

# Stance Taking in News Interviews Based on Stance Triangle and Conversation Analysis

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**How to cite this paper:** Shi, X. L., Wu, J. Y., & Wei, L. F. (2022). Stance Taking in News Interviews Based on Stance Triangle and Conversation Analysis. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 12, 188-206. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2022.122015>

**Received:** February 5, 2022

**Accepted:** March 28, 2022

**Published:** March 31, 2022

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## Abstract

Based on Du Bois's stance triangle and the approach of conversational analysis, this paper focuses on the two intersubjective acts in stance taking, i.e. positioning and alignment. With data collected from the transcripts of CNN's news program, Newsroom, the analysis examines three ways of positioning for interviewers in questioning turn: establishing the topic agendas or action agendas, setting the presupposition, and implying the preference of positive or negative responses. While in responding turn, interviewees present convergent alignment through agreeing, deriving, reinforcing, and indicating divergent alignment through evading, disagreeing, and challenging.

## Keywords

Stance Taking, News Interview, Questions, Responses, Stance Triangle, Positioning, Convergent Alignment, Divergent Alignment

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## 1. Introduction

“Stance” is a word used in association with and as a synonym of such concepts as modality, evaluation, subjectivity, epistemicity, footing, alignment, assessment, agreement, and so on. Research in the fields of stance covers semantic, functional and sociolinguistic areas, and researchers do not share the same agendas, aims, approaches or methodologies. For instance, Biber et al. (1999) study stance from a semantic perspective and put forward diverse linguistic expressions of stance markers. Hyland (2005) examines categories of stances based on a functional approach. All these diversities present complex and diverse definitions of stance. Due to its increased usage and application, the notion of stance is in danger of becoming an all-inclusive and debatable one.

Du Bois (2007) argues that stance is realized by a linguistic and social act that

serves as the target for the next speaker's stance. "Stance" generally refers to a speaker's attitude, displays of emotions and desires, expressions of beliefs and certainty towards given issues, people, and speaker's co-coherent and uniform paradigm (Haddington, 2004). More specifically, stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through communicative means, simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects, and aligning with other subjects (Du Bois, 2007).

Stance, first and foremost, has a subjective feature. For one thing, many studies on stance focus on specific linguistic markers, such as verbs of perception ("I think"), adverbials ("absolutely"), modals ("might") and stance nouns ("my opinion") (Biber & Finegan, 1989; Biber et al., 1999). Therefore, from the linguistic perspective, stance is decontextualized from the syntactic and lexical forms. A single speaker's stance is realized by a single linguistic act in his/her own utterance. For another, stance is a subjective act expressing speakers' subjective attitude towards an object. Subjectivity is related to the commitment of the speaker to the proposition (Stubbs, 1996), even to the degree that some grammatical units expressing subjectivity have become grammaticized in discourse (Kärkkäinen, 2003). But the focus of stance research is not the subjectivity expressed by a list of markers but the intersubjectivity expressed by stance-taking.

After a brief introduction of stance, let us turn to the term of stance-taking. Stance-taking is better understood as a dynamic, dialogic, intersubjective, and collaborative social activity in which speakers collaboratively construct stances by engaging with, modifying and aligning with, and building upon stances taken by their co-participants in prior talk (Du Bois, 2007; Haddington, 2005). Predominantly, stance-taking arises in interactions, in which communicators will appropriately adjust linguistic forms and communication strategies according to contents, such as changes of discourse structure and linguistic forms, and adjustment of stance according to interpersonal relationship and aims of communication.

From the perspective of social pragmatics, stance-taking has a great/considerable influence on interactivity of interpersonal relationship, so the major feature of stance-taking is intersubjectivity. Positioning and evaluation instance-taking are based on communication and interactivity, which cannot be achieved by a single participant. In conversation analysis (CA), intersubjectivity is defined as the joint or shared understanding between persons (Sidnell, 2010). Each utterance in talk-in-interaction displays a hearing or reaction of a preceding one and the organization of talk provides a means by which intersubjective understanding can not only be continually demonstrated but also checked and repaired.

To contextualize and interpret stance and stance-taking, we have to connect three primary concerns (the stance-taker, the object of stance and the stance that the stance-taker is responding to) and three basic components (position, evaluation and alignment), which can be systematically presented in the stance triangle proposed by Du Bois (2007).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Previous Studies on Stance

Emerging in 1970s, studies on stance have been continuously expanded and advanced. Previous studies on stance abroad mainly have three representative researching perspectives: 1) Semantic. [Biber & Finegan \(1988\)](#) pioneeringly propose the concept of stance and categorize stance markers under semantic and grammatical criteria; [Conard & Biber \(2000\)](#) put forward the categorizing mode of epistemic, attitudinal and style stance; [Precht \(2000\)](#) distinguishes two fields respectively focusing on certainty and doubt, and on emotion and attitude; 2) Functional. [Ochs \(1993\)](#) regards stance as a fundamental dimension of the relation between language and culture and in 1996, she further puts forward the four functional dimensions of language constructing social culture; [Hyland \(2005\)](#) proposes analytical framework of discourse stance and stance markers; 3) Interactional. [Haddington \(2004\)](#) explores the approaches of displaying and constructing stance in news interview; [Du Bois \(2007\)](#) formulates the analytical mode of stance triangle, which displays intersubjectivity of interactants; [Nir \(2017\)](#) teases out the recurrence and manipulation of stance-taking devices.

