



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Managing informal interaction: stancetaking and alignment in Dutch and Indonesian

Naerssen, M.J. van

Citation

Naerssen, M. J. van. (2018, December 13). *Managing informal interaction: stancetaking and alignment in Dutch and Indonesian*. LOT dissertation series. LOT, Utrecht. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/67426>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/67426>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/67426> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Naerssen, M.J. van

Title: Managing informal interaction: stancetaking and alignment in Dutch and Indonesian

Issue Date: 2018-12-13

CHAPTER 4

Data and methods

As explained in chapter 3, interpersonal alignment is a sliding scale between a positive and negative end. The workings of negative alignment, found in disagreements or rejections, have been described thoroughly (see e.g. conversational analytic work on dispreferred actions and repair Sidnell and Barnes, 2013). General patterns of language use related to positive alignment are less well established. There are many studies on agreement and confirmation, but mostly in relation to particular directive actions (e.g. Sidnell and Enfield, 2012; Schegloff, 1996) or as part of a general description of agreement markers (see e.g. Kärkkäinen, 2003). Pomerantz (1984) describes how (second) assessments are used to express both disagreement and agreement, but is an exception in the field.

While these studies on specific interactional environments or linguistic elements are invaluable to our understanding of interaction, we have to keep in mind they are smaller pieces of a bigger picture. That bigger picture is the ultimate goal of interactional research and this thesis is an attempt to get closer to it. My main interest lies in how speakers show their involvement in the ongoing interaction. More specifically, how people make their position known to others and thus establish alignment between active participants - in this case in Dutch and Indonesian. Due to the focus on positive alignment, this thesis still only touches upon a fraction of general interaction. However, it is an important fraction, for if we understand how people belonging to different groups are used to or prefer to express involvement, we are closer to understand the interplay between basic human interactional structures (or the interaction engine, see section 2.4) and culture. After all, the want to cooperate, work together and establish a positive interpersonal relation is said to be the driving force of inter-

action. Sticking with the engine metaphor first presented in 2.4: knowing what motor is used helps us understand how the car works. In other words, when we have a clear picture of what conversational style the speakers of these language use to express involvement we not only deepen our knowledge of the preferences of language use in two speech communities, but in human interaction in general.

The similarities and differences in style between the two groups can tell us more about which aspects of language use might be universal and which aspects are culturally informed. Furthermore, understanding the particulars of informal, friendly, language use in either language, can help explain challenges in intercultural interactions. To uncover a conversational style, a lot of data are needed. This chapter explains what interactional data were used and how they were prepared for analysis. The first section emphasizes the importance of longer stretches of interaction in this type of research (see 4.1). Subsequently the challenges of working with a corpus of spoken language are briefly touched upon (see section 4.2). Section 4.3 introduces real-life soap *Big Brother* as the source material and elaborates on how the TV show is set up, what the participants are like, and what the advantages and limitations are of working with this material. The final section of this chapter explains how the source material was adapted for analysis (4.4) by transcribing and coding a selection of televised episodes, and highlights the main challenges and limitations of manually transcribing and coding data.

4.1 Building conversations, building relations

As argued in 2.2, individual knowledge and attitudes are constantly updated; and as a result of this update, so is the common ground. This shared knowledge subsequently leads to certain expectations about the ongoing interaction and informs decisions about the further course of interaction. Preliminary moves (discussed earlier in section 2.3) are a perfect illustration of how interaction builds. Suppose two people, Dave and Vicky, meet in the foyer of their office building. Dave really likes Vicky and wants to ask her out. A question like “Are you doing anything later tonight?” can be understood as just a question about her plans later that night, but using her intention-attribution skills, Vicky will likely already move on to a possible next move: Dave could be planning on extending an invitation to join him in some activity. If she is not available or does not feel like hanging out with Dave tonight, she can make the question into the main act by formulating a response that cuts off that route of conversation. His (potential) next move of inviting can be prevented. The subsequent course of action depends on what the hearer decides to do with the preliminary move. If Vicky responds with “I’m having dinner with my parents” or even “I have a date”, the invitation-to-be will likely not be extended and the both of them can pretend there was no intention of asking her out on a date to begin with.

Given that interaction builds on what came before, and interlocutors care-

fully monitor what others do in interaction, it is important not to just look at individual turns, or isolated responses, but to analyze language use as it happens. After all, interlocutors have access to much more information than a single utterance or turn. If we want to truly understand how language, and specifically the *use* of language, works we need to study multi-unit sequences as they occur in conversation, and focus on how interactants manage social relations within that stretch of talk in interaction (Enfield and Sidnell, 2014:93). To that end, Enfield (2013) advocates what he calls an enchronic analysis of language:

“An enchronic perspective on human communication focuses on sequences of interlocking or interdependent communicative moves that are taken to be co-relevant, and causally-conditionally related”.
(Enfield 2013a:29)

This causally-conditionally relevance is strongly emphasized in conversation analytic approaches as well. As discussed in sections 2.3 and 3.3, initiating and responsive turns form projective pairs that are jointly established. The sequential nature of talk in interaction is central to investigating how speakers show involvement and establish interpersonal alignment. Furthermore, focusing on a larger stretch of unfolding conversation (as opposed to isolated examples) is the only way that allows for analysts to try and interpret what is said in the (near) the participants themselves did. To learn more about the preferences of constructing an informal conversation, as much of the interaction under consideration has to be taken into account as possible. However, every interactional study is concerned more with one aspect than others. Thus, decisions have to be made about what (not) to include and why. The following sections outline how this was approached in the current study.

4.2 Qualitative and quantitative analysis

Finding patterns of language use and do justice to the complexity and dynamics of interactions requires an extensive collection of longer stretches of interaction. The analysis presented in this thesis is grounded in empirical data. Based on a context-sensitive single case analysis, recurring observations led to the formation of three general types of contributions that are regularly found in spontaneous responsive actions targeting the interpersonal positioning of interlocutors (cf. 3.3, and chapters 5-7). All contributions that fit one of these three main types were subsequently reviewed to determine whether relevant subtypes could be distinguished. This bottom up approach has the advantage of not imposing a particular function or understanding to a certain interactional behavior, while at the same time allowing for generalizations. It thus combines qualitative and quantitative analysis to come to a full understanding of the (relative) regularity of a certain linguistic practice.

This is reminiscent of the inductive approach used in conversation analysis (Heritage, 1995:399): a general search for cases that (seemingly) reflect the practice under investigation, to subsequently come to conclusions about the more general pattern of use based on qualitative case-by-case analysis. This first search includes all possibly relevant instances, following which the collection is studied for patterns. This will reveal clear examples, marginal cases and even deviant cases, clarifying the boundaries of one or another function or use of the phenomenon. An important difference, however, is that this study employed coding as a central step in the analysis. Systematically organizing the data allows for a subsequent thorough analysis of the material, but also provides the possibility to present actual numbers and find relevant correlations. Coding can improve an interactional analysis, as long as it is done sensibly (Stivers, 2015).

