"That's a reputation we have": Interaction, and categorization in intercultural communication

Shane Donald

National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology

Abstract

This paper investigates how two interactants in a podcast about stand-up comedy employ social categories as a discursive resource to interpret and explain the behaviours of particular members of cultural groups as representative behaviour of the group as a whole. Adopting Membership Category Analysis (Sacks, 1992) to illuminate how social categories establish and perpetuate identities in and through talk, findings reveal that rather than being resisted, social categories are utilized in ongoing talk as a device for achieving and maintaining interculturality between interactants. This study adds to extant literature on interculturality by delineating how social categories are utilized in this process and how interculturality is discursively constructed when social categories are invoked and used to describe the actions of members of a cultural group.

Keywords: Cultural stereotypes, intercultural communication, Membership Category Analysis

Introduction

To date there has been limited research in Applied Linguistics into how cultural stereotypes are evoked and utilized during episodes of intercultural communication. As argued by Richards (2003), social reality is constructed and negotiated in and through talk. Part of this process is the use of cultural stereotypes. Stereotypes label people as members of a particular cultural group. This allows for inferences to be made for making sense of and understanding the behaviour of those in that group. Within interaction, cultural stereotypes become a resource interactants draw upon for categorizing group members and interpreting the actions of those in that group. Therefore, how cultural stereotypes are utilized to bring about and maintain shared understanding in interaction is an area that merits further investigation. While there has been work done in social psychology investigating how cultural stereotypes are developed within a culture, i.e., how prejudices are inculcated and manifest (Allport,

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Shane Donald. Email: shanedonald@nkust.edu.tw

1954), little has been done to explore how and why cultural stereotypes are constructed and produced during interaction (however see Brandt & Jenks, 2011).

Researchers working in the field of Membership Categorization Analysis (Sacks, 1992) have argued that there is a relationship between cultural membership and knowledge of that culture; it is to be expected that members of a cultural group will have knowledge to draw on regarding the cultural norms and practices of that group and hence can display this knowledge. However, those who are not members of a cultural group may also attempt to display knowledge of that group. It is also posited that categorization is a process that inevitably gives rise to stereotyping, and with it, prejudice (Allport, 1954).

This raises the question of how cultural assumptions and stereotypes are enacted and oriented towards in situ during intercultural communication. Mori (2007) notes that the activities participants are involved in will have a bearing on how identities are enacted and how cultural identities are ascribed and resisted. This is due to the fact that in episodes of social interaction, identity is situated and constructed in and through talk. Associated with this is that activities affect when and how notions of identity become relevant in episodes of interaction. In other words, identity is not fixed and is negotiated and brought into being as a discursive process (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Bjorge, 2007, Jenks, 2013). Identity then becomes a resource that participants in interaction can orient to when engaged in social activities, i.e., interaction (Hansen, 2005).

As noted by Brandt (2008), there is an assumption that interculturality in interaction is predicated on interactants either making being foreign relevant or ascribing one or more interactants as being more knowledgeable regarding specific cultural knowledge. One of the benefits to the analyst of employing Membership Category Analysis (MCA) is that it offers an emic or insider's perspective on interaction. In other words, it gives insight into how participants in interaction display understanding of, and make relevant, cultural differences. Membership Category Analysis is informed by the idea that talk involves utilizing Membership Category Devices (MCDs) and organizes social interaction by means of categories. Categories are in turn linked to specific actions. One particular category salient to the points made in this paper is identity, in particular how interactants utilize identities of being a New Zealander and a British person to achieve understanding within interaction. Associated with this is that cultural identity becomes a matter of how interactants utilize cultural knowledge in the data shown here as part of expressing and developing interculturality.

This article examines three episodes of interaction during a podcast about stand-up comedy in which cultural stereotypes are evoked while cultural identity is discussed. Employing Membership Categorization Analysis (Sacks, 1992), it is argued that

cultural stereotypes are employed to create shared understandings in order to make cultural descriptions relevant either to the listening audience or an interlocutor or to distance the speaker from members of the same cultural group. Categories and their attendant stereotypes are utilized as a resource for making inferences about a cultural group. Turns-at-talk are designed by interactants to compare cultures and make such comparisons relevant for both an interlocutor and the audience listening to the podcast. The stereotypes displayed in the interaction examined here are utilized as an appeal to the shared commonsense understanding and cultural knowledge interactants and the listening audience possess about the practices of the cultural groups being discussed.

Cultural stereotypes

Shared understandings are transmitted between people through communication. Meanings are brought into being and maintained through a process of production and reproduction within the context of social interaction (Lyons, 2001). In other words, this is how culture, 'a relatively stable meaning system shared within a society' (Triandis, 1995), is created. One aspect of this communicative process is how meaning is constructed from representations (Griffin et al., 1994). Through interaction, shared beliefs regarding the characteristics of groups are expressed (Kreuger, 1996), making them part of the values and beliefs of a culture, or as Tajifal (1981) puts it, shared understandings of social reality are created. One aspect of this is the creation of cultural stereotypes regarding the characteristics of particular groups. Culturally shared knowledge of such groups is activated and disseminated through social interaction. As members of a culture interact, shared understandings about the world are created and recreated. Stereotypes are, therefore, reproduced in interaction, as a function of maintaining social relations. For Esess et al. (1994) this is a process of attributing particular characteristics to certain groups, while for Devine (1989) the transmission of cultural stereotypes function as a social aspect of intergroup beliefs. Stereotypes are shared representations people share regarding other social groups. Prior knowledge and common beliefs of the culture to which people belong are brought to bear and enacted within and through interaction. Communication is predicated on the belief that interlocutors share similar knowledge prior to interaction. As noted by Grice (1975), people are motivated to communicate efficiently and when communicating, make the information they share of greater relevance to their audience through the use of devices such as cultural stereotypes, in the belief that the other parties in the interaction share the same knowledge and experiences of the world (the Maxim of Quality).