The studies of stance emerged in China in the beginning of 20th century. Stance was researched domestically in terms of two general aspects: 1) The micro-study of stance functions of some concrete language forms in Chinese. [Xu \(2012\)](#) analyzes the stance function of epistemic stance marker in spoken Chinese, “I think”; [Hu \(2018\)](#) makes a conclusion that there are different kinds of position markers; 2) The contrastive study on stance taking of Chinese English learners and native English speakers. [Xu \(2007\)](#) researches the features of using stance markers by Chinese advanced English learners; [Long & Xu \(2010\)](#) compare how Chinese English learners construct and position stance in Chinese and English argumentations.

### 2.2. Previous Studies on News Interview

The word “interview” originating from the French word “entre voir” that means “to be in sight of”, enters the English language in 1514. By the end of the 19th century, interview gradually entered in public domain. Subsequently, many dictionaries refer to it as “a meeting in which someone asks another person, questions about themselves, their work, or their ideas, in order to publish or broadcast the information” ([Macmillan Educ, 2007](#)). Nowadays, it has been regarded as an oral discourse and “an institutional talk that differs greatly from causal, ordinary conversations in a number of dimensions and occurs naturally under specific restricted settings” ([Clayman & Heritage, 2002](#)).

The studies on interview abroad are mostly conducted from the perspective of conversation analysis, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, focusing on language use, turn taking and pragmatic strategies in news interview.

1) From the perspective of CA. [Heritage & Roth \(1995\)](#) conclude that the function of information seeking and opinion expression in news interview is

completed through the response to questions; [Thornborrow \(2010\)](#) looked at adjacency sequencing, question and response designed to reveal ways of eliciting personal dimensions in news interview.

2) From the perspective of discourse analysis. Analytic foci of many linguistics are on sequential turn organization concerning the construction of interviewees' account ([Greatbatch, 1986](#)), interruption and overlap ([Bull & Mayer, 1993](#)), and discourse markers ([Schiffrin, 1988](#)).

3) From the perspective of sociolinguistics. [O'Connell et al. \(2004\)](#) identify the differences of males' and females' usages of stance markers in spoken and written English; [Clayman & Loeb \(2018\)](#) investigate the speakers' of grammatical and social preferences in broadcast journalism.

Studies on news interview developed in China with the popularity of mass media and journalism, aiming to research from the perspective of the following aspects: 1) Studies on elements of conversation, such as its structure, characteristics and principles. [Cui \(2011\)](#) analyzes the structure of the question-answer in the interview program; [Wang \(2016\)](#) explores the characteristics of discourse and meaning production of interview programs; [Zhou \(2019\)](#) generalizes the features and structure of conversation in an interview program; 2) Studies on the conversational behaviors, like turn taking, interruption and repetition. [Liu \(2015\)](#) summarizes the form, mode, function and distribution of speech interruption in interview programs. [Liu \(2017\)](#) indicates that the majority of turns of interviewee (IE) and interviewer (IR) are constituted by sentences, and explores different strategies employed by IEs and IRs to express their ideas; 3) Studies adopting discourse analysis and conversation analysis. [Lin \(2010\)](#) studies different performances in the structure of interview; [Jing \(2013\)](#) compares and contrasts topic selection, change and connection in different types of interview programs; 4) Studies that combine discourse analysis with pragmatic principles. [Wang & Cao \(2005\)](#) categorize the types of programs and the correction mechanism; [Fang \(2019\)](#) believes that discourse markers are embodied in functions of contextual organization, discourse structure and interpersonal interaction.

### 2.3. Previous Studies Based on Stance Triangle and CA

#### 1) Previous studies based on Stance Triangle

We have presented abundant research on the linguistic stance markers in the previous section. However, this is not always the focus of stance research. Instead, the act of stance taking draws attention from scholars, and [Du Bois \(2007\)](#)'s stance triangle (as mentioned in Section 2.1) is one of the most famous achievements (Details of this framework will be introduced in Section 3.2). Since this framework has a relevantly short history, relevant studies on Stance Triangle are not that many, and they mainly concentrate on the application of the theory. For instance, [Noy & Hamo \(2019\)](#) have investigated museum commenting platforms by combining Stance Triangle and Goffman's participation framework and exhibited the interplay between subjects, objects and authors. [Haddington \(2004\)](#),

based on the discourse-functional Stance Triangle, provides some empirical accounts of stance taking activity in news discourse with a thorough illustration of linguistic resources, sequences of turn designs and constructions. This study is of particular importance to the current study, for its piloting practice in this methodological approach.

