

Affiliating and Disaffiliating with Complaints

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Abstract

The following dissertation considers the practices involved in affiliating and disaffiliating with complaints in everyday, naturally-occurring interaction. Much work has been done to explore the practices involved in complaining itself, both in institutional and everyday settings but recipient responses are yet to be explored in such detail. This dissertation looks at data from existing corpora of phone calls and in-person interactions between friends, family and colleagues to (1) outline the three main complaint types found in interaction, then uses conversation analysis to (2) highlight the practices involved in affiliating and disaffiliating with complaints. In a conclusive discussion, I then (3) recognise the potential categorisation of these practices on a continuum ranging from explicitly affiliative to explicitly disaffiliative, acknowledging the position of non-affiliation as an additional response type.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work, except where referenced or stated otherwise. The ideas presented are original and have not been previously submitted for any other degree or professional qualification at the University of York or any other institution.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Complaining is an integral part of social interaction, largely because it is through complaints that we express and negotiate the moral character of an action. Complaints involve characterising someone's conduct as transgressive in some way, and hence convey assessments of the inappropriateness, incorrectness or unsuitability of someone's conduct. Whether the complaint is made between friends about the conduct of a mutual friend or acquaintance or a customer complaining about an unsatisfactory meal, complaints convey an assessment relating to a standard or expectation of behaviour or conduct by an individual, an organisation or an unfortunate circumstance. Complaints lie at the heart of our understandings and assessments of the morality of another's behaviour and reveal personal motivations and expectations of conduct. That having been said, complaining is a dispreferred action. Complaining has negative connotations and a person who complains frequently may be viewed in a particularly negative light, perhaps labelled as a 'moaner' or 'whiny'. This makes complaints of great interest to linguists, particularly conversation analysts (CA).

CA researchers have analysed how complaints are initiated and managed in interaction. From a linguistic perspective, complaints can be characterised by the speakers negative expression of dissatisfaction relating to a misfortune or wrongdoing – namely a complainant. Conversation analysts have explored complaints in a variety of environments, both in institutional settings and in everyday social activity, making sense of how speakers navigate potentially face-threatening conversation, the practices involved in complaining and how a complainant works to elicit affiliative responses (Drew 1998; Laforest 2002; Monzoni 2002; Traverso 2009).

Little research has been done to provide a comprehensive, systematic analysis of recipients' responses to complaints, specifically, the practices involved in displaying affiliation and disaffiliation have yet to be deconstructed and understood as stand-alone features of talk that make up this particular interactional activity.

Complaint Types

When analysing complaints, comparisons can be made between the different 'types' of complaints found in interaction. In CA research complaints are typically divided into third-party complaints and direct complaints; however, a further and equally relevant category is 'agentless' complaints. These are complaints where blame is not attributed to a human agent, but to 'circumstances'. However, in general, complaints can be categorised based on human agency. However, each complaint type has its own distinct attributes when considering turn design, sequential position, complainability and normative standards of conduct. Turn design refers to the particular words or design of turns of talk (Drew 2012); sequential position is the exact position during a sequence of turns that a particular turn occurs (Schegloff 2007); normative standards of conduct are not what is statistically normal but what participants orient to being appropriate conduct. Complainability is explored, in detail, in the opening of the literature review. In order to highlight this significant distinction here are three data excerpts each of which illustrates these three principal types of complaint.

Third-party complaints are those made to a recipient in an environment where the complained-about person – one might say the complainee – is not present. Excerpt 1 shows Lesley launch a complaint to Joyce about a mutual acquaintance Mr R. Third-party complaints are often embedded in a narrative, designed to enable the recipient to follow and appreciate the sense of the speaker's grievance at her treatment by another, or at the egregious character of another's conduct (wrongdoing); such narratives provide the context and explain the details of the third party's transgressive conduct.

#1 [Holt:C85:4]

01 Les: °Oh:.° hh Yi-m- You ↓know I-I- I'm boiling about
02 something hhhheh[heh hhhh
03 Joy: [Wha::t.

04 Les: Well that saɪ:le. (0.2) at- at (.) the vicarage.
 05 (0.6)
 06 Joy: Oh ↓ye[:s,
 07 Les: [t
 08 (0.6)
 09 Les: u (.) ihYour friend 'n mi:ne wz the:re
 ((omitted transcript))
 28 Les: AND uh ↑we were looking rou-nd the ↑sta:lls 'n poking
 29 about 'n he came up t'me 'n be said Oh: hhello Lesley,
 30 (.) ↑still trying to buy something f'nothing,

Complaint initiations are often produced in the form of a ‘pre-telling’ that sets up the narrative to follow. Overt expressions of emotion, as seen at line 1, are often used as pre-tellings and are frequently to be found in third-party complaints; they work to add context and shape the telling and emphasise the extent of wrongdoing by conveying the effect that the other’s conduct had on speaker. Third-party complaints embedded in a narrative often feature animation or reported speech to help paint the complaine in a particular light.