Where this mixed methods approach is aimed at finding patterns of use, strict conversation analytic studies do not normally use a quantitative approach.¹ Schegloff (1993:103) indeed argues that formulating a defensible notion of nominator, denominator and domain is not possible in many areas, thus complicating quantitative analysis. Heritage (1995:406) similarly concludes “statistical treatments of evidence for conversational procedures have yet to prove to be central or significant for analysis”. Essentially, the problem is that to quantify the occurrence of a particular practice it needs to be clear what is counted (and why) and it needs to be clear what does and does not count as a relevant instance (and why). More challenging still, is that the fact that something *can* occur at a certain point in interaction - that it is a relevant and appropriate act at that point - does not mean it necessarily *does*. The potentiality of a particular practice is likely higher than the actual number of realizations. How often something could have, but did not, occur is difficult to assess, since there is no (linguistic) form available.

Distilling linguistic patterns from a large pool of data is the central effort of corpus linguistics. Corpus-linguistics can be an end in itself, but is increasingly used as a means to an end in other disciplines of linguistics (McCarthy and O’Keeffe, 2010:7). In most corpus linguistic studies, the search for a particular lexical item leads to certain conclusions about its distribution, use or change. With pragmatic phenomena, such as politeness patterns, stancetaking and phatic language use, it is difficult to enter a search item and retrieve frequency and distributional information automatically, since there often is no specific form associated with the phenomenon of interest (Ruhlemann and Aijmer, 2015:10). This lack of clear form-function mapping also means automatic tagging or annotation often is impossible. Still, using quantitative methods is relevant to discourse analysis, although it can never be a fully quantitative analysis (Hunston, 2007:28). The numbers that are included in a quantitative overview are normally derived from a case-by-case examination; they are a product of qualitative analysis. Furthermore, quantitative patterns of use play

¹Recently a special issue on the use of conversation analysis in experimental (often quantitative) studies was published in *Research on Language and Social Interaction* (2017, 50(1)). See Kendrick (2017) for an introduction.

a role in identifying more or other elements of interest (Hunston, 2007). The relevance of quantitative information thus primarily lies in the relative frequency of particular form or function within the larger set of forms and function that target the same phenomenon.

This is why the analyses presented in the following chapters will not speak to the overall frequency of occurrence compared to the associated potentiality. All quantitative statements concern the number of instances of a particular subtype relative to the full set of observed occurrences of *that type*. For example, the study of explicit expressions of alignment demonstrated several forms to be used, most notably expressions similar to “me too” or “that is why I said”. In the collection of explicit alignment efforts in Dutch showed most are of the first type, in the Indonesian data the second type is more frequently observed. Similarly, out of all phatic contributions that actually were produced, a difference in distribution of the main types (support, reproduction, collaboration) is observed between the two data sets. Note that this statement addresses the relative distribution *within* this larger class, not the relative frequency of phatic contributions (or one of the subsets) in interaction *overall*. These relevant frequencies do contribute to the general impression of speakers orienting towards a certain conversational style. Furthermore, the quantification of phrases such as “usually” or “typically” adds transparency to the analysis.

In recent years, corpus linguistics has become increasingly used to help solve pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and discourse analytical questions. Although the use of corpora to investigate language use has proven to be very fruitful (McCarthy and O’Keeffe, 2010:11), it presents a number of challenges as well. Corpora are generally not designed with the study of pragmatics in mind and there are relatively few spoken corpora (McCarthy and O’Keeffe, 2010:10). For both Indonesian and Dutch no spoken corpus was available that included longer stretches of naturally occurring talk. Even if such a corpus had been available, the comparability of the data would be questionable at best. To ensure the comparability of corpora, a new corpus was constructed for this thesis. Constructing a corpus that includes pragmatic annotation inevitably means manually assigning tags or codes to every relevant item in the data set - a time-consuming job.

The advantage of an annotated corpus is that it allows for systematic analysis of certain aspects of the different classes or categories that are distinguished. For example, one such aspect could be the frequency of an affirmative particle being added to a full repetition or paraphrase of an earlier utterance. The subsets that are formed by the corpus linguistic analysis of the coded reactions are then qualitatively scrutinized in a case-by-case manner adding a layer of pragmatic analysis. This combination of pragmatic and corpus linguistic methods is what Ruhlemann and Aijmer (2015) call corpus-pragmatics. Corpus-pragmatics has proven to be a useful method in research on topics related to this thesis, including work on stancetaking in academic writing (Gray and Biber, 2015), back-channels (Peters and Wong, 2015), and co-construction (Clancy and McCarthy, 2015). To conclude, the integration of quantitative cor-

pus linguistic methods with qualitative pragmatic methods, as advocated by corpus-pragmatics, can uncover patterns that would be overlooked by either method on its own.

4.3 The data - Big Brother recorded them

If we truly want to understand how people use their language in everyday life, we need to actually observe them using it. As Pulaczewska (2013) shows, elicited data can be problematic because the data might not represent actual spoken language use, but rather represent what participants think is “correct”. A prerequisite for potentially uncovering patterns - and cross-linguistic differences - in language use is thus having a huge database of naturally occurring spoken interactions. However, gathering enough examples is not an easy task. Following people around, recording all their (linguistic) actions, would yield a great amount of useful data, but is both highly impractical and very invasive.

Luckily, the great minds of television have designed a show that does just that: Big Brother.² In this reality TV show, a group of people moved into a house where their every move was recorded. Even though the data have been obtained from an abnormal environment, they are a good source of normal language use. This practice has been put to the test in recent years, and a number of local versions of Big Brother have been used as a source of data to analyze language usage patterns, including Sinkeviciute (2014) on Australian English mock impoliteness, Sinkeviciute (2015) on impoliteness in the UK, Pulaczewska (2010, 2013) on Polish, German and English requests, Flöck (2016) on requests in British and American English, and Syahwinda and Kusasi (2012) on politeness in Indonesian.

4.3.1 Big Brother the TV show

Modeled after George Orwell’s dystopian book *1984*, the television show Big Brother revolves around the idea of people living in a world without privacy. A number of contestants, referred to as housemates, is brought into a house that will be their home for up to the next hundred days. They are not allowed to have any contact with the outside world; no telephone, no internet, no television, no radio, not even a newspaper. Everything they say and do is recorded with both visible and hidden cameras. In the first ever broadcast season of Big Brother, 24 cameras (of which 2 infrared cameras) and 63 microphones were used to document the life of the housemates. To record personal interactions, every housemate had to wear a personal microphone as well (Hille et al., 2000:160).

²This project would not have been possible without the permission from Endemol Nederland B.V. (EndemolShine Nederland since 2015) to use their archive of Big Brother material. The use of material was restricted to members of the research project and was limited to reviewing and transcribing the data; distribution or reproduction of audio and/or visual material is not allowed. Therefore, no images or other media files can be made available related to this thesis.

Although the creators of the show prefer to describe it as a real-life soap (Roscoe, 2001:480), Big Brother is essentially a game show with a money prize to be won after a hundred or so days. Every two weeks all contestants have to (anonymously) nominate two of their peers for eviction.³ It is, however, not the contestants themselves that decide who leaves the house, but the viewers at home. Via televoting the audience decides which of the nominees is evicted the week following nomination. The last resident to remain in the house is the winner. Apart from the weekly nominations, the contestants have to complete a challenge each week in return for extra household money or other advantages (e.g. a good meal, a letter from home, immunity from eviction).

The first ever season of Big Brother was broadcast in the Netherlands in 1999. Soon after that, the immensely popular TV program spread across the globe and local versions have now been broadcast in over 45 countries. The concept of the show has remained largely the same, although some changes were made most notably to the number of contestants. Because of the consistency in design, the show lends itself very well for comparative study. Considering this thesis aims to analyze and contrast the norms of conversational conduct in Dutch and Indonesian, comparability of the source material is essential.

