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Managing informal interaction: stancetaking and alignment in Dutch and Indonesian
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CHAPTER 3

Stancetaking and alignment

From the previous chapters it might seem that the language use in interaction is entirely focused on keeping others close, maintaining and tightening bonds and jointly reaching understanding. This is, however, a particularly one-sided (if not fantastical) representation of how language is used in daily life. The cooperative nature of humans does not negate the fact that people can and do disagree with one another. Establishing boundaries and social differences with interactional partners is an important part of organizing social relations as well (Enfield, 2013:7). If we fully want to understand how people use their language to manage relationships, we need to combine studies of both cooperative and competitive interactions. Yet here, the focus is on cooperation rather than competition. As explained earlier, the general structure of organizing talk in interaction has received a lot of attention, but the knowledge about specific language usage patterns is still limited (cf. Heritage, 1995).

This study aims to deepen the understanding of how people manage their interpersonal relationships during informal interactions. To that end, I will focus exclusively on how they establish and maintain constructive, positive relationships, as the preferred state that people generally orient towards. A central aspect of interpersonal relationship building is stancetaking. Presenting an evaluation or assessment of a performed act is what is often referred to as stancetaking. How stancetaking is organized and how it influences interaction is explored in section 3.1. Importantly, taking stance toward something implies taking stance toward someone (Du Bois, 2007:144; 149).

When taking position regarding some object participants align themselves with the position presented by the previous speaker. The stancetaking act itself may primarily communicate the subjective position of a particular participant

regarding a particular object of talk, as a consequence it also communicates how similar or different the co-participants are in their evaluation of that object. This can be visualized as a stance triangle, which is further discussed in section 3.2. Essentially, individual stancetaking results in interpersonal alignment, thus informing participants about their mutual relationship, and in turn helping them (better) anticipate and coordinate their behaviors. Section 3.3 explores how people establish interpersonal alignment in interaction. This section will introduce some main forms of language use that are observed to be associated with efforts of alignment and interpersonal relationship management. These general resources (support, reproduction, collaboration) are the leading themes in the analysis presented in chapters 5 to 7.

The previous chapter explained that although people universally share certain cognitive abilities to participate in interaction, cultural norms decide the community specific style of interaction. The management of interpersonal relations was argued to be one of the - if not the - central function of language use in interaction. In what way and to what extent people make their positioning and hence alignment explicitly available to one another is most likely influenced by cultural customs as well. The specific executions and preferences involved in "doing" alignment result in a particular conversational style. This point is further elaborated upon in section 3.4.

3.1   Taking stance

The general understanding of stance often involves the expression of personal attitudes, feelings, or judgments about a particular topic of talk (Biber and Finegan, 1989; Englebretson, 2007). As Kockelman (2004:144) concludes, "scholars often use the term stance marker to refer to any linguistic form that seems to imply an evaluation" (cf. Kockelman, 2004 for a review of the different uses of the term stance in the academic literature). There thus does not seem to be agreement on how stance is to be defined. Englebretson (2007:6) describes the study of stancetaking to involve several general themes:

- stance is physical, active, personal belief, social morality
- stance is public, perceivable, and interpretable
- stance is interactional
- stance is indexical
- stance is consequential

All these aspects of stancetaking have been discussed in some way or another in the previous chapter. Personal attitudes and knowledge are commonly shared in conversation. By sharing them, the speaker makes them accessible to others and at the same time indexes the position he or she has taken on the matter. Establishing and maintaining social relations is an interactional, negotiable, process. The distribution of social relations subsequently affects the possible and plausible interpretation of interactional moves. Keeping updated on what

people know or believe to be the case about something or someone thus is a vital part of interaction.

Du Bois (2007:144) argues there are three general functions of stance: evaluation, positioning, and alignment.[1] The latter function will be elaborated on in section 3.2. Stancetaking is not limited to approval, it more generally has to do with the position one takes in relation to an act (and its speaker by extension). This may involve their personal liking (often called affective stance) or their knowledge (epistemic stance). In taking stance, participants may "join" someone else's position (using *"yes"* for example) or explicitly express it is *their* subjective position (e.g. *"I know"*) on a scale of affection or knowledge (cf. Du Bois, 2007:143, 152ff). Even if they are emphatically taking subjective stance, their relative position is still perceivable and interpretable to others and thus indexes and affects to ongoing interaction.

Participants orient their stance toward a particular "object of stance" found in the utterance or act they respond to. In taking stance, they make relevant the relation between themselves (the stance subject) and the act or referent (the stance object) the speaker is orienting to (Du Bois, 2007:154). Stancetakers thus combine an object-focused act, evaluating it, and a subject-centered act, positioning themselves in relation to that object (Du Bois, 2007:158).

So far, stancetaking is presented as an individual or subjective affair. However, in interaction people are shown to orient towards the same object or act. Stancetaking is thus not only a subjective matter; it often is an intersubjective affair. Indeed, as Schegloff (1992:1299) explains, participants "do" intersubjectivity as "co-shaping an appreciated grasp of the world". Researching stance (and alignment) hence entails the study of form-meaning relations, figuring out "how stance is located in form" (Englebretson, 2007:17).

Considering participants share and build common ground and cooperate in reaching understanding, it would only make sense that they would try to jointly establish and maintain a topic of interest. Several interlocutors can - and often do - present their stance about the same thing. Because interaction is incremental (Schegloff, 1996; Kärkkäinen, 2003), they must take notice and acknowledge the stances provided before their own. Imagine Sophie, Jasper and Astrid are discussing the new Star Wars movie over dinner. Sophie is eagerly awaiting her chance to go see the movie and, knowing her friends have already been to the theater, she wants to know what they thought about it. Following her questions, both her friends want to express their disappointment. Jasper is the first to respond, meaning Astrid cannot subsequently construct her response as if she is the first to do so.

A hypothetical exchange of turns as in (1) would presumably yield at least a raised eyebrow. Astrid's exact copy of Jasper's answer is not something we normally encounter and, unless meant as a joke, a response like this would probably have others believe she is not a very competent communicator (which

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[1]Compare Englebretson (2007:17) who subdivides stance into three aspects as well: evaluation ("assessment"), affect ("personal feelings"), and epistemicity ("commitment").

is not to say people do not recycle turns, but more on that in 3.3).

(1)   *Star Wars 1*
      Sophie   So how did you like the movie?
                   Would you recommend it?
      Jasper   I thought it was a waste of time, honestly
      Astrid   I thought it was a waste of time, honestly

In (1) Jasper evaluates the object of stance - the movie - and reveals his sub-
jective position to it (indicated by "I thought"). By the time Astrid presents
her evaluation, she cannot ignore Jasper's response to Sophie's question. More-
over, one of the aims of her stancetaking should be aligning herself with Jasper's
stance; that is, finding a way to connect her subjective judgment of the movie
to that of Jasper. Astrid thus has to take into account and acknowledge the
stance Jasper took before her; she has to index her stancetaking as coming
second to Jasper's. In a scenario like this, Jasper is said to be the stance lead
and Astrid the stance follow (Du Bois, 2007:161). This acknowledgment, and
hence intersubjective indexing, can be expressed in numerous ways:

(2)   *Star Wars 2*
      Sophie   So how did you like the movie?
                   Would you recommend it?
      Jasper   I thought it was a waste of time, honestly
      Astrid   (a) Yeah, I thought so too
                (b) A total waste of time
                (c) And money!
                (d) I didn't like it either

In this example, option (a) presents a positive stance towards the prior speaker's
positioning, joining Jasper in his evaluation, and at the same time a negative
stance towards the movie. There is still overlap between Jasper's and Astrid's
responses, but here she acknowledges she is the second one to present this
stance (most explicitly by adding "too"). A good amount of overlap is found in
(b) as well, in which Astrid reiterates the movie was "a waste of time", but adds
an intensifier ("total"), reinforcing - and thereby acknowledging - what Jasper
said. In (c) it is not so much the words itself that are adopted by Astrid, but the
construction Jasper used. She inserts a different noun that neatly fits Jasper's
earlier turn: the movie was a waste of time/money. Again, this time by using
"and", she explicitly ties her response back to Jasper's making the relation
between their two stances relevant. Lastly, (d) does not make use of the words
or construction Jasper chose, but does acknowledge there was a prior turn that
presented a stance to the same object that is now being evaluated (marked by
"either"). The evaluation itself is phrased differently ("didn't like"), but the
two stances are overtly connected, thus aligning the perspectives taken by the
two participants.