By contrast, direct complaints are those made about the recipient, to the recipient. The following excerpt is a conversation between housemates Kerry, James and Sam, in which Sam makes a direct complaint to James about him mentioning the fact they are being filmed. Sam initiates his complaint via an interrogative at line 4. ‘Why do you keep mentioning the filming’ questions James’s behaviour and implies some degree of wrongdoing.

#2 [RCE08_28.41]

01 Jam: Right I’m gonna ↓leave the film
 02 Ker: Why? (.) you have to ↑wait til I’ve finished
 03 [↓my food at least
 04 Sam: [why d’cha keep mentioning the ↑filming [because jus- you know
 05 Ker: [I know
 06 Sam: why do you have-
 07 Ker: [I’ve completely ignored i
 08 Sam: [that’s about the ↑fourth or fifth time you’ve mentioned it
 09 you’re not supposed to be mentioning it.
 10 Jam: Al↓right ↑calm ↓down
 11 Sam: what happened to you just being ↓natural
 12 Jam: I have been natural. (.) you’ve been very un↑natural
 13 Sam: I have NOT I’ve just be ↑ME
 14 Ker: exactly (.) I’M ONLY MESSIN
 15 Sam: ↑YOU’RE ALWAYS MESZIN

Whilst the construction ‘why do you keep’ (line 4) conveys a complainable matter, through the implied repetitive nature of the misconduct, the complaint is then made particularly explicit at line 8 when Sam not only highlights James’s behaviour but also introduces a normative standard of conduct; ‘not supposed to’ suggests that there are rules or guidelines to which James has not adhered and again, that he has done this repeatedly (‘fourth or fifth time’). Furthermore, the debate between James and Sam regarding ‘being natural’ at lines 11 and 12 reveals what the normative standard of behaviour should be whilst the camera is on. Direct complaints often emerge as a direct response to an act of wrongdoing and to some extent see complainants ‘call out’ misconduct as they see it. Other direct complaints can be made addressing past transgressions; nevertheless, direct complaints are always launched unilaterally by the complainant in an attempt to address the trouble. Direct complaints are the most face-threatening of the complaint types as they are often accusatory and could lead to disagreements or altercations.

Agentless complaints: The third complaint category, not often touched upon in CA research, is agentless complaints. Subcategories of agentless complaints would be complaints about life, ‘I’m so stressed all the time’ or ‘I have no motivation’ and inanimate complaints ‘the weather is so horrible’ or ‘this chair is uncomfortable’. Excerpt 3 is an example of a complaint about life. Luca produces a unilateral complaint through a declarative assessment of his current trouble, in response to an earlier question ‘how’s research and things’, asked by his friend Kyle.

#3 [RCE4_720_Philosophers]

01 Luc: >n- I’m< ↑just bored. just bored.
02 (5.0)
03 Luc: I need something. I can’t really I’m just bored of
04 this:shit this research thing teaching it’s just boring
05 °it’s not exciting >s not exciting<°
06 Kyl: ↑no
07 Luc: =but it’s work. (.) I just want something (.) ↓exci-

Luca’s complaint is brief and unambiguous. He is producing a complaint about a trouble he is experiencing with his life and there is no agent to attribute blame to. Besides agency, what makes both complaints about life and inanimate complaints their own unique category is fact that they are not made in relation to conduct or misbehaviour. Agentless complaints are produced as the result of an unmet expectation or desire, such as the weather being nice, wanting a comfier chair or being bored.

While the discussion of the morality of conduct is the focus of much CA research, my focus in this dissertation on recipient’s responses to complaints – specifically, on how recipients respond by either affiliating or disaffiliating with the complainant – means agentless complaints are just as relevant as direct and third-party complaints.

Literature Review

The literature on complaining most frequently takes a conversation analysis perspective, with some researchers touching on multimodal features of talk and supplementing alternate linguistic perspectives. I have arranged the appropriate literature by key analytic themes found in complaint research: complainability; the construction design and sequential management of complaints; mitigating negative identities; direct complaints as face-threatening actions; and recipient affiliation and disaffiliation.

