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### Stance, Alignment, and Affiliation During Storytelling: When Nodding Is a Token of Affiliation

Tanya Stivers<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

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# Stance, Alignment, and Affiliation During Storytelling: When Nodding Is a Token of Affiliation

Tanya Stivers

*Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics  
Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

Through stories, tellers communicate their stance toward what they are reporting. Story recipients rely on different interactional resources to display alignment with the telling activity and affiliation with the teller's stance. In this article, I examine the communication resources participants to tellings rely on to manage displays of alignment and affiliation during the telling. The primary finding is that whereas vocal continuers simply align with the activity in progress, nods also claim access to the teller's stance toward the events (whether directly or indirectly). In mid-telling, when a recipient nods, she or he claims to have access to the teller's stance toward the event being reported, which in turn conveys preliminary affiliation with the teller's position and that the story is on track toward preferred uptake at story completion. Thus, the concepts of structural alignment and social affiliation are separate interactional issues and are managed by different response tokens in the mid-telling sequential environment.

When someone tells a story, the teller provides the recipient with “access” to an event and to the teller's stance toward that event. By “access,” I do not mean simply that the recipient is provided with information but rather that they are provided

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Correspondence should be sent to Tanya Stivers, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, PB 310, NL-6500 AH Nijmegen, The Netherlands. E-mail: Tanya.Stivers@mpi.nl

with the means to understand what it was like to experience the event being reported through the eyes of the teller. This is critical to the argument presented here in which I claim that story recipients who nod during a storytelling convey something different than when they offer vocal continuers during the telling. With a nod, recipients, in the first instance, claim to have achieved some measure of access to and understanding of the teller's stance either indirectly or directly. By contrast, vocal continuers do not claim such access, even if they acknowledge the information provided in the telling and support the progress of the telling (what I later refer to as *alignment*). Second, I show that through claiming access to and understanding of the teller's stance, story recipients show themselves to endorse the teller's perspective (what I later refer to as *affiliation*) in the mid-telling environment, even if only preliminarily. I support these claims with two main types of evidence: (a) tellers treat head nods in mid-storytelling environments differently from other common mid-telling response tokens (*mm hm* and *uh huh*) and (b) recipients offer nods in very particular places in storytellings, namely, where they are offered elements that provide them with access to tellers' stances toward events being reported—either directly or indirectly. Finally, I show that nods are not generic affiliation tokens but that they derive this valence from their claims of access in this particular mid-telling sequential position. In the course of this discussion, one sees that the concepts of affiliation and alignment can be separated.

## BACKGROUND

### Storytelling

To some extent, this argument has as a prerequisite a conceptualization of storytelling as an activity that both takes a stance toward what is being reported and makes the taking of a stance by the recipient relevant. Although not articulated in quite this way, there is substantial support for this perspective in the work of Sacks (e.g., 1974) and Jefferson (e.g., 1978). For instance, considering when a storytelling succeeds or fails is another version of the question “what is relevant at story end?” Jefferson (1978) discussed as “failure” a case where “the story is treated as utterly irrelevant to the ongoing talk and is sequentially deleted” (p. 229). Sacks (1974) contrasted three main possible responses to the telling on which he focused (in his case, a joke). Sacks (1974) discussed immediate laughter, delayed laughter, and silence. Sacks (1974) argued that all are systematic possibilities but that “laughings ... have a priority claim on a joke's completion” (p. 348). Silence and delayed laughter, Sacks (1974) intimated, are in a class of unequal but nonetheless possible alternative responses.

Taken together, these analyses suggest not only that storytellings make relevant a display of recipient stance on story completion (Sacks's [1974] “response se-

quence”) but also that not all stances are equivalent. Storytellings, like many other social actions, can thus be viewed as having preferred and dispreferred response types. “Preference” refers to the “range of phenomena associated with the fact that choices among nonequivalent courses of action are routinely implemented in ways that reflect an institutionalized ranking of alternatives” (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, p. 53) and was introduced by Sacks (1987) and Pomerantz (1984). Arguably, the real import of Sacks’s (1974) and Jefferson’s (1978) discussions is the contrast between responses that treat the events being reported in the telling in the same way as the teller and those that do not. Because laughter treats a joke as funny, virtually any other response treats the telling as, relevantly, not funny. Sacks (1974) observed that tellers routinely make use of prefaces to provide “an initial characterization” of the story (p. 340). Sacks (1974) noted that this “can serve to motivate a positive reply” by the recipient and furthermore

seems to have a distinctive structural job of informing recipients about the sort of response teller seeks after his telling, thereby aiding recipients in listening throughout to find, from the telling, such materials as are relevant to the production of such a response and to its positioning. (p. 341)

Thus, Sacks (1974) and Jefferson (1978) have both suggested that the preferred response to a storytelling is the provision of a stance toward the telling that mirrors the stance that the teller conveys having (often in the story preface) whether that is as funny, sad, fabulous, or strange.

Having established that a display of stance is relevant at story completion, the question becomes how this issue gets managed during the course of the telling. In what follows, I examine existing work on mid-telling responses to see how story participants manage issues of alignment and affiliation in the course of the telling prior to the point at which the recipient should display his or her own stance toward the events reported in the telling.

### Alignment and Affiliation in Storytelling

Communication researchers became concerned with separating out mid-telling-type response tokens from other sorts of responses quite early on (Dittmann & Llewellyn, 1968; Duncan & Fiske, 1977; Yngve, 1970). Researchers in this area have subsequently documented that these response tokens play a key role in the ways that story recipients shape and even contribute to an emerging story (Bavelas, Coates, & Johnson, 2000; Drummund & Hopper, 1993; Duranti, 1986; C. Goodwin, 1979, 1986a; M. H. Goodwin, 1980; Mandelbaum, 1989). Across interaction research there is broad agreement with the position that tokens such as *mm hm, uh huh*, and *yeah*; and nods are appropriately considered to be one class of response,

whereas assessments (e.g., “That’s fantastic.”) and other full turn responses (e.g., “I see.”) are appropriately analyzed differently (Bavelas et al., 2000; C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; M. H. Goodwin, 1980; Jefferson, 1983; Schegloff, 1982).<sup>1</sup> Although M. H. Goodwin (1980) and Jefferson (1983) have discussed the former as “acknowledgments,” Schegloff (1982) as “continuers,” and Bavelas et al. (2000) as “generic responses,” there is general agreement among these researchers that *mm hm, uh huh yeah*, and nods form a collection of tokens that treat the turn as still in progress (C. Goodwin, 1986b; M. H. Goodwin, 1980; Jefferson, 1984; Schegloff, 1982), at least if delivered without prosodic salience (Müller, 1996).<sup>2</sup> In the storytelling context, I term such treatment *aligning*. When a recipient *aligns* with a telling, he or she supports the structural asymmetry of the storytelling activity: that a storytelling is in progress and the teller has the floor until story completion. *Disaligned* actions undermine this asymmetry by competing for the floor or failing to treat a story as either in progress or—at story completion—as over. Thus, *alignment* is with respect to the activity in progress.