3.2   The stance triangle

Recall that stance involves three general functions: evaluation, positioning, and aligning. These three functions typically come together in one single act of stancetaking. When speakers take stance, they simultaneously evaluate an object, position a subject (usually themselves), and align with other subjects. These three seemingly separated elements are mutually connected: focusing on one affects the others. This interconnectedness is nicely represented in a stance triangle, as shown in figure 3.1 below. The triangle features three key elements: Subject 1, Subject 2, and an Object.

Subject 1, the first speaker, evaluates the object of stance and thereby positions himself regarding that object, and at the same time aligns himself with Subject 2. Even if Subject 2 has not said anything yet, one could argue that Subject 1 has indexed his position with respect to Subject 2. Subject 2 now has access to and knowledge of the position taken by Subject 1, and has to consider this when producing a next turn. There is thus already interpersonal positioning taking place with respect to Subject 2 as well, without this person actually having said something. When Subject 2 subsequently evaluates that same object, he or she takes position as well and in doing so aligns his or her stance with the position taken by Subject 1.
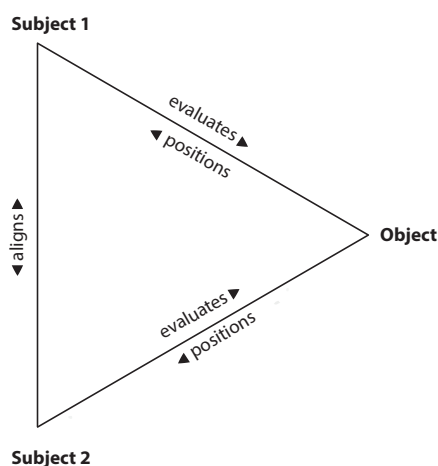

Figure 3.1: Stance triangle (reproduced from Du Bois, 2007:163)

The idea behind the triangular form is that if one of the three acts (represented by the vectors) is not overtly expressed, the other two will allow participants to make inferences about the "missing" stances. Referring back to example (2), the alignment between Astrid and Jasper was overtly expressed in (a), (b), and (d). The response in (c) already took a little more effort, because the others had to recognize how Astrid's assessment fit the construction Jasper used. Now

suppose the exchange looked like this:

(3)   *Star Wars 3*
           Sophie   So how did you like the movie?
                     Would you recommend it?
           Jasper   I thought it was a waste of time, honestly
           Astrid   I totally zoned out
           Sophie   So I guess I'll skip it then

Jasper's answer is still the same, but whereas Astrid still does evaluate and take
position, she does not overtly relate her stancetaking to that of Jasper. The
alignment between the two stances has to be inferred. Because the participants
have access to the (subjective) evaluations and positions of Jasper and Astrid,
and they are aware that there normally is a relation between the individual
stances, they will attempt to (re)construct this connection. In example (3)
both Jasper and Astrid express their dislike of the movie, so even though it is
not made explicit, their stances are convergent.

   Stivers (2008:35) refers to this type of support display of stances as affil-
iation. Alignment, to her, is related to those interactional moves that extent
support the activity itself. For example by producing continuers like "mm-hm",
"okay" or "yeah" participants can align themselves with that ongoing activity
and reality without commenting on the content of the story. Alignment and
affiliation are both important in calibrating the relation and balance in inter-
action (Stivers, 2008:36). The analysis presented in this thesis focuses on the
cooperation and management of interpersonal relationships in interaction, and
is as such concerned with what is described here as affiliation. However, while
the content of a conversation and participants' stances toward that content are
considered most relevant, backchannels do show active involvement in inter-
action and, as such, can play a central role in participants' sense of mutual
affiliation as well. For my purposes, affiliation and alignment are therefore not
separated.[2]

   Following Du Bois, alignment is defined as "the act of calibrating the re-
lationship between two stances, and by implication between two stancetakers"
(Du Bois, 2007:144).[3] This calibration is normally scalar, people often do not

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[2]Not because there is no difference between the two, but because the difference (content
vs structural focus) is not of immediate relevance to the present research. In the design of
this study, alignment and affiliation almost always converge: both pertain to the mutual
commitment to continue their interaction on the set course. Alignment need of course not
be affiliative: two speakers can present opposite stances related to the same object of talk.
In such a case, their individual positionings emphasize their distance or even dissociation
from one another. For the purposes of this research, however, such negative alignment is
not further considered. Consequently there is no need to distinguish (positive) affiliative
alignment and affiliation.

[3]Pickering and Garrod (2004, 2006) suggest alignment is indeed the fundamental aspect
of successful communication. However, they connect alignment to sharing a representation at
some level: "specifically, alignment occurs at a particular level when interlocutors have the
same representation at that level" (Pickering and Garrod, 2004:171).

agree or disagree completely on a particular matter. Their alignment may be relatively positive or negative or something in between (Du Bois, 2007:162).

In sum, at each step in their joint interactional trajectory participants coordinate and calibrate their shared knowledge and goals. They update their common ground and reaffirm their mutual relation (Enfield, 2006:405).[4] As long as they share the same evaluation or similar stance, they are mostly showing positive alignment, when a disagreement arises their alignment will be on the negative end of the scale.

There is no way of telling whether people actively tried to establish or increase positive alignment between them. Yet, in stretches of talk, all kinds of unnecessary or redundant contributions are presented - at least on a referential level that is. Such contributions may not carry new (propositional) information concerning the main theme or object of talk, they do offer (new) insights on the participants' affiliation both regarding the object of concern and each other's position on that topic. As such, these contributions are central to keeping the interaction flow and establishing alignment, and thus managing the interpersonal relation. These types of turns are a form of phatic communication that occurs not at the margins of interaction, but right at the center.

3.3   Doing alignment

Threaded through interaction is the effort of aligning with co-interactants: indexing and re-indexing ones position on a particular matter to increase mutual understanding. Showing active involvement, by producing a highly and recognizably similar utterance to what was uttered earlier, indexes the position of the speaker relative to the object of talk and the other participant(s). This affiliation between utterances does not only connect one turn to the next, it connects one stance to the next. Alignment is not only central to negotiating the relationship between interactants, it consequently affects their common

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[4]The cognitive approach taken by Pickering and Garrod (2004, 2006) and Wachsmuth et al. (2013) fundamentally disagrees with the idea of updating common ground. Their reasoning is that keeping track of both your own and someone else's knowledge about the situation you are in (your situation model) is far too costly. Participants simply assume that what is in their representation of the situation is found in the situation model of the other as well (Pickering and Garrod, 2006:211). They propose that alignment is not a result of common ground or inference. Instead, "the fundamental mechanism that leads to alignment of situation models is automatic" (Pickering and Garrod, 2004:178). Considering both participants find themselves in the same interactional situation, and thus add similar information to their situation model, they can access the same information, but, crucially, in their own (individual) representation of the situation. Interestingly, Clark (1996) does assume a basic shared starting point of common ground: the situation you are in and the information you have on prior encounters (see section 2.2.1). Furthermore, participants do not *know* they have common ground, the best they can do is assume what is accessible to them is accessible to their partner as well. There hence is an assumption on both participants' parts that they perceive and remember the same (salient) things and that they both update their individual knowledge in the same way. This, to me, seems very close to the situation model and its automatic update advocated by Pickering and Garrod.

ground and supports mutual engagement and understanding: participants want to ensure they know where the other stands in relation to a particular topic or act, and by extension to them. This allows them to anticipate and coordinate their joint next actions.