Complainability

Some of the earliest CA work on complaints is Sacks’ *Lectures on Conversation* (1964-1972), notably that of Fall 1968 in which he introduces the accusatory nature of direct complaints. He highlights that the interpretation of a declarative is open to the recipient and the navigation of the conversation to follow depends on the second-pair part they produce. He uses the example of “you interrupted me”. Should the recipient apologise, deny or excuse their interruption, it appears that they interpreted the turn as accusatory and complainable. This then sets up and defines the sequence to follow. This idea was developed by Schegloff (2005) through the definitive concept of complainability, explaining that recipients can easily interpret casual small talk as complainable. Interrogatives can also have multiple interpretations but could be understood to be complainable by a recipient. Sacks’ lecture highlights that regardless of how an utterance is interpreted the normative features of turn-taking emerge and form the foundation of the interaction. In one of his later lectures (Fall 1971) on poetics, Sack’s revisits complaining. He highlights the problematic element of complaints, particularly direct complaints in interaction, in that they often consume the conversation that follows. Relating to the points in his earlier lecture, he points out that should an accusatory complaint be made, the talk that follows can be consumed by endless counter-complaints and accusations, affirming the face-threatening and argumentative consequences of complaining, making clear that complaining is something speakers may want to avoid being characterized as doing.

The development of complaints and their sequential management is covered in Jefferson's (1988) paper on the sequential organisation of troubles-talk. Complaints are a sub-category of troubles-talk, a particularly sensitive and intimate social action that requires careful navigation due to this face-threatening nature. Jefferson (1988) highlights the complex sequential organisation of troubles-talk by analysing how it emerges and is then managed in conversation, and to what rules and standards such talk conforms to in comparison to other, more habitual, social actions. Jefferson explains how speakers are 'trained' about the normative structures of behaviour and expected preferred responses to actions, for example, greetings are to be met with greetings or invitations are to be met with acceptance or rejection. These are standard preferred responses that participants learn to become aware of and adhere to. She explains how we have not been taught to manage troubles-talk in the same way. The subject of the troubles-talk is particular to the person expressing their trouble, and while specific actions warrant a preferred response, i.e the preferred response to complaining is affiliation, there are no specific 'rules' or 'rituals' that we know to follow. Jefferson's solution to navigating this is that trouble-talk should be embedded within ordinary conversation, encompassed by what she calls 'business as usual' talk. She explains how ordinary talk is often underway before troubles-talk emerges and then subsequently resumes, creating varying degrees of intimacy in the process (Jefferson 1988, p.438). She explains however that this is less of a 'rule' and more of a suggestion or consideration for managing troubles-talk successfully.

Emerson and Messinger (1977) present a framework for "analyzing interactional processes through which personal difficulties or troubles are identified, reacted to, elaborated, and perhaps transformed into a specific sort of deviance" (p.121). They outline how problems or troubles are frequently experienced by a person but complaining is a format through which such troubles are publicly recognised. Complaining is an attempt to 'remedy' their trouble, either through receiving comfort and empathy or resolving any problems. It is possible that such a 'remedy' may not work, and can therefore cause a recurrent pattern of trouble throughout interaction, leading to unresolved disagreements, misaligned stances and disaffiliative responses with co-participants. Such results require careful negotiation between both parties to ensure mutual understanding of the issue at hand. Nevertheless, the structure of complaint sequences is a form of micro-managing troubles, as a way to navigate through 'deviant' or particularly egregious troubles (Emerson & Messinger 1977, p.131).

The construction, design and sequential management of complaints

It is with the practices outlined in Drew's paper on *Complaints about transgressions and misconduct* (1998) that we can identify explicit complaints from potentially complainable conversation. Drew's work is fundamental in explaining how complaints are produced, organised and understood in interaction. He highlights the key practices involved in complaining and what makes complaint sequences overt. Some key features he highlights are (1) overt expressions or emotions or moral indignation toward the trouble or complaine, (2) explicit versions of transgressions, (3) narrative constructions, (4) emphasis on repeated egregious behaviour of the complaine and (5) extreme case formulations. Extreme case formulations are a feature of talk explored by Pomerantz (1986) that work to legitimize claims, an example of which would be 'every time' or 'the whole world'. Each feature outlined by Drew plays a role in magnifying the transgression or wrongdoing in comparison to a normative standard of moral behaviour, designed (in the case of third-party complaints) to elicit co-participants' affiliation.

A common property of the sequential management of complaining is their narrative structure, as discussed by Traverso (2009) who demonstrates that complaints can involve storytelling, often conforming to the structure "(1) initiation, (2) core part, (3) complaint development, (4) closing" (Traverso 2009, p.2388). Each phase is navigated through cues that are mutually recognised and understood by participants. The initiation stage of a third party complaint sequence is arguably the most imperative as is where the 'potential complaint' is produced by a complainant. Traverso explains that it is at this stage where a recipient chooses to treat the complainants turn as complainable or not (Schegloff 2005). The third turn in this sequence is where the complainant chooses to accept their

recipient's treatment of the complaint, either moving to pursue affiliation, reformulating their initiation or potentially abandoning the action. After the initiation, a complainant will pursue affiliation through a variety of practices including topic reorientations, anecdotes and explicit criticisms of the third party, all produced via an exclamatory structure.

