan edellisessä vuorossa.

Asiasanat: conversation analysis. talk show. humour. reported speech. talk dramatization.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The present study examines humour in the American talk show *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. *Late Night* is a show on the television channel NBC and Conan O'Brien has been hosting it since 1993. The show has been popular in its time period: the show's comedy and its host have been praised by the media, it has gained top ratings and won several awards. The guests of *Late Night* are usually actors, writers, singers and other celebrities who have a new movie, television show, book or album coming out. At the beginning of 2009, though, O'Brien left the show to move on to another talk show on NBC, *The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien*. The goal of the present study is to find out how reported speech and talk dramatizations are used in the interaction between the host, O'Brien, and his guests as means of humour. In other words, the present study investigates from the point of view of Conversation analysis how humorous sequences with reported speech and talk dramatizations are constructed in the interaction.

Whenever one reproduces a piece of talk that someone has said before, one is using reported speech. Reported speech is typically divided into direct and indirect reported speech. In direct reported speech, the speaker forms the utterance as a reproduction as the original utterance (Holt 1996: 220), but in indirect reported speech, constructions such as 'he said that...' are used (Sandlund 2004: 231). Sometimes, a piece of hypothetical talk can also be reported. This type of imaginary reported speech is referred to as talk dramatization. Talk dramatizations work in the same way as reported speech. The only difference is that no one has actually uttered the words. (Sandlund 2004.) Reported speech is a relatively common feature in talk-in-interaction (Holt and Clift 2007, Sandlund 2004), as it seems to be in *Late Nigh*, too. Furthermore, reported speech and talk dramatizations have been found to occur in humorous contexts, such as at the climax of amusing stories (Holt 2000, Sandlund 2004), and they also seem to be used in creating humour in *Late Night* as well.

Humour plays a significant role in *Late Night*, as it does in many other talk shows. However, it seems that there is very little, if no, research about the topics together. Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) have studied Finnish and German talk shows, but their attention was not on humour, even though they list it to be one of the features of talk shows and Ilie (2001), on her study about American talk shows, concentrated on their institutional and conversational features. In studies about humour and laughter, the objects of study have been variable as well. For example, Norrick (2003) has investigated different features of conversational humour and Jefferson (1979) the ways laughter is invited in interaction. Therefore, I believe that the object of the present study is relevant and will provide new information.

The present study will first introduce the theoretical background. Chapter two takes a look at broadcast interaction and moves from institutional discourse in general to more specific features of talk shows. Chapter three outlines humour in interaction including conversational humour and features of laughter. Chapter four focuses on features of reported speech and talk dramatizations. After the theoretical background, chapter five presents data and methods. The findings are presented in chapter six. Finally, chapter seven pulls together and discusses the results of the study.

2 BROADCAST INTERACTION

2.1 Institutional discourse

Institutional discourse is discourse that takes place in a public setting, such as in courtrooms, bureaux or television. According to conversation analysis, institutional discourse has specialised speech exchange systems that participants orient themselves to. In the turn-taking system of ordinary conversation, order, size and type of turns are free to vary. In institutional discourse, in contrast, the turn-taking system has been reduced or specialised so that the range of possible practices is not the same as in ordinary conversation. (Hutchby 2006: 25-26.) In other words, there are limitations to what kinds of turns can be used and how. However, there are different levels of institutionality. Some situations, such as trials, are more institutional and therefore more restricted and others, such talk shows, are less institutional and closer to everyday conversation.

According to Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000), all discourse in the public forum is institutional and has different conditions than everyday conversation. They list main features that distinguish institutional discourse from conversation. In institutional discourse, at least one participant has an institutional role that s/he has to take into account. There also exists a third participant, even though not always a visible one, such as a legal institution or a television viewer. Furthermore, institutional discourse often has a goal that is determined by at least one, but often more than one, participant. In an interview that goal for the participants might be to bring out different opinions and to express their own opinions. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 13-16.)

Thornborrow (2002: 4) assigns four features that determine institutional talk. First, in institutional talk, participants have differentiated, pre-inscribed and conventional roles or identities depending on where the discourse takes place. In a talk show these roles might be interviewer and interviewee or host and guest. Second, different turn types are delivered asymmetrically between the participants who, then, do different kinds of things with the

turns. For example, interviewers usually ask questions and interviewees answer them. Third, institutional talk is asymmetrical also in the way the participants have speaker rights and obligations, that is, the way certain types of utterances are allowed for some but not for others. Fourth, the institutional identities of the participants either weaken or strengthen their discursive resources and identities through which they are able to accomplish different actions. Complying with these definitions of Nuolijärvi and Tiittula and Thornborrow, talk shows can be said to be institutional discourse.

Institutionalism is not, however, similar in every occasion, but there are varying levels of institutionalism. In some situations institutionalism appears more distinctively than in others. For example, in courtroom examinations institutionalism is much more transparent than in talk shows. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000.) Therefore, institutional discourse can be divided into formal and informal discourse, of which formal discourse can be very regulated. Yet, features of both can be present at the same time. (Drew and Heritage 1992, as quoted by Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 16-17.) Institutional discourse can also be described through formal and non-formal systems. Both of these are determined by specialised forms of turn-taking, that is, they have a certain set of turn types that are available for the participants. (Heritage and Greatbatch 1991, as quoted by Hutchby 2006: 26.) An example of the formal system is the interview, and especially the news interview, in which the participants are most of the time limited to two types of activity: asking questions and giving answers. In contrast, non-formal systems are less constrained. Many types of media talk, such as talk shows, offer participants a wider range of turn types than just question and answer. Therefore, they resemble more everyday conversation than does the strict pattern of the news interview. (Hutchby 2006: 26-27.)

Power is notably present in an institutional setting. Power is employed through restrictions that determine what can follow in an interaction. For example, a question creates limits for what can be said next. However, the restrictions are not created through single turns, but are complicated

structures in which one participant restricts the other's actions. (Peräkylä 1996, as quoted by Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 16.) Thornborrow (2002: 8) sees power "as a contextually sensitive phenomenon" in which speakers have a set of resources and actions which they can use more or less successfully depending on the speaker and the situation. According to her, power in discourse is achieved "on a structural level, through the turn and type of space speakers are given or can get access to, and, on an interactional level, through what they can effectively accomplish in that space" (Thornborrow 2002: 8). What this means is that speakers have a set of linguistic forms as resources they can use and accomplish actions with but the functions and effects of these resources are always dependent on the context.

Another characterizing feature of institutional discourse is asymmetry, which means that the participants are not in an equal position in the conversation when it comes to discursive resources that are available for them. Asymmetry can be seen to be something that is pre-inscribed and structurally designed and which limits the speakers' access to and use of discursive resources (Thornborrow 2002: 22). The institutional roles of the participants give access to different rights and they on whose territory the discourse is taking place have more rights than the others. For example, on television the host chooses and asks the questions and the guest's role is to answer those questions. (Drew and Heritage 1992, as quoted by Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 15.) However, Ilie (2001: 211) points out that in talk shows the guests are sometimes able to challenge the asymmetrical power relations by asking questions and making non-elicited comments. Another central characteristic of asymmetry is that the participants are experts of their own institutions. For the institution's representative the institutional situation is routine but for others, such as a guest or a customer, it can be a one-of-a-kind experience. (Drew and Heritage 1992, as quoted by Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 15.) However, Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000: 16) point out that in a television setting the celebrity guests can be as used to the television institution as the host and in that sense are also experts in that area.

2.2 Television discourse

Television discourse has some special characteristics that are not necessarily present in other forms of institutional discourse or conversation. To begin with, the time for programs in television is limited and predetermined. Also, in addition to actual participants taking part in the discourse, there is a third party to whom the discussion is aimed at, that is, television viewers, who do not usually take part in the interaction. Then, discourse in television is, in a way, performed to the viewers, in other words, the participants are pretending to be engaging in a conversation with each other even though the discussion is aimed at a third party, the viewers. Furthermore, directing and camera angles have an effect on what the viewers see and do not see. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 17-18.) On the other hand, because of the directing and different camera angles, the viewers are able to see more than a person participating in the conversation, which makes it possible for them to concentrate on different things in the interaction (Fiske 1987: 66-67, as quoted by Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 21). However, the viewers' participation in the program is fairly limited. Their participation is usually restricted to asking questions from a studio audience or through phone or sending e-mail to the program. In addition, talk on television is often written beforehand or is based on written text. This does not mean that all talk is read from a script but that interviewers or hosts have planned and prepared questions and topics for discussion beforehand. Besides the host or the interviewer, the interviewees can also base their talk on some written text, such as a politician on a party programme. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 18-20.)

Hutchby (2006) assigns three main features that certain forms of broadcast interaction on television and radio, such as confrontational television talk shows, news interviews and political panel discussions, often have in common. First, even though much broadcast talk is scripted, there is also a great deal of unscripted talk or, as Goffman has called it, 'fresh talk'. 'Fresh talk' is talk that is not read aloud from a text, such as from a teleprompter, or

memorized. (Goffman 1981, as quoted by Hutchby 2006: 1.) Pre-scripted talk can be found for example in news bulletins or drama, in media talk that is more or less more regulated, whereas in interviews or talk shows, even though they have had some planning and preparation beforehand, “the talk as it unfolds in the real time of the show is not scripted” (Hutchby 2006: 1). The talk is more uninhibited and therefore the participants need to be creative in their reactions and responses. Second, these kinds of programmes involve live talk. They are either broadcast live or they try to preserve a sense of liveliness in the editing and give the viewers an image of the event as a single take, even though the programme has been prerecorded. Third, these forms of broadcast talk often have participants from outside the broadcasting profession. In interviews, debates and talk shows one finds professional journalists and interviewers in interaction with politicians, representatives of social organisations and ordinary members of the public. (Hutchby 2006: 1-2.) Therefore, Hutchby (2006: 2) argues, broadcast talk “crosses between key sociological categories such as ‘private’ and ‘public’, ‘lay’ and ‘professional’”. These features apply to *Late Night* as well. Even though its questions and themes may be prepared beforehand, there is a great deal of unscripted talk. The show is also taped earlier but as it airs on television, it is shown as if it was ‘live’. Furthermore, the guests are not necessarily broadcast professionals, but they often may be professionals in appearing in these kinds of situations.

Television discourse is intertextual. All public and media discourse is intertwined with television discourse and there are always references made to them. Therefore, television talk is never disconnected from the surrounding reality. Another feature, which is closely connected with intertextuality, is topicality. The themes that are being discussed elsewhere in public are also discussed on television. On the other hand, television can bring out new topics for other media as well. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 18.) According to Hutchby (2006: 134), especially political interviews can raise topics for media discussion: “sometimes what happens in an interview becomes ‘newsworthy’ itself, and so takes on a mediatised life on its own.”

Intertextuality and topicality are clearly features of *Late Night*, too. Usually most guests are at the moment already in the public eye because they have a new movie, television series, book or album coming out.

Public and private are mixed on television. Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) argue that in recent years publicity has become more private. Competition over viewers has become harder and thus topics on television are now more entertaining, personal and fragmented in order to catch viewers who have to be able to turn on the programme at any time. This can be seen in the increasing amount of discussions and interviews on television as well as in the variation of discussions. The mixing of public and private also affects the topics on television, which have become more intimate, as well as the setting, which can be staged as a living room. However, it is worthy to take into account that the private in public is often performed, in other words, it is portrayed differently than in actual privacy. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 19-20.) Some of these features can be found in *Late Night* as well. For example, the show and discussion topics are entertaining and sometimes personal and the set is built so that it imitates a living room.

The issue of broadcast talk being public and intimate at the same time can also be described from the point of view of the audience. Talk on television is designed to be public so that it is aimed at large audiences. On the other hand, to its audiences it is somehow intimate. It may not be necessarily directed 'to them' but at least it is meant 'for them'. It is a form of talk in public but it, in a way, tries to imitate the conditions of interpersonal communication in face-to-face conversation. (Hutchby 2006: 11-12.)

2.2.1 Broadcast interviews

One type of broadcast interaction is the news interview. However, it should be noted that even though there are some similarities, the talk show is less formal than the news interview. For example, in talk shows, interviewees or guests do not have to conform to the rules of turn-taking as strictly as in news interviews.

Hutchby (2006) describes the characteristics of the news interview. On the most basic level, the turns available in a broadcast news interview are question and answer. Typically in everyday conversation as well as in institutional settings, a question-answer sequence has also a third position turn in which the answer is acknowledged or evaluated. Compared with this, these third-position acknowledgements and evaluations are usually avoided in news interviews and the sequence is thus question-answer-next question-answer and so on. Another feature that separates a news interview from everyday conversation is that interviewers typically do not react to the interviewee's answer during the answer turn. In ordinary conversation, lengthy utterances with someone telling 'news' are usually punctuated by the recipient with utterances such as 'right' or 'yeah'. (Hutchby 2006: 122-124.) This is done to show that the participant is the primary, intended and attentive recipient of the talk (Schegloff 1982, as quoted by Hutchby 2006: 124). Hutchby (2006) states that both the production and reception of talk differs from this in news interviews. First, it is not the teller who introduces the news but the news organization determines what is newsworthy. Second, interviewers do not generally punctuate the interviewee's talk because they are not the primary recipients. On the contrary, the purpose of the interview is to offer news to the overhearing audience. Third, interviewers avoid reacting notably to interviewee's answers, often because they try to maintain a neutral stance. (Hutchby 2006: 126.) Fourth, interviewees do not "display that the talk they produce was designed from the outset for 'this particular hearer'" (Hutchby 2006: 126), that is, they do not express that their talk was meant for that particular interviewer. However, not all of these apply to *Late Night*. Because talk shows often strive to give an image of being private and informal, the host, O'Brien, can punctuate the guests' answers and he does not always avoid reacting to the guests' answers.

Thornborrow (2002) discusses the roles, tasks and identity of the participants in a news interview. According to her, in a news interview, the institutional roles of interviewer and interviewee equal the discursive roles of questioner and answerer. The interviewer works also as the talk manager.

In media news interviews not only the interviewer but also the interviewee often have professionally marked status and identity, that is, the professional interviewer is talking to a professional interviewee. They both are familiar with the setting and experts in their own area. (Thornborrow 2002: 86-87.) These roles can also be found in *Late Night*. The host works as the talk manager and the guests are often celebrities accustomed to answering questions in an interview, that is, they are professional interviewees.