Extracts 1 and 2 show two examples taken from a family dinner where vocal continuers *align* with the telling activity. Here the boy’s continuative “Yeah” tokens pass on the opportunity to do more (Jefferson, 1983; Schegloff, 1982). In both cases, the boy facilitates the telling structurally insofar as a small silence has emerged at points where the teller is not possibly (pragmatically) done with the telling:

## (1) FD 01736

- |   |        |   |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | MOM:   | when uhm: (0.5) tlk thuh Lakers were: almost    |
| 2 |        | definitely losing,                              |
| 3 |        | (.) ((Mom’s body torqued in direction of boy    |
| 4 |        | but boy is behind her pouring a glass of milk)) |
| 5 | BOY: → | Yup,  |
| 6 | MOM:   | An’ uh:m_ (1.0) Was it (.) What’s his name      |
| 7 |        | that made all the freethrows, Miller?           |

## (2) FD 01736

- |   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | MOM:   | But it wasn’t for sure that the Lakers were        |
| 2 |        | gonna lose yet, cuz it was only like fi:ve points, |
| 3 |        | (0.2)  |
| 4 | BOY: → | Yeahp,   |
| 5 | MOM:   | an’ it still coulda been anybody’s game,           |

In Extracts 1 and 2, one sees that vocal continuers, as analyzed in previous studies, treat the structure of the telling as not yet complete and thus align with the telling activity as still in progress. They make no claim of access to either the events

being reported or the teller's stance toward those events, nor do they convey a stance toward these events in and of themselves. Activity alignment by the recipient is not a given. Sacks (1974) showed this in his analysis of a joke's telling. Extract 3 shows an example of how a recipient can actively obstruct a telling by initiating what Koenig (2005) termed an "oblique" sequence. Here during a family dinner, the mother is telling about something that happened during a professional basketball game earlier that evening:

## (3) FD 01736

- 1 MOM: Reggie Miller ma:de a bunch of freethrows like  
 2 right there at the end like two three in a row  
 3 whatever an' then sat down, an he was really  
 4 concentrating, His buddy wanted tuh .h slap his  
 5 hand after the first one, he's like no: no: I'm  
 6 concentrating, .hh and then later he told his  
 7 buddy you know, (0.5) jus' kinda held his hand,  
 8 shook his hand whatever,  
 9 BOY: -> His bud [dy,  
 10 MOM: [He sat down on the be:nych?  
 11 BOY: -> His [buddy?,  
 12 MOM: [It was his own team member?  
 13 (.)  
 14 BOY: Oh:.  
 15 MOM: Who's a frind of his, Ye(h)ah so it's his  
 16 buddy.  
 17 MOM: So anyways he sits down on the bench, . . .

Instead of offering a response token that would facilitate the progress of her telling, the boy actively impedes the telling's progress by challenging his mother's reference form "his buddy" (line 9). When the mother declines to respond to his repair initiation (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), he redoes it stressing it still more strongly (line 11). Here the mother responds by accounting for her use of the formulation (line 12), which is accepted (line 14; although she further expands on it in lines 15–16 before resuming the telling in line 17). Here the boy's mid-telling initiation of a sequence disrupts the progressivity of his mother's telling, and thus his response is analyzable as obstructive rather than facilitative and therefore as disaligning with the telling activity.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to *alignment*, with the term *affiliation* I mean that the hearer displays support of and endorses the teller's conveyed stance. As discussed in the introduction, in the environment of story completion in which what is due is for the recipient to display his or her stance toward the reported event, preferred and affiliative uptake involves taking a stance that matches the teller's stance toward the event(s)

being described as, for example, funny, sad, horrible, or exciting. However, aligned responses are not necessarily affiliative. In mid-telling position, assessments—generally agreed to display *affiliation* (or *disaffiliation*) with the speaker (Bavelas et al., 2000; C. Goodwin, 1986b; C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; M. H. Goodwin, 1980)—can be treated by tellers as too strong. One explanation is that recipients may be understood to be *disaligning* with the in-progress telling by treating the telling as complete when it was not. In Extract 4, two girls are on the telephone, and Hyla is narrating the plot of a play that she and Nancy are about to see (line 6). The telling continues for some time. At line 35, Nancy assesses the report about the play as sounding “so goo:::d?” Hyla treats this assessment as too strong for its mid-telling position, asking Nancy to “wai:t.” and then continuing with the telling:

## (4) Hyla &amp; Nancy

- 1 Nan: Kinyih tell me what it's about:t?=  
 ((27 lines of description not shown))  
 29 Hyl: =.hh En she's fixed up, (0.4) en she meets this gu:y, .hh a:n'  
 30 yihknow en he's (.) rilly gorgeous'n eez rilly nice en  
 31 ev'rythi [:ng bud li ]ke=  
 32 Nan: [Uh h u :h,]  
 33 Hyl: =.hh He's ah .hh Hollywood (0.3) s:star's son yihknow who wz  
 34 a mista [ke en they [put im in'n [Academy, ]  
 35 Nan: -> [O o this [s o u n d s [so goo::: ]\_::[d?  
 36 Hyl: [school, .hh buh  
 37 => wai:t.'n then, .hhm (0.2) .tch en the:(w)- the mother's .hh  
 38 sister is a real bigot.  
 39 (.)  
 40 Nan: [ i - Y a : h , ]  
 41 Hyl: [Yihknow en sh] e hates anyone who isn' a Cath'lic.=

This suggests that what constitutes affiliation will vary by sequential context.

In this section, I have shown that both alignment and affiliation are at issue in the storytelling environment and that tellers monitor these tokens for their fit-ness to the sequential position. Mid-telling responses must be calibrated with respect to their sequential position to maintain the balance between displaying activity alignment and affiliation with the teller. When this calibration goes awry, recipients are vulnerable to being heard as *disaligning* or *disaffiliating* or both. In what follows, I outline the data relied on in this study and then begin the analysis by showing some of the resources tellers rely on for conveying their own stance. One then sees that nods contrast with vocal continuers in both their environments of use and in what they claim. With nods, story recipients claim that they have achieved some measure of access to the events being reported and that they



understand and endorse the teller's stance toward these events, even if preliminarily. I argue that it is through this mechanism that they offer tellers affiliation.