Further research into the role of narrative and stories in complaining is Selting's (2012) work on complaint stories and displays of affect and emotion. Her work provides an exhaustive catalogue of cues and features, found in complaint sequences and their subsequent complaint stories. The list includes rhetorical features such as intensifiers, negative assessments, idioms and expletives; prosodic cues that display particular stereotypes when reporting speech and visual cues of conventionalized expressions of emotion to name a few. In her specific research, she looks at how such features are used by complainants in their initial complaint story, and how these are then mirrored or embodied as a display of affiliation to the first complainant.

Reported talk and reported thought are widely explored features of complaint stories. The difference between the two features being that reported talk is the report of speech in interaction, while reported thought is the report of something that occurred in one's head. Reported thoughts are often more critical of the third party and are brought to the 'interactional surface' during the third party complaint sequences (Haakana 2007, p.153). Reported thoughts are an expansion of Drew's (1998) overt expressions of emotion. Drawing attention to how a complainant feels about a transgression not only makes a complaint more explicit but is an active practice for pursuing affiliation and empathy from co-participants. There is also a difference to be noted between direct and indirect reported talk. The use of each shapes complaint stories in a slightly different way. Direct reported talk is designed to make a story seem more accurate and credible (Holt & Clift 2007; Heinrichsmeier 2021), however, a complainant choosing to use indirect reported talk could allow them to downplay their role in the transgression. The events of complaint stories can be easily misreported, often intentionally in favour of the complainant. Reported speech and thought play an important role in painting the complaine in a negative light, while the complainant is somewhat of a victim. The organisation of reported speech in complaint stories is also a complex practice of complaining, specifically in relation to identity work. Self-positioning in complaint stories is important when seeking affiliation. Heinrichsmeier highlights that "complaints orientate to – and seek to mitigate – possible negative dispositional identities such as moaner, whinger, habitual complainer, etc." (Heinrichsmeier 2021, p.44). In using reported speech, complainants can choose who is animated to speak and when, this allows them to avoid the attribution of negative identities by positioning their complaine as egregious through selective animation.

Mitigating negative identities

The negative identities listed above – moaner, whinger, habitual complainer – all contribute to Sacks' idea that one would likely not want to be characterized as complaining in social interactions. Thus, complainants use particular features to mask the harsh nature of complaints, in an attempt to create intimacy, as opposed to discord with their co-participants. Edwards explores how speakers manage their complaints through announcements, laughter, displacement and lexical descriptions and explores whether or not these enhance or take away from the seriousness of a complaint (Edwards 2005). He analyses the various implications laughter has on complaint sequences, particularly how complaints manage irony and humour to avoid their recipient feeling awkward. Idiomatic expressions can often be used as another method for creating a relatable and shared understanding of the trouble for the recipient. Drew and Holt (1988) refer to idioms as "formulaic, colloquial constructions" that to some extent "incorporate stereotypical knowledge" (Drew & Holt, 1988, p.399). Their research found that idioms in complaint sequences were used to summarise the details of a complaint story in a way that is somewhat accessible to all participants. Their figurative nature makes it more difficult for a co-participant to challenge the details of a telling with empirical fact and is, therefore, most often used when a recipient has not yet affiliated with the complainant. Such irony is another means for Edwards

(2005) idea of displacement noted above. By pre-facing a complaint in such a way, it is a way to establish a mutual understanding between the participants that a complaint story is about to begin.

Particular interactional environments allow for unique features of complaints to emerge. Ruusavori et al. (2019) explore how managers create opportunities, as a recipient, for an employee to initiate a complaint about their colleagues under the term 'complaint facilitation'. They outline that the negative assessments prevalent in complaints warrant a judgement from the recipient, specifically in institutional settings. Initiating a complaint between managers and employees requires coordinated collaboration between participants, in order to maintain a standard of professionalism and appropriateness. The study found that "participants drew upon an assumed shared knowledge and a shared affective stance in the form of, for instance, facial expressions and laughter as resources aimed at managing the delicacy of moving into complaining" (Ruusavori et al. 2019, p.32-33). From this initiation, the complaint sequence is still carefully managed through the use of hesitation markers, mitigating devices and active collaboration. Such navigation however is particularly exclusive to institutional settings based on the asymmetry between the participants of manager and employee.