## 2) Previous studies based on CA

CA, arising within sociology, was developed as a field of study in the 1960s by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Details of this framework will be introduced in Section 3.2). Studies on CA can be classified into two perspectives: theoretical study on conversation itself and the employment of CA in various settings. The former investigates turns, sequences, preferential structures, repairs, organizational structures and conversational strategies. Different speech acts such as requests, and strategies such as silence, repetition, etc. are also studied. The latter is mainly related to classroom interactions. Other settings involve doctor-patient interactions, court trials, etc. More recent development of CA also touches upon multimodal analysis.

To sum up, abundant research abroad and at home has been done on stance taking and news interview respectively, and various studies based on stance triangle and conversation analysis have been achieved. However, a detailed analysis of the stance taking is still understudied in the field of news interview discourse. Since stance taking plays a significant role in steering the direction of topics and maintaining interpersonal relationship, it is necessary to investigate the dynamic display of stance taking between the IR and IE in the discourse of news interview.

## 3. Research Design

### 3.1. Research Questions

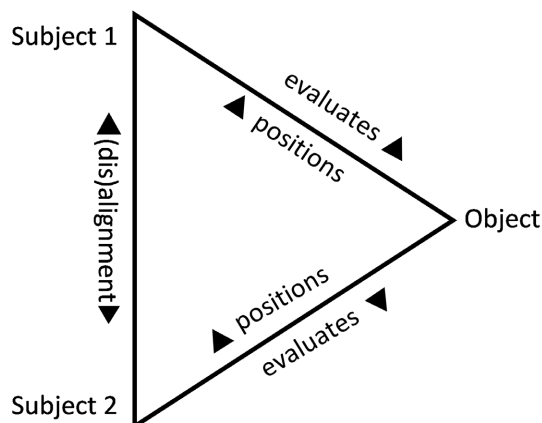
Based on the research results and methods of *Du Bois (2007)*'s stance triangle theory and CA, this paper focuses on the analysis of two stance taking activities in the questioning turn and responding turn, namely positioning and alignment, to interpret the process of stance taking in news interviews. This paper mainly explores the following questions:

- 1) What are the strategies for interviewers in the news discourse to present positioning in the questioning turns?
- 2) What are the strategies for interviewees in the news discourse to present convergent and divergent alignment in the responding turns?

### 3.2. Theoretical Foundations: Stance Triangle and CA

To avoid the expansion of different types of stance, *Du Bois (2007)* methodologically provides a systematic representation for stance, including the representation of the "stance triangle" with manipulation, as shown in **Figure 1**.

*Du Bois (2007)* defines the concept of stance as three interrelated acts of evaluating, positioning, (dis)alignment occurring among three elements (Subject 1,



**Figure 1.** Stance triangle (Based on Du Bois (2007)).

Subject 2 and Object), which is a public act reached by explicit means of communication by subjects. Subject 1 (the speaking subject who is responsible for the stance) and Subject 2 (the referential object or target toward which the stance is being directed) stand for the co-participants and the Object (the prior stance that the current stance is being formulated in response to) is a shared attentional topic they are talking about, such as a person, an event, a proposition and so on. The three sides of the triangle indicate vectors of directed action that organize the stance relations among these entities.

Evaluation, as the most salient form of stance-taking, is defined by Du Bois (2007) as “the process whereby a stance-taker orients to an object of stance” and is characterized as having some specific quality or value.

Positioning is defined as “the act of situating a social actor with respect to responsibility for stance and for invoking socio-cultural value” (Du Bois, 2007), and corresponds to the concern of the stance taker. It is not only an affective scale but also an epistemic scale.

(Dis)alignment is defined as “the act of calibrating the relationship between two stances, and by implication between two stance-takers” (Du Bois, 2007). The notion of alignment, according to Du Bois, does not refer to agreeing per se, but the ways by which interactants position themselves in relation to each other.

As illustrated by the stance triangle, firstly, Subject 1 introduces a Stance Object in an utterance, simultaneously evaluates the Object and positions a subject. The next act occurs when Subject 2 evaluates the same object that Subject 1 has just evaluated and positions himself/herself in relation to it. Thirdly, Subject 1 and Subject 2 (dis)align with each other. Generally speaking, the stance triangle is a unified framework for specifying the socio-cognitive relations (subjective, objective, intersubjective) in talk-in-interaction, and how these relations are constituted through the stance acts of evaluating objectives (objective), positioning subjects (subjective), and (dis)aligning with subjects (intersubjective). It depicts a complete picture in which the interlocutors take stances.

To conclude, these three different acts, instead of separated types of stance,

are interrelated in the dialogic stance acts, which trigger three kinds of stance consequences at once. Stance-taking is not considered as a static semantic or functional component of language, but a dynamic and intersubjective act.