The organization of turn taking in news interviews can be described as an institutionally specialised system (Heritage and Greatbatch 1991, as quoted by Thornborrow 2002: 87). What this means is that there are limitations to how the interaction develops: turns are often limited to questions and answers, openings and closing as well as turn allocations are controlled by the interviewer and interviewer questions are usually aimed to set an agenda. The allocation of turns is predetermined so that the interviewer goes first and the interviewee second. Turn types are questions for the interviewer and answers to the interviewee. In interviews with more than two participants, the interviewer also handles speaker selection and thus organises who speaks when. However, as the talk manager, it is sometimes difficult for the interviewer to get the interviewee stop talking and it may take several attempts. Sometimes an interviewee can also self-select as the next speaker. In this case there is often some explicit reference made to this action. If no bid is made, the interviewer may not acknowledge this turn. Furthermore, interviewee answer turns are usually lengthy and they consist of extended turns at talk, that is, more than one turn construction unit. (Thornborrow 2002: 87-89.) In *Late Night*, O'Brien acts as the talk manager but the guests can sometimes self-select and their turns are often long answers, such as stories.

Besides the usual question and answer turns, a characteristic turn type for interviews is a formulation. A formulation is a third-turn receipt of information that sums up what has been said in the previous turn (Heritage and Watson 1979: 137, as quoted by Thornborrow 2002). Formulations are used for example to clarify utterances that are open to many interpretations

and which are then confirmed or disconfirmed by the next speaker. Therefore, a formulation is the first pair part of an adjacency pair and the second pair part, then, is the confirmation or disconfirmation. Typically the interviewer acts as 'formulator' and the interviewee as 'responder'. (Thornborrow 2002: 90-92.) It has been noted that when formulations are quite rare in conversation, they on the other hand appear very frequently in institutional settings and especially in news interviews (Heritage 1985, as quoted by Hutchby 2006: 129; Drew 2001, as quoted by Thornborrow 2002). Formulations can be found in *Late Nigh* as well, as O'Brien sometimes sums up the guests' answers for the sake of the audience.

Formulations have many functions in interviews. After an interviewee answer, the interviewer can show his/her neutrality by using a formulation. The interviewer can attribute the grounds of disagreement to someone else and thus avoid any personal alignment over what was just said. Formulations can also be used instead of conversational receipt tokens by the interviewer to avoid alignment. Furthermore, formulations can be used as prompts to clarify, refocus and/or redirect interviewee reports or as probes to elicit a more elaborate answer from the interviewee. (Thornborrow 2002: 93-95.) Interviewers also use formulations to keep interviewees on topic (Greatbatch 1986, as quoted by Thornborrow 2002). Further, formulations are a useful resource for the interviewer to use for clarification, challenging the interviewee's response or 'recycling' a proposition when they try to hold "interviewees to addressing questions of sense and meaning". These types of formulations can be used co-operatively or unco-operatively. If used unco-operatively, the interviewee is forced to repeatedly disconfirm the claims and has to put more work into resisting these meanings. (Thornborrow 2002: 97-103.)

Even though formulations can be powerful tools for interviewers for maintaining the discursive upper hand, interviewees have also developed strategies to deal with the interviewers' sometimes quite unco-operative or even hostile use of formulations. Instead of confirming or disconfirming the inferred proposition, interviewees can treat formulations framed as questions

as actual questions. This way they avoid especially the repetitive disconfirmations in a confrontational situation. Interviewees can also take up elements from the interviewer turn, neither confirm nor deny that proposition and then shift the focus of the talk. (Thornborrow 2002: 103-105.) In the case of co-operative or less unco-operative formulations, formulations make it possible for the interviewee to agree with, disagree with or otherwise react to the interpretation offered in the formulation in the next turn (Hutchby 2006, 130-131).

2.2.2 Special features of talk shows

Talk shows have some specific features that distinguish it from other broadcast discourse. However, central features of talk show can be hard to determine because they come in many forms and boundaries to other television programs are not fixed, Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000: 88) argue. Ilie (2001: 210) also suggests that talk shows present features of more than one discourse type. She compares talk shows to entertainment programs, news interviews, debate programs, everyday conversation and even to doctor-patient dialogue and a therapy session. Yet, it can be argued that talk shows share some common features. Typically, a talk show concentrates on a person, is entertaining and has a studio audience. It is also repeated in roughly the same formula to which the viewers can get used to and are then able to create parasocial relationships with the characters. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 88.) Having a parasocial relationship means that viewers may feel that they are being addressed personally by the personalities on television, even though the talk is meant to be specifically impersonal (Horton and Wohl 1956, as quoted by Hutchby 2006: 12). Furthermore, topics in talk shows are open and themes can vary and develop quite freely (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 88). Especially the free development of the theme is said to be a characteristic feature of talk shows (Foltin 1994, as quoted by Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 88). A major factor in all talk shows is

also the host and his/her personality. The host is the reason the show is or is not watched. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 88.)

One reason for the mixed types of talk shows may be that the entertainment is created through many elements. For example, a celebrity's life can be observed, the host or the guest may act funny or there can be an interesting topic or an intelligent and quick-witted debate. Exciting and unexpected turns add to the entertainment, as does spontaneity; the viewer cannot predict what will happen next. Also the environment has an influence; the audience watches the programme as a play on stage. There are also more programs on offer today and the competition for viewers is harder. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 89.) Holly (1990, 1996, as quoted by Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 90) suggests that the reason for this diversity of talk show types, such as infotainment and confrontainment, is that there is an attempt to target the programmes at as wide an audience as possible.

Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) distinguish two types of talk shows in German television: popular talk shows and personality centred talk shows. Even though the types are based on examples from German talk shows, they seem to share features with talk shows from other countries as well. Popular talk shows are aired during daytime and guests are 'normal' people who talk about their private life and problems in front of an audience. The guests portray their personal problems and disputes or make confessions to the public and the audience gets to peep into their lives. The host acts as a therapist and some programs even advertise the program's therapeutic nature - even though the host usually has not had any training in that field. Popular talk shows are an opportunity for 'normal' people with abnormal or interesting stories to get their fifteen minutes of fame. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 118-120.)

Personality centred talk shows are aired in the evening and have a known host sitting with a known guest. In personality centred talk shows, one or more celebrities show their lives 'behind the scenes'. The host's questions concentrate on the guest's persona but practically any topic can be discussed and guests can even violate the usual question-answer pattern. The guests

can also be unknown people with unusual professions or experiences. The show's entertainment is created through the participants' quick-wittedness in which humour also plays a part. Music and other show elements can also be included. (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000: 122-124.) Of these two types, *Late Night* represents the personality centred talk show. The show is built around the host's character and personality. The show is even named after him. The guests are usually well-known actors, musicians, writers or other celebrities and there are also humorous inserts and musical performances on the show.

3 HUMOUR AND LAUGHTER IN INTERACTION

3.1 Conversational humour

According to Coates (2007: 30), there is no shared agreement between researchers on what conversational humour means. There are only narrow interpretations about the term, since many studies have focused only on specific speech acts, such as telling a joke. This could be explained with gender-related differences, Coates (2007) argues. Men and women view humour differently; men prefer formulaic joking and women funny stories. Thus, “perhaps the foundational work done by men... grew out of their own orientation to humour” (Coates 2007: 30). However, it seems that many researchers often use the term ‘joking’ instead of ‘humour’ even though “humour is a much broader, more fuzzy-edged category than the term joking implies” (Coates 2007: 30). Humour arises in conversation spontaneously and organically when, for example, a point is picked up and played with, and it involves participation by all, whereas jokes are ready-made, learned and repeated and interrupt the progress of talk (Cotes 2007: 30-31).

Norricks (2003) presents four types of conversational humour: jokes, anecdotes, wordplay and irony. Narrative jokes distinctively end in a punch line. They are not about real people or realistic characters, but about caricatures or types. The information jokes offer about these characters has no relevance as soon as the joke ends. Jokes are also disconnected from the surrounding conversation, that is, they do not necessarily arise from the conversational topics. Further, jokes limit audience participation to laughter most often at the end of the joke. Personal anecdotes work similarly as narrative jokes but they may have several humorous points that evoke laughter. They are not as disconnected from the ongoing conversation as jokes. Anecdotes also tell about real people and events and therefore give hearers new information about the teller. Anecdotes can encourage audience participation and hearers can even become co-tellers of the story. In conversation, both anecdotes and jokes are usually announced with prefaces

such as 'I heard the funniest thing...' Wordplay or punning is more disruptive of topical conversation than jokes or anecdotes because it does not set off from the turn-by-turn conversation with a preface. Irony, then, is a form of humour that is not always considered humorous. However, irony can be funny and invite laughter but it often does not generate more humorous talk as other forms of conversational humour. Even though conversational humour can be divided into these categories, it is not always possible to draw clear distinctions between the different types, because the forms often mix in conversation. (Norrick 2003: 1338-1341.) However, when analyzing humorous discourse, categories may help to determine the nature and structure of different kinds of humour and to describe them even though a humorous instance might fall into more than one category.

It has been suggested that conversational humour has two functions. It can be both aggressive and create rapport between the participants. In the aggressive sense, jokes can be considered as tests for understanding. The joke teller challenges the hearers to prove that they understand the joke and know to laugh at the right time. (Sacks 1974, as quoted by Norrick 2003: 1342.) Besides the hearers, the butt of the joke can also be the target of aggression (Sherzer 1985, as quoted by Norrick 2003: 1342). However, jokes cannot be considered to be very highly aggressive. The joke teller rather supposes that the hearers already have the background knowledge to understand the joke and offers more like "an opportunity to ratify shared attitudes" than an intelligence test (Norrick 1993, as quoted by Norrick 2003: 1342). In fact, jokers usually make sure that the hearers have all the relevant information before telling a joke to make sure that the joke succeeds (Norrick 2003: 1342-1343).

Conversational joking can also increase rapport between participants. Since we "interact to present a personality" and "to gain knowledge of others", we can use joking to collect relevant social data (Goffman 1967, as quoted by Norrick 2003: 1342). Because jokes are often about personal problems or socially sensitive subjects, such as ethnicity, politics and sex, "they allow the joker to demonstrate a certain tolerance and/or insensitivity,

while offering hearers a chance to signal their agreement, shock, resentment” (Norrick 2003: 1342). Therefore, joking helps one to determine what is and what is not acceptable in the interaction. Also, because one can show aggression towards a third party through joking, this can enhance the participants’ feelings of rapport. Therefore, it can be argued that joking can toughen group cohesion and solidarity. (Norrick 2003: 1342.)

Coates (2007) has studied conversational humour in informal conversations between friends. She argues that humorous talk is a form of play and that speakers have to collaborate closely to achieve a ‘play frame’. This close collaboration, then, creates group solidarity and increases intimacy. “Collaboration is an essential part of playful talk, since conversational participants have to recognise that a play frame has been invoked and then have to choose to maintain it” (Coates 2007: 32). This, in turn, enhances the group’s solidarity. Even though the study concentrated on playful talk between friends, talk-as-play can also be found in formal contexts such as in the workplace. (Coates 2007: 29-33.)

Coates (2007) found five features that are characteristic of talk in a play frame. These features are often co-present in talk. First, there is a great deal of overlapping speech. When speakers collaborate closely in playful talk, the one-at-a-time rule can be put aside and the floor is potentially open to all participants simultaneously. This does not hinder the conversation but the speakers thereby show their shared perspectives about the topic at hand. Second, speakers can co-construct each others’ utterances. What this means is that a speaker can continue another’s utterance by adding a single word or an entire clause at the end. Third, there can be repetition on lexical, semantic, syntactic or thematic level. For example, on syntactic level a similar syntactic pattern, such as a question, can be repeated or on semantic level speakers can say things that have a similar meaning but use different words. Fourth, laughter is used to show the participants’ continued involvement and participation without actually producing an utterance. Laughter also shows amusement and appreciation. Laughter can occur when a speaker laughs at her/his own utterance or when co-participants respond to something funny.

Laughter also occurs when a play frame is established or when it, or a subsection of it, is closed. Fifth, the participants use metaphors to create solidarity. The use of metaphor in a play frame allows a fresh look at things that are everyday and familiar and it increases the humorous impact of the talk. (Coates 2007: 39-46.)

One essential feature on conversational joking is timing. Timing of a joke is a combination of many features: "The overall tempo of the performance, the ebb and flow of given and new information highlighted by rhythms of hesitation, repetition and fluent passages, all co-determine timing" (Norrick 2003: 1352-1352). Usually jokes told in conversation are prefaced by an announcement that a joke is about to follow. The purpose of these prefaces, such as 'Have you heard the one...' is to find out if the audience knows the joke already or not. (Norrick 2003: 1353.) Joke tellers also often repeat or correct themselves at the beginning of the performance: "they typically start the joke, then hesitate, backtrack and re-start, often in a slightly different way" (Norrick 2003: 1353). This happens so often that it can be said to be a standard strategy of joke telling. Besides the beginning, repetitions and hesitations are also found at turning points of the joke. However, even though the build-up contains corrections and hesitations, the punch line is typically delivered without hesitation. (Norrick 2003: 1353.) Further, repetitions are commonly found in conversational joking. A phrase is repeated in the joke to establish a pattern, which is then skewed "the third time around in the punchline" (Norrick 2003: 1353). Lastly, the punch line is often put off as late as possible to make it more effective (Norrick 2003: 1355).

3.2 Laughter

A feature that must be covered when discussing conversational joking is laughter. Laughter, or the lack of it, is the way jokes are evaluated. Laughter at the end of a joke marks a successful completion and thus a successful joke. Through laughter, audience shows not only understanding of the joke but also evaluates the teller's performance. However, laughter does not always

follow a joke. The hearers can also be silent at the completion of a joke. This can mean that they either did not understand the joke or that they do not laugh knowingly because they did not like the performance. The audience can also respond to the joke with a mirthless imitation of laughter or other expression to show that they understood the joke but did not find it funny. The hearers can also comment on the joke either while they laugh or after the laughter has stopped. The discussion after the comments can turn into serious matters or, as often is the case, into more joking. (Norrick 2003: 1344-1345.)

Jefferson (1979) describes laughter as an activity one can invite another or others to. This invitation can be accepted or declined by the recipients. However, laughter can also be volunteered. When recipients laugh voluntarily, the prior speaker does not explicitly invite laughter but the point of the joke is understood and clear and the recipients thus respond with volunteered laughter. In contrast, when invited, there is a sequence in which the speaker invites laughter from the recipients: the speaker laughs at the completion point of the utterance. This laughter by the speaker serves as a sign that the others may laugh as well at that point. Besides the completion point, laughter can also be invited by inserting laugh particles within the speech. (Jefferson 1979: 80-82.)