Direct complaints as face-threatening actions

Dersley and Wootton (2000) demonstrate why direct complaints are the most potentially face-threatening of all the complaint types. In two key papers, they examine the interactions associated with direct complaints, examining first complaints that emerge in already antagonistic conversation. These complaints are direct, usually containing an accusation or criticism of the co-participant. This research relates back to Emerson and Messinger's (1977) idea that complaining can lead to a recurring pattern of trouble, as counter-complaints and denials are made the collaboration between participants begins to break down. Dersley and Wootton (2002) emphasise that their findings do not apply to all complaints: however, particularly accusatory direct complaints are often met with one of two responses, if not an apology: "didn't do it" and "not at fault" denials. The former are designed as preferred actions but clearly present a misalignment between participants, while the latter is a more blatant denial of culpability and responsibility causing dispute about the nature of the trouble (Dersley & Wootton 2000, p.402). Both responses are insufficient for the complainant and likely this recurring pattern emerges as counter-complaints are continuously made against both participants. The second paper considers complaint sequences that result in one participant unilaterally leaving the conversation – walking out – on the other (Dersley and Wootton 2002). Such a conclusion often means remedy work has either not been done, or is unsuccessful, as parties still hold opposing views. They compare the sequential trajectory that begins with a direct complaint, and ends in a walk-out. A complaint develops of a series of turns, and in this time, a complainees' defences and denials can often grow with the complaint, naturally generating a confrontation due to the participants opposing stances. These interactions require careful navigation to resolution because if neither party's actions are rectified emotive states of indignation become apparent, often leading to said walk-outs.

Direct complaints are more likely than third-party complaints to be accomplished in a single accusatory turn, although that turn typically generates the subsequent negotiation of the accusatory act. Laforest (2009) considers this joint negotiation and navigation through troublesome interaction but considers the significance of a present third party witness. This witness is in the position of being able to defuse any confrontation, encourage it or affiliate with either party all of which could extensively affect the outcome of the interaction. In a later paper, Laforest (2002) makes the important claim that interlocutors can disagree about behaviours and troubles, but prefer to form an agreement not to argue. This is particularly prevalent in interactions of which the participants have a close relationship as close relationships can mean that "the entry into the argument is negotiated in the speech turns that follow the complaint/response sequence, and the argument only breaks out if the complainer questions the value of the complainees' response" (Laforest 2002, p.1618). Participants in these interactions use specific techniques to avoid arguments, and this was most successful when techniques were used by both participants. The techniques are a form negotiation that works toward

the idea that interlocutors can disagree about behaviours and troubles but form an agreement not to argue (Lafroest 2002, p.1618). There is a mutual understanding and desire for resolution.

Monzoni argues that “complaints should be grounded in the actual occurrence of events” (Monzoni 2008, p.84). In the same paper, Monzoni (2008) looks at the production of direct complaints as interrogatives. Questions, as explored by Schegloff (2005), can be used to elicit information that often links to a form of accusation or criticism of behaviour. In institutional settings, complaints initiated through questions are a way of establishing shared knowledge of this event occurrence, and complainants often use polar questions to elicit recognition from the recipient. Wh-questions on the other hand are frequently used to challenge a complainees’s behaviour. They are an indirect way of criticising behaviour and seem less accusatory or overtly critical. Monzoni claims that recipients respond to these criticisms literally, implying that they do not see their actions as wrong or troublesome.

Recipients’ affiliation and disaffiliation

It is widely accepted that “preferred format actions are normally affiliative in character while dispreferred format actions are disaffiliative. Similarly, while preferred format actions are generally supportive of social solidarity, dispreferred format actions are destructive of it” (Heritage cited in Linström & Sorjonen 2013, p.350). Lindström and Sorjonen highlight the important role affiliation plays in social solidarity between interlocutors in all social interaction. Regarding to complaints, they note that “the general pattern is that complaints that target third parties make possible affiliation with the co-participant, while complaints about issues that are within the realm of responsibility of the co-participant are disaffiliative” (Lindström & Sorjonen 2013, p.360).

Heinemann’s (2009) research combines Goffman’s (1981) ‘participation status’ with the analyses of third-party complaints. In outlining the differences between presence and absence, and participation and exclusion, highlights their interactional relevance in third-party complaints. The unique institutional environment of Heinemann’s research meant she was able to look at third-party complaints in which the complainees was present yet excluded from the conversation. This unique take is somewhat subjective to this environment as perhaps less likely in an everyday social interaction. Nevertheless, Heinemann’s contribution to the discussion of affiliation is comprehensive, particularly when considering the notion of participation. She claims that affiliation is more common in third-party complaints as it prevents a complainees from responding defensively against the complainant. Active participation from a complaint recipient involves affiliating to an extent that they collaborate in complaining and form a ‘coalition’ with the complainant – which in this environment allows for exclusion of the complainees. Participation, like affiliation, must be established interactionally, creating an intimate alignment between participants that allows for a seamless navigation of complaint interactions.