The Dutch data cover the first 60 days of the contestants living together, the Indonesian data range from the first to the 34th day of habitation. Transcripts were made from a selection of the television broadcasts of both the first season of the Dutch version (aired in 1999) and the Indonesian edition (aired in 2011) of Big Brother to compile a large enough corpus to study the management of interpersonal interaction. Both data sets consist of approximately ten hours of transcribed interaction.⁴ The excerpts that were selected include different types of interactions:

- spontaneous interactions between contestants (e.g. sitting in the living room)
- “guided” interactions between contestants (e.g. weekly tasks)
- interactions between the contestants and Big Brother

Not all of these interactions are equally relevant to the current study. Given that this thesis is concerned with interpersonal relationship management in informal interaction, the spontaneous interactions between housemates are most relevant. These are all conversations amongst contestants that are not in any way encouraged or influenced by the producers of the TV show. They are truly informal and spontaneous.

Guided interactions refer to those interactions that are instigated by Big Brother, like the weekly task they have to complete or the grocery list they have to make. It is important to note that Big Brother does not influence the interaction *itself*. Participants are completely free in what they do or say, how they behave, whether they cooperate or take part in the activity or not, etc. The

³At least in the first edition (1999) the nomination was biweekly.

⁴For the included excerpts and episodes, see Appendix A.1.

<i>Corpus details</i>	Dutch	Indonesian
minutes	598	729
episodes	41	28
scenes	696	964
contributions (all)	11897 (100%)	8064 (100%)
contributions (internal)	11713 (98.45%)	7416 (93.20%)
words (all)	96841 (100%)	60869 (100%)
words (internal)	88868 (91.77%)	47992 (78.84%)

Table 4.1: Corpus breakdown This table presents the relevant numbers pertaining to the size of the corpus. The total number of contributions and words, represented by (all) in the table, includes all utterances presented by the contestants. Contributions by hosts, guests, voice over, or the production team are excluded from the corpus. Since the focus of this thesis is on interpersonal alignment in informal interaction, a distinction was made between interaction oriented towards an “internal” or “external” interlocutor. All of the contestants themselves are considered internal interlocutors, making all their interpersonal interaction part of the relevant data collection. They partake in actual face-to-face informal conversation. On these grounds, contributions targeting a member of the Big Brother production team or a friend or relative back home were excluded. These participants are either not present (e.g. family members) and thus do not actively take part in any form of interaction, or the interaction is not deemed informal or equal due to a clear power structure between Big Brother representatives and the contestants. Furthermore, these representatives are normally invisible to the contestants, which significantly influences the communicative behavior as well.

term guided merely reflects the fact that the suggestion of doing that particular activity at that moment did not come from one of the contestants, but from an external party. Both the spontaneous and guided interactions are useful in describing the conversational habits of the people involved, since both situations involve multi-party interactions where in principle anything and everything is possible.

Finally, interactions between housemates and Big Brother are excluded from analysis. On several occasions, contestants interact with a representative from the tv show. These representatives are only “present” in interaction behind a camera (in the diary room) or via intercom. This “Big Brother” character is never seen, only heard. Big Brother may address the housemates as a group, in which case the voice is heard in the entire house, or housemates may enter the so-called “diary room” to talk to Big Brother in private. Housemates are usually invited to come into the diary room by intercom; they cannot initiate contact themselves. In the diary room, the contestants reveal their two nominees of choice, talk to a psychologist or doctor if needed, receive secret missions or tasks from Big Brother, or simply share their thoughts on something that happened in the house. These interactions are not really multi-party, since contestants are in the room by themselves, talking to a camera. They do talk to someone, but this person is not actually present, they only hear their voice.

The power relation between the contestants and representatives from the TV show and the lack of actual contact between the two groups disqualifies their

interaction as a type of informal conversation. The contestants are dependent on the producers, cannot normally initiate talk with them, and are not able to see them. The relationship between contestants amongst themselves and between the contestants and Big Brother is entirely different. Whereas contestants are mostly equals, their relation to Big Brother is hierarchical (Pulaczewska, 2010). They do not know who they are talking to, they reside in the house because Big Brother lets them, and it is Big Brother, not them, who can decide to make changes to their living situation. The numbers presented in table 4.1 therefore distinguishes between turns directed at “internal” and “external” interlocutors. The contestants are the internal co-participants, all people they talk to who do not reside in the house are external participants. This latter group includes representatives of the show, but also family members or friends that are addressed through the camera.

4.3.2 Advantages and limitations

Big Brother has been described as a human zoo, in which “the housemates are displayed in a simulated natural environment” (Roscoe, 2001:478). Just like in an actual zoo, the general behavior of its residents is not impeded, only the area they can move around in. Also similar to a zoo, visitors (the audience) feel they have the right to watch the residents’ every move and formulate all sorts of opinions and judgments about them as well. It is this confinement of the residents and the privilege of unlimited access to their behavior that makes this human zoo a perfect source for language use research.

As a result of being completely isolated from the outside world, the Big Brother residents dependent on each other for distraction and interaction. They do not have too much to do (aside from the weekly tasks that earn them money to order groceries), meaning one of their main activities is to hang around and talk. These interactions are the kind of spoken data that are not easily obtained: long, spontaneous, multi-party, naturally occurring stretches of talk between people that have no shared history. Although this is enough reason in itself to use these and not other data, pre-recorded data do present some challenges of their own. The main advantages and disadvantages of the data are discussed below.

The first advantage is the fact that the participants have no prior history. They have to resort to their basic knowledge and expectation of how to talk to others, since they do not have any information about how their co-habitants might react. Secondly, a lot of different types of interactions are observable - the housemates gossip, discuss more and less serious matters, complain, tell stories, coordinate activities, argue, and so on. A third advantage is that the number of people that are involved allows for different pairings of participants. The way they talk can thus potentially be cross-referenced with their interactional partner to see whether they adapt their uses of language.

One objection to using a televised show as source material might be that the participants’ behavior is unnatural or that the interactions are scripted.

However, even though the contestants indeed *know* they are observed, their behavior is reflective of human beings trying to show their best self. These interactions are thus taken to represent the conversational style they would use in similar situations where they would have to interact with newly acquainted people in a sympathetic manner.⁵ Therefore, I do not consider this a real limitation to the data, at least not in the context of the current study.

There is a serious limitation, though, that influences the availability and accessibility of interactional material. To find patterns in language use that together form a style, longer stretches of spontaneous talk are crucial. A challenge in using a television program for research purposes is that you do not have any control over what is and is not available. The producers of the show might make decisions that make a lot of sense from a production perspective, but can be destructive of interesting conversational data. To give some examples, some interactions are cut short, others “begin” in the middle of a conversation, and sometimes the conversation is overpowered by music or surrounding noises. Still, while the limitation is real, the bits and pieces that are available leave plenty of useful interactional data to work with.

4.3.3 Participants

Although the contestants are aware they are being recorded, they do not know what material is included in the daily broadcast or how the recordings are edited. The housemates in the 1999 season in the Netherlands did not even know millions of viewers tuned in each night to watch them live their lives. This group of people is especially interesting to the study of interactional norms, because they are essentially strangers that have to learn to live together. They have not met before entering the Big Brother house and thus have no previously established social relations to fall back to. They have to rely on how interaction is “normally” structured to get to know one another and establish a mutual relationship.