The invitation to laugh can be accepted or declined by the recipient. If accepted, the recipient laughs upon the prior speaker's laughter. If declined, the recipient may be waiting an invitation to laugh from the prior speaker. The prior utterance may not be clearly laughable to the recipient and therefore s/he wants an assurance that laughter is appropriate. Instead of laughter or silence, the recipient can also terminate the laughter's relevance and start talking about the topic prior to the candidate laughable utterance. If this happens, the prior speaker can stop pursuing laughter and also start talking. However, especially in multiparty situations, the prior speaker can continue pursuing laughter. In multiparty conversations, even if one participant does not accept the invitation to laugh, there are others who may take it up. If the speaker continues pursuing laughter in a multiparty

conversation, others may, again, accept it or continue on topical talk. (Jefferson 1979: 83-89.)

Laughter is an important feature of *Late Night*. There is plenty of joking and the audience, the guests and the host often laugh to show their appreciation and understanding of the humour. However, because a talk show is always more or less scripted, it is worth to remember that the laughter may not always occur naturally. The laughter as well can be scripted. It is not certain whether *Late Night* directs the audience's reactions, but it is worth keeping in mind that the audience may be directed to laugh, or react in some other way, at certain points.

4 REPORTED SPEECH AND TALK DRAMATIZATIONS

4.1 Direct and indirect reported speech

Whenever a speaker quotes something that has been said by others or her/himself in a previous conversation, s/he is using reported speech. Reported speech is a relatively common feature of talk-in-interaction (Holt and Clift 2007, Sandlund 2004). In fact, it is claimed that much of what we say is has already been said in an earlier conversation (Holt and Clift 2007). For long, studies on reported speech have concentrated on invented examples or extracts from novels (Holt 1996: 426, 2000: 221). However, recently researchers have also started to look at reported speech in naturally occurring interaction (Holt 1996: 221, 2000: 426).

Traditionally, reported speech has been divided into two types, direct reported speech (DRS) and indirect reported speech (IRS). When using DRS, the speaker forms the utterance as though a reproduction of the original utterance (Holt 1996: 220) and lends her/his voice to the speaker being quoted (Sandlund 2004: 231). DRS tries to replicate both the form and the content of the original utterance, including non-verbal features (Li 1986, as quoted by Holt and Clift 2007: 5), as well as the action the utterance carried out (Holt 2000: 429). When using DRS, the speaker does not have to summarise or gloss the original utterance, thus giving recipients access to the 'original' utterance and letting them make their own assessments of the reported speech (Holt 1996: 236). Furthermore, "speech pronouns, temporal references, vocatives and so forth are all from the point of view of the original speaker" (Holt 2000: 428). In the sequential placement, DRS "is employed to recall utterances that are the focus of a telling", "as the climax of a story" (Holt 2000: 430). Also, changes in prosody can be used to mark a shift from unreported speech to DRS (Holt 1996: 223).

In contrast, when using IRS, constructions such as 'he told me that...' are often employed (Sandlund 2004: 231). In IRS, it might be difficult to differentiate the voice of the original speaker and the current speaker (Holt

2000: 428). It can also be more difficult to see the action the original utterance performed. In the sequential placement, IRS is often used to give background information. (Holt 2000: 429-430.)

However, the distinction between DRS and IRS is not always clear-cut. In fact, Holt (1996: 243) argues that speakers may “blend the two forms to create a quote that cannot easily be categorized as one or the other.” Speakers can, for example, start a quotation as indirect but then switch to direct reported speech. Yet, usually quotations can be recognised as direct or indirect. (Holt 2000: 427.) In addition to DRS and IRS, sometimes a third way of reporting speech is distinguished, that is, free indirect or quasi-direct reported speech, which is a combination of DRS and IRS (Holt and Clift 2007: 4).

The start of reported speech is often marked with the use of so called quotatives (Mathis and Yule 1994, as quoted by Holt and Clift 2007: 5). Especially in English, quotatives are often formed by a pronoun and a speech verb, such as ‘say’ (Holt and Clift 2007: 5). With IRS, quotatives are also often followed by ‘that’ (Li 1986, as quoted by Holt and Clift 2007: 5). Other quotatives include, for example, ‘go’ and ‘think’ (Holt 1996: 224) as well as ‘tell’ and ‘like’ (Tannen 1989, as quoted by Holt and Clift 2007: 5). ‘Say’ is the most commonly used quotative because the speaker is then able to use prosody to show how the utterance was originally said and does not have to describe the way the utterance was spoken (Holt 1996: 224).

An area of interest for researchers of reported speech has been the authenticity of the speech, that is, how reliably it is a re-enactment of what was originally said (Holt and Clift 2007: 6). Direct reported speech has usually been considered a more accurate reiteration than indirect reported speech. However, studies have shown that DRS is rarely an accurate version of the prior utterance. (Holt and Clift 2007: 6, Holt 1996: 243.) In fact, Mayes (1990, as quoted by Holt and Clift 2007: 6) argues that at least 50 per cent of the reported speech in her corpus was inventions of the current speaker. However, Holt (2000: 432) points out that it would be “entirely inappropriate” if the quotation was an exact copy of the original because the action it is used for is not the same as originally.

The function of reported speech is not merely to report what was said in a previous conversation. Holt (2000: 438) has noted that, besides telling what has been said, speakers can implicitly convey their attitude towards the reported utterance. Holt and Clift (2007: 7), too, argue that reported speech is used in stories to display the speaker's attitude towards the reported speech. The speaker chooses what to tell and how and thus "constructs a specific representation of the original situation and seeks a specific response from the recipient" (Niemelä 2005: 199). Prosody and intonation cues are used, for example, to create a dramatic mood for a story or to parody the original speaker and thus to mark the speaker's "personal standpoint toward the speech that is reconstructed" (Günthner 1997, Holt 2000, Müller 1992, as quoted by Sandlund 2004: 231). For example, a speaker can use embedded laugh tokens in the reported utterance, which are not the original speaker's but display the current speaker's stance towards the utterance as well as show to the recipients that it is something to be laughed at (Goodwin 2007: 20). In *Late Night*, especially laughter is used with reported speech to signal the others when something is meant to be funny. Also, prosody is often used to dramatise a reported utterance or to distinguish it from the surrounding speech.

Reported speech has also been found to display stance taking (Niemelä 2005). Niemelä (2005: 216) suggests that "voiced DRS is a sequentially relevant interactive practice of stance taking in conversational storytelling." Voicing refers to the speaker's attempt to imitate the voice quality of the original speaker or a certain way of speaking (Couper-Kuhlen 1998, as quoted by Niemelä 2005: 197). Niemelä (2005) found three ways of stance taking. First, the recipient can signal a shared stance with the initial storyteller by producing matching voiced DRS utterances within a single story. Second, the recipient can produce a second story with a series of similar voiced DRS with the first story to show a shared stance. Third, the recipient can show a disaligning stance by acting as the initiator of voiced DRS. (Niemelä 2005: 213-217.)

Another common feature of reported speech is shifts in footing, that is, how a speaker aligns him/herself towards the reported utterance. The roles of a speaker can be divided into three. Animator is the party who speaks the utterance. Author is the party who produced the original utterance. Principal is the party whose position the utterance manifests. (Goffman 1981, as quoted by Holt and Clift 2007: 8.) The roles can be played by the same speaker at the same time, but often they are not. For example, when reporting the speech of someone, the speaker is the animator but not the author or the principal. (Holt and Clift 2007: 8.) This can be seen in *Late Night* as well. Often the participants report the speech of others and thus play only the role of the animator. Furthermore, speakers are able to constantly shift footing and take in different roles, which then makes possible to report the speech of others (Holt and Clift 2007: 8). However, the roles of animator, author and principal have been criticised because sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between them, which ultimately will lead into creating more and more categories (Holt 2007: 49).

Reported speech has been found to occur especially in making complaints and in amusing stories. When used in complaints, reported speech can be used to state an utterance that the complaint concerns as well as to show the speaker's attitude towards it. The reported speech is also often assessed by both the teller and the recipient. (Holt 2000: 436-441.) Reported speech has also been associated with laughter and it had been found to occur at the end of jokes and amusing stories (Holt 2000, Holt and Clift 2007, Sandlund 2004). The task of reported speech at the climax of a narrative is to highlight and dramatise key elements (Mayes 1990: 326, as quoted by Niemelä 2005: 198). Furthermore, speakers often add laugh particles in their speech to implicitly comment on the reported speech. This shows to the recipient that the reported speech was meant to be laughable. (Holt 2000: 440.) Sandlund (2004: 232), too, argues that "the teller can laugh during the production of reported talk or in turn final position, or use prosody to show the recipient where the amusing part of the telling is located". As a response, the recipient can laugh first or during the telling of the story or not to laugh at all (Sandlund 2004:

232). The recipient is the first one to laugh and the teller can join in later on (Holt 2000: 447). Reported speech can also be found as the climax or the punch line in amusing stories in *Late Night*. Laugh particles can be added to signal the recipients that the story is humorous, and the recipients usually respond to the story with laughter.

The use of reported speech has also been studied in broadcast news interviews. However, the object of study was different from the present study: how broadcast journalists use reported speech when asking questions from their interviewees. It was discovered that interviewers sometimes present themselves as asking questions, not only for their own benefit, but on behalf of the public. In doing so, they use reported speech in some formulation, which they attribute to the public. Interviewers may present their questions as echoing the public's views, attitudes or concerns. This allows the journalist to act on behalf of the people and for the benefit of the public. Reported speech was found especially in questions, which were sensitive or aggressive, when the interviewer was defending her/himself or was pursuing a question. (Clayman 2007: 221-243.) In doing so, the interviewer "neutralises and legitimates lines of questioning, and exerts pressure on interviewees to be genuinely forthcoming" (Clayman 2007: 242-243).

4.2 Talk dramatizations

When using reported speech, speakers sometimes 'quote' talk that has not actually been said, but which is rather a hypothetical piece of talk that someone might say or have said. This way of 'quoting' speech can be referred to as talk dramatization (Sandlund 2004). Other terms such as hypothetical talk, inner speech/thoughts (Sandlund 2004) and enactment (Holt 2004) are also used for this type of hypothetical reported speech. Whatever the term, they all stand for reported speech that is invented or imaginary. The term the present study uses in the analysis is talk dramatization.

In contrast to direct or indirect reported speech, talk dramatizations are not used to recount something that actually happened in the past but they quote a hypothetical or imaginary piece of talk or action. Otherwise, they work on the same principles as reported speech. (Sandlund 2004: 232.) However, unlike with reported speech, with talk dramatizations it is not usually necessary to determine whether the speech represents direct or indirect reported speech, since the “speaker is not taking the perspective of an actual original speaker” (Sandlund 2004: 237). Also, in contrast to assessments participants often offer about reported speech, talk dramatizations do not usually display a personal stance towards the reported utterance. With talk dramatizations, assessments toward the reported speech are not as notable since the talk they produce did not affect the speakers personally. Through dramatizing talk, speakers rather show shared cultural understandings. The assessments made are of matters in general, not of someone in particular. (Sandlund 2004: 247.)

In her dissertation about emotions in academic talk-in-interaction, Sandlund (2004) discovered that talk dramatizations are often used as the punch line of an amusing story. The features that distinguish talk dramatization as the punch line are similar to reported speech. The punch line is found just before a turn completion point and it is prosodically different from the surrounding talk. The speaker indicates that the talk dramatization is an invitation to laughter with vowel lengthening, slower tempo and rising intonation. Laughter can also be inserted in the speech to indicate that it is laughable. (Sandlund 2004: 238.)

Talk dramatizations can also be used to present a candidate understanding of prior talk. In other words, a speaker can show understanding of the talk by using a talk dramatization. The participants can, then, accept or reject that understanding. After the punch line, the recipients can accept the invitation to laugh and show appreciation of the prior talk. Another way of showing appreciation is offering a second dramatization. (Sandlund 2004: 237-244.) Sandlund (2004: 245), thus, proposes a sequential pattern typical for talk dramatizations:

- Talk dramatization
- Appreciation
- Second talk dramatization
- Appreciation
- Acceptance or rejection of example validity
- Shift back to the 'serious' topic that elicited the talk dramatization

According to Sandlund (2004), this type of pattern with two talk dramatizations does not appear with other types of reported speech. With direct and indirect reported speech, not all the speakers generally have the knowledge about what was originally said. The teller(s) must have been present in the situation to know what and how was said in order to be able to report it afterwards. Talk dramatizations, on their part, are not reporting an actual situation or talk. Thereby, they allow others to join in and offer talk dramatizations of their own. Participation does not require knowledge about an actual event but rather an understanding of the framework, which enables a more active participation. Anyone is allowed to make contributions. (Sandlund 2004: 245.) In this sense, talk dramatizations work as understanding tests (Sacks 1974, as quoted by Sandlund 2004: 246-247).

Talk dramatizations are often used in Late Nigh, too. They can be found at the end of amusing stories as well as show understanding of the prior talk. They can be prosodically different from the surrounding talk, and laughter can be included as an invitation to laugh and the recipients often respond with laughter to show appreciation of the prior talk.

In her study about enactments, Holt (2007) discovered that they can be used to expand a joke initiation. According to her, enactments "contribute to a sequence of activities initiated in a previous turn (or turns), and... contribute to a previously begun reported interaction" (Holt 2007: 61). Enactments are generated by the activities of all the participants in collaboration and contribute to and show understanding of the sequence of activities. When used in a joking sequence, the first enactment, often

following a hypothetical, not a serious situation proposed by one of the participants, indicates understanding of the joking scenario as well as contributes to and extends the sequence of activities. It is usually produced by the recipient but also the joke initiator can be the one to do the first enactment. The enactment is often accompanied by laughter. The second enactment shows understanding and appreciation of the first enactment and willingness to contribute to the joke. Although the first enactment may be produced by anyone of the participants, the second enactment is always produced by the recipient. (Holt 2007: 61-67.) The joking sequence can thus have two patterns. In the first pattern, the first enactment is initiated by the recipient, which displays understanding of the joke and willingness to add to it (Holt 2007: 68):

- 1 A: Joke initiation
- 2 B: First enactment
- 3 A: Second enactment

In the second pattern, the first enactment is done by the joke initiator (Holt 2007: 68):

- 1 A: Joke initiation
- 2 A: First enactment(s)
- 3 B: Second enactment

Here, the same participant begins the joke and produces the first enactment(s). The second enactment, then, shows understanding of the joke and expands it. Sometimes also a third enactment follows, which is initiated by the recipient. Usually after laughter and sometimes assessments and agreements, the joking sequence ends and the participants either return to the prior topic before the joking or start a new topic. (Holt 2007: 69-74.) Both of the patterns can be found in *Late Night*. The joke initiation can be, for example, an amusing story told by one of the guests, to which the host,

O'Brien, responds with an enactment. The host can also offer a joke initiation as well as the first enactment. However, if a second or a third enactment is produced, they are in most cases produced by the host and rarely by one of the guests.