Jefferson et al. (1987) consider how laughter can be produced as a systematic social activity, used to navigate intimate and sometimes improper conversations. Part of this consideration involves analysing recipient responses to speakers, understanding how laughter can be used to pursue affiliation in talk of sensitive or inappropriate topics. Jefferson et al. mention a hypothetical continuum that reflects a progression of affiliation in improper conversation. An example of this progression would be *disattention – appreciation – affiliation – escalation* (Jefferson et al. 1987, p.12). Such a continuum is applicable to complaint discourse, as it involves the preferred response of affiliation and also highlights a clear distinction between affiliation and disaffiliation.

Saleh (2020) directly references Jefferson et al.’s continuum when discussing the relationship between mock aggression and (dis)affiliative responses. Saleh raises questions surrounding this continuum in that responses do not explicitly fall on either side as affiliative or disaffiliative. But instead that mock aggression is an example of a social action that blurs this line by being an overtly negative and potentially threatening action that offers “an exit out of disaffiliation into a more affiliative sequence” (Saleh 2020, p.496). Jefferson et al.’s continuum of affiliation to escalation is also explored by Drew and Walker (2009). This study focuses heavily on the significance of collaboration in relation to complaints, specifically how a recipient becomes an active participant by

affiliating to such an extent that they co-construct the complaint sequence with the complainant. Drew and Walker explore interactional circumstances in which complaints are collaborative affiliative and disaffiliative responses are “two sides of the same coin” (Drew & Walker 2009, p.2412). They present data that shows collaborative complaints turn disaffiliative when the complaint recipient takes a complaint ‘too far’. As explored above, complaints can be initiated but not always built upon based on how they are interpreted by co-participants. In this case, recipients topicalize the initiated complainable matter, co-constructing the complaint sequence with the initiator. What can occur, however, is that after what appears to be a collaborative, and affiliative interaction, one participant takes the complaining too far, creating a misalignment between participants.

Flint et al. examine what happens following disaffiliative responses, and how participants carefully navigate interaction to pursue affiliation in order to reach a conclusion of social solidarity. They outline a three-part sequence consisting of “disaffiliation-extended justification-stance movement” (Flint et al. 2019, p.22). For a disaffiliative interaction to achieve agreeability, participants must accept that disaffiliation can be momentary. In order to achieve this, participants must share their stance and reach a mutual understanding and move their respective stances to some degree in order to achieve social cohesion. Another related reading is Mandelbaum’s (1991) exploration of disattendings. She outlines how the disattending of a complaint allows for an interaction to remain cohesive despite a misalignment between participants. Disattending involves a recipient initiating a topic shift, often by asking a question that redirects the conversation away from the complainable matter. Disattendings may be subtle or blatant, but regardless work to maintain social cohesion without affiliating or collaborating in the complainant sequence.

The literature summarised here is all regarded as CA literature, meaning there might be other relevant research incorporating different approaches and methodologies that have not been included. Nevertheless, the data included highlights some significant key themes of troubles-talk, complaining and (dis)affiliation. Such as the sequential design of complaints, their typical features, implications and management between participants. Complaints are potentially face-threatening and associated with negative identities, meaning there a techniques used by complainants to carefully navigate through such interactions while pursuing the preferred response of affiliation.

Data & Methodology

All data used for this research was publicly accessible as a student at the University of York. Because the data were all secondary data, covered by existing ethics agreements and arrangements, no further ethical approval was necessary. The data has been taken from corpora by Holt, Rossi and Heritage. Most data from the University of York archive were already transcribed; however some data from The Rossi Corpus of English required transcribing under Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Jefferson 2004). The data are all naturally occurring talk between friends, family and colleagues in ordinary social interactions. The data include in-person and telephone conversations, and hence include both video and audio recordings made in both the UK and US, from the 1970s to 2020.

Compiling small collections of this relevant data allowed for a comprehensive comparison that validates the focal arguments through highlighting parallels and consistencies across different interactions. I therefore began by examining my chosen transcripts, building small collections that demonstrated particular practices for affiliation and disaffiliation to present in my analysis. In selecting two larger data excerpts, I can effectively demonstrate each response type to show the process of systematic conversation analysis of a complaint sequence, providing context and explanations of practices involved in both complaints and affiliation to show how they work on a larger interactional scale. From here I introduce the small collections that support the findings of this analysis and break down the implications and relevance of each (dis)affiliative practice.

The method for analysing this data is conversation analysis. CA takes human interaction and combines theoretical assumptions with rigorous analysis of structure, turn design and sequential organisation of talk. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson combined linguistics and sociology to study ordinary social action from the perspectives of reasoning, organisation, and institutional ordering

(Sidnell & Stivers 2013). CA has since established itself as “a worldwide theoretical and empirical endeavour concerned with the social scientific understanding and analysis of interaction” (Maynard 2013, p.13). Conversation analysts’ work with collections of carefully transcribed conversations, taken from data collected across a wide range of settings in which naturally occurring talk exists, drawing on patterns and parallels that are evident across the data. This is the most appropriate methodology, not only because existing research has successfully used CA as a framework for analysing complaints, but because the focus on social action and organisation allows for a detailed exploration of how complaints are managed by interlocutors and allows still for focus and understanding of morality and conduct in social interaction.