They might present themselves as (slightly) better or more sympathetic versions of themselves to ensure the television audience’s sympathy as well, but as (Pulaczewska, 2013:661) rightly points out “such conscious face- building is constantly present in our everyday lives, too, and does not disqualify the data as a very special sort”. The fact that they cannot escape the cameras and do not know what will and will not be on air further complicates the idea that the participants would behave unnaturally to impress the audience. Keeping up appearances all day, everyday for up to a hundred days is a steep challenge. Still, both contestants and producers confirm the normalcy of the interactions.

After leaving the Big Brother house, one of the contestants stated in an

⁵Of course nothing is truly similar to living in the Big Brother house. However, as Pulaczewska (2012:21) states, there are situations that resemble certain aspects of this situation like holiday camps, student housing, or shared apartments. All these situations involve a number of people, who are not at first acquainted, residing in a shared space and having to interact with each other to make it work.

interview they “just tried to be themselves” (Van de Pol, 2000). Moreover, as De Kloet and Chow (2000:125) assert, Big Brother is focused on producing and capturing authenticity. The goal was never to bring people spectacular television, instead the show wanted to show them how fascinating the banality of everyday life can be (Van Ginneken, 2000:114; Roscoe, 2001:479). At least in the early edition of the show, the aim was to cast ordinary people, rather than selecting eccentric or provoking characters to entertain the audience. One of the people involved in casting the Dutch housemates recalls they were looking for candidates to fulfill particular family roles - the dad, mom, and the rebellious son. They expected the dynamics between such characters to make for interesting television (Staat, 2000:89). The fact that the housemates were not actors but regular people who “wrote their own script” (Roscoe, 2001:480) allowed viewers to identify with them - quite possibly explaining the huge success of the show.

The premiere 1999 edition of Big Brother, broadcast in the Netherlands, originally included nine people; four women and five men.⁶ Three of them voluntarily left the house prematurely and were replaced by others. Twelve people have thus at one point lived in the Big Brother house, but never more than nine at the same time. These twelve people represent a variety of occupations: police officer, salesperson, teacher, student, singer, bartender, homemaker, entrepreneur, probation officer. Table 4.2 below provides an overview of the age profile of this group of twelve housemates.⁷

Dutch	<i>count</i>	<i>mean age</i>	<i>median age</i>	<i>youngest</i>	<i>oldest</i>
women	7	26.7	26	20	39
men	5	32	25	22	44
total	12	28.9	26	20	44

Table 4.2: Age profile Dutch participants. This table shows the number and age profile of male and female participants residing in the Big Brother house. A total of 12 residents have stayed at the Dutch Big Brother house, albeit not all at the same time. The mean age of the contestants is close to 29 year, with youngest being a woman of 22 and the oldest a man of 44. (The mean age of the original nine contestants was slightly higher, 30 years, due to two of the replacement contestants being younger than the contestants that had left the house.)

⁶From almost 3000 applications a selection of a few hundred people was made, who were invited for a screen test. All prospective candidates had to agree to a psychological evaluation, a medical screening and a background check to ensure they were mentally and physically fit to stay in the house for up to 107 days (Hille et al., 2000:5).

⁷The age profile of the original nine contestants moving into the Dutch Big Brother house is as follows:

Dutch	<i>count</i>	<i>mean age</i>	<i>median age</i>	<i>youngest</i>	<i>oldest</i>
women	4	27.5	23	20	39
men	5	32	25	22	44
total	9	30	26	20	44

The first (and thus far only) edition of Big Brother Indonesia was broadcast in the spring of 2011 and it saw 15 people enter the Big Brother house. In this edition the group of housemates consisted of eight men and seven women who had spent their days before the show as a model, homemaker, student, artist, doctor, entrepreneur, umbrella girl, working in administration, human resources, at a radio station, or freelancing.

Indonesian	<i>count</i>	<i>mean age</i>	<i>median age</i>	<i>youngest</i>	<i>oldest</i>
women	7	27.9	25	20	43
men	8	24.8	23.5	21	30
total	15	26.2	24	20	43

Table 4.3: Age profile Indonesian participants. This table shows the number and age profile of male and female participants residing in the Indonesian Big Brother house. In total there were fifteen residents staying in the house, all of whom moved in at the very first day. There were no replacements. The mean age is somewhat lower than the Dutch contestants are: just over 26 years old. The youngest contestant is a woman of 20, the oldest a woman of 43. The biggest difference with the Dutch contestants, in terms of age distribution, is the younger age of the men (a mean age of 32 in the Dutch, compared to 24.8 in the Indonesian competition).

The main difference between these two groups is the number of participants living in the Big Brother house. Since this thesis focuses on comparing how people in these two languages normally indicate involvement and establish alignment, it is important to start the analysis at a similar point for both groups. To establish what is “normal”, ideally the participants should not have any common ground other than their physical environment - at least as far as they know. Lacking prior information about other people’s knowledge, habits or expectations means people have to fall back on general principles of interaction; their baseline of interactive conduct. Therefore, I decided to focus on all interactions right from the start of the show, even if that meant the number of participants was different. Using the earlier interactions rules out the possibility that differences in patterns of use are a result of one group being unacquainted to each other (the Dutch speakers), whereas the other group has already spent seven weeks living together (the nine Indonesian contestants that are left after seven weeks). In those seven weeks, the Indonesian group could have developed routines of co-habitation not yet available to the Dutch group that had only just met for the first time.

4.4 From broadcast to data - constructing the corpus

The analyses in this thesis are based on roughly ten hours of video material of both the Dutch and the Indonesian first edition of Big Brother; the total set of data thus encompasses twenty hours of recorded natural interaction. These hours mostly consist of multi-party interactions, although some scenes involve visits to the diary room to talk to a member of the production team

(as explained in section 4.3.1). The data were selected based on the presence of accessible linguistic interaction. To give an example, when the housemates were seen working on a project without any talk involved (or inaudible due to music) that part of the episode was excluded. All selected material was subsequently manually transcribed and coded. This resulted in a corpus of informal conversation reaching almost 97.000 words in Dutch and 61.000 words in Indonesian. The corpus includes pragmatic annotation of all responsive contributions. Not all responsive actions are of course produced spontaneously (e.g. answers to questions), nor are all of them primarily targeting the interpersonal relation. This section will first address the transcription process, followed by an explanation of the coding protocol and a breakdown of the corpus and finally some challenges to the research procedure.

4.4.1 Transcripts

The selected episodes were fully transcribed and/or checked by both a native speaker of the relevant language and myself. A transcript was produced for all spoken material.⁸ Every (transcribed) scene also includes information about who are involved or present and where the interaction takes place. I use the term “scene” to describe a demarcated stretch of interaction in the material. A scene might be cut off due to the production team deciding to jump to a different location or activity in the house, or can end naturally when the participants move on to do something else. If there was even the slightest suspicion of a scene being edited by the show’s producers, this is indicated in the transcript. Each scene normally takes place in one location with a fixed group of people and covers a specific topic of talk. All changes in location and involved participants are mentioned in the transcript, change of topic is of course visible in the talk itself. The transcript thus represents what is called an open transcript, as it includes “every feature of talk and interaction as it unfolds” (Jenks, 2011:12) without a predetermined hypothesis or research goal.