Each pair of utterances shows efforts of calibration, of alignment: first speakers take position on a particular matter and fellow participants orient towards that effort when presenting their own stance. First turns normally initiate some kind of action trajectory, which second turns respond to. Each response decides on the successful completion of a joint action (see section 2.2.3) and thus each second turn presents a chance to take the same position as the first speaker or diverge from their point of view. The second speaker has two general options: to respond in "a compliant or aligning way or in misaligning or noncompliant way" (Schegloff, 2006:74-75). As explained in section 2.3, people prefer the interaction to unfold as projected in the initiating act. There is, hence, a preference for positive alignment between interactants and, as evidenced by preliminaries or set-up expressions (Enfield, 2006:406, cf. section 2.3) people actively try to minimize the chance of being confronted with a negative response. It is agreement, positive alignment and joint commitment that people generally seek.

This overall orientation toward positive alignment does not mean people have to explicitly say "my position is completely in line with yours" to show that there is positive alignment. Reproducing what was said before, collaborating on the completion of a turn or a simple "me too" or "same here" suffices to inform some a co-participant of your shared (or a similar) stance. Similarly, negative alignment can be explained extensively or can be established with a mere negation. Moreover, alignment does not need to be explicit, a speaker can present a stance that their co-participant has to relate to an earlier stancetaking themselves, inferring the alignment between the two utterances (Du Bois, 2007, cf. 3.2).

In the following sections, some of the resources that people have at their disposal to take stance and align themselves to others will be presented. There are of course infinite ways of establishing alignment, what the selected forms share is a distinct focus on the relative positioning of participants. They all show there is a strong sense of involvement - a focus on the connection between what one participant says and what came before - whether the utterance serves to concur or contest what was said earlier (Du Bois, 2014:360;363).[5] With the interpersonal relationship or involvement taking pole position, referential or informational content may move to the background.

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[5]This is different from adjacency pairs or projective pairs as presented earlier. This sense of involvement (or engagement in terms of Du Bois, 2014) is not necessarily only associated with the previous turn - i.e. the first pair part - but to all that came before, and is thus similar to making explicit reference to the coherence between turns. Importantly, this engagement is not only found in utterances produced by different speakers. A single speaker can relate their next utterance to the previous one as well, thus engaging with prior words and structures (Du Bois, 2014:372).

The (sub)classes discussed below play an important role in the coordination of knowledge and understanding and hence in managing the common ground; they are all attempts to (re)phrase or connect to the other's idea, to show understanding, and position oneself accordingly. Following this effort, participants have (explicit) access to the status of their interpersonal alignment, thus demonstrating the collaborative nature of interaction.

3.3.1 Positive and negative alignment

Establishing alignment can be done explicitly and absolute by saying "yes, I agree completely" or "no, I disagree completely"; clearly relating the expression and associated position to what came before. Here, the alignment is near perfect: the second speaker indicates their stance to be effectively the same or the absolute opposite of that presented by the first speaker. However, as explained in section 3.2, alignment is thought to be scalar, meaning the independent positions are often not identical, but rather relatively closer to the same side of the scale or towards opposite ends.

Positive alignment is established when one speaker takes a particular position regarding the object of talk and the second speaker takes a similar position. This is what Clark (2006:134) calls their "joint position". His idea is that speech acts are not completed by just one speaker - the initiating party - but by the combination of the initiating and responding party. Take, for example, a suggestion. The proposition presented by the first speaker is not only reflective of his or her own position, but also reflects the position of the second speaker once they have accepted the suggestion. In example (4) Stef and Jack have a meeting at nine o'clock with a real estate agent and are discussing what time they have to leave to be on time.

(4)   *Taking the train*
    1   Stef   If we have to be there by nine,
    2   we'd better take the 8.15 train.
    3   It's about a 15 minute walk I guess.
    4   Jack   Okay, 8.15 it is.

Stef suggests they take the train that leaves at 8.15 because they have to walk for a bit before they are at the arranged meeting place. Jack agrees with her plan, taking the same position she presented in line 2. They both individually present the same subjective position on the matter (taking the 8.15 train), but Jack's stancetaking is informed by what Stef has done earlier. He not only takes a subjective stance but relates his stance to Stef's, establishing the relation between their two stances. In accepting her suggestion, he thus positively aligns himself to her stance, establishing their joint position.

In most languages, the simplest way to show agreement is by means of an affirmative particle. On the opposite end, disagreement can be expressed by means of a disaffirmative particle. The challenge with describing the use of particles like "yes" and "no" is that their distribution is much more complex

than just an affirmative or disaffirmative answer to a polar question (see e.g. Sorjonen (1997) on the distribution of (dis)affirmative particles in Finnish). A simple (dis)affirmative marker can indeed convey affiliation and construct positive alignment, but it could just as well indicate someone is simply listening without taking stance whatsoever.[6] Oftentimes the use of a particle is combined with a more explicit form of stancetaking. These more explicit strategies will be discussed below.

Divergence of stances is what I will refer to as establishing negative alignment. Negative alignment arises when one speaker takes a certain stance regarding an object of talk and the second speaker takes an opposing stance. By not joining the first speaker in his positioning, the second speaker not only rejects the proposition presented by the first speaker, but expresses (or even emphasizes) the dissimilarity between to two of them. The most recognizable cases of negative alignment involve blatant disagreement or rejection. In the following example, an assessment made by one participant is rejected by the other participant. Ruben and Hugo discuss Hugo's career in the hotel and restaurant business. At some point Ruben states that he would not like working with all those annoying people. Hugo does not agree with this assertion, he actually likes bonding with his guests. The relevant exchange is presented in example (5):

(5)   *Hospitality (day 1)*[7]
          1   Ruben   all kinds of annoying people who all (.)
          2   ju[st strangely wander eh
          3   Hugo   [no you build a relationship with them,
          4   that's really nice.

Hugo dismisses the perception Ruben has of the hospitality industry. He interrupts Ruben and he, indeed, starts his objection with a plain disagreement marker "no". Following the negation, he does offer a reason for his divergent

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[6]These back-channels or continuers are what Stivers (2008) refers to as alignment, in contrast to affiliation. While the latter would include taking stance, alignment, to her, only includes structural markers indicating all parties are (still) in agreement about the ongoing organization of the interaction. I am, however, not so much interested in the progress of the structure of interaction, but rather in the management of the content and the related interpersonal positions. Here, alignment is mostly used to refer to stancetaking, i.e. interpersonal alignment, not organizational alignment (cf. section 5.1 for a discussion of backchannels in relation to the managing interpersonal relations). This means the cases that *do* involve stancetaking and hence alignment are the central target of study. More specifically still, it is those instances in which conveying the position of the speaker is (one of) the main contributions to the interaction that are of primary interest.

[7]All examples that include a reference to a certain day (e.g. here "day 1") are taken from the Dutch collection of Big Brother transcripts. The excerpts are loosely translated to English, without the Dutch original present, to increase readability. The point here is not to present a thorough analysis of the Dutch material, but to illustrate the different resources interactants - generally speaking - have at their disposal. Part II will discuss the patterns of use of these different forms in the Dutch and Indonesian data. There, the examples will of course include the original text (as well as a translation).

stancetaking as well. In Hugo's opinion, the people you encounter in the hospitality industry are not annoying; you build relationships with them which is something enjoyable.[8] The dismissal thus establishes negative alignment between the two men. Here, the rejection was opened with a negation marker "no".[9] This does, however, by no means imply that to reject someone's position an explicit negation is required.