Membership categorization analysis

Membership Categorization Analysis (henceforth known as MCA) is derived from ethnomethodology and is generally regarded as a subset of Conversation Analysis. Conversation Analysis (CA) examines the sequential organization of talk and the micro-details of interaction (for example, repair, overlaps, pauses) to explicate how interlocutors use turns-at-talk to achieve goals within interaction. CA provides an emic or participant-relevant perspective on spoken discourse; the analyst is led by the data and seeks to uncover recurring patterns of interaction. Thus, CA is an inductive process and theoretically agnostic (for more on CA see Ten Have, 2007).

MCA arose from the work of Harvey Sacks (1992) and is informed by the idea that categories provide a method for describing members of society according to the various social groupings members belong to and the roles they have as part of those groups. MCA takes as its focus an interest in how interactants develop and reveal an understanding of the social worlds they find themselves part of (Hester & Eglin, 1997). To date, MCA has been employed to examine a variety of phenomena in interaction such as ethnicity (Day, 1994, Goodman & Speer 2007, Demostenhous 2012), intercultural communication (Brandt & Jenks 2013, Mori 2007), gender (Evaldsson, 2008, Stokoe & Smithson 2001), and broadcast talk (Stefani & Horlacher 2006, Fitzgerald & Housley 2002). MCA examines the activities undertaken by people when categorizing others. This is done by exploring how Membership Categorization Devices (Sacks, 1992) are utilized to make sense of social groups and the activities they are involved in. Categories are linked to activities with devices being based upon the knowledge people have about groups and the common behaviours of members of groups.

It should be noted that interactants have the potential to belong to multiple categories, and as categories are discursively constructed, these are in a state of flux as interaction develops and unfolds. A corollary to this, as observed by Stokoe (2012), MCA is a 'messy' research methodology in which the analyst is attempting to show how order is achieved through the categorization of the cultural practices performed by members of a group. Certain categories are bound by certain activities and category-bound activities are characteristic of category members (thus, there is a reflexive relationship between the two).

Of relevance to this research is the idea that categories are inference-rich. People draw upon the commonsense knowledge they possess regarding human activity that has been acquired throughout life and so apply these notions when categorizing others (Schegloff, 2007). In other words, 'taken for grantedness' (Stokoe & Attenborugh,

2015) is fundamental to MCA. MCA is a process of sense-making and allows people to make sense of who they encounter and how activities are linked to certain categories. Therefore, talk possesses descriptive and inferential aspects (Butler & Fitzgerald, 2010). MCA is also an inductive process, as it is the details of talk that reveal the possible categories interactants belong to and the activities that go with that category. Through communication, social categories are talked into being and are made relevant by participants themselves as they go about the business of interaction. For the analyst using MCA, it is imperative that categories are shown to be relevant to those engaged in the interaction under examination as noted by Schegloff (2007). Categories arise though talk and are oriented to by interactants during communication. Through utilizing CA, the underlying organizational structure of talk emerges, and given the emic perspective CA offers the analyst, the orientations of the participants themselves to evoking cultural stereotypes is able to be investigated. Facets such as turn-taking and turn-allocation reveal how categories are made relevant in interaction. How identities are developed as part of the sequential flow of interaction (Fitzgerald & Housely, 2002) can be discerned. In other words, language, social action and sequential context are interrelated and constitute and inform episodes of interaction. It follows that if cultural stereotypes are utilized as part of this process of identity work, an examination of the micro-details of interaction will reveal how participants deploy such stereotypes within interaction, filling a gap in the literature about the function of cultural stereotypes in intercultural communication.

The data

The data extracts examined in this article are taken from an episode of 'The Comedian's Comedian' Podcast (https://stuartgoldsmith.podbean.com/e/76-ben-hurley/), hosted by Stuart Goldsmith. In this podcast, Stuart Goldsmith interviews fellow stand-up comedians about their careers and creative processes. Podcasts are audio files made available for download, usually in episode form. Unlike other forms of broadcast media, such as radio talkback (an area in which much work has been done regarding MCA – see de Stefani & Horlacher, 2008; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2007) podcasts are recorded, sometimes before a live audience, or in a studio, and then edited. To the best of my knowledge this is one of the first pieces of research to utilize MCA to investigate intercultural communication within podcasts.

The episode from which the data has been collected is an interview between Stuart Goldsmith (who is British) and Ben Hurley (a New Zealand stand-up comedian) during the New Zealand Comedy Festival in May 2014. I approached the data with no preconceived expectations, referred to as 'unmotivated looking' (Ten Have, 2007). I downloaded and listened to the podcast on several occasions before performing broad transcription; this entails transcribing the words as they were spoken without the

detailed analysis that informs CA (see Appendix A). I then analyzed the broad transcript to identify recurrent phenomena during the interaction. Having identified the use of cultural stereotypes as a recurrent topic of discussion during the podcast episode, I then prepared transcripts of this data utilizing the analytic framework of CA.