Chapter outline

In the following chapters I present systematic explorations of the practices involved in affiliating and disaffiliating with complaints in an attempt to understand how complaints discourse is managed by both participants. The following chapters include an analysis of the practices involved in affiliating and disaffiliating with complaints in everyday interaction, followed by a concluding discussion making reference to an affiliation continuum to which the practices involved in affiliation and disaffiliation may be categorised. The analysis consists of two chapters, the first focusing on affiliative responses by recipients, the second on disaffiliative responses. Each chapter begins with the analysis and explanation of one third party complaint sequence in which participants are clearly displaying the relevant response type. Analysis of these transcripts found that overt displays of disaffiliation are less prevalent than perhaps expected. Therefore, the term ‘non-affiliation’ is equally as relevant when discussing the possible responses to complaints. Each analysis chapter is supplemented with small collections of data that support the analysis and recognition of each practice across all three complaint types. In my conclusion I explore how complaint responses can be considered on a continuum, ranging from explicitly affiliative to explicitly disaffiliative – though a caveat is in order here as recipients are not often, if ever, overtly disaffiliative, but instead, as I will go on to show, are more implicit in their disaffiliative stance. At any rate, the ways in which participants design their responses fall somewhere on this continuum which impacts how complaint interactions are navigated by all interlocutors.

Chapter 2 Recipient affiliations with complaints

Having considered the design and structure of three different complaint types (direct complaints, third-party complaints and agentless complaints), the following chapters will focus on the construction of responses to complaints and how complaint recipients design their turns to display affiliation or disaffiliation. As discussed, much of the existing literature focuses on the design of complaints (i.e. the design of turns at talk to be heard as complaints) and how complaining is managed in interaction. While recipients' responses in general and affiliation and disaffiliation in particular are frequently discussed in complaint literature, little work systematically considers the practices involved in responding to complaints.

This analysis of recipient responses is organised into two chapters, this chapter on affiliation and the next, chapter 3, on disaffiliation. In both, I will begin by considering recipient responses to a single extended third party complaint sequence, in which affiliation (chapter 2) or disaffiliation (chapter 3) is displayed. My aim in this chapter is to identify and highlight the key practices involved managing affiliation by the participants in the interaction. Exploring one extended example allows for an expedient analysis that demonstrated how particular practices work together to display affiliation, disaffiliation or non-affiliation (these in the next chapter 3) in a full interaction. While these larger extracts selected are not comprehensive; they do allow for a detailed discussion about some key practices that interlocutors use to navigate complex, and potentially face-threatening, interactions. In order to highlight each practice further, I have added small collections illustrating each practice. Analysing collections allows for a more thorough exploration of each of the practices I have identified, and in the various different types of complaints outlined in the previous chapter. This means the practices outlined are not exclusive to third-party complaints and will allow for a wider exploration of practices across direct complaints and agentless complaints comparatively. Examining collections also allows for the addition of examples to the already identified practices, to explore how they are designed across the different complaint types. This then allows for a wide collection of various practices that can then be analysed from the perspective of a continuum.

Affiliation - an illustrative example

"Affiliation can be used to describe a general feature of interaction and social relation that is tied to the organization of preference. Furthermore, affiliation is also used to describe actions with which the recipient displays that s/he supports the affective stance displayed by his/her co-participant" (Lindström & Sorjonen 2012, p.367). Affiliation allows for social cohesion amongst participants in interaction, frequently creating a shared expectation and evaluation of behaviour and conduct. Affiliation takes agreement one step further by often leading to collaboration and co-complaining.

This first example shows a lengthy complaint sequence in which a complaint recipient responds to the complaint story with affiliation. I will use this excerpt to demonstrate how a variety of practices are used in conjunction with one another to display affiliation. This specific extract has been taken from a telephone conversation between good friends Hyla and Nancy. Having been talking about Nancy's boyfriend, Richard, who doesn't write to her often enough, the friends are already engaged in a collaborative troubles-talk. As seen below in line 1, Nancy makes a joke saying if all else fails regarding Richard she could write to magazine agony aunt, Abbey. Line 3's 'Dear Abbey' is the topic touch-off that leads Hyla to transition into the complaint sequence. A topic touch-off being, "a form of topic transition where a new topic occasioned by prior talk is introduced in a disjunctive way" (Yang 2020, p.83). Hyla's 'oh' at line 7 functions as a change-of-state token (Heritage 1984) that marks a remembering of Abbey's wrongdoing, a remembering that interrupted her turn and caused Hyla to make a self-correction. This turn-initial 'oh' also functions as a disjunctive marker that transitions from the initial conversation to the new topic touch off (Yang 2019). From here, a complainable matter emerges concerning 'something mean' that Abbey wrote in her newspaper 'agony aunt' column.