Crucially, alignment does not have to be absolute. Participants can take position towards the same end of the scale but not at the same point their interlocutor placed himself. This is seen in example (6) where David and Susan share the same sentiment, but not the same position. Susan states she is convinced three other housemates concocted some sort of plan to collectively nominate David and Lotte for eviction. Whereas David has the same feeling, he is not entirely certain about the nomination being a set-up. He thus adopts her belief, but not to the full extent.

(6)   *Hundred percent (day 33)*
          1   Susan   but I know for sure-
          2   one thing I'm absolutely convinced about,
          3   (.) I just talked to Bram about it,
          4   I'm convinced the three of them discussed this.
          5   I'm a hundred percent sure of it.
          6   David   yeah? I'm ninety percent sure.

Susan's states she is "a hundred percent" certain of the other contestants having discussed the nomination process beforehand (line 5). Her strong suspicion of foul play is mitigated somewhat by David, who asserts to be "ninety percent" convinced of them talking it through. Thinking of alignment as a scale, David is taking position on the same side of the scale as Susan, but not at the same point. His positioning still results in mostly positive alignment (on the general theme) but shows some slight divergence as well (on the details).

On the negative end of the alignment-scale, one can cast doubt upon someone's stancetaking without completely disagreeing with it either as in example (7). Just prior to this fragment Thomas and Ruben started talking about their female housemates when Thomas, in line 27, states one of them made him think of Pippi Longstocking.

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[8]A relevant factor that allows for Hugo's bluntness might be that Hugo is the one who has greater access and rights over the knowledge regarding the hospitality industry. After all, he is involved in it and Ruben is not. See Stivers, Mondada, and Steensig (2011) for detailed studies of epistemics and morality in interaction.

[9]Although dispreferred responses are said to usually be more complex structurally and less clear-cut (cf. section 2.3), this kind of explicit disagreement is not at all uncommon in the Dutch data. This might suggest the Dutch, like speakers of Spanish, might not perceive disagreements necessarily as dispreferred (López Sako, 2008). However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss rejections in detail.

(7)   *Pippi (day 5)*
    26   Thomas   when she came outside this afternoon
    27   she reminded me of Pippi Longstocking
    28   Ruben   yes, but that's her style,
    29   yeah, I- [you know I just accept people
    30   Thomas   [just like Pippi Longstocking
    31   Ruben   the way [they are
    32   Thomas   [yeah me too
    33   Ruben   yeah I don't know

Ruben objects saying it is just her style (line 28) and that he accepts her as she is (line 29-31). He seems to imply Thomas does not accept her, leading Thomas to assert that he *does* in line 352. His statement does not convince Ruben, as evidenced by the latter's expression of doubt in line 33. While Ruben does not openly accuse Thomas of judging their housemate for the way she dresses, he is not prepared to accept Thomas' positive alignment with him either. The intersubjective positioning between the two of them is ambiguous here, there is no straightforward agreement or disagreement.

The combination of positive and negative alignment is not uncommon. Indeed, repetition can be used as a strategy of rapport (Tannen, 2007:84) before disagreeing with someone: the social relation is first reaffirmed by showing or ratifying listenership through repetition, after which some form of disagreement is more easily accepted. Combining positive alignment through repetition with an overall negative stance can be used as a face-saving strategy (Tannen, 2007:84). Most of the rejections found in the data start with a negation marker or turn-initial repetition as an effective way to introduce a negative stancetaking (Schegloff, 1997:532-533). Dispreferred moves in general are commonly prefaced by a repetition of the problematic part that the second speaker is rejecting or correcting (Schegloff, 1997:531).

Some of the more frequent resources used by participants to establish positive alignment are discussed below. As already apparent from the last example, a responsive act may combine several forms. The different classes presented below are separated for ease of understanding, but in actual interaction they do of course co-occur. Oftentimes positive alignment is established through a combination of repetition and explicit agreement (using "yes" or "me too" and reproducing the previous utterance). Similarly, the combination of co-construction or shadowing of a turn and the subsequent ratification by the initial speaker also affirms the joint position, that is, positive alignment, of the participants.

3.3.2   Explicit alignment

One of the most straightforward phrases people can use to position themselves right along their interlocutor is "me too" or "me either" type of responses. The strongest message conveyed by such a phrase is that there is in fact positive alignment; that the both of them are of the same opinion about something.

Parallel to explicit positive alignment phrases like "me too", there are of course ways of explicitly communicating you do *not* share the stance taken by a conversational partner. The focus being on positive alignment, those cases are not addressed separately. In the example below, Laura aligns her position explicitly with Kirk's point of view:

(8)   *Meatballs - me too*
      Kirk   I don't like meatballs
      Laura   (a) I don't like meatballs either
               (b) I don't like them either
               (c) Me neither

As discussed in section 3.2, a second speaker can overtly mark their contribution as a stance follow to someone else' stance lead. Laura overtly acknowledges her utterance is indeed a partial reproduction of Kirk's idea about meatballs. She indicates her position is a stance follow to Kirk's stance lead by adding "either". There is thus explicit engagement with the prior structure and active alignment of stances. In (c) the alignment is the only explicitly communicated message, in (a) on the other hand, Kirk's entire turn is repeated followed by the alignment marker. She thereby maximizes the likeness between their turns. Even if Laura responds with (c), there still is a level of repetition present: she may not reproduce the words; she does recycle the proposition by connecting herself to it. She decides to what extent she reproduces the prior utterance or which elements she selects (Du Bois, 2014:379).[10] The stronger the similarities across utterances, the stronger she commits herself to the proposition and thus their shared position.

What distinguishes this alignment strategy from the other classes is that the speaker unequivocally relates his or her own position to that of the object of talk and therefore to the other speaker. The subjective alignment is thus explicit, as in (8). The interlocutor does not have to infer the position that is taken or the effect this stancetaking has on their interpersonal alignment, they are handed to him. The next example emphasizes the usefulness of such explicit construction of alignment, with four people taking two positions (in pairs). Right before the exchanges in example (9) takes place one of the contestants has announced she will withdraw from the competition.

(9)   *Inkling (day 9/10)*
      73   Hugo   well, I didn't expect this to happen
      74   Ruben   no I didn't expect this either
      75   Roos   I did have a feeling it might
      76   Hanna   yeah, me too

Hugo and Ruben share the same position: they did not expect someone to leave the competition willingly at this point (lines 73-74). Their alignment is positive and explicitly marked by the full repetition and the addition of "either"

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[10]This is similar to the category of resonance that Du Bois (2014) refers to as selection.

showing Ruben is the stance follow to Hugo's stance lead. Roos and Hanna, on the other hand, share the opposite view: they did have an inkling this might happen. Roos' stance diverges from Hugo and Ruben's resulting in negative alignment. She explicitly refers to her subjective position in relation to Hugo and Ruben's subjective first positioning, making the interpersonal alignment between them and her easy to recognize. Finally, Hanna explicitly connects her position on the matter to Roos' stance. In this example, the explicit positioning of second parties is combined with the (partial) repetition of prior utterances. Repeating someone else's words to communicate your own position facilitates the recognizability of alignment, while maintaining the autonomy of each of the stances, as we will see in section 3.3.3. Due to the similarity between the two individual expressions, the relation between them is easy to identify - whether that relation is one of sameness or opposition. As a result, the interpersonal relation between the speakers of those utterances is easily recognized as well.