In this research a 'single case analysis' has been performed. The data extracts studied here are taken from a single interactional context, that of a podcast episode. The justification for this is that this context provides a clearly delineated locale for examining how cultural stereotypes are utilized to create shared understandings between the interactants, and by extension, the podcast listeners. Employing a single case approach allows for 'a richer understanding of an existing phenomenon within its extended local context' (Maynard, 2003).

Extract One – Chavs and Bogans (6.38 – 7.39)

This first extract below is an example of cultural stereotypes being employed to engender shared understanding between the interactants and also the listening audience. An explicit comparison is made between identity in British and New Zealand culture, as the host Stuart Goldsmith (SG) asks Ben Hurley (BH) to describe the state of New Zealand comedy when he first began his career. After naming some New Zealand comedians that had achieved a measure of fame in New Zealand, Stuart Goldsmith asks if UK audiences would be familiar with these comedians.

```
1.    SG:   would we- would British listeners know [any of those names
2.    BH:                                          [Brendan  Lovegrove (.) would
3.          probably be one of the few…
4.    SG:   [okay yep yep
5.    BH:   [that that
6.    SG:   [I know Brendan
7.    BH    he u:m ya know (.) he worked in the UK for a few years (.) um hhh so↑ Love-
8.          there was Love↑ grove ↓ theres Cal Wilson who um would [be=
9.    SG:                                                          [>>friend of the
10.         show<<
11.   BH.   yeah oh right >> there you go<< yeah
12.   SG:   hehehe
13    BH    uh and uh a a a bloke called Ra↑ dar hhh uh and uh whos whos now a sort of (.)
14.         hes kind of our um ↓ oh I was gonna I was- I was- I was gonna say Bear Grylls
15.         but hes hes much less annoying
16.   SG:   hhh hehehe okay.[okay
17.   BH:                   [uh uh yeah and a guy (.) called Mike ↑ King who is a Maori ↓
18.         fella .hhhn and um and oh and and probably uh Ewan ↓ Gilmore who is our
19.         kind of um well A- Australian and New Zealand (.) listeners will know what I
20.         mean when I say Bogan hhh=
21.   SG:   =okay [yeah sure
22.   BH:         [uh yeah its kind of its kind of Australasian thing its not↓quite a ↑ Chav=
```

23.	SG:	=yeah (.) its- its almost like the the idea of a Chav, but with a certain amount of
24.		pride in being a↑ Bogan (.) are Bogans proud to be called [Bogans
25.	BH:	[>>certainly
26.		[certainly<<
27.	SG:	[yeah
28.	BH:	proud to be called Bogans and theres a lot more heavy ↓ metal kind of
29.	SG:	influ:ence=
30.	SG:	=sure
31.	BH:	u::m=
32.	SG:	=mullets and muscle cars=
33.	BH:	=hm yeah=
34.	SG:	=yeah=
35.	BH	=yeah (.) thats the one (.) yeah.

This first extract displays how identity and stereotypes are created and ascribed within an episode of social interaction. What is of interest here is how labelling (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998) and invoking cultural stereotypes occurs as part of intercultural encounters and why invoking such stereotypes becomes relevant at particular times within interaction, in this case to engender shared understanding. Labelling refers to the process by which explicit membership categories are produced in talk (i.e., Maori fella, Chav and Bogan). Associated with this is the importance of who invokes these stereotypes and what cultural assumptions are displayed by interactants. The intercultural nature of this interaction is made relevant from the beginning of the interaction as SG explicitly asks BH (a New Zealander) to inform the British audience about comedians from his country that may be known to the UK listener. To do so, BH is required to perform particular identity work in order to make his descriptions relevant to the listener. A comparison is made between the New Zealand comedian Radar and the British television personality Bear Grylls to explain the brand of comedy Radar employs. BH is seeking to create shared understanding with SG and the listening audience. In lines 17 to 20, BH performs further identity work, labelling Mike King as 'a Maori fella' and Ewan Gilmore as 'a Bogan'. BH makes these labels relevant within the interaction by utilizing them to exemplify the cultural group each comedian belongs to. This orients back to the request made by SG in line 1 of the interaction as he asked BH to name some New Zealand comedians for British listeners. The process of labelling and deploying cultural stereotypes that follows is done because of this request. By ascribing a social group to Mike King and Ewan Gilmore, BH applies MCDs to make his descriptions of greater utility to the listener. Through invoking the cultural groupings of Maori and Bogan, BH is positioning himself as an authority, focused on informing the listener about various identities and social groups that comprise New Zealand society.