Another very important theoretical foundation for the current study is CA. Conversation is ubiquitous in life as a basic and constitutive characteristic of human sociability. Argued by Ten Have (1999), “conversation” is used to indicate people’s activity of talking with each other as a form of sociability, independent of its purpose. It is through conversation that contacts, communication and cooperation of human beings can be achieved in a unique human way.

CA is a systematic study of everyday interaction that is under the umbrella of conversation. Sidnell (2010) defines CA as “a set of methods for working with audio and video recordings of talk and interaction”. It aims to “describe the procedures and expectations in terms of which speakers produce their own behavior and interpret the behavior of others” (Heritage, 1984). The focus of CA is to interpret interactants’ practices in their situated context and to explore relationships of interactants’ coordination.

Conducted on a turn-by-turn basis, actions in conversational interaction continuously advance and systematically sustain intersubjective understandings. Consequently, no stance of talk should be looked at in isolation. By thinking vertically, stance should be traced and analyzed in sequential and organizational context. Meanwhile, by thinking laterally, stance is not separated from utterances and acts of different interactants.

To conclude, this paper combines the two approaches to study stance-taking in news interview. Firstly, Du Bois’s stance triangle theory serves as an integrated framework in the intersubjective activity, illustrating how speakers construct and display their own stances in communication. Secondly, CA provides a coherent analytic framework to observe and describe the social and sequential organization in talk-in interaction. Consequently, with the mutual complement of stance triangle and CA, the present study can investigate stance and stance taking systematically.

### 3.3. Method and Data Collection

Methodologically, the present study is characterized by qualitative methods based upon collected data. The framework that has been built up around the term “stance” is particularly applicable to research interviews. Essentially, news interview is a face-to-face conversation and is diverse in techniques of expressions. Thus, it is more topical and inductive. So, firstly, the author chose CNN’s Newsroom as the database. It is a news program reporting the latest headlines and involves a lot of news interview about news events. The transcripts of Newsroom are available on the website <https://transcripts.cnn.com/>. Next, the transcripts from July 12th, 2021 to July 30th, 2021 were browsed carefully to collect data. Then the paper uses stance triangle and CA to analyze the stance utterances in the stance-taking activities.

## 4. Results and Discussion: Stance Taking in News Interviews

With application of stance triangle in the context of news interview, Subject 1 and Subject 2 can be respectively replaced by IR and IE, and Object by a shared topic. Stance-taking in news interview is mainly realized by turn-taking of questioning and answering. The focus of the study thus can be the two interactional and intersubjective stance-taking activities, namely, positioning and alignment.

Our data show that to maintain neutralism and adversarialness, IR employs three positioning strategies in questioning turn: 1) Setting agendas, including topical agendas and action agendas; 2) Setting presuppositions; 3) Implying preference, including positive preference or negative preference. Equally, IE indicates convergent or divergent alignment in responding turn.

### 4.1. Interviewer's Positioning in the Questioning Turns

#### 1) Positioning by Establishing Agendas

In the normal course of things, by questioning at the beginning of a news interview, IR sets the topical domain and the interview agenda, expecting that IE answers in an appropriate response with related content. Through establishing agendas, IR can set up a difficult position for IE with different preference and IE can adjust the language in time for positioning conversation. Therefore, setting agendas plays a significant part in delimiting the scale and scope of IE's responses.

##### a) Establishing Topical Agendas

IR can position IE within the boundary to the agenda via setting specific topical agenda for response. In Excerpt 1, the IE Jeff Bezos, who just finished his space travel, proposes to build a road to space to protect the planet. The background of the interview is when Jeff Bezos was once back on Earth and interviewed by the IR, Anderson Cooper, laying out his vision for space travel and his intention to use it to save the planet. In the following excerpt, the IR raised the topic agenda of the ambitious road to space.

Excerpt 1 (July 21st):

IR: →What does that look like though? I mean, what does this road look like? I mean you talked about a human presence on the moon.

IE: Yes.

IR: →Obviously, Elon Musk is talking about Mars. What does that look like?

IE: And there's a couple of things. One of the things is it's really about moving heavy industry....

In this excerpt, the IR puts forward a question framed as "What does that look like..." and narrows down it to a more specific question (what does this road look like?). The IR explains what he asks by using "I mean" to set up a topic agenda. Afterwards, the IR mentions "a human presence on the moon" closely relating to "the road to space". In order to set up a more detailed topic agenda, the IR employs this strategy to imply that the IE should talk about his ambitious goal. However, the simple reply of the IE, "yes", is not sufficient, so the IR gives



him more clues for responding by adding the third-party Elon Musk who actually is the competitor of the IE in their space race. To maintain the interview order continuously and effectively, the IE has to adjust his position by narrowing down the original question and explaining it again and again to establish topical agenda and ultimately position the detailed subject.

Simultaneously, the IR evaluates the shared object (the road to space) with his implied evaluation that there are relationships between Mars' projection of Elon Musk's and goal of the IR's, trying to elicit the IE's stance. Right after the IE's answer, the IR mentions the examples of moving heavy industry to the moon in the IE's blueprint. The purpose of such a design is to direct the IE to describe his projection more specifically.