3.3.3   Repetition

One particularly interesting form of language use that can both introduce positive and negative alignment with another participant is reduplication of a prior utterance (usually the utterance immediately preceding the current one (Schegloff, 1997:503, 525). Repetition seems to be an automatic and spontaneous process, not something people stop to think about (Tannen, 2005:100).However, Du Bois (2014:379) argues the opposite: he discusses several strategies people use to establish alignment, including repetition, arguing these are in fact a strategic use of language. Participants deliberately choose to select a particular form to control the level of engagement with the prior utterance, thus not suggesting a reflex, but rather a purposeful decision.

Parallelism was famously analyzed by Jakobson (1960:368-369), who described it as a "fundamental problem of poetry": consecutive lines in a poem are often found to be parallel, emphasizing the likeness or unlikeness between the two juxtaposed units (1960:369). Such parallels appear in everyday conversation as well. Utterances are constructed using the same internal structure, increasing the perception of affinities between the utterances (Du Bois, 2014:370).

Reproduction of a prior utterance is not only used in explicit constructions of alignment. Repetition can in fact be used to perform a variety of functions. Repair structures (Schegloff, 1997) and epistemic claims (Stivers, 2005) are but two environments in which repeats are often found. Tannen (2007:68-78) presents a thorough description of repetitions in interaction and distinguishes at least nine different purposes repetition can serve, some of which coincide with the relevant types discussed in this section.[11] Related to the different functions

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[11]The term "relevant" here refers to the types of spontaneous, phatic, responses that were distinguished through the bottom-up analysis of the interactional data. This includes all and only those cases that are presented spontaneously and are targeting positive alignment. That is, those contributions that could be called "phatic" (cf. section 2.1); that are informationally

of repetition, it is important to realize participants can repeat their own words or the words of others (Tannen, 2007:63). Considering the focus of this thesis is on interpersonal alignment, cross-speaker repetitions are most interesting. People do repeat their own words, to emphasize a point or to correct a mistake for example, but these self-repetitions are not relevant to the present analysis. After all, they do not aim to position one speaker in relation to another, but rather concern the subjective, one-sided, positioning of a single interactant.

Speakers are observed to use words that were previously produced by others and make them their own. By integrating others' words in their contributions, participants make the conversation into a unified whole (Tannen, 2007:67). Repetition ranges from full reduplications or "perfect copies", to repetitions that are slightly altered, to repetitions of the format of a previous utterance, to reproductions of content but not form (Tannen, 2007:63; Couper-Kuhlen, 1996:368; Stivers, 2005). Following Schegloff (1997:525) the term "repetition" is reserved for those cases involving observable repetition of words from some preceding turn. Repetition of meaning but not form is discussed under "paraphrase" in the next paragraph.

Listenership

Full repetition of (part of) a prior utterance is the most straightforward type of repetition. At the same time, it is the most confusing type from the perspective of interactional relevance, since the information is already available. Consider example (10). By recycling the phrasing of the prior utterance, the second speaker takes the same position as his conversational partner. He could have just agreed, seconding the proposition presented by his interlocutor.

(10)   *It's not fair (day 29)*
      45   Susan   no it's not fair
      46   Bram   it's not fair
      47   Roos   no, it's not fair

Susan presents her stance on the matter of nominating fellow contestants. In her view, it is unfair to nominate someone you believe to be safe from eviction based on the assumption that the audience will not vote for that person to leave the house. Bram holds the same opinion, as evident from his utterance in line 46. He thus establishes a joint position for him and Susan. His repetition allows him to make the same point independent from Susan. This might seem insignificant, but by uttering the proposition himself, there is a sense of autonomy that would not be available to him if he would have just attached himself to Susan's proposition (e.g. by agreeing with her). Bram now shows he has as much access to the presented information as the first speaker and can thus claim epistemic independence (e.g. Heritage and Raymond, 2005; Heritage, 2012; Heritage and

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or referentially redundant. It is for this reason that e.g. repair structures and conversational routines are excluded from the discussion, as are disaffiliative and initiating acts.

Raymond, 2012; Stivers et al., 2011).[12] Even if he actually did not think about this matter before Susan brought it up, the suggestion of shared knowledge or experience alone builds rapport and thus strengthens the interpersonal bond in that interaction. Repetition can hence be used to allude to shared knowledge and epistemic independence without it actually being present. After both Susan and Bram have stated the situation is not fair, Roos presents the same stance. She too fully repeats the expression initially presented by Susan, claiming greater independence over her positioning than she would have by simply agreeing to it. The difference between Bram's repetition is that she marks her contribution as being a stance follow to Susan's stance lead. By including an affirmative marker ("no"), she openly acknowledges she is not the first to take this position.

This type of full repetition usually immediately follows the original utterance, showing familiarity and involvement with the interaction and reflects what Tannen (2007:68) calls participatory listenership, which is probably the most basic form of repetition. The hearer shows they are listening and understand what is being said by repeating the speaker's words. By echoing someone else's utterance, participants can show involvement and acceptance of the message and thus establish shared expertise on the matter (Tannen, 2007:68; see also Schegloff (1997:527) on registering receipt). The use of full and partial repeats is further discussed in section 6.1. In short, the difference between full and partial repeats relates to the extent of overlap between the first and second speaker's presentation of the expression. Full repeats are perfect copies of the original; no material is added or eliminated. Partial repeats are an integral copy of part of the original utterance, meaning some other part of the previous rendering is not reproduced.

Shadowing

In example (10), the repetition of the initial utterance "it's not fair" was produced only after the previous instance was completed. Each of the participants awaited their turn and only then reduplicated the prior turn. It is not uncommon however, to have a second speaker reproduce the first speaker's utterance while the initial turn is still ongoing, as in example (11) below. Lieke and Iris are both nominated for eviction. The nomination process is anonymous, but Lieke pretends to be mad about the situation and fake-demands to know who nominated her:

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[12]Stivers, Mondada, and Steensig (2011) argue that we can only understand how people manage (dis)agreement and (dis)affiliation through a better understanding of epistemic stance. I will treat stance as a general way of positioning oneself, including epistemic and affiliational stance. Separating these two functions is not necessary for the purpose of this study. In fact, managing relationships is not only related to access to knowledge, but to attitudes and emotions as well.

(11)   *I don't want to know (day 53)*
      20   Lieke   I WANT TO KNOW WHO NOMINATED ME, NOW!
      21   Iris   hahah (.) no:: I do[n't need to know]
      22   Lieke   [no I don't need to know]
      23   Iris   no:
      24   Hugo   I don't mind telling you

In response to Lieke's demand, Iris says she does not need to know who nominated her. This position is quickly adopted by Lieke, who starts talking along with Iris' turn, repeating the entire utterance with only a small delay. This shadowing (Tannen, 2007:69) is a relatively effortless strategy to show involvement with the other participants (Tannen, 2007:93). Its use to construct affiliation and construct positive alignment as found in the Dutch and Indonesian data is discussed in section 7.1.3.

Ratification

A slightly different form of repetition is found when people collaboratively construct an utterance or story. In these cases, one speaker offers the next piece of information to a story told by a different speaker as a show of understanding or involvement (Lerner, 1996; Lerner and Takagi, 1999). The main speaker may hesitate or pause before finishing the current utterance, but even without such encouragement participants are found to suggest a (to them) likely completion to someone else's turn. If that piece of information is correct or indeed relevant, the main speaker may explicitly connect it to his initial utterance. By repeating the suggested information, the storyteller ratifies it (Tannen, 2007:70-71) and includes it in his story. In example (12) Bram has the floor but pauses mid-sentence in line 8, following which his turn is completed by Hugo (cf. section 7.1.4).

