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Structures that enable the timing of shared laughter in conversation

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Listen to the examples



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Aims

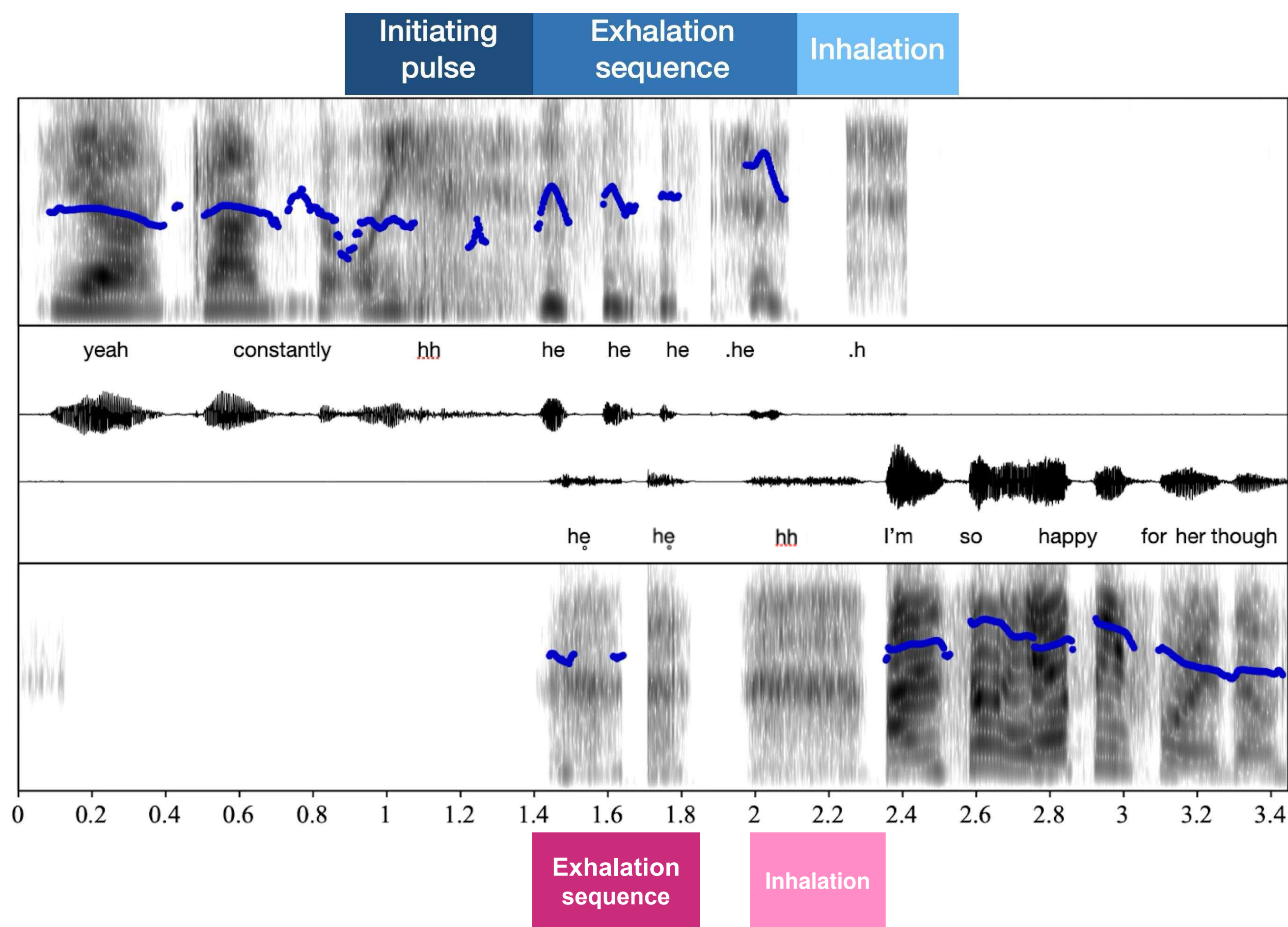
- To uncover phonetic and social organisation of laughter in spoken English, German, Spanish and Finnish conversations
- How do participants use phonetic details of laughter to manage its unfolding in real time?
- We detail the internal structure of laughter bouts and how phonetic features are used to coordinate laughter

The organisation of laughter (Chafe, 2007)

| initiating pulse | exhalation sequence | inhalation |
|--|--|--|
| Voiced or voiceless Typically glottal, may have oral initiation Explosive onset with turbulent airflow | Voiced or voiceless Oral, nasal, or oronasal Variations in jaw opening Melodic and rhythmical structure Phonation type | Mostly voiceless Sometimes voiced Friction: glottal, also oral ([.s, .t, .m]...) |