## DATA AND METHOD

The data for this article are approximately 40 first-position (i.e., self-initiated) tellings. All were videotaped and involve 2 to 5 participants in spontaneous, naturally occurring, face-to-face interaction in varieties of American English. I considered a nod to be a rhythmical vertical head motion consisting of at least one down-up trajectory. Typically, head nods in these data began with a downward motion. The intensity and duration of nods varied widely, but this would be a study in its own right and not one that I attempt here. From the corpus of tellings gathered for this study, all evidence suggests that nods (whether one or multiple, whether deep in their vertical trajectory or shallow, whether rapid or slow) are still tokens of a single gesture type (Duncan & Fiske, 1977; Kendon, 2004; McClave, 2000) much the same way that other items such as *Mm hm* or *Yeah* retain their lexical semantics even though substantial interactional work can be done through their delivery (see, e.g., Müller, 1996). For this reason, the placement of the nod has been transcribed, but little additional work has been done to show the quality of the nod.

Within this corpus, I identified 40 instances of head nods occurring on their own (i.e., not in overlap with a spoken item) during these tellings. Conversation analysis is the method used for analysis of these data (for thorough reviews of the theoretical assumptions of CA and its use as a method, see C. Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Heritage, 1984b; Levinson, 1983). This method attempts to identify and understand the structures that underlie everyday social interaction. The data were transcribed according to the now standard conventions originally developed by Gail Jefferson (as cited in Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). The conventions used here are described in Appendix A.

## ANALYSIS

### Teller Stance

As discussed in the introduction, Sacks (1974) showed that tellers use story prefaces to convey to listeners how and when to respond. The primary means tellers have for instructing listeners is to display their own stance toward the events they are reporting. I here use *stance* to mean the teller's affective treatment of the events he or she is describing whether that is communicated explicitly or implicitly. In this section, I review several resources with which tellers convey their stance

toward the telling and its sub-elements. This will prove important when, in later sections, I argue that these are environments where story recipients are more likely to nod than in other environments, and tellers may even use these resources to invite preliminary displays of recipient stance toward the events of the telling.

The range of teller resources for conveying their stance includes at least (a) the use of story prefaces (Jefferson, 1978; Sacks, 1974), (b) “non-canonical information packaging”<sup>4</sup> (e.g., the use of the passive voice, imperfective, or special lexical choices) in the course of the telling, (c) prosody, and (d) the context of the telling. Through each of these resources, tellers convey to recipients the stance that they should take at story end, and thus they convey what the preferred response to this telling is. In all cases, the preferred response is treated as the response that the teller conveys to be his or her own orientation to the event.

One can see many of these features in the following telling. Here, Lance is telling his housemate Gio about an event in which their neighbor yelled at him because their dog escaped from the back yard:

(5) Housemates

- 1 LAN: 1-> Did I mention to you that I **got yelled at** by one of  
 2 our neighbours today?  
 3 (0.2)  
 4 GIO: No,  
 5 ((5 lines joking deleted))  
 6 LAN: 2-> **The dawg got out the gate.**  
 7 (0.5)  
 8 (The)/(That) back gate.  
 9 (0.2)  
 10 GIO: Ohw was it the same voice as uh: the answering machine?  
 11 LAN: Mm hm,  
 12 (.)  
 13 GIO: Was it?  
 14 LAN: <Her name(.) is (.)Laura>  
 ((5 lines deleted))  
 20 LAN: Anyway (0.5)  
 21 3-> **That back gate ((staccato))** (0.2)  
 22 The one that goes around the side(s) the uh (.) bedrooms?  
 (0.2)  
 23  
 24 GIO: Mm h [m?  
 25 JUD: [Yep, [hh hm hm hm hm ] hm hm  
 26 LAN: 4-> [**Somehow came undone**]  
 27 ((10 lines deleted))

- 28 GIO: So it was the same girl who left a message on our machine?  
 29 (.)
- 30 LAN: Yeah, sounds like it.
- 31 5-> She was all (.) **“lthis’s the third time.”**
- 32 LAN: Although (.) maybe she was wa- walking- you know maybe it  
 33 wasn’t her because she was walking a great dane .hh ml and  
 34 she said it was mauling our dog.
- 35 GIO: [And she tried ] to pick up the dawgs [that-] ( ) carry it  
 36 LAN: [( ) ] [and ] I don’t think  
 37 she could( ) uh great dane  
 38 (0.2)
- 39 LAN: No ’cause she lives like two- two houses down.  
 40 (0.2)
- 41 6-> And she said uhh, **“you guys gotta do something to  
 42 restrain him.”**  
 43 (0.8)
- 44 GIO: [(She said) ]-  
 45 LAN: [( ) ]
- 46 GIO: She said (we had to do something) tuh restrain him?  
 47 LAN: Yeah.
- 48 LAN: 7-> She goes (.) **“you had better tie up that do:g.”** and I said  
 49 well it’s pretty well contained back there\_ she goes  
 50 8-> **“!Obviously not!”** hh  
 51 GIO: hh Didju tell her to (just) fuck off?,

Throughout, Lance treats his own behavior as reasonable, that he was not at fault in the event he describes, whereas their neighbor was unnecessarily adversarial. We can see this, for instance, is the use of the passive voice<sup>5</sup> in both the story preface (Arrow 1) and the telling proper (Arrows 2 and 3/4). Passive voice is generally understood as a way to diminish the participant’s agency (e.g., Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1972). Here, the passive construction diminishes Lance’s agency in the misdeed for which he was blamed and suggests that he was blameless.

Similarly, see the choice of determiner at Arrows 2 and 3. Because the dog is their dog and because normally he is referred to by name (“Jack”), this reference to him as **“the dawg”** is hearable as not “simply referring” (Schegloff, 1996; Stivers, 2007). The determiner here works to convey that the dog is the source of a forthcoming complaint (in a way that neither “our dog” nor “Jack” would). Similarly, **“That back gate”** (where the likely default in a context in which there is only one back gate would be “The back gate”) also has a complaint forecasting function by not placing the gate within what Enfield (2003) called the speaker’s “here space” when this was possible. This is common among marked references to persons (Stivers, 2007).

If one examines the prosodic resources, one can observe that reported speech is used repeatedly. In using reported speech (Arrows 5, 6, 7, and 8), Lance adopts a voice different from his own. In each case, the reported speech voice is less animated, more staccato, and lower intoned than his own. This too then provides insight into Lance's own orientation to the person in the telling as in the wrong.

In addition to all of these ways in which a teller can convey his or her own stance and thereby instruct recipients as to the type of response due at story completion, tellers also provide recipients with access to the events themselves. Although less direct than some of the prior resources, access to the events themselves nonetheless allows a recipient to make an assessment of the events and in turn provides insight into the teller's stance, even if indirectly. In this example, the reported speech is one example. I discussed the voice quality used to deliver the reported speech previously. However, that he utilizes quotation rather than simply paraphrasing the conversation is also a way of allowing the recipient a greater opportunity to assess the situation as well as providing more insight into the teller's likely stance.