(12)   *Solidarity (day 5)*
      7   Bram   and yet, when all the guys are together
      8   there is some kind of (.)
      9   Hugo   solidarity
      10   David yeah with the women too
      11   Bram   solidarity

Hugo proposes the term Bram is looking for is "solidarity", which is ratified by Bram in line 11 when he repeats it and thus includes it in his story as his own. The co-construction of turns at talk, as shown by Hugo in this case, is another way to establish positive alignment. This is further elaborated on below in section 3.3.5.

Answers to questions

A third context in which full repetition is often found is in answers to polar questions (see e.g. Raymond (2003); Heritage and Raymond (2005); Stivers

(2005)). By repeating the question, the respondent "confirms" the proposition, rather than "affirming" it (Heritage and Raymond, 2012:192) as in example (13):

(13)   *Ready (day 36)*
          2   Kevin   are you ready?
          3   Lotte   I'm ready

In response to Kevin's question, Lotte could have just said "yes". However, she chose otherwise. She must have had a reason to put in the effort of reproducing Kevin's question as an answer. Increasing the engagement between the two utterances seems a possible explanation (Du Bois, 2014:379).[13] By echoing the question in line 2 as an answer, Lotte ratifies the proposition and claims greater epistemic rights over her current state of being ready compared to when she would have just said "yes". She accepts Kevin's proposed position and makes it her own, thus establishing positive alignment between them.

Repetition in repair structures

Lastly, repetition is regularly observed in repair structures (Schegloff, 1997; Stivers, 2005). Repair initiations, for example, can be formulated by rephrasing the unclear statement as a question or check of understanding (Schegloff, 1997:526) as in (14):

(14)   *Funny or not (day 29)*
          23   David   I believe it would be funny
          24   Hanna   it's amusing right?
          25   Lotte   you believe it would be funny?
          26   David   just for fun, sure why not.

In this example, David and Hanna propose the idea that David and Lotte pretend-marry, because it would make for good television. Lotte does not initially agree to this idea. In line 23, David asserts he believes it is funny to go on with the plan (and Hanna concurs in line 24). Lotte reproduces his assertion as a question - probably out of disbelief that he would say such a thing. While this is a case of repetition, although with variation (Tannen, 2007:63), it does not present positive alignment on Lotte's part. At least at this point in the conversation, she is not prepared to join David and Hanna in their assessment of the situation. This example shows that repetition can be and is used to show and establish negative alignment as well. Instead of positioning herself alongside the same end of the scale as David and Hanna, Lotte questions their stance. As a result, it could be argued she tentatively takes the opposing stance, with an invitation for them to change her mind ("I believe it is not funny, but convince

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[13]Crucially, Du Bois excludes "mere echoes and slavish repetition" and argues that only the more extensive repetitions are strategic. What he calls reproduction is thus an *active* effort to create similarity. This effort must be recognizable as a direct attempt to engage with the prior occurrence of this same word or structure (Du Bois, 2014:378).

me to believe otherwise"). Taking this opposite stance, she stresses the difference between them and her, thus creating a situation of negative interpersonal alignment.

Another form of repetition that is found in repair structures is self-repetition of the problematic utterance (Schegloff, 1997:507). When a speaker is alerted that something is unclear by a general repair initiation they will often repeat the initial turn to solve the problem, as in example (15) in which Susan's attempt to complete her part of a group assignment fails before she started:

(15)   *Self-repair (day 29)*
       39   Susan   I hadn't even started yet
       40   Roos   darn it
       41   Lotte   HUh?
       42   Susan   I hadn't even started yet.

Susan complains to the other contestants that she did not get a fair chance to compete because she was called back before she could start her part of the assignment. While Roos does not necessarily respond to the complaint, Lotte is open to discussing it. The problem is she did not hear or understand what Susan said. In response to Lotte's repair initiation in line 41 ("Huh?"), Susan reproduces her initial utterance. Because this is neither a spontaneous repetition, nor a reproduction of someone else's turn and position, cases like these are not further analyzed in detail.[14]

All of the cases discussed above show full, complete, repetition of the prior utterance. However, there are plenty of examples in which the repetition is only partial, meaning a second speaker presents a perfect copy of some part of the previous utterance. Such partial repetitions are not discussed as a separate form of repetition, because they can all be placed in the subclasses presented above. Full and partial repeats are collectively referred to as "bare repetitions", owing to the fact that the second utterance includes the same choice of words as (part of) the previous utterance.[15] Recall that reproduction in interaction can be thought of as a scale ranging from full repetition (reproducing meaning

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[14]Other forms of repetition that are excluded are self-repetitions as a result of the initial utterance not being (entirely) audible to the interlocutors and repetition as part of a conversational routine, as in "Good night" - "Good night". For a similar reason, repair initiations are excluded from further analysis as well. As explained in sections 1.1 and 2.1, the analyses presented in this thesis are exclusively concerned with spontaneous, phatic, contributions. The emphasis is thus on responsive actions that establish positive alignment without disrupting the flow of information (the reason repair initiations are excluded). The interactional relevance of rejection, disagreement, and repair structures is fully recognized, but does not fit the scope of this research.

[15]This is not to suggest the two contributions are deemed exactly the same, their interactional meaning is of course different, simply because of the fact that one is presented after the other and by another participant. For example, the added claim of epistemic rights or access and the establishment of alignment are associated with the string of words uttered by the second speaker, but were not associated with that same string of words when uttered by the first speaker. "Bare" repetition is meant to capture the one-to-one match concerning the words used by two speakers, not to the associated interpretation of those words.

and form) to paraphrase (reproducing meaning but not form). One type of repetition with variation merits special attention as it combines aspects of both: repetition of the format of an earlier utterance, but substituting a crucial element with some other lexical item.

Substitution

Participants sometimes reproduce the structure of a prior utterance but partially change the content. Similar to the "me too" and "me neither" examples discussed in section 5.4, one can only partially reproduce the prior utterance and still convey the same message. A very dressed down version of partial repetition would be to recycle the grammatical structure of a previous utterance, but change the content. In doing so, the contribution is connected to the prior utterance by means of the structural recognizability, even though the message may not (at all) be related. This re-using of the grammatical structure is explained as creating a rhythm (Tannen, 2007) or enhancing engagement (Du Bois, 2014), but it does not necessarily involve interpersonal alignment, because the object of talk may be entirely disconnected from the earlier utterance (compare "She wears glasses" and "He wears a hat"; both present a simple sentence involving a 3rd person subject wearing something. These two utterances could be meant to contrast her and his outfit, but it could also be two descriptions of a person's appearance, unrelated to stancetaking and the speakers' interpersonal alignment.). A partial repetition strategy that *does* create alignment is what I will call "substitution". The class of substitution includes those cases in which a central part of the first utterance is replaced by a similar, often related, word in the following turn.[16]

An example of how substitution is used to create interpersonal alignment is givne in (16). Hugo and Hanna react to Bram's earlier suggestion a good session of cursing and calling each other names might release some tension held by the group (lines 40 and 43):

(16)   *Name-calling (day 4)*
      40   Hugo   you do that when we're gone.
      41   Bram   hahahha
      42   Hugo   hahahah
      43   Hanna   you do that when you're home.

Hugo counters Bram better holds the urge to call people names until the others are not around. In line 43, Hanna reproduces the first part of Hugo's utterance but replaces "when we're gone" with "when you're home". The message is essentially the same: both Hugo and Hanna are not keen on his proposal and suggest he only then starts his name-calling session when they are not present.

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[16]Variations in the intensity of an assessment or evaluation are not included here. For example, "That cake is delicious" vs. "That cake is absolutely delicious" are not considered to substitute a vital part of the construction. They will be analyzed as cases of full repetition modified by an upgrade (or downgrade).