As Tannen (2005:14) emphasizes, ideally both the verbal and non-verbal behavior is analyzed. Although the used source material includes audio and video, the editing process aimed at making good television, not good research data. The transcripts represent all verbal and where relevant (and visible!) non-verbal behavior of the involved participants. Non-verbal behavior is considered relevant when it (i) clearly presents a reaction or response to something another participant said and (ii) it is noticeably interpreted as a meaningful contribution by that other participant. The third position (the turn following a projective pair) gives a good sense of how the nonverbal act was interpreted by

⁸Many thanks to Tanja Sloos (research intern) and Eri Y Sidharta (research assistant) for their assistance with the transcripts. The financial means for the latter’s involvement was generously provided by LUCL. I would also like to thank the students of *Tekst- en gespreksanalyse* 2014-2015 for their willingness to act as co-coders. See Appendix A.2 for the transcription conventions, which are (loosely) based on Jefferson (2004). Appendix A.3 and A.4 present a longer stretch of transcribed conversation from respectively the Dutch and Indonesian material.

the first speaker. For example, nodding or frowning might lead the first speaker to continue or rephrase their turn to clarify what they meant. In doing so, they ratify the non-verbal act as a meaningful contribution. The turn following a projective pair thus holds information about how the participants themselves interpreted the behavior of their interlocutor.

4.4.2 Coding the data

To create some order in the chaos of hours of interaction, the relevant interactional exchanges have to be separated from the irrelevant. Using codes to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant cases and to assign the relevant cases to particular subsets makes the pool of analyzable data manageable. As Basit (2003:152) fittingly describes, coding allows you to “communicate and connect with the data to facilitate the comprehension of emerging phenomena and to generate theory grounded in the data”. Coding provides additional information to the transcript and can therefore be seen as a further “development of the transcription stage” (Adolphs and Carter, 2014:15). Whereas the transcript reflects the actual behavior in interaction, the codes reflect a higher level of abstraction of that behavior. By linking symbolic categories to certain contributions, qualitative records of events become quantifiable (see Bird and Liberman (2001) for an effort to design a unified frame for all types of linguistic coding and annotation).

Since the topic of this thesis is interpersonal involvement and positive alignment, the analysis, and therefore the coding, is focused on responsive actions. Whenever a participant has taken a stance regarding a particular object, other participants have the opportunity to join that first speaker in their position - positively aligning to them - or to present a different position - negatively aligning to them. The stancetaking of every party other than the first stancetaker is coded to investigate how speakers of Dutch and Indonesian preferably inform their conversational partner(s) about their subjective stance and consequent interpersonal alignment. To this end, all responsive contributions that present some form of positioning were coded, both the responses that establish positive and negative alignment.⁹ This resulted in a total of 4915 coded contributions in the Dutch corpus and 2667 coded contribution in the Indonesian corpus.

The coding was done by me as a bottom-up identification process: I read through all transcripts while watching the videos and provided a code when appropriate. To present evidence based on corpus data, a reliable method is needed to describe and analyze the patterns that are discovered (Tognini Bonelli, 2010:18). In an attempt to devise a set of codes that were most relevant to my research goals I followed the three rules of thumb in coding data presented by Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (1993:179-181): (i) the categories that

⁹Coding negative alignment as well is useful, even if it is not included in the analysis, because it provides an overall idea of how common certain linguistic structures are and how often and explicit speakers make their stance follow available to others. The negative alignment instances will not be discussed further in this thesis.

are distinguished should match the research goals of the current research (and not include “left over” codes from a borrowed coding scheme that are in fact irrelevant), (ii) it should be clear what each category represents and how it is different from other categories (categories are preferably mutually exclusive), and (iii) the chosen categories should be exhaustive, that is for all cases that are found a classification has to be provided.

The codes I used reflect prominent topics in research on affiliation and alignment and, more importantly, were observably different in the data. They represent the main resources speakers use to establish alignment with another party. The main codes attributed to positive alignment cases distinguish repetition (RPT), co-construction (COCON), paraphrase (PAR), agreement (AGREE) and reactions that include some reference to a shared evaluation (ME TOO).¹⁰ Apart from these main codes, all annotated cases provide information on three other aspects of the reaction, each of which is explained below. For the sake of transparency, the full breakdown of the corpus is given here, starting from the full collection of coded contributions, resp. 4915 cases in the Dutch corpus and 2667 cases in the Indonesian corpus.

Note that these numbers pertain to all contributions that follow some earlier utterance. This still includes reactions to participants not residing in the house (e.g. Big Brother representatives, family at home, the audience) and reactions to an earlier utterance produced by the same speaker (e.g. self-repair or reproduction of an utterance for emphasis). These reactions are excluded from the analysis, because they do not primarily target the interpersonal relationship between co-participants. However, they were coded to gain insight in the relative frequency of contributions constructing positive interpersonal alignment. The text below will use the starting data set to present some general trends that appear from this broader overview, and will explain how and why certain contributions were excluded from further analysis. The final number of contributions that *do* form the basis of the analyses presented in part II comes down to 3218 cases in Dutch and 1287 in Indonesian.

Responsive actions

All contributions that are discussed in this thesis are reactions to some other participant.¹¹ Furthermore, they are all produced spontaneously and do not carry (too) much new propositional content. They are, in terms of transfer of

¹⁰Appendix A.5 presents all codes used to organize the data; an example of coded data is given in Appendix A.6.

¹¹Some are responsive actions as well. Following (Thompson et al., 2015:3) the term *response* is understood to refer to contributions that present a proper closing of a projective project. That is, turns that are presented in the responsive slot, complete a proposed project, and are interpreted as such. Reactions refer to turns that react to something presented by another speaker, but are not a proper responsive action, in that they do not present uptake of the initiated or projected project. Both responses and reactions can contribute to establishing interpersonal alignment, although reactions - with their lack of clear propositional content or projected pair completion - are the primary suspects to perform a mostly phatic role.

information, redundant or irrelevant. However, they are highly valuable when it comes to the coordination of interpersonal understanding and stance. They represent a form of phatic communication at the heart of human interaction.

A distinction was made between content and feedback contributions. Content contributions are described as expressions that can stand on their own; they carry their own propositional content (e.g. “That is a beautiful cake”). Feedback contributions, on the other hand, cannot stand on their own, but are strongly linked to the turn they are presenting a reaction to (“Indeed”, “Okay”). Compare Roos’s contributions in example (1):

- (1) *Reaction or response?*
 Hanna but I thought she was joking, so I ju[st kept going.
 Roos (a) [hm
 (b) YEah
 (c) sure, I would’ve done the same thing
 (d) hungry?

Hanna reports on her experience in an earlier situation, which invites a response insofar as a telling is normally aimed at enlisting sympathy or affinity. The utterances in (a) and (b) are of the FEEDBACK type, the utterances in (c) and (d) reflect a CONTENT contributions. Note that the category of FEEDBACK is not restricted to the class of backchannels or continuers; a single affirmative marker that presents a full response (“Are you still at work?” - “Yes”) is just as much a feedback contribution as a simple “hm-hm”. The point is that both in (a) and (b) the utterance does not mean anything without the previous utterance. To some extent, this applies to (some) content contributions as well. In (c), the “same thing” that is being referred to is impossible to understand without access to the prior exchange. Yet, the utterance in (c) is much more insightful when it comes to the positioning of the second speaker; whatever the “thing” is that is referred to, both speakers are now connected to the same position regarding that thing. At least their mutual similarity or shared understanding of the situation is clearly visible in the utterance. In that sense, the utterance communicates its own message, independent from the earlier utterance.