Each of the resources discussed (the story preface, the passive voice, the lexical choices, the prosody used to animate the neighbor, and the use of reported speech) provides Gio with access either to the event itself (and indirectly to Lance's stance toward it) or directly to Lance's own stance toward the neighbor as unreasonable and unjustified in the manner of her complaint (and possibly in the complaint itself). Gio treats this as Lance's position and affiliates with it (thereby offering a preferred response at story completion with "Didju you tell her to (just) fuck off?").<sup>6</sup>

An additional feature of storytellings that tellers may rely on to convey their stance toward a reportable is the context of the telling. Institutional contexts, such as during a medical visit, at a complaint desk, or during an emergency call, are contexts that may shape the stance recipients hear tellers to be taking. That is, a telling about an event will be heard, because of contextual factors, as a description of a problem, even if this is not explicitly flagged. This is not only true of institutional contexts. Jefferson (1978) showed different ways that stories get introduced into turn-by-turn talk. One resource Jefferson (1978) identified is via "a conventional story-prefixed phrase" (p. 224). In each of Jefferson's (1978) examples, the story is being told in a context in which tellers' stances are projected by virtue of their response to the prior turn and their positioning of the story vis-à-vis that ("That's true," "I know what you mean," "Really.," "*He* can be a bastard too.," "But it *don't* happen that way"). In all cases, the sequential context of the story at its beginning provides the recipient with access into the teller's stance toward the reportable even prior to other resources, such as those discussed earlier in this section, coming into play.

In this section, I reviewed some of the resources that tellers rely on to display their stances toward the event/experience on which they are reporting and thus to convey to listeners what sort of response is preferred at story completion. A core

part of this process is the provision of access to the teller's stance both indirectly (through access to the events) or directly. This is critical as I turn to nods and vocal continuers.

### Vocal Continuers Versus Nodding

Evidence that nods and vocal continuers are different sorts of response tokens begins with two observations: First, nods and vocal continuers are generally positioned in response to different elements of the telling. Second, as response tokens during in-progress tellings, nods and vocal continuers are treated as distinct forms of response. These observations are particularly evident when story recipients use a vocal continuer and a nod in close proximity to one another. For instance, see Extract 6. Here two housemates (Lianne and Katie) are hosting Taryn for dinner. Katie initiates telling a story about a recent time when they babysat a dog. Here the telling proper begins at line 1. Notice that in response, after a brief silence, Taryn, the story recipient, offers a vocal continuer (line 4):

(6) BD 2/3 000356

- 1 Kat: .tlk Alright so Curt's parents come for dinner?,  
 2 (.)  
 3 Lia: #h[m#  
 4 Tar: -> [(M)m hm,  
 5 (0.3)  
 6 Kat: An' uhm\_ (0.8) we're like  
 7 Lia: H(h)m!/(0.8)  
 8 Kat: "Leave your ^dog;" "We'll babysit your dog,"  
 9 (.)  
 10 Tar: ((Gaze shifts to Katie))  
 11 Kat: ["We have uh dog £t^oo.,"]  
 12 Tar: => [ ((nodding . . . . . )) ]  
 13 Kat: an so:\_ his parents leave thuh dog,

Like other continuers shown in Extracts 1 and 2, this continuer is offered at a point in the telling in which the recipient has not been provided with any access to either the events being reported or to the teller's stance toward them. However, a telling activity has been projected and is clearly in progress. The continuer aligns with the telling activity but does nothing more. By contrast, in lines 8 and 11, Katie uses reported speech to depict how she and Lianne reacted to Curt's parents' visit with their dog. They report offering to babysit the dog. This, in contrast with the announcement of Curt's parents coming to dinner, does provide Taryn with access to both Katie's stance toward this event and to a component of the event because it

describes what they did (offering to keep the dog) and portrays the offering as something they did with enthusiasm (note the pitch peak and emphasis on “dog” and the quick succession of offers in line 8). The teller treats the offer as a reasonable thing to have done and one done with neither hesitation nor reservation.

In response to this, Taryn shifts her gaze from her plate to the story teller (arguably monitoring whether she is gazing at her) and nods (line 12) in overlap with a third unit of reported speech, ““We have uh dog  $\text{f}t^{\wedge}\text{oo}$ .”” In contrast to the vocal continuer, the nodding is positioned where the teller has produced a telling element that provides insight into her own stance.

A similar case is shown in Extract 7. Here, two hair stylists, Nicole and Shauna, are talking while Nicole is working on a client. One can observe that there is a vocal continuer “Mm hm” following lines 4 to 5 (which offer background but no insight into the teller’s stance toward the event she is reporting—birthday plans). “Mm hm” aligns with the telling activity and may also accept that Nicole’s son Troy is leaving Monday night:

(7) HS5 7-23-03T2 04.20

- 1 Nicole: Sunday’s my honey’s birthday:,  
2 (0.4)
- 3 Shauna: I know:, whut=[you (doin’-)/(gon=do-)]  
4 Nicole: [We wuz gon go t’ South Springs but  
5 Troy’s leavin’ monday night?,  
6 (0.2)
- 7 Shauna: **Mm hm,**
- 8 Nicole: y’know mah resort, out there,  
9 <He got tha same timeshare I got.  
10 (1.0)
- 11 Nicole: I wuz like nah:=I better not do that\_ I need t’be  
12 here.  
13 (0.3)
- 14 Nicole: Cuz he need=ta finish (his)/this last day a’summer  
15 schoo:l\_ ‘n he gotta be in Alanena et fi:ve.  
16 (0.7)
- 17 Nicole: So I ain’t tryin’=a go t’South Springs  
18 ‘n turn aroun, <Y’know go Sunday eve[nin’,  
19 Shauna: [Come ba:ck.  
20 Nicole: [°turn aroun ‘n come right back, so we gon’ do=  
21 Shauna: [(**nods**)]  
22 Nicole: =that another ti:me.

By contrast, at line 21, Shauna nods. This is at a point in which Nicole has accounted for the decision not to drive to South Springs, saying that they would

not have enough time. Thus, the nod is positioned where Nicole has provided Shauna with access to her stance toward the trip as being a hassle and therefore not feasible.

Not only do story *recipients* use nods in different environments from vocal continuers, *tellers* also treat recipients' nods and vocal continuers differently. For instance, see Extract 10. Here immediately following Extract 7, Nicole mentions where she intends to go for her boyfriend's birthday followed by an account for how and why she would go there (she can pay for it with a gift certificate that she already has):

(8) HS5 7-23-03t2 000401

- 1 Nicole: °turn aroun 'n come right back, so we gon'  
 2 do that another ti:me. .hh but uh:m I'm'a  
 3 go t' Stevie's?,  
 4 Nicole: I got a gift certificate,  
 5 (0.7)  
 6 Shauna: -> Mm hm:,  
 7 Nicole: for my [birthday,  
 8 [(Nicole shifts gaze to Shauna))  
 9 Shauna: => ((nod nod))/(0.4)  
 10 Nicole: So I figure we'll go there. . .