5 DATA AND METHODS

The aim of the present study is to find out how reported speech and talk dramatizations are used to create humour in the talk show *Late Nigh with Conan O'Brien*. In other words, the present study strives to find out how humorous sequences with reported speech or talk dramatizations are constructed in the interaction.

The data of the present study consists of two episodes of *Late Night*. The episodes were aired in the United States on 8 and 9 October 2008 and they were videotaped from the Finnish television channel Sub. The episodes were then converted into digital format to make transcribing and handling of the video material easier.

Both episodes are about 45 minutes long and the interviews last roughly from five to ten minutes. On the whole, the data consisted of five interviews in two episodes. Only the interview parts were chosen as the object of investigation to get as naturally occurring conversation as possible. Therefore, opening monologue, other sketches and musical performances at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the show were excluded from the data. Also, one of the interviews needed to be left out from the data, because it did not have any reported speech or talk dramatizations. The episodes were selected randomly and there were no particular targets as to what kinds of guests there were. However, even though the episodes were chosen randomly, it was interesting to find out that the guests happened to be quite different.

There are three guests in the first episode. The first guest is Molly Shannon. She is an American actress and a comedian and she has come to *Late Night* to promote her new television series called *Cath and Kim*. Her interview lasts about 11 minutes and there is also a commercial break during the interview. The second guest is Jason Ritter. He is an American actor and he is at *Late Night* because he has a new movie called *Good Dick* coming out. His interview lasts about 7 minutes 30 seconds. Molly Shannon is also present during his interview, but she does not take part in the conversation.

The third guest is Noah McCullough. He is a thirteen-year-old American author and he has come to *Late Night* to talk about his two books, *The essential book of presidential trivia* and *First kids: the true stories of all the president's children*. His interview lasts about 6 minutes 30 seconds. Molly Shannon and Jason Ritter are also present but they do not participate in the conversation.

The second episode contains two interviews. However, the interview of the first guest, Dennis Quaid, was left out because reported speech or talk dramatizations were not used in it as means of humour. The second guest in the second episode is Lance Mackey. He is an American dog sled racer and, at the time the episode was aired, has won the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race two times. He is at *Late Night* to discuss dog sled racing and a new series about the Iditarod race called *The toughest race on Earth: Iditarod*. His interview lasts about 10 minutes. Dennis Quaid is not present during his interview.

The episodes were filmed in the studios of the television channel NBC in New York. The host and the guests sit on a small stage in front of a studio audience. From the audience's perspective, O'Brien sits behind a desk on the right side. For the guests, there is an armchair and a sofa on the left side. The guest that is being interviewed sits on the armchair and if other guests are present, they move to the sofa. The guests come into the set from the left side behind a curtain and walk to the stage where O'Brien is standing to greet them. There is also a house band, The Max Weinberg Seven, in the studio. The band usually plays when a guest walks into the studio and when an interview ends.

The interviews were transcribed for analysis by using common transcribing conventions of CA (see Appendix). Both verbal and nonverbal interaction were included as accurately as possible in the transcript whenever they were relevant. However, the camera angles limited the transcription of nonverbal features somewhat since often only the host or the guest is seen. Furthermore, the audience was not filmed at all. Therefore not all nonverbal features are captured in the transcript.

The interviews were first transcribed entirely paying attention to the humorous sequences. Next, preliminary notes were made on all of the humorous sequences. Because the sequences formed a too miscellaneous and extensive data for the present study, a particular feature needed to be chosen as the object of analysis. Cases with reported speech and talk dramatizations as means of humour stood out from the interviews because they were used quite often. Therefore, sequences with reported speech and talk dramatizations were chosen as the target for the present study.

The goal with using only the interviews as the data was to get as natural conversation as possible. However, it is worth remembering that talk show interviews are always more or less scripted. O'Brien and the scriptwriters have been talking to the guests and preparing questions and jokes before the episodes were filmed. The guests have probably been preparing for the interview as well and thought what kinds of things they might tell. For example, humorous sequences where O'Brien uses reported speech as background information (chapter 6.2.1) were designed beforehand as most likely were the amusing stories told by the guests (chapter 6.1.1). In that respect, the interaction is not completely naturally occurring. Some of the interaction and humour naturally rises from the situation but there must also be a script whereby the interview progresses. There is also a possibility that the show directs the audience's reactions and uses 'applaud' or 'laugh' signs, as some shows do, but it cannot be said for certain. However, as Hutcbly (2006) noted, there is also a great deal of unscripted talk and thus the host and the guests also need to be creative in their responses and reactions.

The analysis was based on both the transcripts and the videotapes. In the analysis, humorous sequences with reported speech and talk dramatizations were first identified from the data. Then, both the verbal and nonverbal features of the sequences were studied in detail to find out the organization of different sequences with reported speech and talk dramatization as means of humour. The findings were divided into two main categories according to the speaker, that is, whether it was the guests or the host who used reported

speech or talk dramatizations. The main categories were then divided into subcategories based on the types of sequences.

6 HUMOROUS SEQUENCES WITH DIRECT AND INDIRECT REPORTED SPEECH AND TALK DRAMATIZATIONS

The findings have been divided into two main categories: guest turns and host turns. The analysis showed that there were clearly different turn types available for the guests on one hand and for the host on the other. Therefore, the division into guest and host turns was a logical decision. Furthermore, the two main categories were divided into subcategories according to the types of different humorous sequences with reported speech an/or talk dramatizations. The guests used reported speech and talk dramatizations in only one type of sequence, that is, as the punch line in an amusing story. The host turns formed four subcategories: reported speech as background information, talk dramatizations as formulation, talk dramatizations expanding a joke initiation and reported speech and talk dramatizations in an assessment sequence.

6.1 Guest turns

The guest turns with reported speech and talk dramatizations were in the minority in the data. However, all the cases of sequences fitted under one category: reported speech and talk dramatizations as punch line in an amusing story.

6.1.1 Reported speech and talk dramatizations as punch line of an amusing story

There were only a few cases in the data where the guests used either reported speech or talk dramatizations as means of humour. In fact, there were only four sequences in total in all of the interviews. However, all the four sequences happened to fall into the same category. When the guests used reported speech or talk dramatizations to create humour, they used them as the punch line in an amusing story.

In Example 1, direct reported speech is used as the punch line. O'Brien (CO) and Shannon (MS) are talking about their small children. Previously, O'Brien has asked Shannon about her children and mentioned that he, too, has small children, a five-year-old daughter and a three-year-old son. Shannon has told that she has two children, a five-year-old daughter and a three and a half-year-old son. In lines 59-61, O'Brien states how children in that age are amusing because *they're saying crazy things*. This makes it possible for Shannon start an amusing story about her children. She starts a story about her son, Nolan.

Example 1. Yeah, or my balls!

59	CO	yeah and um so it's it's fun now
60		because now its like popcorn pop popping in their heads
61		they're saying crazy things its enjoyable (.) you know.
62	MS	I know (oh we have) the same thing
63		they just make you laugh so hard (.)
64		my son um you know recently we went to the pediatrician
65		in New York an um this- the doctor always (.) you know
66		she reminded (him) @just remember you know if anybody ever
67		touches your bottom you know you just say <u>no</u> @
68	CO	[mhm]
69	MS	[and] so I always remind them ()
70		I say like she says (I'm like yeah) @if anybody touches your bottom
71		you know say no or or your penis@
72		and he's like @yeah OR MY BALLS@
		o-----o
		lifts right arm up, points up with index finger
		..._CO_____
73		[£really loud£ ((laughs))
74	CO	[[((laughs))
75	AU	[[((laughter))
76	MS	[and I'm like yeah or your <u>balls</u> .
77	AU	[[((laughter))
78	CO	[[((laughs))
79	MS	[(that's right)
80	AU	[[((laughter))
81	CO	your son talks like Regis Philbin [(kinda does)

Shannon first agrees with O'Brien in lines 62-63 that small children say funny things. Her comment *they just make you laugh so hard* as well as what O'Brien had said earlier about small children project that the following story is going to be amusing. Therefore the hearers already know to expect a humorous story. In line 63, Shannon starts a story about how she had taken her son to

see a pediatrician. The doctor had reminded Shannon's son that he should not let anyone touch his bottom inappropriately. To report what the doctor had said, Shannon already uses DRS and a prosodically different voice, which people use when talking to children (lines 66-67). Then, she continues that she too reminds her children that they should not let anyone touch them inappropriately (lines 70-71). This time she quotes herself in DRS and uses again a voice that is used when talking to children. The story so far forms the build-up.

After the build-up, Shannon reaches the punch line. She uses DRS to deliver the punch line and reports what her son had said to her (line 72): *and he's like @yeah OR MY BALLS@*. The utterance is again prosodically different from the surrounding talk. Shannon tries to reproduce the way her son had delivered the utterance in an excited manner when he had known yet another place, besides his bottom and penis, that nobody is not allowed to touch. The loudness of *OR MY BALLS* emphasises the excitement. Shannon also mentions that her son's voice had been *really loud* (line 73). At the same time with *BALLS*, Shannon also lifts her right arm straight up with the index finger pointing up to re-enact the nonverbal gesture her son had used to make his utterance more effective.

After the punch line (line 73), Shannon shifts her gaze to O'Brien, says *£really loud£* in a laughing voice and then laughs. Her intonation is also falling towards the end of the utterance, which indicates the end of the story. These cues indicate to O'Brien and the audience (AU) that now is an appropriate place to laugh, which they do in lines 74-75. Shannon, too, joins the laughter. Overlapping with the laughter, Shannon yet continues how she had agreed with her son and uses DRS to quote herself (line 74): *and I'm like yeah or your balls*. She also tries to say something more, but still overlaps the laughter, which makes her utterance impossible to hear. After the laughter ceases, O'Brien takes the next turn and starts assessing the quality of Shannon's son's voice, which ends the sequence.

In Example 2, the punch line is delivered in indirect reported speech. Noah McCullough (NM) is telling about the time he met the former

president of the United States, George H.W. Bush. Earlier, O'Brien has asked McCullough, who knows a lot of trivia about the presidents of the United States and aspires to become the youngest president of the United States himself, if he has met any real presidents. McCullough answers that he has met three presidents, which infers the audience that he will tell three stories, one of each president. Example 3 is McCullough's third and final story about the presidents he has met. The two preceding stories about Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush were, although amusing, not so clearly designed to evoke laughter. The third and final story, however, is clearly meant to invite laughter as the last story.

Example 2. Barbara did all the spanking.

192	CO	[and and you also] (.) I'm glad that these these () so nice to
193		you and and who was the third?
194	NM	er George H W Bush er George W Bush's father (.) I got to meet
195		him (.) and I'm <u>nine</u> years old and er the <u>first</u> thing that I asked
196		him when I met him was you know president Bush >you've
197		been the president of the United States< but <u>how</u> does it feel (.)
198		to be er (.) one of the <u>few</u> people on the entire universe (.)
199		that can say that they have <u>spanked</u> the current leader of the
		...X_CO_
200		free world. ((smiles))
201	AU	[((laughter))
202	CO	[that's a cool question yeah
203		>what did he what did he say<
204	NM	er he says doesn't know the feeling because Barbara did all the
205		spanking. ((smiles))
206	CO	[oh ((laughs))
207	AU	[((laughter and applause))
209	CO	e:r (.) well e:r thank you so much for being here

To begin with, O'Brien asks McCullough in line 193 who was the third president that he has met. McCullough answers and starts a story about their meeting. He begins by telling that the third president he met was George H.W. Bush and that McCullough was just nine years old at the time of their meeting (lines 194-195). He continues by telling the very first, and therefore an important, thing he wanted to ask the president. First, he says in DRS that he started by stating that *president Bush >you've been the president of the United*

States (lines 196-197), which works as background knowledge to the question. He says this in a monotonous tone and slightly quicker than the surrounding speech as if being the president of the United States was not an important achievement. However, what McCullough is about to ask next is important for him. In lines 197-200 he reports the question he asked president Bush: *but how does it feel (.) to be er (.) one of the few people on the entire universe (.) that can say that they have spanked the current leader of the free world.* He uses stress to emphasise the important words *how*, *few* and *spanked*. There are also small pauses and hesitations throughout the reported utterance, which delay the ending of the utterance. Furthermore, the word choices add to the humorous effect of the question. There is a notable contrast between 'spanking' and 'the current leader of the free world'. Spanking is a punishment and perhaps considered humiliating whereas 'the current leader of the free world' is a remarkable position. McCullough has intended the question to be funny and therefore has designed it carefully.

The story so far has been the build-up and already humorous in its content. Towards the end of the reported utterance, McCullough smiles and shifts his gaze to O'Brien (line 200), which indicates that what he has told is meant to be funny and that he is now giving up the turn for a while before he tells the punch line. The audience responds to this with laughter (line 201). Overlapping the audience's laughter, O'Brien assesses McCullough's question (line 202) and after the laughter has stopped, he asks McCullough what president Bush had said (line 203). McCullough answers O'Brien's question and delivers the punch line (line 204-205): *er he says doesn't know the feeling because Barbara did all the spanking.* McCullough uses IRS in the punch line and thus tells president Bush's answer from his own point of view. Therefore there are no prosodic changes. President Bush had told that he does not know what it feels like to spank his son because his wife, Barbara, was in charge of punishing the children. There are no hesitations in the punch line. McCullough's intonation is falling towards the end of the utterance and he also smiles (line 205). The lack of hesitations, falling intonation and smiling, signal that McCullough has finished the punch line

and is giving up the turn, that is, the others are free to laugh. Both O'Brien and the audience laugh and the audience also applauds (lines 206 and 207). After the laughter ceases, O'Brien takes the turn and continues to the next topic, which end the sequence.

In Example 3, Jason Ritter (JR) uses talk dramatizations as the punch line of his story. O'Brien and Ritter are talking about a movie that Ritter acts in. The movie tells about a video rental shop. Ritter plays the shop's employee and his girlfriend, who also wrote and directed the movie, plays a woman who rents a lot of porn movies from the shop. At the beginning of Example 3, O'Brien asks Ritter (lines 192-193) if his girlfriend had made background research for the movie, that is, if she had watched many porn movies.