Of note is that in line 19 BH also makes direct reference to the podcast having listeners, particularly listeners who share a cultural understanding of what Bogans are, because they are not British, in counterpoint to SG's invoking the listener in line 1. Australian

and New Zealand listeners are mentioned as possible members of the listening audience, as BH ascribes to them insider knowledge of the group he is describing, as 'they will know what I mean'. In line 22 BH expands on his example of what a Bogan is by invoking his own (and by implication that of the likely British listenership) knowledge of British culture, by stating that while a Bogan is an almost uniquely Australasian social group, the closest local equivalent the audience may know is a Chav. By doing so, BH attempts to make his descriptions of New Zealand social groupings of further relevance to the listener (and engender shared understanding) by displaying his knowledge of British society. In comparing a Bogan to a Chav, BH appeals to the cultural knowledge he expects the audience to possess. A Bogan is not exactly like a Chav, but that is a useful cultural reference point for understanding what a Bogan is. SG ratifies this comparison in line 23, agreeing with SG that while the two social groupings are not equivalent, they possess similarities. SG adopts the comparison made by BH in line 23, serving to position Chavs as a disadvantaged social grouping who occupy a more invidious position in British society. SG works to maintain shared understanding within the interaction through utilizing his turn-at-talk to display his knowledge of the cultural norms and behaviours of Bogans. By doing so he is orienting to BH's earlier turn in which he compared a Chav to a Bogan. SG is making BH's cultural description relevant for the audience by further developing the comparison between these two groups. This act of comparing and positioning is somewhat weakened by SG's concluding utterance in line 24 when he asks if Bogans are proud to be known as Bogans. This utterance undermines the cultural knowledge SG has displayed up to this point regarding Bogans, as BH resumes the position of expert by confirming Bogans do possess pride in being identified as Bogans in line 25, with the repetition of 'certainly' emphasizing that BH both agrees with SG and is in a position to confirm the veracity of this view as the 'expert' in this sequence of interaction. In line 28 BH states that Bogan culture is shaped by heavy metal music and culture; this utterance identifies for the listener how Bogans look and their musical taste. In line 32 SG expands upon this point, providing the listener with examples related to this heavy metal influence, with Bogan sporting mullet hairstyles and driving loud vehicles. This process of giving identifying details allows the listener to develop a mental image of Bogans by drawing inferences based on the knowledge they possess regarding music, hairstyles and motor vehicles; in other words, the cultural stereotypes deployed here by BH and SG are used to help listeners draw on the knowledge they have to make sense of how Bogans look and how they behave, through comparison with a more familiar cultural group – Chavs.

Before examining the second extract that forms the data examined in this paper, it is also important to note that from lines 21 to 35 in this first extract, both BH and SG attempt to display knowledge of each other's culture. BH evokes Chavs as a point of comparison with Bogans and SG describes Bogans as a proud cultural group, going on to describe Bogan hairstyles and cars associated with Bogans. Thus, both BH and

SG position themselves within the interaction as having equal right to invoke and display cultural knowledge regarding labels and stereotypes in order to inform the listener about the social groupings under discussion, though neither is a member of each other's culture. BH and SG co-construct an understanding of their own and each other's culture as they make relevant the use of stereotypes to explain to the listener how the identities of Chav and Bogan, while not a shared national identity, share similarities that transcend national boundaries, and so are potentially relevant for audience members either from the UK or Australasia. In other words, cultural differences are of importance in this episode of interaction, as BH and SG employ relevant labels and stereotypes to describe how Chavs and Bogans share differences and commonalities to make these cultural identities pertinent for the listener. This indicates that knowledge of other cultures can be displayed in intercultural communication as an act of performing expertise (as noted by Zimmerman, 2007).

Extract Two – Making observations about Britain (45.01 – 45.59)

In this second extract, BH is describing the style of comedy he employed during his first year as a comedian in the UK. While the first section of the extract does not explicitly concern itself with how cultural assumptions and stereotypes are enacted within interaction, this section is included to provide context for BH's assumptions about people in the UK and how he utilized these assumptions and attendant stereotypes within his stand-up performances. Through analyzing the interaction as it unfolds and develops, how cultural stereotypes are used to create shared understanding is made relevant. Further, it can be seen that BH utilizes cultural stereotypes here as examples of tropes he did not use in his stand-up routines, positioning himself as separate from other comedians from outside the UK who relied on clichéd observations about British people.

1.	BH:	it was all still mine but I was↑ ve:ry uh oh Ive noticed this about Britain, oh Ive
2.		noticed this about Britain=
3.	SG	=sure
4.	BH:	or you do this about Britain >>and it was all<< (.) it was all fairly safe (0.1)
5.		stuff .hhh that um [uh
6.	SG:	[thats interesting to- to hear that as- as be described as↑ <u>safe</u> (.)
7.		>>I agree with you (.) I know what you mean<<=
8.	BH:	=hm (.)
9.	SG:	hhh I wonder if (.) as a new comic in a strange↓ place you feel like (.0.1) IVE
10.		GOTTA PROVE THAT I CAN DO OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HERE=
11.	BH:	=hm=
12.	SG:	whereas may:be its <<a a more kind of ballsy>>↑ tactic or more confident (.)
13		tactic to go no Im gonna to give them ↑my act (0.1)
14.	BH:	.hhh it is [w
15.	SG:	[>>its its weird isnt [it<<
16.	BH.	[>its way more<< ballsy to give them your act
17.	SG:	[yeah
18.	BH	[<u>way</u> more ballsy(.) I- I- I <<it took m::e (.) two years probably to actually j-
19.		just>> (.) Id do (0.1) you know (.) obviously Id do a couple of minutes (.)$ at the

```
20.          start $ of (.) but they were  >>I- I- I thought<< they were <<genuinel:y u:m hhh
21.          unique observations as opposed to the the same ↓ones (.) as oh oh you- you- you
22.          guys drink a lot and=
23.  SG:     ↓=hm
24.  BH:     ya know ah ° ah ° dunno but w- the girls wear nothing in the north
25.  SG:     yes
26.  BH:     ya know hehehe
27.  SG:     sure
28.  BH:     um
29.  SG:     they were your own obser-they were your own=
30.  BH:     =yeah(.)
```