In this environment, Nicole is not looking at Shauna, and Shauna, after a gap of silence, offers a vocal continuer.<sup>7</sup> This is not treated as adequate though, and Nicole pursues uptake with an expansion of the prior turn constructional unit with the phrase “for my birthday,.” This increment (Schegloff, 2001) provides minimal if any additional information, and it does not further the progress of the telling. Thus, it primarily works to elicit a particular (and different) response from Shauna. Here Nicole shifts her gaze to Shauna who then provides a nod.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the vocal continuer, this is treated as adequate uptake, and Nicole proceeds to the next component of her telling. (Note in particular the use of the resumptive “so” as a preface to her continuation; Raymond, 2004.)

In this section, I have shown that in contrast to vocal continuers, nods are typically positioned following telling elements that provide the recipient with access to the events being reported in the telling or directly to the teller's stance toward those events. Moreover, vocal continuers are oriented to differently from nods. In the next section, I move a step further showing that the provision of a nod claims access to the event(s) and that in the mid-telling position, this does affiliative interactional work.

### Nodding as Claiming Access

The last section was primarily concerned with comparing nods to vocal continuers. Here I focus on evidence for my primary claim that nods claim access to the teller's

stance and by virtue of this that in the mid-telling position, they affiliate with the teller. I begin with a more detailed look at how tellers provide story recipients with access both to the events being described in the telling and to their stance toward these events.

A primary way that tellers provide recipients with access to the reported event is to become more “granular” (Schegloff, 2000) and detailed in their report. As any reader or writer of fiction knows, it is through details that one comes to envision a given scene. Moreover, these details provide indirect insight into the teller’s stance toward the reported event(s). Tellers have a variety of resources for providing such detail. The resources I draw attention to take several forms: the use of the gerund participle, the use of reported speech (mentioned earlier), and lexical choice. Nods are more likely to occur after tellers become more granular in their reporting—usually involving one or more of these resources.

Speakers who use the gerund participle (most commonly progressive aspect as in *be + x-ing*) can be said to express a dynamic situation (Huddleston, 2002).<sup>9</sup> In the context of a story, this construction may, more than the perfective, convey a sense of immediacy that helps to bring recipients into the telling. For instance, see Extract 9. Here four men are talking. Justin initiates a telling about an incident involving a friend of his in a run-in with the police:

(9) FG 000313

- |   |         |   |
|---|---------|---|
| 1 | JUS:    | We were- [we were in Playa Vista                |
| 2 | NIC:    | [( character)                                   |
| 3 | JUS:    | and we have this party a::nd there’s all these  |
| 4 |         | footpatrol,                                     |
| 5 |         | (.)   |
| 6 | JUS: -> | walking,  |
| 7 | TEX: => | ((nod))   |
| 8 | JUS:    | and (.) >being pretty stupid< (.) he yells. . . |

Here, the teller adds the gerund increment “walking” (line 6) to a story element (lines 3–4). Because “footpatrol” clearly travel by walking, this increment (Schegloff, 2001) is semantically redundant. However, syntactically, the gerund helps to heighten the accessibility of the event for the recipient. A recipient can better be asked to picture the event with footpatrol in the dynamic state of “walking” rather than simply “being there.” Moreover, that the footpatrol were, at that particular moment, walking does provide additional information that is at a finer level of granularity than that there were some number of footpatrol in the area. It is in response to this element that the recipient nods.

Access is often provided to the reported event and to the teller’s stance at the same time. In Extract 10, Tara is describing an experience that she and one of the



other interlocutors, Kristi, had at a party recently. The primary story recipient is Alexa. Within the extract are two cases of nodding preceded by story elements that help Alexa to better imagine the events. The first is the description of Tara and Kristi looking for one another in the house. Here in line 1, this is reported as “was just looking,” which makes use of the past progressive followed by an account for looking for her. This element also uses the past progressive “was c(h)all(h)ing me,” “were r(h)unning,” and “trying.” Here, at possible completion, Alexa nods. The nod comes after a point in which access to the reportable has been given through the detailed portrayal of the scene—a portrayal made dynamic and more accessible through the use of progressive aspectuality:

(10) SB1 004411

- 1 TAR: I was just looking for Kristi cuz  
 2 TAR: -> (0.2) she was c(h)all(h)ing me on my cell  
 3 -> phone and we were r(h)unning around the house .hh  
 4 -> trying to find each other on our [cell phones=  
 5 ALE: [ha ha ha  
 6 TAR: =[cuz we couldn't hear each other talking,  
 7 ALE: => =(((nodding))  
 8 KRI: (think, volume. [ )  
 9 ALE: ( )  
 10 TAR: [((gazing at Kristi))  
 11 TAR: -> [and you were like “Come upstairs!  
 12 TAR: -> [((Gaze shifting [reaching Alexa))  
 13 -> Come upstairs!” and [so I thought [she meant  
 14 -> in the [w [:e^b (0.5) and I go to walk in and the guy's=  
 15 TAR: [((eyebrow flash))  
 16 ALE: => [((nodding))

In Alexa's nod at line 16, one encounters a second resource for providing access to the reportable, which is the use of reported speech mentioned earlier. Reported speech allows recipients to experience what the telling participants experienced. In lines 11 and 13, Tara uses reported speech to convey what Kristi said at the time. This provides Alexa with resources for understanding why Tara would have thought what she did, and this is responded to with a nod in line 16.

Besides providing the recipient with access to the scene, the teller also provides her with access to her own stance toward the event. First, in lines 2 through 3, the report of the event is interspersed with laugh particles. In this context, the laugh particles help Tara to convey to her recipient that her stance toward what she is reporting is that it was funny: a stance that Alexa also adopts by laughing (line 5); and the nod at line 7 occurs in just this environment. Similarly, in lines 13 through 14, Tara reports what she thought at the time. This offers direct access to her stance

toward what was going on. Further, the use of “I thought” conveys that this was, in fact, wrong. *Thought* is what Sacks referred to as a “first verb” projecting more (Jefferson, 2005; Sacks, 1986). The recipient has better access to the teller’s position after being told how the speaker reacted to the events just reported, and the use of a first verb may actually seek affiliation with the idea that her reasoning process was rational. Finally, in overlap with the delivery of the “w:e^b,” Tara does a quick eyebrow flash, and in immediate response, Alexa nods (line 16).<sup>10</sup>

In this example, one has seen that nods are positioned after elements that provide access to both the events of the telling and to the teller’s stance. In this position, they can also be understood to be affiliating with the teller by virtue of their claim to *have* access. This can be seen again in Extract 11.<sup>11</sup> Here, Michael is a barber cutting Matt’s hair. Michael is telling Matt about a recent event involving leaving his dog with someone who then did not properly take care of her:

(11) HS4-7-9-03 06.32

- 1 MIC: >yeah I wanna jump on him cuz I’m  
 2 like (0.2) “Foo:l,”  
 3 MAT: [(I le-)  
 4 MIC: [“I let you to [babysit my dog ]<” (gah) an’=  
 5 MAT: [ ((nodding ))]  
 6 MIC: -> =we went to barber school together right?,  
 7 MAT: => ((nodding))  
 8 MIC: >So he (tells) me yeah you can leave. . .