Out of all reactive contributions, a good subset consists of feedback reactions: in the Dutch data, 51.66% (or 2539 out of 4915) presented a feedback reaction, compared to 38.13% (or 1017 out of 2667) in the Indonesian data. The difference in frequency and type of reaction is already a first sign that these two groups may have different expectations in interaction when it comes to the behavior of fellow participants.¹²

¹²The relative preference for feedback over content contributions further increases in Dutch in the subset of contributions directed at another contestant (i.e. excluding reactions to self or to some person not residing in the house). This collection of 4279 cases represents actual interpersonal interaction and is as such more representative than the full collection of contributions. Out of all other-directed contributions in Dutch, 2505 presented feedback (58.5%) against 1174 content contributions (41.46%). Conversely, in the Indonesian data the relative preference of for content over feedback increases when only considering contributions

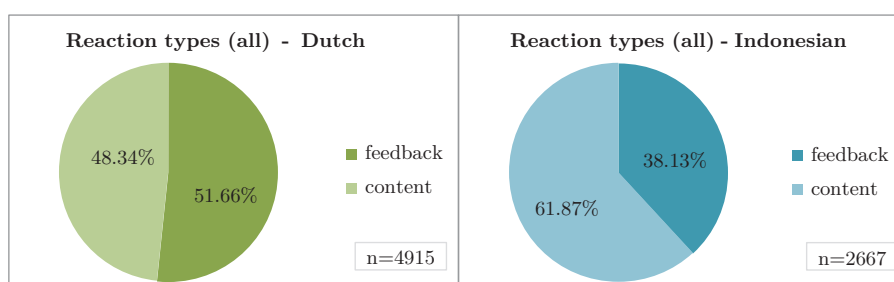


Figure 4.1: Feedback vs. content contributions. These figures present the relative share of feedback and content type reactions found in the corpus. The Dutch data shows a relatively higher number of feedback contributions (51.66% or 2539/4915) compared to content contributions (48.34% or 2376/4915), although they are very close together. The Indonesian data present a rather different picture: the relative share of feedback contributions (38.13% or 1017/2667) is much smaller than the share of content contributions (61.87% or 1650/2667).

Contributions that are coded as feedback may be performed in the responsive slot - after a transition relevant point - or mid-utterance (as in (a) above), indicating the person is listening. Moreover, owing to their limited propositional content, they can easily be non-verbal in nature. Content contributions may occur mid-utterance as well, for example, when a second speaker believes he or she is able to finish someone else's turn. Even though such a parallel contribution is not quite a response - since the utterance is presented ahead of the first speaker finishing the original his utterance and as such does not present a completion to the projected pair - it is a relevant propositional contribution in terms of constructing alignment. These mid-utterance contributions show involvement and the (at least one-sided) belief that the interlocutors share a common understanding. As such, they are relevant to the management of their interpersonal relationship.

Aside from FEEDBACK and CONTENT, a number of other codes were used to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant contributions. Each of those codes was designed to filter out data that did not target phatic communication and interpersonal alignment. The first distinction made is that between a reaction to some other participant's turn versus an earlier turn produced by the current speaker. After all, with only one speaker involved, there cannot be *interpersonal* alignment. The second distinction relates to the spontaneity of the contributions, since spontaneous informal reactions were explained to be the primary locus of interpersonal relationship management. Thirdly, contributions that are mostly concerned with the transfer of (factual) information were separated from phatic contributions. These three distinctions, and the consequences for the data collection, are each further discussed below.

directed at a fellow contestant. The Indonesian corpus includes 1893 other-directed reactions of which 839 present feedback (44.32%) and 1054 (55.68%) present a content contribution.

1. Self or other

Most of the lexical or grammatical forms that are used to establish or express alignment are used in other environments as well. One of the contexts I decided to exclude from this study is repetitions or corrections of self. Investigating interpersonal alignment inevitably focuses on multiple parties, making reactions to utterances that were produced earlier by the same speaker irrelevant to the current study. Recall that it was for this same reason that reactions directed at participants not residing in the Big Brother house were excluded from further analysis. Thus, only coded contributions that react to some other speaker residing in the house are relevant for the purpose of this study: those turns form the subset of interpersonal spontaneous interaction in which alignment and stancetaking is presumably found.

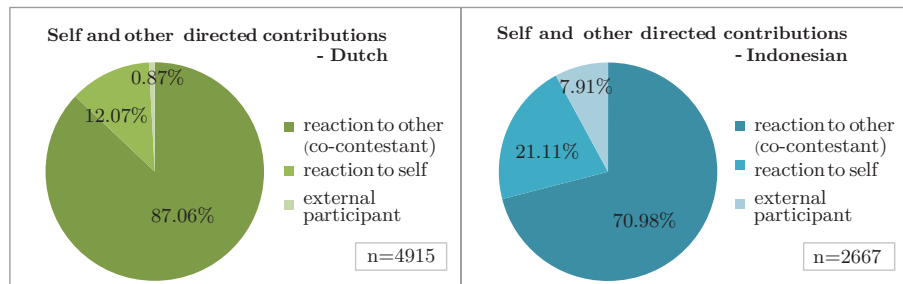


Figure 4.2: Reactions to self vs. other. The majority of reactions is, unsurprisingly, directed at some other participant. However, the size of this majority share differs markedly between the two collections. In The Dutch data 4279 contributions were directed at a fellow contestant (out of 4915, 87.10%); in the Indonesian data the peer-oriented reactions make up for 1893 cases (out of 2667, 70.98%). The share of contributions targeting an earlier utterance produced by the same speaker (e.g. cases of self-repair, emphasis, non-responsiveness) reaches 12.07% in Dutch (593/4915) and 21.11% in the Indonesian data (563/2667). In the Indonesian corpus almost 8% of reactions were directed at some participants external to the circle of contestants (i.e. a Big Brother representative, the audience, or someone back home), whereas this hardly occurred in the Dutch data (0.87%). This is likely an effect of the higher number of diary room visits edited into the Indonesian episodes.

Figure 4.2 shows that out of all reactive moves, the majority was indeed directed at a fellow contestant in both the Indonesian and Dutch data. This separation of self and other directed contributions results in 4279 contributions (out of 4915, equaling 87.10%) directed at a fellow contestant in the Dutch data, and 1893 relevant contributions in the Indonesian data (out of a total of 2667 contributions, or 70.98%) These numbers include all responsive moves targeting one of the other participants, irrespective of the function or goal of that move.

Turns that are produced by a second speaker in reaction to some other speaker were coded with OTHER. All structures that would be considered a reaction had someone *else* produced them, were coded as if that were the case - even if they were produced by the same speaker. This includes repair structures,

emphatic reproduction of a particular point, a second attempt to gain someone's attention, confirming one's own stance, etc. Whenever a speaker "reacted" to their own expression, the code SELF was added. The codes referring to both self and other reactions combined give us a sense of the general frequency of use of certain structures, whereas the reactions to self can easily be excluded from further in-depth analyses. To be able to shed light on how participants prefer to show their active involvement in Indonesian and Dutch informal interaction, a further distinction needs to be made between invited and uninvited responsive actions.