In lines 1 and 2 BH responds to a question from SG regarding what form his stand-up took in his first year in the UK. BH utilizes his outsider status as a resource in the interaction, explicitly positioning himself as outside British culture, stating that while his observations were his own, he was actively engaged in observing and noticing details about British culture for his act. Within the interaction, BH orients towards his identity as a stand-up comedian, discussing his early material as 'safe stuff'. In line 7 SG states that he agrees with BH and understands what he means, orienting to his own professional identity as a stand-up comedian. Thus, they possess a shared professional identity and the interaction that takes place is shaped by this.

It is not until lines 21 and 22 that BH makes use of a cultural stereotype (that British people drink) as an example of observations he did not make in his performances. In line 24 BH offers 'ya know' as a continuation of his earlier turn in relation to the idea that in the UK people are heavy drinkers. This statement implies SG shares an understanding of the relevance of this stereotype and also serves the function of including SG within the grouping of those who would be aware that there is a stereotype of British people consuming alcohol in large quantities. This argues that this is a common stereotype in the UK and abroad, and that as a member of that culture, SG should be expected to acknowledge that this stereotype is commonplace. BH then lowers his voice and states that he doesn't know which outsider observation he can use to offer a further example of the tropes he used in his comedy, finally stating that girls in the north wear very little; the incomplete utterance w- can be interpreted as the initial phrasing of the word 'women', which is then changed to 'girls', an indication that BH believes this will be a more accepted description of females in the north who wear revealing clothes; it is something girls, but not women, would do. In line 25, SG acknowledges this observation of dress styles in the north with 'yes', appearing to validate BH's observation.

This extract shows how cultural assumptions and stereotypes are deployed to display both outsider status and perceived knowledge of the culture being discussed, within the context of a professional identity and professional activities. BH's use of stereotypes

orients towards the commonsense knowledge of his stand-up audiences, which is likely shared by the listening audience. The intercultural nature of this episode of interaction is clear from the first line of interaction, as BH is asked to comment on his outsider status in the UK and how it affected his stand-up comedy. Given that observational comedy is a fairly well-known form of stand-up (Jerry Seinfeld's comedy for example), BH's professional identity is utilized here as a rationale for making explicit observations about the UK from the point of view of an outsider, which the listener can draw inferences from. BH acknowledges that this is a fairly common trope for comedians (safe stuff) and that his outsider status had an impact on his brand of comedy; it validated the process of making observations about British culture as a professional activity, though he argues that presenting original material is braver. BH states that he initially made cultural observations as part of his act, feeling that his observations did not resort to cliché in the way that stereotypes do, when discussing characteristics of British people. BH makes utilizing cultural stereotypes relevant in this extract by means of contrasting these evoked identities with his own observations. It should be noted here that at no stage does BH utilize any of the 'unique' observations he produced in his stand-up comedy, instead relating common cultural assumptions and stereotypes in distinction to his own (unexpressed) observations about Britain and its people. He utilizes stereotypes used by other overseas comedians based in the UK to draw a distinction between himself and members of that group, an act of distancing himself from other comedians. Further, through the employment of cultural stereotypes such as British people being heavy drinkers and women in the north wearing very little, BH appeals to the shared understanding he believes SG and the listening audience will have about British culture and the sorts of conventional observations stand-up comedian make about that culture.

This is of interest, as it reveals how cultural assumptions can be shared and utilized with regard to members of a culture and their social practices. The purpose of this paper is not to argue in favour of cultural stereotypes or suggest such stereotypes are valid (or otherwise); rather, my purpose is to show how they create and maintain shared understanding within episodes of intercultural interaction. In the example above, utilizing cultural assumptions and stereotypes works as a display of knowledge and an attempt to provide examples regarding cultural groups that make up society, as representations of this knowledge. Recall that in extract one, labels are applied to New Zealand stand-up comedians to make their identities relevant to the listener, i.e., Bogans being similar to the more familiar (to a UK audience) Chavs. In the case of the second extract, BH is asked to explain how his status as an outsider provided a source of material for his act, as a facet of his working life as a comedian. BH does so by invoking cultural stereotypes as a way of explaining the observational nature of his material but also to underpin that his own observations were not stereotypes and relied

less on clichéd notions of how British people behave, unlike other overseas comedians working in the UK. BH utilizes stereotypes that he feels the listener will know and possibly identify with. Thus, British people are heavy drinkers and girls in the north are scantily clad. It can then be inferred by the listener that British people drink alcohol less responsibly than members of other cultural groups and that young women in the north enjoy displaying their bodies even when the weather makes it impractical to do so. What this does is position BH as someone who has a certain level of knowledge regarding British cultural practices as he is outside that culture, as observed by SG in line 1. Through utilizing cultural stereotypes in opposition to other (unexpressed) observations BH has about Britain, he makes relevant the notion that such stereotypes are commonplace and able to be identified by a wide range of people, both within and outside the UK. Of further interest is that SG, who is from the UK, does not refute these stereotypes or challenge the validity of the cultural assumptions BH makes. An example of this is in line 27 where he offers agreement (sure) in response to BH's observation that girls in the north wear very little. BH deploys cultural stereotypes to draw a distinction between his own observations of British society and those of others in his profession, and also illustrates the ubiquity of such cultural stereotypes.