#4 [HGII (US Telephone Call) (14.15 into call)]

01 Nan: If all else faihhls,=
02 Hyl: =hhhyeh .hhh=
03 Nan: =Dear Abbey, °hhmh

04 (.)
05 Hyl: .hhhh[h
06 Nan: [.hhh[hh
07 Hyl: [No:: I c'n Oh:, she said something mea::n
08 yesterday=
09 Hyl: =I didn' [like her,]
10 Nan: [()What'd sh]e sa:y::.=
11 Hyl: =.tch Well ih wasn't mea:n b't it wz rilly s:stu[pid.]
12 Nan: [AH] don't
13 see how she thinks she knows it [all anyway]
14 Hyl: [.hh-hh-hh.h]hhh I know she
15 said .hhh
16 (0.3)
17 Hyl: somethi:n:g ahm °hhhhum::°
18 (1.7)
19 Hyl: .tch.k
20 (1.0)
21 Hyl: something the:t- (.) sh- th's fifteen year ol'gi::rl's- her
22 mother:: .hh (0.7) doesn't let'er(d) (0.2) n-date er:: (.)
23 do anythi[ng.
24 Nan: [Yea:h,
25 (.)
26 Hyl: A::n', Abbey en:d'd up saying yuh thankful you gotta
27 mother, hhhhhhhu[h.hehhhh=
28 (N): [.tch
29 Nan: =W[hata no] good a:nswe::[r,
30 Hyl: [S o : :]
31 Nan: [I wanni[da::]
32 Hyl: =tear the paper u:p,=
33 Nan: =Go:::d.=
34 Hyl: =(Th)a:'got me so mad,=
35 Nan: =Really that's no a:nswe:r,
36 (.)
37 Nan: tuh he[:r?
38 Hyl: [.t.hhhh One time I member,.hh 's girl wrote end her,
39 .hh she wz like (.) fifteen er six[teen end] her mother=
40 Nan: [Uh hu:h,]
41 Hyl: doesn't let'er wear,.hh nail polish er sh(h)oret ski:::rts
42 'er[:: .hhhhhhh]=
43 Nan: [Oh: wo:(h)w]=
44 Hyl: =Oo:h no I remember what yesterday was,=
45 Nan: =Wha[t.
46 Hyl: [Feret it I made that up.hh[hh
47 Nan: [Wh't was [it.
48 Hyl: [Yes[thher[day,]
49 Nan: [Shhhe[make]s
50 it up,=
51 Nan: =.hhhh Hey that's a pretty good one,=
52 Hyl: =eh-eh .he::hhh Yesterday, (.) wa:s, .hhh this gi:rl, .hh
53 °e- fifteen year old girl her mother didn' let'er wear
54 sho:rt skirts'r midriff to[:ps'r h]alter to::ps'r
55 Nan: [Uh hu:h]
56 Hyl: e::nnything,=
57 Nan: =[Yea:h,
58 Hyl: =[.hh Y' know specially some(h)ing thet'd sh-w'd show her
59 navel, .hhhhh [A : : n : : d,]=
60 Nan: [°°hhhh Ghhhod.]=
61 Hyl: =En Abbey agreed thet you don't, i:t- thet it's jist
62 invhhiting trouble.=
63 Nan: =Oh:::~::~.
64 (.)
65 (.)

66 Hyl: .TCH!=
67 Nan: =A:bbey jus'side with the mo:[:m,]
68 Hyl: [ekh]u-I wz so [mad et[that.]
69 Nan: [G o : [: : d].
70 (.)
71 Nan: You- .tch! How c'n she say tha:t
72 (.)
73 Hyl: 't's easy.She writes it out.=
74 Hyl: =.hhhh[hhh [(bak(hh)ay)hhh:hinh hinh
75 Nan: [Oh: [(bo:y)
76 (0.2)
77 Nan: No: I think that's ah[:ful.]
78 Hyl: [.h-hh]
79 (.)
80 Hyl: Yeh I wz (.) pretty upset abou'that['n then one] tim:e,=
81 Nan: [(M m m :)]
82 Hyl: =u-w'll like- w't I wz saying before I interrupted myself,
83 .hh w[as tha::t,]
84 Nan: [°hh h i h] hh° =
85 Hyl: =this fifteen year old girl wro:te thet (y)er mother doesn'
86 let'er wear nail polish [er short] skir:ts er do any a'=
87 Nan: [Ri:