2. Invited or uninvited

Initiating actions can simply present information that the other participants can do with what they will or they can explicitly target a response from another party (Kotthoff, 1993:194). Prime examples of invited reactions are answers to questions (Heritage and Raymond, 2012:1). Whereas these invited reactions are not immediately relevant to this study, they seem to represent an environment in which many of the linguistic structures are found that are used for purposes of alignment as well.

Similar to the distinction between self and other, it was indicated for each case whether the reaction or response was invited or uninvited. Reactions that establish alignment are mostly uninvited: participants spontaneously decide to reproduce, paraphrase or confirm what was just said, thus communicating similarity between themselves and another person. In both data collections, most coded contributions were not encouraged, but were presented spontaneously by another participant.

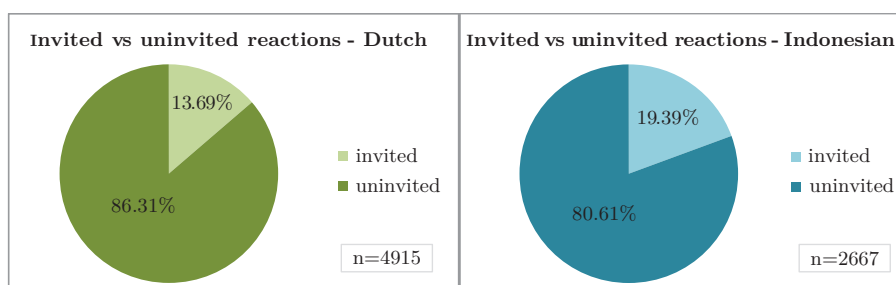


Figure 4.3: Invited vs. uninvited contributions. These figures show the large majority of cases to be presented spontaneously. In 86.31% of Dutch reactions (4242/4915) and 80.61% of Indonesian reactions (2150/2667) was it the second speaker that decided to say something in return, without being invited or encouraged to do so. Invited responses refer to those cases where the first speaker (explicitly) requests a response, the easiest example being a question that invites an answer.

Candidate solutions for word searches, as in "that museum in eh" followed by a silence, are considered to be invited as well since the first speaker opens up the floor to suggestions. All reactions that were in some way targeted or

invited by the first speaker were coded as INVITED; all cases in which the second speaker spontaneously decided to contribute something were marked UNINVITED. Open questions were excluded altogether, because the response they target is normally new information. Phatic communication and alignment is associated with speakers reacting to or (re)sharing knowledge that is already available in their common ground. The transfer (or request) of new information is thus not considered here.¹³ This is in fact the final and most important distinction that was made: that between informative and phatic or affiliative contributions.

3. Informative or affiliative

The relevant data set was restricted to affiliative moves only, by excluding all “informational” contributions. Many responsive actions did not primarily target interpersonal alignment, but rather presented requested new information or redirected the conversation to some other topic of talk (e.g. answers to open questions). Such interactional moves were excluded from the analysis, precisely because they are more concerned with the exchange of news or information than with establishing and maintaining the interpersonal relationship. Only contributions that presented an immediate reaction to a stance or position taken by the first speaker are included in the analysis.

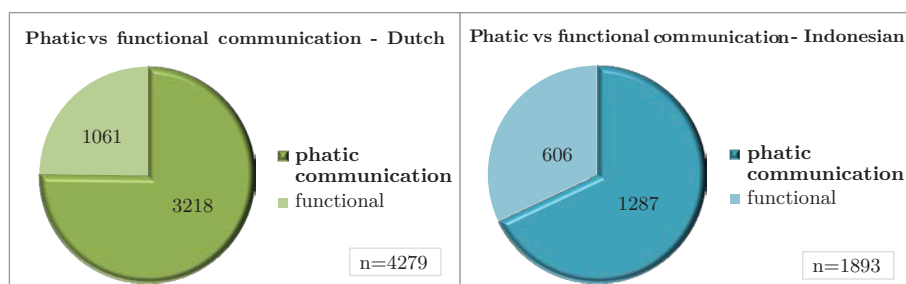


Figure 4.4: Phatic vs. functional contributions. The majority of spontaneous reactions can be classified as phatic communication. Out of all other-directed contributions, 75.20% resp. 68.09% in Dutch and Indonesian, are primarily socially relevant. This means that these contributions are not structurally necessary, i.e. they do not present an anticipated second pair part. Also, they do not obstruct or divert the course of action (in the form of repair or rejection) in any way. All contributions included in the raised pie part are primarily focused on continuing the ongoing interaction, constructing, and maintaining the interpersonal relationship. This results in 3218 phatic contributions in the Dutch corpus and 1287 in the Indonesian corpus.

Out of all other-directed contributions, most cases are in fact primarily relevant from a social perspective. In both data sets, the majority of reactions are

¹³An exception to this rule are confirmation questions, which are primarily concerned with the establishment of similarity and sharedness and therefore included in the analysis (cf. section 5.3).

affiliative in nature, although the share of phatic contributions is somewhat bigger in the Dutch corpus (75.20% or 3218/4279) compared to the Indonesian corpus (68.09% or 1287/1893). The numbers presented in the raised part of the pie chart represent the core data set that was used in this study. It includes all responsive actions that targeted some fellow participant *and* were deemed redundant in terms of informational value. The analysis presented in this thesis is thus based on 3218 instances of Dutch and 1287 instances of Indonesian phatic communication.

Actions - one or many?

An important point to keep in mind is that many actions in fact do several things at once. For example, a single turn does not just show confirmation, but also lays claim to the source or right of knowledge, or does not just show understanding, but autonomous (or even superior) access to information. The codes that were assigned to the relevant turns do not imply that all there is to that turn is what the code represents; they merely indicate to which broad categories of observable phenomena the turn belongs. For example, the code representing repetition of lexical items (RPT) only tells us that what the speaker says is a reiteration of an earlier turn. What the second speaker does or means with his repetition of the first turn is not yet determined.¹⁴ Whether they confirm, disconfirm, question, mock or do something else entirely is not yet established when giving a code. The codes refer to observable structures of alignment, not to intended or interpreted actions, let alone claims of epistemic access or autonomy. The quantitative analysis thus informs the subsequent qualitative analysis, by drawing attention to certain cases that might have otherwise passed by unnoticed (Hunston, 2007).

4.4.3 Challenges

Including pragmatic annotation or assigning codes to language use is a tricky endeavor. The main challenge to the coder(s) is to limit confusion between the different coding options and to ensure for all cases that deserve a code one is available. Ideally, manual coding of language use is done by a number of people in parallel to show people other than the developer can indeed apply the coding distinctions (Carletta et al., 1996:24). Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (1993:196ff) report that coding agreement varies greatly depending on topic of research and even from one team to the next. To produce similar codings of the same text, individuals are preferably trained together to make sure they have the same understanding of the process. Still, the percentage of agreement may be too low to be considered reliable, even with experienced coders (Spooren and Degand,

¹⁴The coding guide in Appendix A.5 shows codes for some subclasses. Whereas the main classes largely refer to categories of form or content, these subclasses are related to the main action performed by the speaker's contribution, it is thus a more functional indication. A particular turn was only assigned a subcode if there was a clearly recognizable action involved (e.g. a repair initiation, the completion of a routine, answering an open question).