Extract Three – Rugby and Sheep (57.48 – 58.53)

Prior to the interaction examined in this extract, SG has been asking BH to describe his identity as a New Zealander. BH has stated that he is part-Maori and that white New Zealanders generally identify with their ancestral roots in other countries, for example, expressing an Irish identity due to having an Irish grandparent. The extract then begins with SG asking BH to state what meaning culture has for him.

1.	SG:	just in terms of the- the culture of being a:: white or a mostly white=
2.	BH:	=hm hm
3.	SG:	=New Zealander(0.3) like ↑are there- what is- what is that- what is that culture
4.		mean to you does it- (0.2) is it- (0.2) anything beyond a sort of (.) <<Im a normal
5.		bloke with my normal mates (.) and Ive got to suffer jokes about sheep when I
6.		↓travel>> :
7.	BH:	u::m hhh w- theres theres definitely ↑some (0.6) ah a:spects t:o New Zealand
8.		uh white ↑culture you know kind of like the laidbackness I s- I think theres .hhh
9.		thats thats a reputation we have (0.6) u:m (0.8) ya know and g- going to ya know
10.		all- all the London things (.) as well when- when I was over there hhh which I
11.		didnt really live that life of the typical New Zealander in London [with
12.	SG:	[okay
13.	BH:	in the flat with 28 n- other people=
14.	SG:	=sure (.)
15.	BH:	and um doin the haka on the tube and um with ma shirt off hehehe
16.	SG:	$ okay$

17.   BH: yeah u:m (0.2) were certainly searching for identity ↓constantly (1.0) ya know
18.   theres theres the rugby and the sheep and hhh the um sh- .hhh Im Im struggling
19.   right now=
20.   SG::   =↓h::m=
21.   BH: =to even think of it yeah

In the interaction SG and BH both utilize cultural stereotypes to engender common ground with each other, and with the listening audience. In lines 3 to 5 of this extract SG is focused on finding out how BH views New Zealand cultural identity. To do so he evokes a stereotype (jokes about sheep) that allows the listener to draw upon knowledge they may possess regarding New Zealand (sheep are abundant) and that New Zealanders are commonly exposed to humor about sheep. Through utilizing this stereotype, SG is able to display knowledge of New Zealand that may be of relevance to the listening audience and allows him to frame his question from a position of some knowledge of New Zealand cultural identity, engendering shared understanding with BH. BH's response from lines 7 to 11 acknowledges that white New Zealanders are associated with a particular character trait, that of being laidback. He expands upon this by also observing that New Zealanders in London share common behaviour (going to London things). In line 10 BH begins to formulate an image of a 'typical' New Zealander in London, noting that he was not like this. In typifying the behaviour of New Zealanders in London, BH utilizes stereotypes that SG and the listener may be familiar with. He is orienting towards what he believes SG and the listening audience know about the behaviour and cultural practices of expatriate New Zealanders in London, in order to engender shared understanding. The stereotypes he deploys in lines 13 and 15 also serve as a counterpoint to his behaviour when based in London (an act of distancing himself from his countrymen) and for allowing SG and the listener to make inferences about New Zealanders based there. His description in line 12 serves as a response to SG's question in line 1 and also allows him to utilize the stereotype of New Zealanders living together in large groups in the London suburbs, to draw a comparison between himself and members of that group. This in turn allows the listener to infer that New Zealanders form a distinct and close-knit cultural community when in London. This is also the case in line 15. The haka is a war dance performed by the All Blacks (New Zealand's national team) before international rugby matches. The stereotype of New Zealanders in London doing this dance on the tube enables the listener to interpret the behaviour of this group; New Zealanders in London use this dance to display cultural identity. A further inference can be made by the listener (and SG) that New Zealanders are not shy about expressing cultural identity in settings that are not usually associated with such behaviour; in other words, New Zealanders are not reticent about expressing cultural identity. In lines 17 and 18 BH alludes to the idea that New Zealanders are engaged in a search for cultural identity that leads to the behaviour he has described earlier. He evokes the stereotypes of New Zealand culture

as 'rugby and the sheep', and then states that he cannot think of other stereotypes of New Zealand identity.

Discussion and conclusion

Stereotypes function as a generalization about a group of people, utilizing particular characteristics of a small number of people to represent the entire group. What this study shows is that stereotypes are reproduced in episodes of intercultural communication to engender shared understanding between interlocutors (and a listening audience) and ensure communication proceeds efficiently. This occurs because cultural stereotypes are culturally shared knowledge of a particular group reproduced and shared in social interaction. In the context of this podcast about stand-up comedy, cultural identity becomes a resource that is oriented to in order to make comparisons between cultures and make distinctions between individuals as a means of distancing oneself from other members of a particular group. This research adds to the literature related to intercultural communication by showing what cultural stereotypes do in interaction and how they function as a shared representation of the knowledge people have regarding social groups. Cultural stereotypes can be evoked to perform evaluations and make inferences about members of a particular cultural group, either to compare different cultural groupings for the sake of relevance to other speakers and listeners or draw a distinction between a speaker and other members of the same group.