#### b) Establishing Action Agendas

In addition to identifying the topical content for an appropriate response, IR can seek to set agenda of action that the IE should perform to place the IE in a problematic position (Chen, 2020; Wang, 2019). In the following excerpt, the IE is Dr. Kenji Shibuya, the director of the COVID vaccination center in Soma, Japan. He has also served as a senior adviser to the head of the WHO. The interview is about the concerns and predictions of the Winter Games that will be held in Beijing in terms of the pandemic.

Excerpt 2 (July 22nd):

IR: →Like I said, we're about 28 weeks away. What are the chances the Winter Games will be spared those tough restrictions which are already in place right now for the Tokyo Olympics?

IE: Yes, I think we should learn from the lessons but on top of that, the global community should try to suppress pandemic in a collaborative manner.

IR: →Right. So, basically, this pandemic is going to be with us and it's not going to go away in 28 weeks. So essentially, Beijing will face similar if not greater challenges?

IE: Yes, but I think with vaccination effort, testing and scientific measures, I think it will be possible to hold the Olympics with spectators because China has a track record to suppress the transmission...

In this excerpt, the wh-type question is taken to launch the interview and preform the IE in a problematic position. By evaluating the Winter Games as short-range and establishing the action agenda "what are chances...", the IR implies that there might be a great potential of tough restrictions in the Winter Games similar to the Tokyo Olympics. Thereupon the IR gives his stance and sets up a position. The IE doesn't reply with an explicit answer but draws importance of collaborative action. In the next turn, the IR aligns with the IE by using the stance marker "right". With a question ended with a rising tone, the IR manages to restrict the IE's answer and call for the IE's response by raising a follow-up question to return to the previous position, which again establishes the action agenda. Afterwards, the IE responds with "yes" and further mentions some measures to hold the Winter Olympics in a safe way.

#### 2) Positioning by Setting Presuppositions

Questions in news interview are resonated with presuppositions. In questioning turns, by making use of linguistic structures and resources, IR can incorporate presupposition and construct a difficult position for IE to take a response stance. IE's design of presupposition sometimes aims to provide objective background information shared by participants of communication, including acknowledged facts, third-party quotations and authoritative data, which keep IE's neutrality. All in all, the foreshadowing of questions strongly impacts on interlocutors' stance-taking.

Excerpt 3 is selected from the interview with the director general of the WHO, Dr. Kenji Shibuya, in Tokyo as the preparations for the Tokyo Olympics are under way. Japanese government and people once were confronted by the dilemma of whether or not to cancel the Olympics because of the Covid-19 pandemic; however, after being postponed for one year, the Tokyo Olympics is held eventually though the gloomy situation of the pandemic is still hanging over the planet.

Excerpt 3 (July 22nd):

IR: →Even the doctors in Japan call for the cancellation of the games, public health officials of the world over have expressed serious concerns. And in the past, the WHO has been accused of a conflict of interest when it comes to the IOC and the Olympic Games. Would have been better if maybe that ringing endorsement was perhaps a little more muted?

IE: Well, I think it depends because the WHO has a responsibility to suppress the transmission globally. And I think it is important for the WHO to be optimistic and convey the message that we need a global collaboration.

As shown above, in this excerpt, the IR's starting point is to introduce proposition of a third-party, the public, about people's concerns even avocation of the doctors for the cancellation of the games, which helps maintain a neutral stance towards the IE. In detail, the IR then objectively states that the WHO has been accused of a conflict of interest. Hence the IR is expecting the IE to respond to the issues, and uses the question framed as "would have been better if...?" to evoke the IE's position, through which IR shows his position that the WHO's support is positive but possibly has negative effect on the controlling and prevention of the coronavirus. To conclude, by using the third-party proposition, the IR shifts from asking an information-seeking question to questioning on behalf of the third-party, and sets up a stance for the purpose of placing the IE in a troublesome dilemma.

### 3) Positioning by Implying Preferences

Positioning embedded with preference is usually designed by the IR to evoke or encode one preferred answer of IE. Preference embodied in IR's positioning questions falls into two categories: preference for positive response and preference for negative response (Chen, 2020; Wang, 2019).

#### a) Implying Preference for Positive Responses

The IR can embody preferences for a position answer by raising a positioning question. In the following excerpt, the interviewee is Associate Professor Satoko

Itani from Kansai University and the issue discussed is the move of Toyota to stop its Olympic sponsorship.

Excerpt 4 (July 21st):

IR: →I want to start with this the fact that companies like Toyota, Japan's most valuable company, Olympic sponsor, has decided not to air Olympic ads in Japan. It's of sensitivity for the COVID situation. What does that say to you about the way the event is being perceived these days in Japan?