Here the teller does not use reported speech to provide access to the event(s) (because this reported speech is offered as what the teller thought and wanted to say but did not actually say). Other resources that provide Matt with access to Michael’s stance are embedded in the reported speech. He begins with “Foo:l,” an address term that lexically and prosodically shows the teller to be angry. When the teller subsequently states “I wanna jump on him”, he more explicitly provides insight into his stance. Stating directly what he wanted to do suggests the degree of his outrage over this incident. This is further expanded as he continues with “I let you to”, which again projects strong negative affect and thus a stance that the man’s conduct was entirely inappropriate. The teller actually pursues affiliation with his stance most explicitly in line 6 with the tag question “right?”. The turn itself offers justification for the teller’s outrage—the man at fault is someone who would be expected to care well for his dog. Thus, a pursuit of confirmation involves an agreement with the teller’s stance. This is done with a nod.

Another resource for providing recipients with access to the teller’s stance toward the reported event(s) is visible behavior. In the way that a turn is delivered visibly, tellers can convey that an event is being oriented to as, for example, good

versus bad. As an example of this, see Extract 12. Here, Lianne, Katie, and Taryn are standing in the kitchen. Taryn is the primary story recipient. In this case, Lianne is describing the primary problem with a choral fellowship program she had been interested in as requiring her to be in Los Angeles. This is not responded to initially (see single-headed arrows). Lianne portrayed the location as problematic with the contrastive “but” preface (see Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001, for a discussion of “but” prefaces) and the formulation “you have tuh”. So, the recipient has been given access and thus could have endorsed the teller’s position to the program as problematic.

The teller then reCompletes the turn element specifying “in that city” (line 2) as “like the closest to you” and then “and mine was LA” (lines 4–5). In her response, Taryn instead offers a change-of-state token (turn 6; Heritage, 1984a). Here the change-of-state token specifically contrasts with a response that would endorse Lianne’s stance toward the fellowship program and the related move because as one has now seen, this is an environment ripe for such endorsement. The change-of-state token acknowledges the information provided and claims to now have realized something that was previously opaque—in this case, to now understand that the relevant move would be to LA because that is the most local story element. However, the “Oh” claims no understanding of, or access to, Lianne’s stance and therefore still fails to take a position relative to Lianne. Lianne then formulates her stance explicitly (or begins to) in line 7, overtly pursuing endorsement of her position:

(12) BD 1/3 000357

- 1 LIA:           but anyway it turns out where you go to college  
 2           ->    you have tuh go: in that city,  
 3           ->    (0.8)  
 4 LIA:       ->    like the closest to you,  
 5 LIA:       ->    and mine was LA,  
 6 TAR:       O=u::h. ((possible small nod in overlap))  
 7 LIA:       and I just [don’t [want to be in LA after this;  
 8 LIA:                       [[((pushes arms away from body and down))  
 9 TAR:                               [[((nodding))  
 10           (.  
 11 LIA:       right away?,

Here following “just”. she swiftly pushes her hands out away from her body and then flops them down toward her legs as shown in Figure 1. In the figure, the first still represents the starting point of the hands at line 8 and the second still the end point at the end of “don’t.” The drawing depicts the hand movement that occurs in the gesture. As soon as the gesture of negation coinciding with a projected negative vocal turn (“I just”) begins, Taryn responds with a nod. Thus, once again, the nod is



FIGURE 1 Gesture in overlap with “don’t”.

offered at a point when the teller is providing the recipient with greater access to her own stance toward the event. Heath (1992) discusses a similar case and suggests a range of ways interactants can elicit head movements from interlocutors.

In this section, I have shown that one of the most common environments for nodding is when tellers provide recipients with access to either the reported event or the teller’s stance itself. Access can be provided in a number of different ways. I touched on four phenomena, all of which provide recipients with access to the telling or directly to the teller’s stance toward the reportable: tellers’ use of the gerund participle, reported speech, statements about the teller’s stance, and visible behavior. Through these resources, recipients are given access to an experience that is otherwise completely outside of their domain of experience and therefore very difficult to assess.

That nods are what is provided in response to access and are subsequently treated as appropriate (whereas vocal continuers are not) is evidence that they are response tokens that claim access. In this mid-telling sequential position, they affiliate because a claim of access is a claim to understand and accept the perspective of the teller (whether they actually *agree*).<sup>12</sup>

### When Nods Are Not Affiliative

Early in the article, it was observed that responses are not generically affiliative because the doing of affiliation depends on both the composition of the response and on its sequential position (see also Heath, 1992). This is true for head nods in an interesting way. We have seen that in mid-telling position, the claim of access to the telling is a means of doing affiliation because it both claims understanding of events the interlocutor otherwise has no access to and because it works to endorse the teller’s own stance. Additionally, in this position, it may suggest that the recipi-

ent is on track to deliver a preferred affiliative stance at story completion. However, nodding is not *generically* affiliative, and this is evident when we observe that nodding primarily occurs in the mid-telling (as opposed to posttelling) position. More important, at ends of tellings, story recipients and tellers alike do substantial work to *avoid* nodding as a final response. The account I offer for this is that at story completion, as one saw early in this article, it is relevant for story recipients to adopt a stance toward the telling. The claim of having access does not in and of itself provide a stance. Nods are understood as adopting an affiliative stance mid-telling only by virtue of the nod's position in the telling.

*Recipient work.* Recipients treat “just” nodding in final response position as insufficient in two ways. First, recipients who produce a nod and then find themselves to be no longer in mid-telling position but rather at possible story final position upgrade from nods to fuller vocal affiliative responses. See Extract 13. Here the participants are the same as in Extract 6. In this case, Lianne recently had a phone conversation with a mutual friend who has just moved to New York. The mutual friend and her boyfriend had, for this reason, decided to discontinue their relationship, although he went with her to New York to get settled. Lianne is telling about how this friend is doing and in lines 11 through 12, reports the girl as having said she and her boyfriend had “uh <gre:at las:t night> together °though.°” With her emphatic and slow production of “great last night” combined with the lexical choice in the assessment, Lianne conveys a positive stance toward this event. Additionally, she conveys that she has reached possible story completion:

(13) BD 3/3 000212b

- 1 LIA: =she says she hasn't even thought about it.  
 2 (0.4)  
 3 LIA: (she's) okay: (0.3) (about) the Jared thing.  
 4 LIA: She said she's used to seeing him once a week,  
 5 (0.2) and it hasn't even been a full we:ek,  
 6 (0.2) °that he's been gone.° [ So ] that might=  
 7 TAR: [Yeah:.]  
 8 LIA: =be why [ that ] she's okay.  
 9 TAR: [mm hm,]  
 10 TAR: ((nodding))/(0.6)  
 11 LIA: She said they had uh <gre:at las:t night> together  
 12 °though.°  
 13 (0.2)/((no visible uptake))  
 14 LIA: -> in New Yo[rk,  
 15 TAR: => [((nodding))  
 16 TAR: That's awesome.  
 17 LIA: Her classes are awsome.