Hanna repeats the entire structure and most of the content of Hugo's utterance, but paraphrases a salient part of it, making it (at least partly) her own.

As discussed earlier, repeating someone else's utterance can increase the epistemic access you claim over that information. By repeating an utterance but essentially paraphrasing the key component by selecting a synonym, the respondent emphasizes his own position on the matter, while at the same time aligning himself with the initial speaker. The proposition remains intact but is enforced or mitigated by changing the salient parts. Substitution can also be used to present subsequent propositions as alternatives (Du Bois, 2014:381). Because of the overlap in structure, the emphasis can be placed on the contrast between two elements as David does in line 6 in example (17):

(17)   *Hundred percent (day 33)*
    1   Susan   but I know for sure-
    2   one thing I'm absolutely convinced about,
    3   (.) I just talked to Bram about it
    4   I'm convinced the three of them discussed this
    5   I'm a hundred percent sure of it
    6   David   yeah? I'm ninety percent sure

He echoes Susan's assertion she is "hundred percent sure of it", but substitutes a crucial element to downgrade the level of certainty to express he is "ninety percent sure of it". The similarity between their two contributions certainly creates high involvement and positions them near to each other on a stancetaking scale. Yet, the (slight) dissimilarity between them is emphasized because of the structural similarity. Substitution can thus be used to emphasize convergence, by paraphrasing part of the utterance, or divergence, by replacing one phrase with a phrase unrelated in meaning to the original, presenting an alternative proposition. In (6) there was only minor divergence, but a similar strategy could be used to emphasize opposing positions on a particular matter (cf. Du Bois (2014:381) on contrast).[17]

3.3.4   Paraphrase

Paraphrase can be thought of as repetition of the idea without reproducing the utterance used by the prior speaker. It involves approximate equivalence of meaning (Bhagat and Hovy, 2013) presented in different words. [18] Whereas

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[17]The substitution of elements for emphasizing the contrast between two participants is not further considered here, the simple reason being it is not within the scope of the current study of positive alignment and the use of phatic contributions.

[18]Paraphrase can be defined as strict as involving all synonymy (Bhagat and Hovy, 2013; Vila et al., 2014) that is however not the type of paraphrase meant here. The classes presented in this chapter all relate to phatic communion and alignment. They all show interpersonal positioning and involvement of participants. The type of paraphrase included here thus needs to meet that criterion: it has to be used to establish or display the alignment between the subjects and object of a specific interaction. For a typology of paraphrase, see Vila, Martí, and Rodríguez (2011).

repetition can be objectively recognized, paraphrase is much more of a sliding scale of interpretation. Participants have to interpret both utterances and decide whether the level of similarity between them is high enough to be considered paraphrases. Because of this subjectivity paraphrase is not included in the class of repetition. Still, the sense of repetition that is present in paraphrasing is what makes it a useful strategy to show involvement as seen in example (18):

(18) *Surprise (day 12)*
  2   Thomas   well David you did not see that coming huh?
  3   David   no-no not at all
  4   Hanna   surprise right?

The group of contestants decided to throw David a surprise birthday party and he just found out about the party. While he is taking all of it in Thomas concludes David had not suspected something like this to happen, which David confirms in line 3. Following this exchange, Hanna comes to the same conclusion Thomas presented: David did not see it coming; it was a surprise. She paraphrases "not see that coming" as "[that was a] surprise". Because she constructs her turn as a question, the similarity with Thomas' utterance is even more apparent.[19] By using a paraphrase to ask the same question that has already been answered, she seems to claim the right to know (Stivers et al., 2011) and positions herself alongside Thomas. Not as a stance follow, but as an autonomous position that is positively aligned to his.

Establishing a connection between two participants using paraphrase is even more recognizable in example (19), where Iris confirms Lieke's evaluation of a bottle of perfume she had bought that carried her name.

(19) *Perfume (day 49)*
  14   Lieke   everyone said like it smells kinda nice.
  15   Iris   it doesn't smell bad at all.
  16   Lieke   no.

Prior to this exchange, Lieke has told the story about how she was on holiday and came across a brand of perfume by the same name as her and decided to buy a bottle. In line 14 she explains that her friends said "it smells kinda nice", almost justifying why she bought it. Iris is quick to confirm this assessment, stating "it does not smell bad at all" (line 15). Both Lieke and Iris thus present the same (extended) position on the fragrance, and while both of them use the main verb "smell" the actual assessment is paraphrased from the original "kinda nice" to "not bad at all". There is no explicit stance follow marker present (something like, "yes", "right", "either"), Iris actually phrases her reaction as if she could have been the first to make this remark. The strong overlap in the propositional content of the two messages is what gives away the connection,

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[19]She is not trying to surprise David at this point by yelling "SURPRISE". She wants validation for the successful surprise; for the fact that they pulled it off to organize a party without him expecting anything.

more so than similarities in chosen form. A detailed analysis of paraphrases in relation to alignment is given in section 6.2.

3.3.5 Co-construction

In (12) we already saw an example of collaboration on turn-completion, repeated here for convenience as (20). In this conversation, Bram has the floor and produces a longer turn but stops right before the end, seemingly not being able to find the right word.

(20) *Solidarity (day 5)*
6	Bram	and yet when all the guys are together
7		there is some kind of (.)
8	Hugo	solidarity
9	David	yeah with the women too
10	Bram	solidarity

Even though Bram's utterance is not completed and there is thus no transitional relevant point to change turns (Sacks et al., 1974), Hugo presents a candidate completion for Bram's utterance. In this case it can be argued that Bram was seeking help: by pausing in the midst of his utterance he opens up the possibility to let someone else complete the turn.[20] In line 11 he accepts Hugo's suggestion by repeating it, thus incorporating it in his original utterance and ratifying Hugo's interpretation of Bram's initial thought (Tannen, 2007:70-71).[21]

Their collaborative effort to produce this single turn speaks to their willingness to cooperate as well as their (especially Hugo's) ability to think for the other person. This co-construction thus evidences a strong common ground, which is further reinforced by the correct insertion of a missing element (and the subsequent ratification). Hugo's anticipation of what characterization would be fitting in this context reflects his position on the object ("a group of guys"). Considering it is originally Bram's assertion, this completion projects the position Bram supposedly represents, which is indeed confirmed by Bram, thus establishing their joint position on male solidarity.

However, collaborative completions are not always encouraged, as shown in examples (21) and (22). Roos and Hugo are in the kitchen trying to make a salad dressing. They do not have a mixer or blender at their disposal so they have to whisk the ingredients together by hand. Roos suggests their best option is to work together: one of them can hold the bowl while the other slowly pours the oil into the mixture.

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[20]Lerner and Takagi (1999) refer to this phenomenon as co-participant completion; Lerner (1996) calls it anticipatory completion,

[21]Such successful co-constructions of a single turn are often ratified by a repetition or affirmative marker produced by the initial speaker. However, when the candidate completion is flawed the initial speaker will likely replace the suggested completion to convey the intended interpretation, cf. section 7.1.4.

(21)   *Drip (day 9/10)*
        14   Roos   isn't it an idea to have one person
        15   hold it [slightly tilted and then do]
        16   Hugo   [yes and the other lets it]
        17   ve::ry carefully, really drip. drip. drip.

She has not yet finished her turn, when Hugo steps in (line 15) and completes it for her, overlapping the end of her original turn. Similarly, in (22), Hanna quickly steps in to finish Ruben's thought about talking to a psychologist.