IE: →Well, I think the Toyota's move is very interesting, but not surprising given how the tainted the image of the Olympics has become in Japan. ...So, this might be the historic moments when, you know, the Olympic sponsors think that their association with the Olympics will negatively affect their sales, right?

IR: Yes, I think some polls suggest, you know, about 70 percent of people in Japan don't want these games to go ahead.

In this excerpt, the IR first points out the fact that Japanese giant companies have decided not to air Olympics ads, by taking Toyota as an example, and then conveys his stance that sponsors for Tokyo Olympics under the circumstance of pandemic are sensitive. In the questioning turn, the IR raises the topical agenda with the question framed as "what does that say to you about...", which guides the IE to explain this phenomenon from his own perspective, and therefore invoke his stance. Subsequently, IR responds that Toyota's move is interesting but not surprising and provides further explanations, expressing a convergent alignment with the IE. Finally, the IR uses a tag question framed as "..., right?" to the IE, which implies the preference for an affirmative response by positioning the IE to take side with the IR. In the last responding turn, the IR agrees the IE and provides the authoritative data of poll.

b) Implying Preference for Negative Responses

The IR can also do positioning by designing questions to convey preference for a negative response. In the following excerpt, the IE is the global CEO of Amref Health Africa Githinji Gitahi in Nairobi, Kenya. Before the following turns come out, the IE has given a brief idea of how serious the overall Covid situation is for Africa. Now their focus has shifted to the gap of vaccination between rich nations and African countries.

Excerpt 5 (July 18th):

IR: →Now in the U.S. and some other places, the vaccine doses have literally been discarded because of a lack of demand. They have far more than they need. One study said, rich nations will have nearly 2 billion more doses than they need. What do Africans think when they hear that? Do they feel abandoned or forgotten by the rich nations?

IE: Exactly, and also the feeling that you can never rely on any other country or any other geography...So this is actually a catastrophic moral failure. That's how we feel. And because we point it out every day, that's why I say, a vaccine delayed is a vaccine denied.

In this excerpt, the interlocutors are discussing about the feelings and thoughts towards the huge gap of vaccine between rich countries and African countries.

With argument of the viewpoint by referring to a third-party's statement, specifically the third party's position of "one study said", the IR suggests that rich nations restore more vaccination doses than they need, which shows a sharp contrast with the lack in Africa. Then the IR raises the question, "what do Africans think..." and narrows it down to a yes/no question, "do they feel abandoned...", embodying the preference for a negative answer. By designing the questioning as such, the IR is inviting the IE to defend his known position.

#### 4.2. Interviewee's Alignment in the Responding Turns

From the standpoint of CA, alignment is accomplished to respectively position co-participants in the light of trajectories of action initiated in the prior turn or sequence. Furthermore, through (dis)alignment, interlocutors respond with an (dis)agreement-inclined action that keeps with (un)expectations raised by previous actions. Nonetheless, alignment is not the reverse of disalignment, but a continuum that covers any possible degrees of intersubjective (dis)alignment. IE's convergent and divergent alignment are not two poles, but instead, all these subcategories, in terms of degree, can be displayed as: reinforce > derive > agree > evade > disagree > challenge (Chen, 2020).

##### 1) Convergent Alignment

###### a) Agreeing

Agreeing refers to the speech act of displaying convergent alignment by showing assent, recognition and support for the attitudes, evaluations or opinions in the prior turn(s). For the following excerpt, the background is that the world has witnessed almost unprecedentedly severe extreme weather for a week alone, including flash floods in Germany, dozens of wildfires across U. S. and a year's worth of rain and deluge in China's Henan province. The participants are talking about the assessment of John Kerry, the U.S. climate envoy, towards the urgent engagement when facing the dire climate crisis. The IE is Shyla Raghav, Vice President of climate change at Conservation International.

Excerpt 6 (July 22nd):

IR: →OK, so the U.S. climate envoy, John Kerry, spoke with CNN's Christiane Amanpour on Wednesday, and Kerry said yes, the situation is grim, but there could be a silver lining. This is some good news. Here it is. (John Kerry: In Germany, Belgium and the United States, in California and fires, people all around the planet are beginning to feel the impacts that were predicted by the scientists, so there's no surprise in this, but hopefully it will create an urgency...) Do you agree with that assessment? Finally, the crisis now is so dire, ignoring it is no longer an option?

IE: →Yes. I think John Envoy Kerry makes a really interesting point...

In the excerpt above, the IR first begins the interview with John Kerry, and thus the shared object is John Kerry's assessment. The IR shows his stance by saying "good news" when he shows a footage of John Kerry, in which John Kerry believe that the situation is grim and taking actions is urgent. After that, the IR

questions of whether the IE agrees with that assessment and further explores whether he thinks ignoring the dire crisis is no longer an option. It is clear to see that with the stance marker “yes”, the IE agrees on the position of the IR, which embodies that the IR and the IE have reached a consensus. Both sides of the conversation have reached a consensus stance in the view that climate change should not be ignored and the actions and engagements are urgent.