Example 3. You must teach us the ways of sex.

192	CO	u:m did (.) did she when she was researching the movie (.)
193		was she watching a lot of this this stuff [this] material if you will?
194	JR	[yeah]
195		yes for <u>research</u> e::r she was er she was bringing home (.) basically
196		she was trying to get the the exact taste right for her character
197		so what it was it was all like (.) these sort of silly: movies
198		where u:m you know it will be like
199		@we are from another planet what are these humans engaging in
		o-----o
		head movements; lifts arms, small movements up and down
200		you must teach us@ the ways of sex and things like that,
		-----o
201	AU	[(laughter)]
202	JR	[or like] [(laughs)]
203	CO	[so the the the soft core] porn that has the silly goofy
204		plots
205	JR	yeah where no-one's actually like no-one's really having sex or
206		anything like that they're just like (.) getting naked and being on a(.)
207		planet or like @dude there's all these sexy ghosts in this mansio:n@
		o-----o
		lifts arms, small movements; tilts his head a bit backwards
208		[and one (.) visited me last ((laughs))
209	CO	[(laughs)]
210	AU	[(laughter)]
211	CO	that's always my favourite.

In lines 195-196, Ritter starts his answer by telling that his girlfriend had watched porn movies because she was making research for the movie and she had wanted *to get the the exact taste right for her character*. Then, he

continues describing the situation in more detail and tells that his girlfriend had been watching *these sort of silly: movies* (lines 197-198). This has been the build-up of the story. Now Ritter reaches the punch line. In lines 199-200, he gives an example of a porn movie's dialogue and uses a talk dramatization as the first punch line of his story: *@we are from another planet what are these humans engaging in you must teach us@ the ways of sex and things like that,,*. His speech is prosodically different from his normal speech. He 'quotes' an alien or possibly a robot and the voice he uses imitates an alien or a mechanical voice. He also uses nonverbal gestures that remind of a robot's movements. Ritter moves his head and lifts his arms up and down stiffly like a robot. Towards the end of the utterance, Ritter returns to his normal speaking voice and says *and things like that,,*, which suggest to the audience that he is about to give up the turn. Therefore, in line 201, the audience laughs. Ritter tries to give another example in line 202 but then stops and starts laughing too.

Overlapping with Ritter's laughter, O'Brien forms a formulation in lines 203-204: *[so the the the soft core] porn that has the silly goofy plots*. O'Brien clarifies that Ritter is talking about softcore porn movies that have *silly goofy plots*. In lines 205-206, Ritter confirms O'Brien's formulation and describes in more detail what kinds of movies he is talking about. Then, in line 207, he forms the second punch line: *or like @dude there's all these sexy ghosts in this mansio::n@*. Ritter uses again a talk dramatization to give an example of a porn movie's dialogue. This time he imitates the voice of a simple or a dumb person. He also uses nonverbal gestures and acts like a surprised person looking around. Ritter continues the talk dramatization in line 208 in his normal voice but O'Brien and the audience start laughing. Ritter stops talking and joins in the laughter as well. Finally, in line 211, O'Brien starts an assessment sequence of Ritter's story and thus ends the sequence.

The sequences with reported speech or talk dramatizations as the punch line of an amusing story begin with a question by the host. Next follows the guest's answer, that is, a story. The story starts with a build-up, which gives the hearers background information and describes the situation. At the end of the guest's story is the punch line, which can be either direct or indirect

reported speech or talk dramatizations. The punch line can differ prosodically from the surrounding talk, but not necessarily, and nonverbal gestures may also be used. The punch line, then, is followed by laughter, with either everybody laughing, the host and the audience laughing or the guest and the audience laughing. If the first punch line was a talk dramatization, another punch line and laughter can follow. Finally, after the laughter has calmed down, the host takes the next turn and either assesses a point he has picked up from the guest's answer or shifts to the next topic. The turns, thus, form the following sequence:

- question
- answer: story with reported speech or talk dramatization as punch line
- laughter
- talk dramatization
- laughter
- assessment or shift to the next topic

6.2 Host turns

The clear majority of the cases in the data where reported speech or talk dramatizations were used as means of humour, were produced by the show's host, Conan O'Brien. The host turns have been divided into four subcategories according to the type sequence: reported speech as background information, talk dramatizations as formulation, talk dramatizations expanding a joke initiation and reported speech and talk dramatizations in an assessment sequence.

6.2.1 Reported speech as background information

There were two sequences in the data where O'Brien used reported speech to give background information about a new discussion topic. Both were from

the interview with Shannon and in both cases O'Brien quoted a magazine interview Shannon had given.

In Example 4, O'Brien uses a quotation from Entertainment Weekly as background information for his next question.

Example 4. I just smelled the springs of Ireland.

95	CO	now () you you did a nice thing recently er
96		you gave this big interview for Entertainment Weekly
97	MS	[oh yeah]
98	CO	[everybody] reads Entertainment Weekly a:nd you gave me a nice
99		shout-out
100	MS	[(yeah)]
101	CO	[they] asked which host of all the talk show hosts
102		smells best and you said (there's) a quote
103		<u>Conan</u> (.) [you just look at him
104	MS	[o-----o spreads arms; smiles; looks at AU
105	CO	and it smells like Irish Spring soap.
106	MS	o-----o arms spread; smiles; shifts gaze to CO
107		[(laughs)]
108	AU	[(laughter)]
109	CO	I just smelled the springs of Ireland.
110	AU	[(laughter and applause)]
111	MS	[(laughs)]
112	CO	[that's (.) I mean I've had worse things said about me
113		that was very nice.
114	MS	[(laughs)]
115		it's tru::e
116	CO	do I really smell like that?

O'Brien first tells that Shannon had given an interview for Entertainment Weekly and that she has said something nice about O'Brien (lines 95-96, 98-99). Then he quotes the question, which is not the most common question to ask, the interviewer had presented to Shannon using DRS (lines 101-102): *[they] asked which host of all the talk show hosts smells best*. Then O'Brien continues and reports Shannon's answer in DRS (lines 102-103, 105): *and you said (there's) a quote Conan (.) [you just look at him and it smells like Irish Spring soap*. Shannon had told that the best smelling talk show host in her opinion was O'Brien. She has said that he smells like a soap called Irish Spring, perhaps because O'Brien is Irish American. There are no prosodic changes but O'Brien quotes the citation in a relatively normal voice. At the same time

O'Brien quotes her, Shannon looks at the audience smiling and spreads her arms. With this gesture she signals that the comment about O'Brien's smell is not to be taken seriously. After this, Shannon starts laughing and the audience joins in the laughter (lines 107-108). After the laughter stops, O'Brien finishes the quotation in line 109: *I just smelled the springs of Ireland..* The end of this quite peculiar opinion about O'Brien's odour evokes more laughter. The audience both laughs and applauds (line 110) and Shannon laughs as well (line 111). Overlapping with the laughter, O'Brien comments on Shannon's answer saying that he appreciates Shannon's compliment (lines 112-113) and Shannon assures that she meant it (line 115). Since the reported speech was used to provide background information before a question, O'Brien stays on the same topic and moves next on to the question he wanted to ask Shannon (line 116), which ends the sequence.

In Example 5, O'Brien quotes an interview Shannon has given to The Advocate to provide background information for the next discussion topic.

Example 5. Someone like Ashley Dupré.

275	CO	but you know you really did get over your repression
276		because this e:r you- you- you gave a- a- interview to The <u>Advocate</u> ,
277	MS	mm
278	CO	and e:r this is very interesting you said at one point
279		(there's) an article (.) you sort of admitted (.) that you: (.)
280		have a bit of a lesbian fantasy,
281	MS	[(laughs)]
282	CO	[and you said] [()]
283	MS	[he] asked me (.) he asked me
284		if you could <u>go</u> that way
285	CO	[if you <u>could</u> go]
286	MS	[()] a girl crush ()
287	CO	yeah=
288	MS	=yeah
289	CO	and you said you'd like someone like Ashley Dupré
290		Eliot Spitzer's former mistress real trashy big (boobed)
291		ankle bracelet wearing French manicured <u>hooker</u> .
		<u>AU</u>
292	MS	[£mm?£ ((smiles))
293	AU	[(laughter)
294	MS	[£I di:d?£ ((laughs))]
		o-----o
		lifts hand over her chest
295	CO	[so (.) yes \$ahh yes\$] and it's very <u>specific</u>

Previously O'Brien and Shannon have been talking about Shannon's background and how Shannon's family was very conservative but Shannon herself is now more liberal. O'Brien refers to this previous topic at the beginning of the sequence when he states that Shannon got over her repression and gave an interview to *The Advocate*, which is an American gay newsmagazine (lines 275-276). Then, in lines 278-280, he states in IRS that Shannon had told in the interview that she has a lesbian fantasy. Shannon laughs at O'Brien's statement in line 281. Then, O'Brien tries to begin telling what Shannon had answered (line 282) but is interrupted by Shannon wants to explain why she had told that she has a lesbian fantasy. After Shannon's explanation, O'Brien continues telling what kind of woman Shannon had said she would like if she were a lesbian (lines 289-291): *and you said you'd like someone like Ashley Dupré Eliot Spitzer's former mistress real trashy big (boobed) ankle bracelet wearing French manicured hooker*. He starts in line 289 with *you said you'd like*, which marks the quotation as IRS. Shannon had told that she would prefer a woman *like Ashley Dupré Eliot Spitzer's former mistress*. Eliot Spitzer was the Governor of New York who had to resign because he was involved in a prostitution scandal and Ashley Dupré was one of the prostitutes. There are no prosodic changes but there is stress on the word *hooker*. Next, Shannon utters *mm?* and looks at the audience smiling (line 292). With this, she indicates that her statement is not to be taken too seriously. Overlapping with Shannon, the audience starts laughing (line 293). Then, in line 294, Shannon says *El di:d?É* and lifts her hands over her chest as if she was questioning the authenticity of O'Brien's quotation. However, she smiles and laughs immediately after the utterance, which indicates that she was not being serious. O'Brien overlaps with this in line 295 and starts with *so* trying to move on with the topic but then laughs and answers Shannon's question. Finally, he moves on with the topic and assesses the answer Shannon had given in to the magazine interviewer, which brings the sequence to an end.

Three main observations were made about the sequences where reported speech was used to give background information. First, the sequence begins

with the introduction of a new topic by the host, that is, he provides background information and uses reported speech to do so. The reported speech can be direct or indirect. Second, laughter follows the reported speech and either both the audience and the guest laugh or just the audience laughs. There can also be laughter at other points but laughter after reported speech was a shared feature in both sequences. Third, after the laughter ceases, the host continues on the same 'serious' topic that was initiated at the beginning of the sequence. Therefore, the sequence can be illustrated in the following pattern:

- topic initiation: background information in reported speech
- laughter
- continuing on the same topic

6.2.2 Talk dramatizations as formulation

Another way O'Brien created humour was to use talk dramatizations as a formulation. A formulation is a third-turn receipt of information often used by interviewers to sum up or clarify guests' previous turns and which is then typically confirmed or disconfirmed by the next speaker (Thornborrow 2002). In the data of the present study, O'Brien also used formulations in a humorous way to sum up or check his understanding of a guest's answer.

In Example 6, McCullough is telling a story about Ronald Reagan, a former president of the United States. Previously, O'Brien has asked him to tell some amusing facts about the presidents of the United States. Now, McCullough is telling a funny fact about president Reagan. He says that president Reagan liked to play with other people's ear lobes, to which the audience responds with laughter (lines 125-127). O'Brien does not first believe what McCullough is saying and asks McCullough if it is actually true, to which McCullough answers affirmatively (lines 128, 130-131). Then, O'Brien yet states wondering *[he liked to play with other people's ear lobes?* in line 133 and which makes both the audience and McCullough laugh (lines

uses a surprised and angry voice. Thus, the utterance differs prosodically from the surrounding speech. O'Brien also uses a nonverbal gesture and pulls backwards to get away from president Reagan. Next, he 'quotes' president Reagan: @well ((mumbling))@. The quotation is mostly mutter, which might imitate the way president Reagan spoke or just an old man whose speech is unintelligible. At the same time with the mumbling, O'Brien lifts his arm and depicts president Reagan trying to touch someone's ear. The audience and McCullough react to this with laughter (lines 139-140). O'Brien yet comments on the story (line 141) and then moves to the next topic (line 143), which ends the sequence.

In Example 7, O'Brien and Mackey (LM) are talking about the Iditarod dog sled race. Earlier, O'Brien has asked if Mackey ever starts daydreaming or talking to himself during the race. Mackey has been telling that sometimes when he is sleep deprived he can see and hear things that are not actually there. Further, O'Brien has asked Mackey to tell what kinds of things he imagines seeing and hearing. Now, at the beginning of Example 7, Mackey is finishing his answer.

Example 7. So you're having conversations with the wind.

72	LM	and (well) it sounds like people are talking to you
73		so you're having conversations with the wind.
74	CO	really?=-
75	LM	[=you know
76	AU	[(laughing)]
77	LM	[()]
78	CO	[you're] riding along and you're like @I never told her that@ o-----////////////////////--o
		raises both arms, looks to the left, small head movements
79		[(.) and nothing's
80	AU	[(laughing)]
81	LM	that's that's pretty much it [right] there
82	CO	[wau]
83	LM	and that's just one of <u>many</u> <u>many</u> er examples.
84	CO	@you say that again and I'm coming over there@ o-----o
		raises both arms, small head movements
85	LM	[\$yeah\$
86	AU	[(laughing)]
87	CO	[(laughs)]
88	LM	[that's right.
89	CO	wau [okay]

90 LM [that's] right.
 91 CO do you see things that aren't there?

In lines 72-73, Mackey finishes his answer by telling that sometimes during the race, when one is very tired, one may end up *having conversations with the wind*. The audience reacts to Mackey's amusing answer with laughter in line 76. Next, in line 78, O'Brien takes the turn and forms a humorous formulation based on Mackey's answer: *[you're] riding along and you're like @I never told her that@*. O'Brien makes up an imaginary situation where Mackey is talking with an imaginary person, that is, the wind, which makes it a talk dramatization. To be precise, O'Brien is constructing a situation where Mackey is supposedly having an argument with this imaginary person. O'Brien starts with a description of the situation, that is, Mackey riding his sled. Then, he 'quotes' Mackey's thinking that he never told the imaginary other something. The utterance differs prosodically and O'Brien uses an angry sounding voice. At the same time, he lifts his arms as if riding a dog sled and on the talk dramatization looks to the left at this imaginary person. The audience laughs at this in line 80 and after the laughter ceases, Mackey confirms O'Brien's formulation in line 81: *that's that's pretty much it [right] there*. He continues in line 83 saying that O'Brien's formulation is *just one of many many er examples*. After this, O'Brien continues and produces a second talk dramatization (line 84): *@you say that again and I'm coming over there@*. Now, O'Brien 'quotes' Mackey who angrily threatens the imaginary person if she says something one more time. He also lifts his arms again as if riding a dog sled. Next, Mackey confirms O'Brien's formulation (line 85) and both the audience and O'Brien start laughing (line 87). Further, Mackey confirms the formulation twice more (lines 88, 90) before O'Brien takes the turn and moves on to the next question and the sequence ends.