(22)   *Talk (day 14)*
        38   Ruben   yes, I didn't really have an emotional talk or anything,
        39   but-
        40   Hanna   but it is just nice to talk to someone

As with projected pairs, the turn-so-far projects likely formats for completion (Lerner, 1991:455ff). The "one person does X" construction Roos uses in (21) is recognized by Hugo as likely being followed by "the other person does Y". Instead of waiting for Roos to come to the second part, he produces it for her. Usually these collaborations involve what Lerner refers to as compound turn-constructional units in which the hearer not only anticipates the completion of the entire turn, but also recognizes where the final component might begin (Lerner, 1991:453). The earlier components project the format of that final component, allowing the hearer to complete the turn instead of the speaker (Lerner, 1991:454). This anticipatory completion need not take place, but because of the recognizability of the different parts of the larger turn and the predictability of the construction yet to come the co-participants have the opportunity to take over and produce the last component. It thus allows them to project a joint position, suggesting positive alignment of their individual stances (cf. section 7.1).

3.4   Conversational style

In section 2.6, it was argued that even though all human beings share a set of cognitive skills to manage interaction, the day-to-day use of those skills is influenced by cultural norms. The "normal" way to talk and interact is shaped by culture as well (Enfield and Levinson, 2006b:1). However, we should be wary of overestimating the similarities or differences between cultural preferences of interactional patterns. As (López Sako, 2008:320) shows in his cross-cultural study of disagreements, languages might share one aspect of use, but diverge on another. As will become apparent in chapters 5 to 7, a similar result is found in this study. Some general patterns or phatic language use in spontaneous responsive actions are strongly similar across the two languages, whereas other uses are clearly more preferred by one or the other group of speakers. This collection of preferences within a particular community is an informative source

of how people normally manage an informal, friendly, interaction. It reflects their conversational style (Hymes, 1989).

In interaction people use words, organize topics and turns in a way they consider "normal". And they expect others will do the same (Tannen, 2007:254). They are, as such, oriented towards a particular style of engaging in interaction. It was previously established that what is normal is often overlooked as being part of culture (see section2.6). Many people are not aware they have a conversational style, because everyone around them talks in the same way. They have all been socialized in the same social or cultural group so the style is part of their common ground. Only when they encounter someone that uses a different style it occurs to them their normal might not be everyone's normal (Tannen, 1987:264). What conversational style is preferred differs per social or cultural community. The lack of awareness about conversational styles makes it especially hard to adapt your style to someone else's style.

The importance of style of conversation is not to be underestimated. As Tannen (1987:251) explains: "Style is not something extra or frivolous, added on like frosting on a cake. It is the stuff of which the cake is made". To interpret someone's words correctly, others need to be able to recognize what someone is trying to do. The way some message is phrased and uttered presents clues as to how it is meant (Tannen, 2005:4); provided that you are familiar with that style of course. Recognizing one aspect of interactional organization as shared could result in the (faulty) assumption other aspects are shared as well. Some more subtle differences in conversational style are not that easily perceived, leading people to assume they do in fact use the same interactional resources in the same way and are thus able to correctly interpret others' behaviors based on their own expectations of how interaction normally unfolds.

A detailed study of the patterns of phatic communion can provide a general idea of the conversational style that is adopted by speakers of a particular language (in a particular group). Assuming participants are cooperative and normally try to coordinate their actions to the best of their abilities, the default orientation should be towards positive alignment and communality (this is supported by the preference for continuity in talk and the completion of joint actions (as explained in section 2.3). One strategy to keep the conversation going and establish (or at least suggest) mutual understanding is repetition of ideas and sentences. This type of strategy fits a conversational style of high-involvement in which it is valued to continuously show rapport and engagement (Tannen, 2007:85).

Related to high- and low-context communication, the level of overt commitment and alignment could be hypothesizes to coincide with the verbal explicitness of communicative messages. If a large part of some informational message is communicated verbally as in the low-context communication style, then the same would be expected for the indexation of interpersonal relationships. Low-context cultures would, consequently, be expected to value explicit reference to involvement. The construction of positive alignment would be more overtly expressed, emphasizing the mutual similarity and sharedness. Their conversa-

tional style would be one of high-involvement. Conversely, in high-context communication both the informational and relational coordination would largely by left to inference based on the assumed common ground. The mutual relationship is known to all participants, meaning they do not have to explicitly communicate their shared position or involvement in interaction (and their relationship) that frequently. The sharedness is implied, not in need of explication. High-context communication would thus be associated with a more low-involvement conversational style (cf. section 2.6).

3.5   Conclusion

Language is used to inform others about things we know or want. It is also, or maybe even primarily, used to share our attitude or stance toward someone or something. At some level, this is as much informing others as is telling them something about the world around us - the classical referential informing. Laver (1975) argued the phatic function of language is indexical: a speaker positions himself in relation to the hearer, the utterance, and the situation. By indicating that one shares or opposes another's point of view, the social relation is indexed and updated. This positioning can be alongside a conversational partner (positive alignment) or in opposition of the stance they took (negative alignment). These different positions regarding the object of interaction (the utterance or act) and the participants form a stance triangle (Du Bois, 2007; cf. section 3.2) that people use to keep track of their attitudes and beliefs.

The preferred direction of talk in informal interaction is to move forward and orient towards agreement (Stivers and Robinson, 2006). That is, participants anticipate and coordinate their contributions to increase the likelihood of reaching mutual understanding and appreciation. In terms of stancetaking and alignment, the construction of a joint position is preferred over opposing, disconnected stances. People are thus generally assuming - and actively pursuing - positive alignment. Their calibration of stances is visible in the way they design their responsive actions. Over the course of this chapter, three main types of contributions have been discussed that primarily address the interpersonal stance, attempting to establish alignment.

The most visible way of constructing alignment is by means of an explicit expression that communicates the similarity between two participants (e.g. "I believe so too"). The stance taken by the first speaker is openly taken to represent the second speaker's position as well. These forms clearly mark one of the participants as a stance lead (the first speaker) and the other participant as a stance follow (the second speaker). In other cases, this successive stancetaking is not as clearly to recognize. Reproducing an earlier utterance does communicate the second speaker takes the same (or a similar) stance as the original speaker, but allows for more autonomy. The second speaker can claim independent access to a certain position by not explicitly attaching the two turns (and stances), but presenting the message as if it was something already on their

mind even before the other person made the statement. Finally, collaboratively constructing a single utterance establishes a joint position as well, if that the candidate completion offered by a second speaker indeed fits the first speaker's original utterance. In such co-participant completions, the first speaker starts a turn, which is then completed by another speaker. The anticipation of the full message, as expressed in the suggested completion, projects a possible shared position, which is to be confirmed by the original speaker. These three general types of contributions that primarily target the interpersonal relationship form the foundation of the analyses presented in part II.

The way in which interactants orient towards the use of one or the other type of contributions, indicates how they normally prefer and expect alignment to be addressed in informal interaction. This collection of preferences associated with building and maintaining the interpersonal relationship can be said to reflect people's conversational style: the way they normally do things. This is not to say they are aware of their preferences. Given that people are mostly confronted with people that are used to doing things the same way, it escapes their attention that it actually is a *particular* way and that others may have different preferences.

A distinction was made between high-involvement and low-involvement styles. The first reflects a preference for explicit and frequent expression of interpersonal similarity and connectedness, whereas the second is less concerned with overt and frequent marking of interpersonal involvement. These preferences - and thus the resulting conversational style - may be related to a high-context or low-context culture. A high-involvement style seemingly matches communication in low-context cultures; a low-involvement style seems to correspond with high-context cultures.

In sum, taking a stance, positioning yourself in relation to the things and people around you is an important aspect of phatic communion and central to successful communication. How the three general classes of explicit alignment, reproduction and collaboration are used in interaction and the role they play in establishing alignment is further examined in part II using data from Dutch and Indonesian informal conversation. This will ultimately lead to a discussion of their respective conversational styles in chapter 8. First, the methods of data analysis are explained in chapter 4.