Taryn offers no uptake at line 13 either visible or vocal, and Lianne pursues uptake by recompleting the telling with an increment adding virtually no information (because both participants know that the event took place in New York). Here Taryn nods—a response that claims access to Lianne’s stance but does not take a stance in and of itself. However, she immediately revises this response to a vocal response that overtly does take a stance—one that precisely mirrors the teller’s stance toward this event as good. This revision of her response at a point when the story is possibly complete offers evidence that story recipients treat nods as ill fitted to story completion.

Similarly, see Extract 14. Here rather than response revision, one sees that at possible story completion, recipients shift from nods to vocal assessments. This extract follows immediately from 10. Here, Alexa had previously nodded in response to the in-progress telling. As Tara approaches possible story completion, Alexa offers vocal affiliation. First, in line 5, in response to Tara’s reported dispute with a man who was doing security for a VIP room at a party she attended, she takes the stance that the room’s use as a VIP area was outrageous (in line with the teller). Then subsequently, Tara conveys that her stance toward the proposed solution to this problem—a way to obtain a pass for the room—was to refuse it because it would be rude to pester someone for a pass, and once again, Alexa does upgraded vocal affiliation with this in line 11 (“Yeah seriously.”); and finally, simple agreement is offered subsequent to the recycling of this position in the next turn (line 12). Alexa ultimately offers an entire second story affiliating with Tara’s outrage over the room being managed on such an exclusive basis:

(14) SB1 004411 [[immediately following 10]]

- 1 TAR: like “Sorry.” (0.8) >°He’s like°< “do  
 2 you have a green wristband,”  
 3 I’m like n(h)(h)o:(h), .h I’m just going  
 4 in he:re. .h[hh  
 5 ALE: [oh [my god.  
 6 TAR: [He’s like .hh “you can’t  
 7 TAR: come in without a green wristband”=and I’m  
 8 like “how do I get one.”=he’s like “talk to  
 9 Andy”=(an’) I’m like .hh he’s like running  
 10 around an’ working. I’m [not gonna go=  
 11 ALE: [Yeah seriously.  
 12 TAR: bug him. .hhh “Can I get in a V I P ro[om?”]  
 13 ALE: [Yeah.]

This offers another form of evidence that recipients do work to provide appropriate stance-taking responses at story completion and treat nods as ill fitted to that environment.

*Teller work.* Like recipients, tellers also treat nodding as problematic at story completion. Critical evidence for this claim is that as one saw in Extract 13, when nods occur at (possible) story completion, tellers typically do work to elicit another form of response. For instance, they recomplete the story, which allows recipients another opportunity to respond to the telling at story completion. This suggests that nods in this position are treated as, at best, inadequate and at worst, actually *disaligning* (in the sense of treating the story as not complete) and *disaffiliative*; whereas nods during storytellings are both *aligning* with the telling activity and, through a claim of access, *affiliative*. Thus, this is the inverse of the cases shown earlier in which assessments that are normally affiliative treat the story as complete too early and thus are *disaligning* (Extract 4). As an example, see Extract 15. Here Tex tells a very short story about how he and Jan (who is copresent) were “sweet” (or “cool”) in high school:

(15) FratGuys 001215

- 1    TEX:     Jan and I were sweet in our senior year  
 2             uh highschool  
 3             (0.5)  
 4    TEX:     Hh We used to take longboard skateboards and  
 5             go down the steepest hills and we w- we  
 6             would wear helmets ‘t said lap on ‘em.  
 7             (0.5)  
 8    TEX:     We thought it was th’ coolest thing ever.=  
 9    JAN:     =They- they’re: (.) rockclimbing helmets.  
 10   TEX:     Hhnh!/(0.2) [So like this  
 11   JAN:             [Seventies.  
 12   NIC:             [((nodding))  
 13   JAN:     Seventies rockc[limbing helmets.  
 14   TEX:             [That sit way off your hea:d,  
 15             (.)  
 16   ???:     Yep,  
 17   TEX:     And you could give a damn so:,  
 18   TEX:     .hh a:nywa:ys,=hh  
 19   JAN:     It was fun  
 20   TEX:     °I thought so°.

The telling is addressed to Nick and is in lines 4 through 6. It receives no uptake. Tex pursues a response in line 8. His pursuit can be analyzed as in search of *affiliation* with his stance that this was “cool” (in a mock way by explicitly stating this is what both he and Jan thought). Jan pursues a preferred stance toward the telling (i.e., laughter or something that treats it as funny) by attempting to give Nick further information that would allow him to picture the scene (line 9). Following this,

Tex laughs, and at this point, Nick nods. However, rather than being treated as affiliative, the nod is treated as insufficient, disaligning with the activity by not providing the action that is due: a stance at story completion. Response is further pursued in lines 13 and 14. Once again, the pursuits do interactional work to allow Nick to better picture the reportable lines 13 and 14. However, this receives no uptake, and at this point Tex, the main teller, abandons the effort, treating Nick as actually disaffiliating with “And you could give a damn so:” (line 17). Jan instead reframes the telling as reminiscing, and Tex affiliates, although he still orients to the lack of uptake by Nick (as evidenced by the agreement being downgraded as only his opinion in line 20).

In this section, I have offered support for the claim that nods are not generically affiliative but that they are calibrated to the mid-telling environment and in other environments can actually be construed as *disaligning* and even *disaffiliative*. Evidence in support of these claims was the recurrence of upgrades from nods in mid-telling positions to vocal claims of affiliation in possible telling completion environments and that when nods are positioned at telling possible completion points, they are treated as *nonaligning* or even actively *disaffiliating*. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, nods are very very rare at story completion. Whereas most tellings include some nodding in the mid-telling environment, the cases shown here (Extracts 13 and 15) are the only ones in which nods at possible story completion appear. In both cases, work is done to adjust that uptake. In 13, the recipient upgrades to a full assessment. In 15, the teller attempts to elicit an alternative response, and in the absence of this from the story recipient, a coparticipant provides alternative uptake. The claim that nods are affiliative in mid-telling is based on both the action that they appear to do—claim access—and how a claim of access can be understood in the particular environment in which it is offered.