The sequences where talk dramatizations were used as formulations were somewhat different from each other. Yet, they still shared some main features. To begin with, the sequence starts with the guest answering to a question that has been asked earlier. The answer already evokes laughter and therefore the conversation is already humorous. Next, the host produces

a humorous formulation to sum up or check his understanding of the guest's answer. At the beginning of the formulation, there is a description of a hypothetical situation, which may also include nonverbal gestures. The description of the situation is followed by one or two talk dramatizations. The talk dramatization(s) are prosodically different from the surrounding speech and include nonverbal gestures. The formulation is then followed by laughter. Either both the audience and the guest laugh or just the audience. Furthermore, the formulation can be confirmed, but not necessarily. Then, the sequence can end at this point and the host can shift to the next topic, or it may be continued with another talk dramatization. If the host produces a second talk dramatization, it is again reacted to with laughter and then confirmed. Eventually, the host moves on to the next topic and the sequence ends. To sum up, a formulation sequence with talk dramatizations can be illustrated as follows:

- answer
- laughter
- formulation: description of a situation with talk dramatization(s)
- laughter
- confirmation
- talk dramatization
- laughter
- confirmation
- shift to the next topic

6.2.3 Talk dramatizations expanding a joke initiation

Sometimes O'Brien used talk dramatizations when he continued joking about a topic that one of the guests had been talking about previously. With the talk dramatizations, O'Brien humorously and hypothetically 'quoted' one or more of the people that had appeared or could have appeared in the guest's answer. The guest's answer, which already was humorous, thus

acted as a joke initiation, which O'Brien in turn expanded with one or more talk dramatizations.

Example 8 has many utterances of both reported speech and talk dramatizations. However, only one of the talk dramatizations is produced by O'Brien. Ritter and O'Brien have been talking about a cheetah reserve-winery that Ritter had gone to when he was filming a movie in Africa. They have been wondering and joking about how a place that has both cheetahs and a winery works and how it could be dangerous if people first drink and then go see the cheetahs. Therefore, the topic is already humorous. At the beginning of Example 8, Ritter tells that they in fact were first offered wine and then asked if they would like to go and see a cheetah (lines 49-50). However, he says that there were strict rules of how to behave with the cheetah (line 51). There is a contradiction between first giving one wine and then asking one to obey rules and therefore O'Brien laughs briefly at this (line 52). Next, Ritter gives examples of what kinds of rules there were.

Example 8. Don't have red wine in your blood stream.

49	JR	[but] e::r (.) no they they let you drink
50		and then they you s- they said you wanna go see a cheetah
51		and then they have all these really inten[se rules]
52	CO	[(laughs)]
53	JR	like @don't make eye contact with the cheetah
54		do <u>not</u> approach the cheetah@ with sudden movements
55		and you're terrified [()]
56	CO	[@don't] have red wine in your blood stream@
57	JR	((laughs)) [yes
58	AU	[(laughter)]
59	JR	@it will mistake your teeth for blood and@
60	CO	yeah
61	JR	@tear you apart@ no it was it was pretty scary
62		but the cheetah was pretty sedated so (.) it was-
63	CO	you think this cheetah was sedated too?

Ritter uses DRS to report what kinds of rules they were given about meeting a cheetah (lines 53-54): *like @don't make eye contact with the cheetah do not approach the cheetah@ with sudden movements and you're terrified*. The rules were strict and Ritter comments that he was terrified after hearing them. He tries to say something more, but is interrupted by O'Brien who produces a similar

kind of reported utterance as a humorous continuation of Ritter's story (line 56): [*@don't*] *have red wine in your blood stream*@. O'Brien makes up another rule that was supposed to have been told to Ritter, which makes it a talk dramatization. This rule, however, is impossible to follow, because if one is given wine to drink, one will have red wine, that is, alcohol in one's blood. O'Brien imitates a prosodically different voice that also Ritter had used in his reported utterances, which was serious and commanding sounding. Ritter reacts to this with laughter and the audience starts laughing as well (lines 57-58). Ritter produces two more talk dramatizations in lines 59 and 61 but they do not evoke more laughter. Then, he continues his story about the cheetah (lines 61-62) but O'Brien interrupts him with a question (line 63) and the sequence ends.

In Example 9, O'Brien produces three talk dramatizations. Previously, O'Brien and Ritter have already been talking for some time about how Ritter had asked his girlfriend to go steady with him. Ritter has been telling a story about how he asked his girlfriend to go steady with him at a Halloween party nine years ago. O'Brien thought that Ritter acted in an old-fashioned way and he has been joking about Ritter asking his girlfriend to be boyfriend-girlfriend. Therefore, the interaction is already humorous before Example 9. Now, Ritter is finishing his story.

Example 9. We are now boyfriend/girlfriend.

128	JR	but she u: ((laughs)) \$yeah\$
129		but she er she she accepted my er [my offer]
130	CO	[that's nice] though that's nice.
131	JR	so we became boyfriend slash girlfriend that night.
132	CO	\$yeah\$ (.) @a:h it's done@
		o-----o
		lifts his arm, index finger up, wags his finger
133	JR	[((laughs)) \$it's done\$
134	AU	[((laughter))
135	CO	@the contracts [have been signed@]
136	JR	[(laughs)] [\$yes\$ ((laughs))
137	AU	[(laughter)]
138	CO	@we are now boyfriend slash girlfriend@
139	JR	[((laughs))]
140	AU	[((laughter))]
141	JR	[()]

142 CO [this is] this is a a let's talk about the movie

At the beginning of Example 9, Ritter tells that his girlfriend had accepted his offer to become boyfriend and girlfriend (line 129) and O'Brien states that it was nice (line 130). In line 131, Ritter continues that they *became boyfriend slash girlfriend that night*. Since they have already been joking about the topic, Ritter does not say this in a serious but in a humorous manner. O'Brien notices this and develops the humour further in the next turn (line 132): *\$yeah\$ (.) @a:h it's done@*. First, he agrees with Ritter in a laughing voice and then produces the first talk dramatization and hypothetically 'quotes' what Ritter had said after his girlfriend had agreed to date with him. O'Brien picks up Ritter's expression *boyfriend slash girlfriend*, which sounds businesslike, whereas dating with someone is not usually considered businesslike at all. The utterance is prosodically different and O'Brien uses an official or formal sounding voice. At the same time with the utterance, he also lifts his arm and wags his index finger. Both Ritter and the audience respond to this with laughter and Ritter also repeats the utterance *\$it's done\$* (lines 133-134). Then, O'Brien produces a second talk dramatization (line 135): *@the contracts [have been signed@]*. With this, he refers again to the businesslike expression *boyfriend slash girlfriend* and says, as Ritter, that they have even signed contracts to become boyfriend and girlfriend. He uses again a formal sounding voice. Ritter and the audience laugh at this in lines 136-137. After the laughter stops, O'Brien produces yet a third talk dramatization in line 138: *@we are now boyfriend slash girlfriend@*. The third talk dramatization is prosodically similar to the other two, and this time O'Brien also repeats Ritter's expression *boyfriend slash girlfriend*. Both Ritter and the audience laugh again at the talk dramatization (lines 139-140). Finally, O'Brien ends the sequence when he moves on to the next topic in line 142.

Example 10 has as many as four talk dramatizations. Mackey is talking about the Iditarod race and how the dogs are taken good care of (lines 28-31). He says that there are 47 veterinarians at the checkpoints attending the dogs. In line 32, O'Brien yet sums up Mackey's point that the dogs are taken good care of, which Mackey confirms in line 33. Next, Mackey states humorously

that [I take] better care of my dogs than I do of my kids. (line 35). Everyone responds to the statement with laughter (lines 36-38). After the laughter ceases, O'Brien takes the next turn and continues joking about the topic.

Example 10. Damn kids.

28	LM	=yeah there's er twenty six check points along the way
29		a:nd e:r you know we have forty seven veterinarians out there
30		overseeing (.) you know and and looking out
31		for the best [interest of the dogs.]
32	CO	[so they're well] taken care of.=
33	LM	=they're very well taken care of
34	CO	[e:r]
35	LM	[I take] better care of my dogs than I do of my kids.
36	CO	[\$yeah\$ ((laughs))
37	LM	[(laughs))
38	AU	[(laughter))
39	CO	@damn kids@ o-----o strikes with hand from right to left
40	LM	[\$yeah\$ ((laughs))
41	AU	[(laughter))
42	CO	[\$uh uh um\$ (.)
43		\$do they ever join in\$ (.) have they ever got you with a kid in there
44		hey there's a kid pulling e:r
45	LM	[(laughs))
46	AU	[(laughter))
47	CO	I count eight dogs and two kids @a:r@ o-----o o--o hand movements from side to side; moves hand from left to right
48	LM	()
49	AU	((laughter))
50	CO	u:m it's a <u>ten day</u> race and e:r you're alone (.) on [(on)]

O'Brien continues joking about Mackey's statement that he takes better care of his dogs than of his children. In line 39, O'Brien forms the first talk dramatization: @damn kids@. O'Brien 'quotes' Mackey hypothetically swearing about his children as if they were a nuisance. Therefore the utterance is a talk dramatization. He also makes a nonverbal gesture and strikes with his hand from right to left. The utterance is prosodically different from the surrounding speech. O'Brien uses a voice that sounds irritated. Both Mackey and the audience respond to this with laughter (lines 40-41) and O'Brien laughs a bit as well.

After the laughter dies down, O'Brien develops the joke further and asks in line 43 *\$do they ever join in\$* (.) *have they ever got you with a kid in there*. However, he does not seem to be expecting an answer because he continues immediately in line 44 with another talk dramatization *hey there's a kid pulling e:r*. Now, O'Brien 'quotes' a staff member of the race who has noticed that Mackey has got a child harnessed in the front of the sled. O'Brien seems to want to keep the turn and continue to the next topic since he uses a continuer *e:r* at the end of the utterance. Yet, Mackey and the audience start laughing at the second talk dramatization (lines 45-46). After they stop laughing, O'Brien decides to produce two more talk dramatization (line 47): *I count eight dogs and two kids @a::r@*. With the first talk dramatization, O'Brien 'quotes' again a staff member of the race, who has seen that Mackey has children pulling his sled. The staff member counts that there are eight dogs and two children in the front of the sled. O'Brien also uses a nonverbal gesture and moves his hand from side to side as if counting the dogs and children. Next, he 'quotes' Mackey reacting as if he does not care that there are children with the dogs. The utterance differs prosodically and O'Brien uses a coarse voice. At the same time with *@a::r@*, O'Brien moves his hand from left to right to signal that he does not care that there are also children pulling the sled. The audience reacts to this with laughter in line 49. Then, O'Brien takes the turn and moves on to the next topic, which ends the sequence.

The sequences in this category were somewhat different from each other but regardless shared some main features. First, a guest is answering to a question at the beginning of the sequence. The answer is already in the humorous mode and the participants may have been joking about the topic. Second, the host takes the next turn and forms the first talk dramatization. The host continues joking about the same topic the guest has been talking about and 'quotes' someone who has appeared in the guest's answer. The utterance can be prosodically different from the surrounding speech and include nonverbal gestures. Third, the audience and the guest respond to the talk dramatization with laughter. The sequence can end after the first talk dramatization or it can be expanded with more talk dramatizations. If the

sequence is continued, two or even three more talk dramatizations can follow. These are again followed by laughter. Lastly, the host ends the sequence when he shifts to the next topic. Talk dramatizations expanding a joke can therefore be illustrated in the following sequence:

- answer
- talk dramatization
- laughter
- talk dramatization
- laughter
- talk dramatization(s)
- laughter
- shift to the next topic

6.2.4 Reported speech and talk dramatizations in an assessment sequence

The majority of reported speech and talk dramatizations in the data appeared in assessment sequences. In an assessment sequence, O'Brien first assessed and then continued joking about something that had come up in a guest's previous turn and used reported speech or talk dramatization(s) to do so. The interaction was typically already in the humorous mode and therefore the assessment sequences also expanded the joking. The number of reported speech or talk dramatization utterances varied somewhat: between one and three utterances of reported speech or talk dramatization were used.

In Example 11, O'Brien picks up an utterance from Shannon's prior turn and assesses and continues joking with it. Shannon has been telling an amusing story about her son Nolan. Right before Example 11, Shannon has reached the climax of her story using DRS as the punch line, which evoked laughter in all the participants. Therefore, as the sequence in Example 11 begins, the conversation has already been humorous. Now O'Brien continues the joking by making an assessment.

Example 11. Your son talks like Regis Philbin.