#### b) Deriving

Deriving refers to the speech act of displaying convergent alignment by further reasoning and developing the attitudes, evaluations or opinions in the prior turn(s). In the excerpt, the IE is Satoko Itani, an associate professor from Kansai University. The discussion here is about the IE’s feelings about the backing from WHO for the Olympic Games in spite of the severe situation of pandemic.

Excerpt 7 (July 21st):

IR: →So, I’m wondering, does it surprise you considering the state of the pandemic in Japan right now and the growing number of COVID cases directly linked to the Olympics to hear the head of the WHO backing the games?

IE: →Well, it is shocking and also there is a great misunderstanding of what the Olympics have meant for the people. You know, the hope and bring people together have been emphasized, but they need to recognize that the Olympics has been the factor to divided the public...For example, people were told not to eat out drink alcohol at home...But on the other hand, we see the Olympic contestants going ahead..., even the head of the IOC going to Hiroshima without fulfilling the two weeks quarantine period. And the industrial money is going into the Olympics while hardly any financial support is given to struggling people. So, the Olympics is dividing people and not bringing people together.

In this excerpt, the IR first presents the question relating three facts: 1) the state of the pandemic in Japan, 2) increasing cases of COVID directly linked to the Olympic and 3) the head of the WHO is backing the games. The IR asks the question framed as “does it surprise you...” It can be seen that the IE aligns with the IR by evaluating it as shocking and showing agreement on the position proposed by the IR. Then the IE develops the topic by providing a further reasoning gap between the true meaning of the Olympics and people’s understanding of it. He illustrates the contradiction of the IOC and the Japanese government by taking the restriction for people, unfulfilling quarantine period for Olympic contestants and unbalanced financial support as examples. Finally, the IE sums up that the Tokyo Olympics deviates from its original meaning. By doing so, the IE derives the topic they are discussing about and displays convergent alignment toward the position in the question.

#### c) Reinforcing

Reinforcing refers to the speech act of displaying convergent alignment by further expounding, explaining or complementing the attitudes, evaluations or opinions in the prior turn(s). The context of the following excerpt is the same as the one of Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 8 (July, 21st):

IR: →China plays a key role in combating global warming.

IE: →There is simply no way, mathematical or ideological, to solve the climate crisis without the full cooperation and leadership of the country that today leads the world with 28 percent of global emissions.

In the excerpt, the IR first evaluates China as a key role in combating global warming, conveying his stance. In the following responding turn, the IE doesn't directly agree but his positive comment on China's leadership and cooperation aligns with the IE's stance. In the answering turn, the IE shows agreement on the position set up by the IR and specifies his stance by further explaining China's leadership and cooperation despite the high proportion of global emissions. Therefore, this reinforcement of his position shows alignment with the IR's stance in the previous turn.

2) Divergent alignment

a) Evading

Evading refers to the speech act of displaying divergent alignment by temporarily laying aside or avoiding dealing with the attitudes, evaluations or opinions in the prior turns. In the following excerpt, the participants are the same as those in Excerpt 5. In this context, the IR asks the IE about his opinion of the immediate needs of various supplies for combating Covid in Africa.

Excerpt 9 (July 18th):

IR: →So one study in the journal “The Lancet” found—and this is sort to what you're saying there—found those who suffer from COVID or severe COVID in Africa are more likely to die than patients in other parts of the world, because of issues with things like equipment, supplies, health care, infrastructure. What are the immediate needs? I mean, things like oxygen supplies, ventilators, hospital capacity, that sort of thing?

IE: Well, the fact is that the COVID pandemic has come to Africa at a time when we already have a suboptimal health system. That has many things around it. And the least of either one of them is actually financing. If you look at investment in health, the public expenditure health in euro is \$4000 per capita. In Africa, it ranges anywhere from \$10 to \$20 per capita...

In this excerpt, the IR first mentions a third party—the journal “The Lancet” and quotes the finding that lethality of COVID in Africa is higher than that in other parts of the world. Afterwards, the IE evaluates the stance object by ascribing this phenomenon to things like equipment, supplies, health care, infrastructure. The attribution becomes a foundation for the following questions about the immediate needs and his examples focus on medical equipment that has been narrowed down. In the IE's answering turn, instead of direct (dis)agreement, the IE describes the fact of suboptimal health system by comparing the public expenditure health per capita in Europe and in Africa, and points out that the necessary factor is financing, which indicates his evasion of divergent alignment toward the position set up in the prior turn.

## b) Disagreeing

Disagreeing refers to the speech act of displaying divergent alignment by showing dissent or refusal against the attitudes, evaluations or opinions. The background of the following excerpt is about the riot and chaos, caused by prolific demonstrators when they invaded the Capitol on 6th January, 2021. After that, the new U.S. Capitol Police was accused of lacking emergency plans and leadership. In this interview excerpt, the new U.S. Capitol Police Chief, as IE, on his first day on the job, talked to CNN about the January 6th insurrection and his perceptions of those trying to downplay the seriousness of that day.