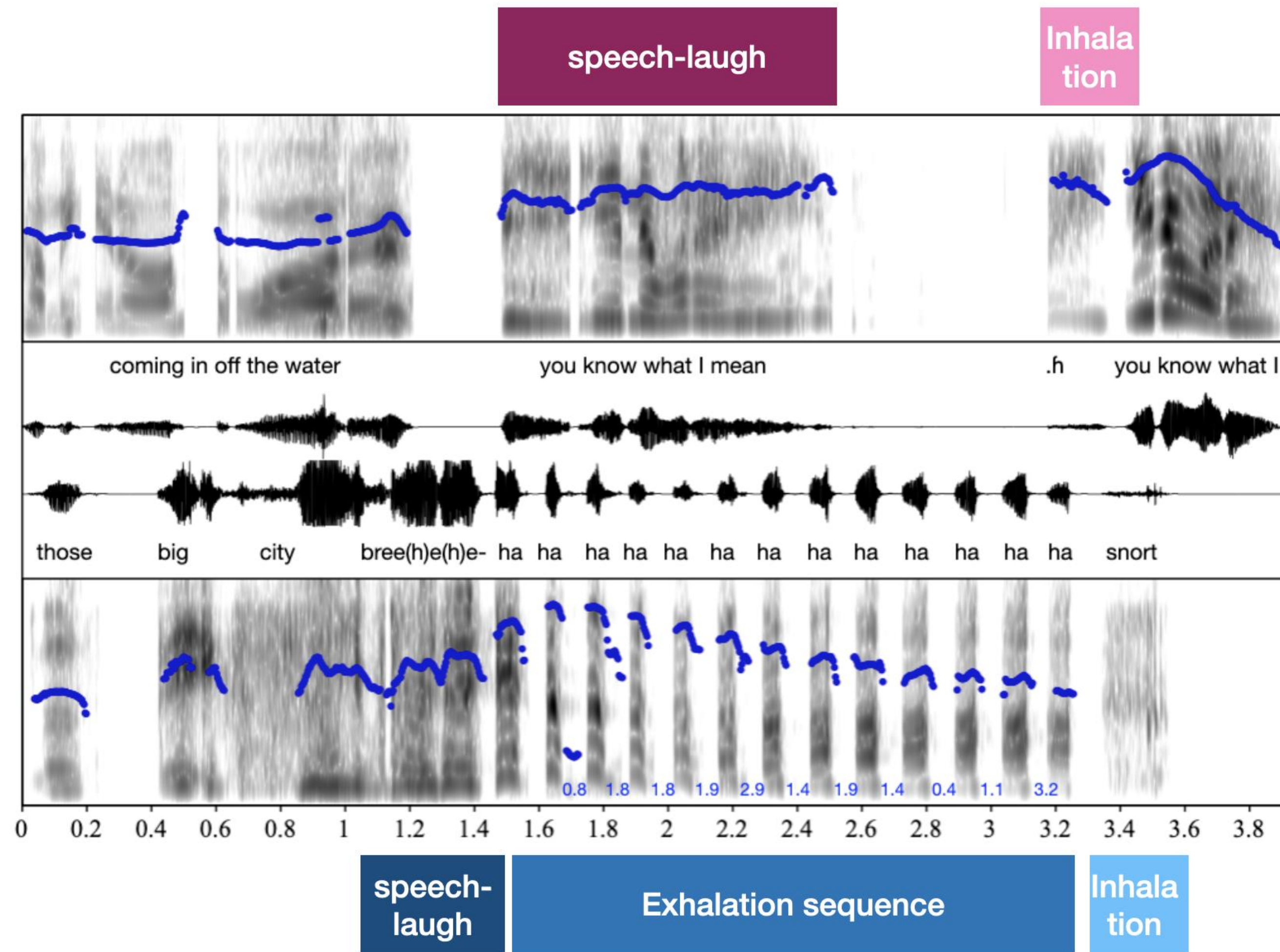
Joining in; simultaneous ending. CallHome en_4157 135-152 constantly with K

01 B: well now she's with Keith.
02 A: .h yeah. constantly. hh [hehehe [.he [.h
03 B: [he he [.hh [I'm so happy for
04 her though.=he's such a nice guy,