## DISCUSSION

In this article, I began with with Sacks’s (1974) and Jefferson’s (1978) observations that storytellings prefer final uptake that treats the telling in the way that the teller has indicated it should be treated. I have suggested that there is a preference for recipients to affiliate with the position taken by the teller toward the event(s) being reported. Given this preference, in this article, I asked what interactional resources story tellers and recipients have for monitoring and conveying their respective orientations toward the telling component by component. I have shown evidence that nodding claims access to the events reported in the telling and/or to the teller’s stance toward these events during face-to-face storytelling without risk of intruding into or derailing the telling. The argument constructed here suggests that nods are carefully calibrated to the mid-telling environment and help convey that tellings are on their way to preferred affiliative uptake at story completion.



The fundamental claim about nods claiming access to teller's stances toward the event(s) they are reporting is important because although tellings are primarily in the service of securing affiliation, a recipient can only meaningfully affiliate with a stance to which he or she has achieved some measure of access. Thus, when a recipient claims that he or she has achieved some measure of access to the teller's stance, that recipient also suggests that the telling is on track to receiving affiliative uptake at story completion. This need not follow, but the provision of access to both the event (as a way to gain insight into the teller's stance) and the teller's stance is a necessary prerequisite to the provision of affiliation. This is precisely the mechanism that allows nods to be understood as affiliative in mid-telling position and allows them to be understood as forecasting a likely affiliative stance at story completion.

Storytellings are interesting with respect to a more general concern with human relations as well. In the evolution of communication literature, there has been much interest in whether language evolved as a response to pressure for increased information provision and reception among conspecifics or increased management of social relations. Nettle and Dunbar (1997) theorized that human interaction evolved in response to socio-relational rather than informational demands. In examining conversational practices in ordinary social interaction, it is often difficult to disentangle the informational from the sociorelational. Storytellings might appear to be no different. Most tellings provide their recipients with information, and story prefaces specifically allow recipients to block tellings on the basis that they already know the information (Sacks, 1974; Terasaki, 2004). However, on the other hand, in storytellings, the role of information is handled within a framework that prioritizes the sociorelational issues over the informational ones. Story responses are concerned not with displaying informedness (e.g., *Oh* change-of-state responses; Heritage, 1984a) but with displaying an affective stance toward the event(s) the story reported. Storytelling might be conceptualized as a kind of microcosm for the interactional management of one dimension of the sociorelational realm: *affiliation*. During storytellings, tellers and recipients navigate whether and to what extent they see eye-to-eye on the events the teller is describing. Mid-telling responses are one of the key resources that recipients have for communicating that their attitude toward the events are in line (or not) with that of the teller. This allows tellers to incrementally modify their telling so that at story end, tellers and recipients adopt the same position toward the reported event(s): a result that is not only preferred but appears to be critical to a human communication system that is built on cooperation.

## NOTES

- 1 Although mid-telling responses likely vary by culture, it may be that all cultures will have resources for managing the issues discussed here. Levinson & Brown (2004)

showed that the feedback systems of Yélf-Dnye and Tzeltal are quite different in that the former is more oriented to visible response tokens and the latter to vocal ones.

- 2 Some research within gesture studies has focused specifically on nodding (Kendon, 2004; Maynard, 1987; McClave, 2000). However, this work neglects the sequential context of the nods.
- 3 Oblique sequences may be *affiliative* or *disaffiliative*. Here, the boy initiates repair on his mother's use of "buddy," apparently challenging this as an appropriate characterization of the teammate. Thus, this sort of sequence initiation is both *disaffiliative* with the mother and *disaligning* with the activity in progress.
- 4 Ward, Birner, and Huddleston (2002) used this phrase to refer to clause constructions that differ from "the most basic, or canonical, constructions in the language" (p. 1365). Ward et al. (2002) asserted that these constructions have a "syntactically more basic counterpart differing not in truth conditions or illocutionary meaning but in the way the information content is presented" (p. 1365). Here, I broaden this concept to include not only pragmatically marked constructions in this context (e.g., passives and clefts) but also marked lexical choices and marked aspect.
- 5 The "*get*-passive" has been discussed as indicating some involvement on the part of the participant (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1983) or indicating that he or she shares some responsibility (Budwig, 1990) and in this way differs from the "*be*-passive." Arce-Arenales, Axelrod, and Fox (1994) handled this difference in an alternative way. Arce-Arenales et al. (1994) argued that constructions such as this are actually still in active voice but exhibit "middle diathesis" because the participant "also exhibits the conceptual status 'affected entity'" (p. 2). I have used *passive* here because there appears to be disagreement in the literature on this topic, and *passive* captures the core interest in reduced agency relevant here.
- 6 Lance's own stance could have been quite different. Lance could have adopted a stance that this was a serious problem that they would need to remedy. In that case, an affiliative response would have been treating the event as bad, "Oh that's horrible!," or treating an apology as due, "Didju tell her we were really sorry."
- 7 Of course, nods cannot be used effectively when the interlocutors do not share gaze, but the point remains because the responses that contrast with a head nod are not only vocal continuers that claim alignment but also assessments. Vocal responses that would assert a stance would also be possible in this context if Nicole were not gazing.
- 8 Rossano (2005) documented that gaze is an interactional resource for pursuing uptake at sequence possible completion. This case is consistent with his work on the topic.
- 9 As Comrie (1976) observed, in English, though not in many languages, tense and aspect are separable. One may therefore find that the use of the present tense is also doing independent work in terms of facilitating access to the reportable.
- 10 Nonprimary story recipients sometimes nod during tellings, and this appears to have the same basic function as described here. The same pattern does not appear to occur with

- vocal continuers. Whereas only primary story recipients can relevantly pass on the opportunity to provide a full turn at talk, other participants can claim access to a teller's stance and can endorse that stance.
- 11 Both the first nod in line 5 and in 7 provide counterevidence for an alternative understanding of nods—that they apply pressure for the story to progress. Counterevidence is that (a) nods are not necessarily placed after tellers have in any way failed to progress in the telling, and (b) after nods, story tellers do not consistently move to the next story element. Thus, neither story recipients nor story tellers consistently analyze nods as pushing for progressivity first and foremost.
  - 12 A patient telling a story to her physician about why she is concerned that a lump might be cancer does not treat the nods as confirmation that it is cancer but treats them as accepting the patient's position and how she came to be concerned.

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## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL TRANSCRIPT SYMBOLS

- ?, A combined question mark and comma indicates a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.
- An underscore following a unit of talk indicates level intonation.
- ; The semicolon indicates that the intonation is equivocal between final and “continuing”
- ^ The circumflex symbol indicates a rise in pitch.
- | This pipe indicates a fall in pitch.
- < The “less than” symbol by itself indicates that the immediately following talk is “jump-started,” i.e., sounds like it starts with a rush.