81	CO	your son talks like Regis Philbin [(kinda does)	
82	AU		(((laughter and applause))
83	MS		(((laughs))
84	CO	@OR MY BALLS@ o-----o spreads arms forcefully	
85	AU		(((laughter and applause))
86	MS		(((laughs)) he <u>does</u>
87	CO	he has that kind of inflection yeah.	
88	MS	yeah [yeah]	
89	CO	[u:m] thats good he's thorough you know [it's good.	
90	AU		(((laughter))
91	MS		(((laughs)) yeah.
92	CO	not Regis er your son [u::m	
93	MS		(((laughs))
94	AU		(((laughter))
95	CO	now () you you did a nice thing recently er	

The sequence begins when O'Brien assesses Shannon's son's way of speaking (line 81): *your son talks like Regis Philbin [(kinda does)*. According to O'Brien, Shannon's son talks similarly as Regis Philbin, a well-known American television presenter. Overlapping with the end of O'Brien's turn, the audience starts laughing and applauding and Shannon laughs as well (lines 82-83). After the laughter dies down, O'Brien continues in line 84: *@OR MY BALLS@*. It is somewhat unclear whether O'Brien imitates Shannon's son using DRS or Regis Philbin using a talk dramatization. If O'Brien produces the utterance as Nolan, the turn is DRS since Nolan, according to Shannon's recount, actually uttered the words. On the other hand, if O'Brien is imitating Regis Philbin, the turn can be interpreted as a talk dramatization, since Regis Philbin did not produce the utterance. The turn is most likely something between reported speech and talk dramatization. In any case, O'Brien changes prosody to mark the turn different from the surrounding talk and imitates the way Regis Philbin, and apparently Shannon's son as well, talks. The utterance is also produced with a loud voice. Simultaneously, O'Brien makes a nonverbal gesture and spreads his arms to his sides in a forceful manner, which might be an imitation of a gesture that Regis Philbin uses. The audience laughs and applauds at this and Shannon, too, laughs (lines 85-86). Shannon also agrees with O'Brien's opinion about the similarity of her

son and Regis Philbin: *he does*. The conversation continues a while in the humorous mode but with no more reported speech or talk dramatizations. O'Brien assesses Nolan's utterance in lines 87 and 89 which evokes more laughter from the audience and Shannon. Finally, the sequence ends when O'Brien shifts to the next topic in line 95.

In Example 12, O'Brien assesses another story that Shannon has told. Before Example 12, Shannon has been talking about her conservative Catholic family background and how she had become less conservative when she went to college. Shannon's story aroused laughter from all the participants so the mode of talk has already been humorous. Now, O'Brien picks up a point from Shannon's story and continues the interaction with a humorous assessment.

Example 12. You became a 1920s flapper for a second.

249	CO	I liked how you became a nine-
250	MS	who:a
251	CO	you became a nineteen twenties flapper for a second
252	MS	[(laughs)]
253	AU	[(laughter)]
254	CO	@then in college I kinda branched out a little bit@ o-----o small head movements; lifts arms, elbows bent; small circles with hands, fingers spread
255	AU	[(laughter)]
256	MS	[(laughs)]
257	CO	e::r (well) what was that like so you got you got a little crazy and e:r

Right before the beginning of the sequence, O'Brien, Shannon and the audience have been laughing. In line 249, O'Brien takes the next turn and starts assessing a point he has picked up from Shannon's story, but is interrupted by Shannon in line 250. In line 251, O'Brien starts the assessment again: *you became a nineteen twenties flapper for a second*. O'Brien calls Shannon a flapper, that is, a young, fashionable and independent woman in the 1920s. With this comment, he is referring to a nonverbal gesture Shannon had used when she was telling about how she had become less conservative in college. The gesture had reminded of a dance move from the 1920s. Shannon and the audience react with laughter at O'Brien's comment (lines 252-253). Next, in

line 254, O'Brien continues: *@then in college I kinda branched out a little bit@*. O'Brien is quoting what Shannon had just told in her previous story, that is, when she had gone to college, she had become less conservative. This makes the quotation a DRS. The utterance is prosodically different and O'Brien uses a kind of happy and carefree voice. He also replicates the nonverbal gesture that Shannon had used. He moves his arms up and down, elbows bent, which resembles a 1920s dance move. He also develops the gesture further and adds another dance move. He lifts his hands with fingers spread and makes small circles back and forth. The audience and Shannon laugh at this (lines 255-256). Then, in line 257, O'Brien takes the next turn and moves on to the next question, which ends the sequence.

At the beginning of Example 13, O'Brien assesses an amusing story told by Ritter. Earlier, Ritter has been telling about softcore porn movies that his girlfriend had watched as background research for a movie. Ritter used talk dramatizations as the punch lines of his story to give examples of the kinds of movies his girlfriend had watched. Right before Example 13, all the participants have been laughing at Ritter's story and thus the interaction has been humorous. Now, O'Brien assesses one of the talk dramatizations that Ritter used.

Example 13. That's always my favourite.

208	CO	that's always my favourite.
209	JR	((laughs)) \$yeah\$
210	CO	@we're being hunted by sexy ghosts@ o-----o o-----o
		points backwards with thumb; lifts hand to the side of his mouth
211	JR	[((laughs))
212	AU	[((laughter))
213	CO	(\$yeah\$) er we have a clip here
214		anything we need to know for this clip?

At the beginning of the sequence, O'Brien assesses the second punch line of Ritter's story (line 208): *that's always my favourite*. He is referring to a talk dramatization Ritter had used as an example of a soft-core porn movie: a mansion with sexy ghosts. O'Brien says that that imaginary movie is his

favourite one. Ritter laughs at this and agrees with O'Brien in line 209. Then, O'Brien produces a similar talk dramatization that Ritter had used previously and 'quotes' a character from a porn movie (line 210): @we're being hunted by sexy ghosts@. With this, O'Brien continues joking about the same topic that Ritter started earlier. O'Brien is not quoting an actual porn movie character and therefore the utterance is a talk dramatization. His voice is prosodically different from the surrounding speech. He uses a voice that is formal and official sounding. He also uses two nonverbal gestures. At the word *hunted*, he points backwards with his thumb, which refers to the ghosts that are hunting the character he is 'quoting'. At the words *sexy ghosts*, he lifts his hand to the side of his mouth as one does when whispering. Ritter and the audience respond with laughter (lines 211-212). In line 213, O'Brien takes the next turn when the laughter stops and moves on to the next topic and the sequence ends.

Each of the examples of assessment sequences so far have included only one utterance of reported speech or talk dramatization. However, an assessment sequence can also consist of more than one utterance of reported speech or talk dramatization. The first reported speech or talk dramatization can be followed by a second and even a third similar utterance, in which case laughter usually follows each reported utterance.

There are two talk dramatizations in Example 14. Prior to this, Shannon has been telling an amusing story about her children. Her daughter had been afraid of mice in their home and tried to protect her little brother's eyes from the mice with tin foil. The story evoked laughter and thus the conversation has already been humorous. Next, O'Brien humorously assesses Shannon's story.

Example 14. What a sweet New York story.

176	CO	[what a sweet New] York story yeah
177	MS	[(laughs)]
178	AU	[(laughter)]
179	CO	@and I need some tin foil for MY BALLS@
		o-----o
		points towards his groin with index fingers

180 MS [((laughs))
 181 AU [((laughter and applause))
 182 CO [@I need both (.) I need up here I need down here@
 o-//-----// -o o----o
 points to his head; points to his groin with index finger
 183 AU [((laughter))
 184 MS [((laughs)) wo::a
 185 CO I'm sorry [()] it's not good.
 186 MS [() ((laughs))]
 187 CO >you know what we should do< we should take a quick break

At the beginning of the sequence, O'Brien first assesses the story that Shannon has just finished (line 176): [*what a sweet New York story yeah*]. The comment is ironical, because the story Shannon has told was not sweet but more like horrible. Both Shannon and the audience react to this with laughter (lines 177-178). Next, O'Brien produces the first talk dramatization (line 176): [*and I need some tin foil for MY BALLS@*]. With *MY BALLS*, O'Brien refers to a previous amusing story that Shannon has told about her son Nolan. Right after the story, O'Brien had also joked about the exclamation *OR MY BALLS*. Therefore, Nolan's exclamation comes up now the third time. This time, O'Brien takes the exclamation and connects it with the story about Shannon's daughter covering her brother's eyes with tin foil. The utterance is a talk dramatization, since Nolan has not actually said it. O'Brien states hypothetically, as Nolan, that he needs tin foil to protect his testicles as well. The utterance is prosodically different and O'Brien uses a voice that imitates Regis Philbin, an American television presenter. He also uses a louder voice and points towards his groin on the word *BALLS*. Shannon and the audience laugh at this in lines 180 and 181. With the laughter still continuing, O'Brien continues the joking and produces a second talk dramatization in line 182: [*@I need both (.) I need up here I need down here@*]. He says, as Nolan, that he needs tin foil to protect both his eyes and his testicles. There is again a similar voice that reminds of the way Regis Philbin talks. O'Brien also uses a nonverbal gesture and points towards his head on *both* and the first *here* and towards his groin on the second *here*. Shannon and the audience laugh at the second talk dramatization as well (lines 183 and 184). Next, O'Brien apologises for the joke in line 185, because he perhaps feels that he has gone

too far, and the sequence ends in line 187 when he states that they will go on a commercial break.

Also example 15 contains two talk dramatizations. Before the sequence, O'Brien has introduced a new topic and quoted a magazine interview that Shannon had given to The Advocate. In that interview, Shannon had been asked what kind of woman she would like if she was a lesbian. Her answer had been quite accurate, even though Shannon is not a lesbian. The quotation evoked laughter, and therefore the interaction is already in the humorous mode. Now, O'Brien assesses and jokes about Shannon's answer.

Example 15. And it's very specific.

295	CO	[so (.) yes \$ahh yes\$] and it's very <u>specific</u>
296		you're like @oh I don't know@
		o-----o
		lifts arms, small movements
297	MS	((laughs))
298	CO	@this is <u>exa:ctly</u> what I want@
		o-----o
		leans forward, points forward with index finger
299	MS	[[laughs]]
300	AU	[[laughter]]
301	CO	[e::r]
302	MS	[\$that's] funny\$ (.) well you know what
303	CO	[[laughs]]
304	AU	[[laughter]]
305	MS	[[laughs]]
306	CO	[I hope so]
307	MS	[you know] what that's a very honest answer and I like I like
308		<u>professionals</u> [(put it that way)]

O'Brien starts the sequence by assessing Shannon's answer (line 295): *and it's very specific*. O'Brien states that Shannon had described in quite detail the kind of woman she would like if she was a lesbian. He implies that Shannon has probably thought about the matter or otherwise her answer would not have been so specific. Then he continues teasing Shannon about her answer (line 296): *you're like @oh I don't know@*. O'Brien 'quotes' something that Shannon has not actually said, which makes the utterance a talk dramatization. O'Brien says, as Shannon, that she does not know what kind of women she would like. The utterance is prosodically different and O'Brien

imitates a high female voice. He also uses a nonverbal gesture and lifts his arms up such as one does when one does not know something. Shannon reacts to this with laughter in line 297.

In line 298, O'Brien produces the second talk dramatization: *@this is exa:ctly what I want@*. O'Brien 'quotes' Shannon again in the second talk dramatization. Now he says the opposite of the first talk dramatization and says that Shannon knows precisely the type of woman she likes. There is stress and a sound stretch on *exa:ctly*, which emphasises the word. He also leans forward and points forward with his index finger on *exa:ctly*, which further emphasises it. His prosody also changes and the voice O'Brien uses is now lower than before and determined sounding. Both Shannon and the audience laugh at the second talk dramatization (lines 299-300). O'Brien tries to take the next turn in line 301 but Shannon interrupts him in line 302. She states that O'Brien's joke was funny and tries to defend her taste in women but is interrupted in turn by O'Brien and the audience who both start laughing in lines 303 and 304. Finally, the sequence ends in line 307 when Shannon gets the turn and explains her answer. This is unusual, because normally O'Brien as the host takes the ending turn and not one of the guests.

Example 16 contains three talk dramatizations. Before the sequence, O'Brien has asked how Mackey goes to the bathroom in the Iditarod race. Mackey has told that he makes a joke about the way he goes to the bathroom during the race. The race is ridden in Alaska, where temperatures can be very low. Mackey has claimed that he does not go to the bathroom in the cold weather but that he 'goes' in his pants, waits the urine to freeze and throws away a urine icicle. The audience laughed and applauded at Mackey's story and therefore the interaction is already humorous. Now, in Example 16, O'Brien assesses Mackey's urine icicle story.

Example 16. I'd hate to be the guy riding behind you.

144	CO	[you know (0.9) I don't wanna (0.5) I'd hate (0.9)
145	AU	[((applause))
146	LM	[((laughs))
147	CO	I'd hate to be the guy riding behind you.

148 LM [\$yeah\$ ((laughs))
149 AU [((laughter))
150 CO @ha:: ha:: () what the hell@
o-----oo--o
left arm raised, moves right arm up and down once;
hits his head with his hand

151 LM [((laughs))
152 AU [((laughter))
153 CO @what the hell is that@
o-----o
puts his hand into fist, lifts hand looking at it

154 LM (oh yeah)
155 CO @s:: throwing Popsicles at me@
156 LM [yeah that's funny
157 AU [((laughter))
158 CO o-----o
holds hand near his mouth, licks

159 LM don't the yellow [snow.]
160 CO [HEY]
161 [HEY HEY it's late
162 AU [((applause))
163 LM [((laughs))
164 CO it's late [now] do what I @gotta do@
165 LM [aah]
166 AU ((laughter))
167 CO \$uhum\$ () you're a you're a thin guy,

At the beginning of the sequence, O'Brien tries to take the turn but pauses three times because the audience is still applauding and Mackey is laughing at the previous story (lines 144-146). In line 147 he finally gets the turn and assesses what Mackey has told about going to the bathroom during the race: *I'd hate to be the guy riding behind you*. With this comment, he means that he would not like to be the one riding a dog sled behind Mackey, if Mackey throws away urine icicles. Both Mackey and the audience laugh at this (lines 148-149). Then, in line 150, O'Brien produces the first talk dramatization: @ha:: ha:: () what the hell@. He is 'quoting' the imaginary racer riding behind Mackey and therefore the utterance is a talk dramatization. He is holding his left arm up as if he was riding a dog sled and encourages the dogs with shouts: ha:: ha::. He also moves his right arm up and down, which imitates whipping. Then, he makes another nonverbal gesture and hits his head with his hand, which acts an icicle hitting his head. The utterance also differs prosodically from the surrounding speech. O'Brien's voice is slightly

louder and questioning when he says *what the hell*. Mackey and the audience react to this with laughter in lines 151-152.

After the laughter stops, O'Brien produces the second talk dramatization (line 153): *@what the hell is that@*. O'Brien continues as the other racer and wonders what hit him. He puts his hand into fist as if holding the urine icicle and lifts his hand while looking at the imaginary icicle. The second talk dramatization does not evoke laughter and so O'Brien continues with a third talk dramatization (line 155): *@s:: throwing Popsicles at me@*. He produces the third talk dramatization also as the other racer, who is angry because he thinks that Mackey is throwing Popsicles at him, but does not know that they are actually made out of urine. Mackey comments on this (line 156): *[yeah that's funny*. At the same time, the audience starts laughing (line 157). Then, O'Brien continues joking about the topic but with no more talk dramatizations. In line 158, he pretends to be licking the urine icicle, and in line 159, Mackey warns not to eat yellow snow, that is, snow that someone has urinated in. However, O'Brien senses that he has perhaps gone a bit too far with the joke and defends it to the audience saying that it is late and that he has to do what he can to make them laugh. The sequence ends in line 167, when O'Brien takes the turn and moves on to the next topic.