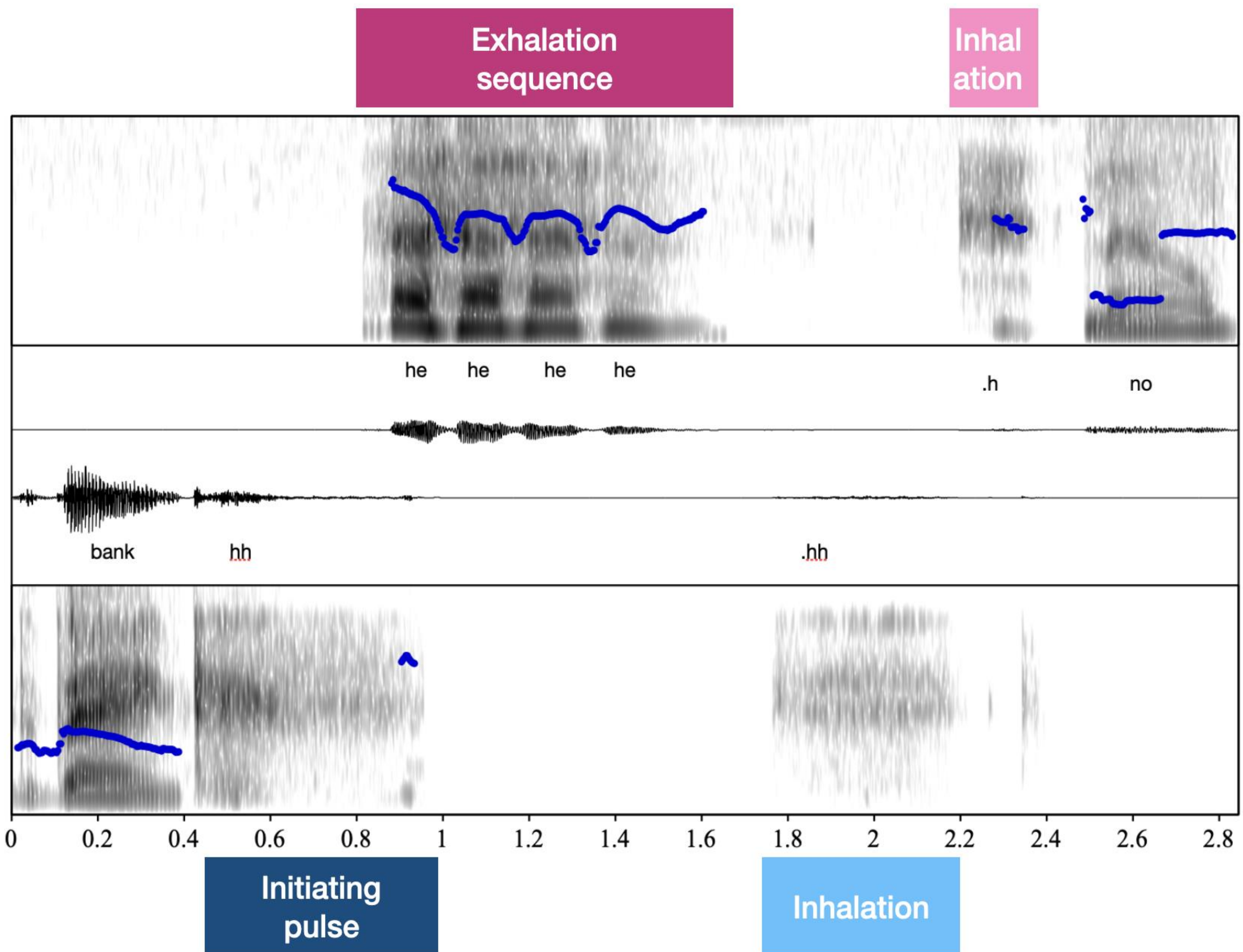
'Melody' as a projection device. CallHome en_4595.296-351 big city breezes

16 A: <<yawn> .h you'll get like those big
17 (0.7)
18 A: <<yawn> those big c::ity breezes,>
19 A: li[ke coming in off the water?]
20 B: [£ those big city bree- £]
21 B: [ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha]
22 A: [<
 £you know what I mean?£>
23 B: ha ha ha ha [ha (snort)
24 A: [.h [£ you know what I mean, right?£
25 B: £[yes I do;£?'



Mirthless laughter. CallHome en_4234.454-476.sound like the bank

01 B: yeah I know the feeling.= [I'm
02 A: [but once you're in vacation
03 mode, it's sort of like (.) well why shouldn't I.=
04 =I only- I have the vacation, (.) it's just you know, the
05 time. and a[nd the money. and what is money for.
06 B: [true] ((distortion and echo))
07 (0.6)
07 B: .th right. Hhh
08 A: [so I [I have to make (a/up)]
09 B: [.h [the ba- you s-]
10 B: you sound like you're the bankhh
11 A: ha ha ha ha
12 B: .hh
13 A: .h °no;° but I have to make up my mind here by Friday,
14 because that's (.) when I can hold my ticket to.=
15 =so I thought I could get a ticket.



Conclusion

- Laughter has an **internal structure** with recognisable **component parts**: used to manage laughter, and project its ending
- Features of laughter & their positioning linked to respiratory cycle
- Lots of phonetic variation of component parts: most richly varied in exhalation phase ('middle' part)
- Some of the phonetic design of laughter needs to be explained in its sequential context, rather than as generic indexical functions
- Each phase of laughter has different **phonetic affordances**: features which in themselves offer possibilities for social action
- Our approach broadens the repertoire of available explanations for variability, and treats the analysis of **laughter as an inherently intersubjective achievement**