Excerpt 10 (July 24th):

IR: →Well, what's your view when people say, well, this was tourism or this was a love fest? I mean, we all saw that video of your officers on the receiving end of so much violence. As the leader of the Department, what do you think when you hear it characterized that way?

IE: →Well, I don't agree with it. That's not the way I saw it. But again, everybody's entitled their opinion. And frankly, as the chief for this Police Department now, I'm in a position to do things to ensure that that wouldn't happen again.

In this excerpt, the IR mentions people's attitude that characterizes this insurrection as a tourism or a love fest the theme of which is peace. To narrow down the boundary for the IE to response, the IR specifies it by saying "I mean..." and doubts the ability of the officers. By doing so, he evaluates the object and sets up a position to promote the IE to take a responsive stance within the question's topical parameter. In the subsequent turn, the IE first says "I don't agree" to divergently align with the IE's assertion. He expressively objects to the agenda set by the IR and maintains that the stance embodied in the questioning turn is contrary to his own perception. After that, although the IE acknowledges the freedom of speech for those people, he states his responsibility is to prevent similar insurrection in the future.

## c) Challenging

Challenging refers to the speech act of displaying divergent alignment by displaying doubt toward the attitudes, evaluations or opinions in the prior turn(s), thereby indicating that the utterances in the prior turn(s) are problematic. In Excerpt 11 for example, the participants are discussing about delayed mandates of requiring masks indoors in the circumstance of wildfire-like COVID in New York currently. The IE is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. At the beginning of this turn, the IR states the fact that employees need the immediate mandates of masks indoors.

Excerpt 11 (July 30th):

IR: →But the other thing is mandates...Public sector, private sector, we need mandates because...And mandates are one of the ways to address it. OK. You have the option of requiring/mandating masks indoors, but you haven't done that yet. Some folks on your city council pretty concerned, saying, you need to act on this right now. Why are you waiting until Monday to make that decision?

IE: →First of all, the whole ballgame is vaccination. And that's part of what is crucial as we announce the approach to mask is not to lose the forest for the trees. The main event is vaccination. Masks can be helpful... So what we want to make sure is everything we does supports vaccination, doesn't distract from vaccination...

IR: →But we can do two things at once, right? Mark Levine, who chairs the New York City Council Health Committee, says one of the lessons we learned from the pandemic is to act fast. Is he wrong?

IE: And we're acting fast on the thing that makes a difference. That's why we put a mandate in place for vaccination of public employees. That's why we created the \$100 incentive to get people vaccinated. That's why I called on the private sector to implement vaccine mandates.

IR: Yes, you did.

IE: →That's what we have to do, so we will address masks. We will.

In this excerpt, we can observe a heated debate between the IR and the IE. As mentioned above, the IR attaches importance to the mandates of masks indoors and evaluates it as an effective solution. The IR further relates the concern from some folks in City Council to imply the necessity of requiring masks indoors immediately. It is followed by the wh-question "why are you waiting..." to place the IE in a problematic position, through which he introduces his evaluation of the stance object (delayed mandates) and sets up a position. The IE takes a stance by insisting that the priority is vaccination and wearing masks is of secondary importance. After the subsequent affirmation of the IR, the third-party, Mark Levine's citation is used to support IR's side. Eventually, the IR challenges the IE's stance in the question framed as "is he wrong?", which is uttered in an adversarial tone and displays strong dissent. Thereafter, the IE lists more examples to defend his stance. What is more, he both sides compromise after the negotiation. In general, this excerpt provides a process of how the IE forms the divergent alignment and how the IE's stance is challenged and modified by IR's stance.

## 5. Conclusion

By analyzing the two essential stance taking activities, positioning and alignment, in news interview with the application of the stance triangle theory and method of CA, the study reports the major findings as follows:

Initially, in the questioning turn IR is inclined to set topical or action agenda, presuppositions or imply positive or negative preference at the same time of evaluation and position in the questioning turn. Additionally, in the responding turn IE opts to show convergent alignment (agreeing, deriving or reinforcing) or divergent alignment (evading, disagreeing or challenging) in accordance with the differences of degrees of alignment with the attitudes or evaluations presented by the IR. Consequently, the stance set up by co-participants is versed with each other and thereby stance taking is reached as an intersubjective activity.



The study on stance taking of IRs and IEs in the news discourse based on stance triangle and CA has some practical implications. For one thing, it reinforces the understanding of stance taking from a relatively novel point of view; for another, this study could shed some new insights into the strategic use of language for IRs and IEs in precisely presenting their stances and showing convergent or divergent alignment in the questioning and responding sequence in the interview discourse. Meanwhile, it is hoped that this study could also offer some reference for the stance taking of speakers in the daily conversation and other institutional spoken discourse.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

### Fund

This work was supported by a grant from the Zhejiang Provincial Philosophy and Social Science Planning Project (No.: 20NDJC202YB).

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