The extracts examined here cast some light on how stereotypes are deployed and oriented to during intercultural communication. Extract One involves displays of cultural knowledge through labelling and utilizing stereotypes. In this instance, both SG and BH utilize the labels Chav and Bogan to ascribe identity to particular social groupings, which are then contrasted with each other. Previous research (Brandt & Jenks, 2013) has noted that this is done as a means of mediating culture; in other words, one culture is utilized in order to mitigate possibly negative observations made about another. However, in the case of extract one, this is not done. Rather, BH utilizes Chav as a means of drawing a comparison with Bogans in order to make his cultural references relevant to the listener, but also as a display of knowledge about British culture. BH is aware that SG and the audience are likely to know more about Chavs and uses this category to explain what Bogans are in order to make his description relevant to them. As noted earlier, BH is not British and so his observations are from the position of an outsider. Through the use of stereotypes, BH is drawing on what he assumes are common cultural assumptions about the UK that will make his use of the term Bogan relevant to the listener. SG also explicitly evokes a stereotype to display knowledge of Bogan cultural practices, though he is not a member of New Zealand

society, describing Bogan appearance and behaviour. What this reveals is that cultural assumptions held by non-members of a cultural group are displayed through using stereotypes about that culture. Stereotypes function as a means of creating shared understanding of what people feel they already know about a cultural group and its practices. As noted by McRae et al. (1994), stereotyping is a process of assigning people a category that relies on rendering perception and judgment a less cognitively-demanding process.

Extract Two is a further example of this, with BH utilizing stereotypes as a means of displaying knowledge about British culture. On this occasion he utilizes stereotypes to draw a distinction between his less clichéd unspoken observations made about British culture and those of other comedians based in the UK who, like him, are not British. From the first two extracts it emerges stereotypes are deployed to validate observations made about cultural practices, hence they are utilized as displays of knowledge regarding a group. The second extract involves a process of explaining the observations BH has made about the UK in his role as a stand-up comedian. By making explicit reference to clichéd observations (stereotypes by another name) as a point of contrast with other observations he made, he is revealing how he realizes stereotypes are clichéd, but also that they have utility in making observations relevant for an audience as a display of commonly-held cultural knowledge (creating shared understanding). He makes his descriptions of stereotypical British behaviour (drinking to excess and wearing little in the north) based on assumptions he believes are commonly-held; thus utilizing cultural stereotypes in this instance utilizes commonly-held knowledge the audience has of the UK and does so in a way that obviates the need for detailed explanations regarding British culture and cultural practices. Further, as stated earlier, evoking these stereotypes also allows him to distance himself from other members of a group which he belongs to, that of overseas comedians plying their trade in the UK.

This is further exemplified in Extract Three, as BH utilizes stereotypes about New Zealanders in London. This is done to draw a distinction between typical behaviour of this group (allowing the listener to interpret how New Zealanders in London behave) and his own behaviour. Describing how New Zealanders live in large groups and dance on the tube emphasizes how stereotypes function as shorthand for explaining how New Zealanders in London act to an audience that may possess some knowledge of the cultural practices of New Zealanders in London. This also shows the way in which deploying stereotypes as displays of knowledge is done; as a way of appealing to commonly-held knowledge regarding a cultural group in order to make a particular description relevant to SG and the listening audience. BH also does this in order to draw a contrast between himself and other New Zealanders based in London. Through the use of stereotypes listeners are able to interpret and make inferences about the

behaviour of his fellow countryman and about BH as someone who does not exhibit these particular expressions of cultural identity.

A limitation of this research is that it examines intercultural communication between two people in one social context – that of a podcast about comedy. Hence, the observations made here focus on a specific local context and the interaction that occurs in that context. However, previous research into MCA in intercultural communication has examined a single context and been able to make generalizations that can be extended to wider social spheres (Hansen, 2005; Evans & Fitzgerald, 2016). Cultural stereotypes are ubiquitous and deployed in many communicative contexts. This research shows how cultural stereotypes are deployed in one specific interactional context and what employing these stereotypes does. Therefore, more research is needed to reveal if cultural stereotypes are utilized to distance a speaker from members from the same group, for example. Comparisons can be made between the findings shown here and other sites of intercultural communication, to examine how stereotypes are utilized and if they are used by interactants for distancing purposes. Given that cultural stereotypes are ubiquitous in social interaction, there is a great deal more to be discovered about the interactional work stereotypes do in intercultural communication.

References

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Perseus Books.

Antaki, C., & Widdicombe, S. (Eds.). (1998). *Identities in talk*. Sage.

Bjorge, A. K. (2007). Power distance in English lingua franca email communication. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics. 17*(1), 60 – 80.

Brandt, A., & Jenks, C. (2011). Is it OK to eat dog in Korea…like China? Assumptions of national food-eating practices in intercultural interaction. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 11*(1), 41 – 58.

Butler, C., & Fitzgerald, R. (2010) Membership-in-action: Operative identities in a family meal. *Journal of Pragmatics, 42*, 2462-2474.

Day, D. (1994). Tang's dilemma and other problems: Ethnification processes at some multicultural workplaces. *Pragmatics, 4*(3), 315 – 336.

Demosthenous, C. (2012). Inclusion/exclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students. *Journal of Social Inclusion, 3*(1), 71 – 85.

Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56*, 5 – 18.

Esses, V. M., Haddock, G., & Zanna, M. P. (1994). The role of mood in the expression of intergroup stereotypes. In M. P. Zanna & J. M.Olson (Eds.), *The psychology of prejudice: The Ontario symposium* (Vol. 7, pp. 77–101). Erlbaum.

Evaldsson, A.C. (2007). Accounting for friendship: Moral ordering and category membership in preadolescent girls' relational talk. *Language and Social Interaction, 40*(4), 377 – 404.

Evans, B., & Fitzgerald, R. (2016). It's training man! Membership categorization and the institutional moral order of basketball training. *Australian Journal of Linguistics, 36*(2), 36 – 54.

Fitzgerald, R., & Housley, W. (2002). Identity, categorization and sequential organization: The sequential and categorical flow of identity in a radio phone-in. *Discourse & Society, 13*(5), 579 – 602.

Gardner, R. (2012). Enriching CA through MCA? Stokoe's MCA keys. *Discourse Studies, 14*(3), 313 – 319.

Goodman, S., & Speer, S.A. (2007). Category use in the construction of asylum seekers. *Critical Discourse Studies, 4*(2), 165 – 185.

Grice, H.P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L Morgan (Eds), *Syntax and Semantics: Speech acts,* (Vol 3, pp. 41–58). Academic Press.

Griffin, M., Viswanath, K., & Schwartz, D. (1994) Gender advertising in the US and India: Exporting cultural stereotypes. *Media, Culture & Society, 16*, 487 – 507.

Hansen, A. (2005). A practical task: Ethnicity as a resource in social interaction. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 38*(1), 63 – 104.

Housley, W., & Fitzgerald, R. (2007). Categorization, interaction, policy, and debate. *Critical Discourse Studies, 4*(2), 187 – 206.

Housley, W., & Fitzgerald, R. (2009). Membership categorization, culture, and norms in action. *Discourse and Society, 20*(3), 345 – 362.

Irvine, A., Drew, P., & Sainsbury, R. (2012). 'Am I not answering your questions properly?' Clarification, adequacy and responsiveness in semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews. *Qualitative Research, 13*(1), 1 – 32.

Jenks, C. (2013). Are you an ELF? The relevance of ELF as an equitable social category in online intercultural communication. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 13*(1), 95 – 108.

Krueger, J. (1996). Personal beliefs and cultural stereotypes about racial characteristics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*(3), 536 – 548.

Leudar, I., Marsland, V., & Nekvapil, J. (2004). On membership categorization: 'Us', 'them' and doing violence in political discourse. *Discourse & Society, 15*(2-3), 243 – 266.

Lyons, A., & Yoshihisa, K. (2001). The reproduction of culture: Communication processes tend to maintain cultural stereotypes. *Social Cognition, 19*(3), 372 – 394.

Maynard, D. W. (2003). Diagnostic news in internal medicine: A single case analysis. *Studies in language and social interaction*, 393.

McRae, C. N, Milne, A. B., & Bodenhausen, G.V. (1994). Stereotypes as energy-saving devices: A peek inside the cognitive toolbox. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66*(1), 37 - 47.

Mori, J. (2007). Reconstructing the participants' treatments of 'interculturality'': Variations in data and methodologies. *Pragmatics, 17*(1), 123 – 141.

Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Springer.

Schegloff, E. (2007). A tutorial on membership categorization. *Journal of Pragmatics, 39,* 462 – 482.

Stokoe, E., & Smithson, J. (2001). Making gender relevant: Conversation analysis and gender categories in interaction. *Discourse & Society, 12*(2), 243 – 269.

Stokoe, E., & Attenborough, F. (2015). Prospective and retrospective categorization: Category proffers and inferences in social interaction and rolling news media. In R. Fitzgerald & W. Housley (Eds.), *Advances in membership categorization analysis* (pp. 51 – 70). Sage.

Stokoe, E. (2012). Moving forward with membership categorization analysis: methods for systematic analysis. *Discourse Studies, 14*(3), 277 – 303.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categorization*. Cambridge University Press.

Triandis, H.C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429499845

Zimmerman, E. (2007). Constructing Korean and Japanese interculturality in talk: Ethnic membership categorization among users of Japanese. *Pragmatics, 17*(1), 71 – 94.

Appendix A. Transcription Conventions (Jenks 2013, adapted from Atkinson and Heritage 1984)

[[ ]]   Simultaneous utterances- (beginning [[ ) and (end]])
[ ]   Overlapping utterances- (beginning [ ) and (end])
=   Contiguous utterances
(0.4)   Represents the tenths of a second between utterances
(.)   Represents a micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less)
:   Sound extension of a word (more colons demonstrate longer stretches)
.   Fall in tone (not necessarily the end of a sentence)
,   Continuing intonation (not necessarily between clauses)
-       An abrupt stop in articulation
?   Rising inflection (not necessarily a question)
__   Underline words indicate emphasis
↑↓   Rising or falling intonation (after an utterance)

DONALD

◦ ◦	Surrounds talk that is quieter
hhh	Audible aspirations
•hhh	Inhalations
.hh.	Laughter within a word
> >	Surrounds talk that is faster
< <	Surrounds talk that is slower
(( ))	Analyst's notes
$ $	Surrounds 'smile' voice