2010:248). Remarkably, the best reliability scores are reported for individuals who have a close personal relationship. In other words, it seems that for co-annotators to produce similar results, understanding the coding system is not enough. They need to understand how the designer of the codes thinks and apply the codes as if they were the designer.¹⁵

If inter-annotator indeed correlates with how well the individuals involved know each other and to what extent they share a way of thinking, the question is how reliable the scores of inter-annotator reliability (and therefore objectivity of coding) in fact is. After all, if the second coder knows how to think *like* the first coder and applies that criterion when going through the material, is it really a measure of objectivity? At that point, the second coder is not necessarily trying to assign codes according to their own judgment, but rather trying to apply the codes as they think the first coder would do it. In other words, the effort shows an attempt to match someone else's subjective view and as a result does not say much about the objectivity of the coding design.

In the end it is mostly discussion and negotiation that is invaluable to fine-tuning the coding system (Lampert and Ervin-Tripp, 1993:200; called "double coding" by Spooren and Degand (2010:253). The coding system designed for this thesis is indeed the result of a number of rounds of parallel coding. In the first round I instructed a group of 8 undergraduate students to code a sample of conversation in groups of three. They first had to code their text individually and subsequently discuss the cases they disagreed on to see whether they could establish consensus amongst themselves on which code was most fitting. In the end, this test-run highlighted the most problematic codes and allowed me to adjust the codes where necessary. The revised version of the coding system was tested by a research intern and myself and led to further tweaking and modification. The result is the coding scheme that is used in this thesis (cf. Appendix A.5).

Unfortunately, I was not in the position to have other people go through all the data and apply codes. All coding is therefore subjective, although the categories the codes refer to are mostly structural and can as such be objectively recognized. An advantage to the disadvantage of not being able to reach inter-rater reliability is in fact this subjectivity. The individual strategies that one coder will develop to apply the codes will at least be applied systematically to all data (Spooren and Degand, 2010:254). Even if the coder is biased towards a particular interpretation, at least that bias is consistently present, thus not obscuring the overall comparison. To give a concrete example, suppose I assigned the code "paraphrase" to cases that someone else would not

¹⁵Core and Allen (1997) report an inter-annotator agreement for their annotation scheme DAMSL (Dialog Act Markup in Several Layers), that is close to - but still below - the limit for drawing scientifically reliable results. They scored around κ 0.6, whereas κ 0.8 is considered to be reliable. Scores above κ 0.67 are useful to draw tentative conclusions. Even though they themselves are optimistic on the successful implementation of their annotation scheme, the fact that inter-annotator agreement seems unreachable - even when a group of people actively work together to create an objective coding scheme - shows the complexity of pragmatic annotation.

categorize as such, at least the category of paraphrase is overrepresented across the board. This single-coder perspective thus has the up-sight that the data is coded consistently.

Because all coding is solely my own, I was rather conservative in assigning codes. Cases I had to think too hard about to “make them” belong to a certain category are not included. Cases in which I was unsure whom the speaker reacted to are not included. If I had any doubts at all whether they were in fact an example of alignment were not included. Surely, I unfairly excluded some cases by being maybe too cautious. Still I decided to focus on the most recognizable ways of establishing alignment, assuming that if a reaction was recognizable as such to me, it must have been recognizable to the participants that were actually part of the interaction as well. The problematic or marginal cases may show some pattern, and may even include the more interesting or creative language usage, but being the marginal cases they do not represent the preferred way of showing alignment.

Kádár and Haugh (2013:64) argue that a normative frame of reference is a key dimension of interpersonal evaluation. This adheres to the idea that people belonging to the same group would be likely - expected - to evaluate a particular behavior or relation in the same way. Whereas normativity is usually located at the societal or cultural level, it can be found on a smaller scale as well. All social units have their own shared norms (Kádár and Haugh, 2013:64). Indeed, the collective of people occupying a Big Brother house is a close-knit group that inevitably will share norms of interaction. It has to be kept in mind that the circumstances in which these people live is rather unnatural, possibly influencing their interactional behavior. Maybe not in the sense that they are trying to present a better version of themselves, but perhaps their ways of doing things is deviant from how they would conduct themselves in a less restricted environment. Indeed, as Goebel (2008, 2016) argues, the television environment could inspire performative behavior on the participants’ part, indexing (and forefronting) a particular identity.

Non-verbal communication

As noted in section 4.3.2, a genuine challenge to including the nonverbal behavior in the transcript and coding is the fact that the material was edited for broadcast. It is not uncommon for only one participant to be visible at a time, obscuring a lot of valuable information; someone may be nodding or shaking their head off-screen, meaning a case of positive alignment would go unnoticed. Whenever non-verbal behavior was accessible and considered to constitute a reaction (by me, but more importantly by the participant(s)) it was coded in the same way as the linguistic contributions. The coded non-verbal material is presumably incomplete and may present an unreliable result. The analysis will thus be largely restricted to the linguistic means that participants use to establish alignment.

4.5 Conclusion

Real-life soap *Big Brother* provides valuable interactional data: access to both audio and video recordings of naturally occurring longer stretches of informal interaction. One of the biggest challenges, however, is that the material was prepared for television, not for analysis. Some (parts) of the interactions that were broadcast are unusable because of editorial decisions to cut off the interaction, to play music that overpowers the talking voices, or to focus the cameras on someone or some action that is not immediately involved in the ongoing conversation. Still, even with these challenges and limitations, the advantage of being able to follow the natural interactional behavior of a group of strangers in a variety of situations makes the material worthwhile.

Roughly ten hours of video material was transcribed for both Dutch and Indonesian, resulting in a corpus of twenty hours of informal interaction. The transcripts were subsequently subjected to a round of coding, to categorize the data and uncover first patterns of use. All responsive actions were coded. The relevant set of data was restricted to spontaneous contributions that were directed at a fellow contestant and had a primarily affiliative function. This last point, admittedly, is difficult to determine. The decision to include some contribution as an example of phatic communication is thus associated with the other two aspects. In short, for a contribution to be included in the final data set, it had to meet four conditions: (i) the contributions had to be produced spontaneously, (ii) it had to have a clear connection to the prior turn, (iii) it had to be directed at another contestant, and (iv) it had to present a positively aligning second stance.

All data was first studied line by line to assign codes to those responsive actions that established alignment or showed structural choices often used in establishing alignment. This first “horizontal reading” of the corpus allowed for the subsequent analysis of the subset of pragmatic phenomena of interest (Ruhlemann and Aijmer, 2015:3). Through the assignment of codes, the data could be categorized in basic subsets of linguistic resources people use in relation to their interpersonal positioning. These subsets were then used to conduct a more detailed analysis, to unveil patterns of language use or occurrence of certain lexical items within or across these subsets. The patterns resulting from this analysis were subjected to a qualitative analysis.

The next three chapters each discuss one main set of resources to construct and communicate sharedness. Each of these categories was designed to reflect a major group of phenomena used to establish interpersonal alignment, although they are by no means found exclusively in this particular environment. The individual instances included in this study are often not required and they present little new information about the actual topic of talk. Instead, the personal experience and interpersonal alignment is addressed. The first chapter explores the use of agreement markers, support, and explicit expressions of alignment. The second chapter focuses on reproduction meaning and form, and the third chapter addresses co-construction of utterances and thoughts.