The assessment sequences with reported speech or talk dramatization(s) begin with an assessment made by the host. He picks up something from a guest's previous turn and comments on it, such as a way of speaking or a nonverbal gesture. In all the cases, the conversation has already been humorous and the assessment sequence therefore adds to the humour and develops it further. Next, the assessment is followed by laughter. In most of the cases, both the guest and the audience laugh. After the laughter ceases, the host produces the next turn using either direct reported speech or a talk dramatization. The DRS or talk dramatization is again followed by laughter. Usually, both the audience and the guest laugh. The sequence can either end after one utterance of reported speech or talk dramatization or the host may also continue joking. If the joking is continued, the host produces a second utterance in talk dramatization, which is again followed by laughter. The

sequence can again end or the host can produce one more utterance of talk dramatization, which once again evokes more laughter. Finally, the assessment sequence ends when usually the host returns to 'serious' conversation and moves on to the next topic. The joking in an assessment sequence, then, can be illustrated as follows:

- assessment
- laughter
- reported speech or talk dramatization
- laughter
- talk dramatization
- laughter
- talk dramatization
- laughter
- shift to the next topic

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The goal of the present study was to examine how direct and indirect reported speech and talk dramatizations were used in humorous sequences in the talk show *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. Because the different types of sequences were divided between the guests and the host, the findings were placed into two main categories according to the speaker who used reported speech or talk dramatizations, that is, if it was the host or one of the guests. These two categories were furthermore divided into subcategories based on the type of the humorous sequence.

There were not many sequences in the data where the guests used reported speech or talk dramatizations to create humour. However, all of those sequences fitted into one subcategory: the guests used reported speech and talk dramatizations as the punch line in an amusing story. It was discovered that the sequence began with a question presented by the host. Then followed the guest's answer, that is, an amusing story. The guests first described the situation and gave background information for the hearers, which formed the build-up of the story. At the end of the story, then, was the punch line, which was either direct or indirect reported speech or talk dramatizations. Next, laughter followed the punch line. Another punch line and laughter as a response to it could follow, but only when talk dramatizations were used. Finally, the sequence ended when the host took the next turn and either assessed the guest's story or moved on to the next topic.

In most cases, it was the host who used either reported speech or talk dramatizations as means of humour. The host turns were divided into four subcategories. In the first subcategory, the host used reported speech as background information for the next discussion topic. To begin with, the sequence started with the introduction of a new topic by the host. To do so, he used either direct or indirect reported speech. The reported speech was responded to with laughter. Then, the host took the next turn after the

laughter had stopped and continued on the same 'serious' topic that he had started at the beginning of the sequence.

In the second subcategory, the host used talk dramatizations as formulations. The talk dramatizations were used to jokingly sum up or check the understanding of a guest's answer. The sequence started with a guest's answer, which the host based the formulation on. Typically, the answer was already humorous and followed by laughter. After the laughter had ceased, the host produced the formulation. The formulation started with a description of a hypothetical situation and was succeeded by one or two talk dramatizations. Next, the formulation was reacted to with laughter. After the laughter had stopped, the guest could confirm the formulation, but not necessarily. The sequence could end here, but could also be continued. If it was continued, there was another talk dramatization, laughter and confirmation. Finally, the sequence ended with the host taking the next turn and shifting to the next topic.

The third type of sequence used by the host expanded a joke initiation. In this type of sequence, only talk dramatizations were used. To begin with, a guest's answer or story, which already was in the humorous mode, formed the joke initiation. Then, the host took the next turn and produced the first talk dramatization, which expanded the joke initiation. The talk dramatization 'quoted' hypothetically someone who had appeared or could have appeared in the guest's answer. The talk dramatization was then responded to with laughter. The sequence could end after one talk dramatization, but it was also sometimes continued with as many as three talk dramatizations, which were also followed by laughter. Finally, the sequence ended when the host shifted to the next topic.

The fourth type of sequence used by the host was an assessment sequence. In an assessment sequence, both direct reported speech and talk dramatizations were used. The sequence began with an assessment made by the host about a point he had picked up from a guest's previous turn. Usually, the talk had already been humorous and therefore the assessment expanded the joking. Next, the assessment was responded to with laughter.

When the laughter stopped, the host produced the next utterance by using direct reported speech or talk dramatization, which was again followed by laughter. The sequence either ended at this point or it was continued with one or two utterances of talk dramatization, which were also followed by laughter. Finally, the sequence typically ended when the host who took the next turn and moved on to the next topic.

As the amount of different types of humorous sequences showed, humour and laughter are an important part of *Late Night*. In fact, one of the goals of the show is to entertain the audience in the studio and at home as well as the guests and the host. Therefore, in contrast to the specialised turn-taking system of formal institutional discourse such as the news interview (Heritage and Greatbatch 1991, as quoted by Hutchby 2006: 26), *Late Night* as informal institutional discourse offers more possible turn types for the participants than just questions and answers. As the analysis showed, there is a great deal of joking and laughter, which break the question-answer pattern. The five different types of sequences with reported speech and talk dramatizations were a salient resource for the guests and especially the host to create humour and evoke laughter. The humorous sequences with reported speech and talk dramatizations therefore are a part of *Late Night's* interactional pattern and used as means of humour to invite laughter.

However, even though the discourse in *Late Night* may not be as formal as in other types of television discourse, there still exists an asymmetry between the participants. As stated above, the humorous nature of the show increased the amount of possible turn types in the interaction. However, the power relations of the participants could yet be seen in the amount of possible humorous sequences, which were available for the host and the guests. The sequences where the host used reported speech and talk dramatizations to create humour were in the clear majority: there were four different types of sequences, which O'Brien could use. In contrast, the guests used reported speech and talk dramatizations in only one type of humorous sequence. Therefore, since the interview happened on his territory and he had more rights than the guests, it was the host who did most of the humour.

Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) claimed that the audience's participation in the interaction of a talk show is the most limited: the viewers can participate mostly by asking questions from the audience, phoning or send e-mail to the show. In other words, they cannot influence much on the development of the interaction. However, there were a couple of instances where O'Brien took the studio audience into more account. In Example 14 (chapter 6.2.4), O'Brien apologised from the audience and probably from Shannon as well when he felt that he had gone too far with his joke about Shannon's son Nolan. In Example 16 (chapter 6.2.4), he defended the quality of his joke about Mackey's urine icicle to the audience. Therefore, the audience was able to somewhat participate in the progress of the show and thus to have an effect on the development of the interaction.

Television discourse is always more or less scripted. However, as Hutchby (2006: 1) noted, in talk shows "the talk as it unfolds in the real time of the show is not scripted" and there is a great deal of live talk. Naturally there is a script behind *Late Night*, and the host and scriptwriters as well as the guests have prepared questions, jokes and answers for the interviews. For example, the humorous sequences where O'Brien used reported speech as background information (chapter 6.2.1) were clearly designed beforehand as well as the amusing stories told by the guests (chapter 6.1.1). However, in talk show interviews, not all talk is read from a script but the participants have to be creative in their responses and reactions (Hutchby 2006). Thus, the humorous sequences also rose in the situation such as when O'Brien picked something up from a guest's turn and started developing it into a joke, like in the examples of chapters 6.2.3 and 6.2.4.

Both direct reported speech as well as talk dramatizations have been found to occur at the climax of amusing stories. Sandlund (2004) studied talk dramatizations in academic talk-in-interaction and found that they were used as punch lines in amusing stories or to present a candidate understanding of previous talk. However, in the data of the present study, talk dramatizations were used only once as the punch line of an amusing story in Example 3 (chapter 6.1.1). This can probably be explained by the

number of humorous sequences available for the host and the guests. Only the guests used amusing stories to create humour, but the host was the one who did most of the joking. Due to this, there were not many opportunities for the guests to use talk dramatizations as the punch line. Furthermore, indirect and direct reported speech are typically placed in the sequential placement so that IRS is used to provide background information and DRS forms the climax or the punch line of a story (Holt 2000). However, in the data of the present study, IRS was also used as the punch line. In Example 2 (chapter 6.1.1), McCullough used IRS to deliver the punch line of his story about president Bush and his wife Barbara. Thus, IRS can also appear as the punch line in amusing stories.

As stated above, direct reported speech is often used as the climax of the telling and indirect reported speech to provide background information (Holt 2000). However, in the examples of chapter 6.2.1, both types of reported speech were used to give background information: the host used both IRS and DRS before a new discussion topic. Thus, both IRS and DRS can be used to provide background information in *Late Night*.

Clayman (2007) investigated the ways reported speech is used in news interviews and found that news interviewers can use reported speech in some formulation when asking questions from their interviewees to maintain a neutral stance and thus to attribute the question to the public. However, in the data of the present study, the host used reported speech in quite a different way, that is, to do humour. Firstly, reported speech was employed to provide background information for a next discussion topic (chapter 6.2.2) and, secondly, as an assessment of a guest's previous turn (chapter 6.2.4). The agenda of a talk show interview such as *Late Night* is quite different from that of a news interview. Such as stated above, one of *Late Night's* goals is to entertain and to make people laugh. The host does not necessarily need to be neutral in managing the talk or asking questions. Thereby, he is able to use reported speech when creating humour.

A typical turn type for an interview is a formulation, where the interviewer sums up the interviewee's answer (Heritage and Watson 1979:

137, as quoted by Thornborrow 2002) and which is then confirmed or disconfirmed (Thornborrow 2002). In *Late Night*, formulations were also used but for a different purpose, that is, as means of humour. In the examples of chapter 6.2.2, the host first jokingly summed up or clarified a guest's answer in a formulation, which was then responded to with laughter and finally could be confirmed by the guest. However, the formulations were not used to merely sum up or clarify the guest's answer. On the contrary, they were formed in a humorous manner. Therefore, the formulations' purpose was to entertain, evoke laughter and thereby add to the humour of the show.

Much of previous research on the use of enactments or talk dramatizations in joking has been based on data from everyday conversation and for example Holt (2007) found that enactments can be used to expand a joke initiation. However, as the analysis showed, talk dramatizations can also be employed in an institutional setting to expand a joke. In the examples of chapter 6.2.3, O'Brien sometimes continued joking about a topic that one of the guests had been talking about and expanded the joke with talk dramatizations. A guest's answer worked as the joke initiation. In contrast to Holt's (2007) findings, the situations presented in the joke initiations in *Late Night* were either hypothetical or actual. Also, the first talk dramatization as well as the following dramatizations were always produced by the recipient, that is, the host. This was probably because he was the one who did most of the humour as the host of the show. Therefore, there was only one pattern in comparison with Holt's (2007) two patterns. There was also a small difference in the length of the sequences. If used to expand a joke initiation in *Late Night*, there was between one and four talk dramatizations whereas in Holt's (2007) data there were three enactments at the maximum.

According to Hutchby (2006), the news interview consists typically of question-answer sequences and does not have a third position turn like everyday conversation or some other forms of institutional discourse where the answer is acknowledged or evaluated. However, because talk shows are less formal than news interviews and try to resemble intimate conversation (Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000), the answers in *Late Night* were sometimes

acknowledged and evaluated. Therefore, in the assessment sequences of chapter 6.2.4, O'Brien was able to pick up a point from a guest's answer and assess it by using reported speech or talk dramatizations. The assessments were, however, done in a humorous manner. Thus, their purpose was to amuse and invite laughter and expand the humorous interaction.

The data of the present study consisted of four interviews in two episodes of *Late Night*. Therefore, the data was not very large. Despite the size of the data, I believe that the present study was still able to offer new and relevant information. The amount of humour in general was significant in all the four interviews, as was the amount of sequences with reported speech and talk dramatizations. Therefore, there was plenty of material to study in just four interviews. Thus, I believe that the results provide a good review of the use of reported speech and talk dramatizations as means of humour in *Late Night*.

The present study contributed to many areas of research. It combined topics that had not been studied together: talk show, humour and reported speech and talk dramatizations. To begin with, talk shows have been popular for decades and, as Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) stated, their number and differences have grown in recent years. However, there seems to be very little, if no, research about humour in talk shows. Therefore, there was and there is room for more research in the field of talk shows. Next, humour has been of interest for researchers of different fields for a long time, but it seems that, as noted above, it has not been observed in the context of talk shows, even though humour is such an important part of them. Finally, as Holt (1996, 2000) noted, it has been just in recent years that researchers have started to study reported speech in naturally occurring interaction. Therefore, there was and there is a need for more research about reported speech as well as talk dramatizations in different kinds of interaction. To sum up, the present study was able to both confirm some of the discoveries made in previous studies as well as provide new information for different fields of research. Therefore, the findings of the present study can be applied in the study of broadcast interaction and talk shows, the study of humour

and laughter in interaction as well as in the study of reported speech and talk dramatizations.

In future research, it would be interesting to repeat the same study with a larger data. The present study showed that there are five types of sequences in *Late Night* in which reported speech and talk dramatizations are used as means of humour. It would be interesting to see, with more episodes and interviews, whether there are more than these five sequence types. On the other hand, one could also concentrate on the guest turns, since the present study found only one type of sequence where the guests used reported speech or talk dramatizations to do humour. It would be intriguing to see if there are any more sequence types available for the guests. Furthermore, one could also compare *Late Night* with other similar talk shows. There are many other late night talk shows that use a great deal of humour. It would be interesting to find out if these types of humorous sequences with reported speech and talk dramatizations are used in talk shows in general or whether they are a unique style for O'Brien to do humour.

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APPENDIX 1

Transcription conventions

CO	Conan O'Brien
MS	Molly Shannon
JR	Jason Ritter
NM	Noah McCullough
LM	Lance Mackey
(unclear), ()	unclear speech
mhm, um, er	responses, hesitations etc.
the:::	sound stretch
<u>this</u>	stress
NO	loudness
that	emphasis
I wa- I mean	cut-off sound
@hello@	animated voice
\$really\$	laughing voice
£nice£	smiling voice
>I want to know<	speech that is quicker than surrounding speech
<I see>	speech that is slower than surrounding speech
(.), (1.5)	silences
it was [funny]	
[yeah]	overlap
((applause))	nonverbal activity
,	level intonation
.	falling intonation
?	questioning intonation
__CO__	gaze
....	turning gaze towards someone
////	turning gaze away from someone
X	point when eye contact is reached
o-----o	
crosses hands	gestures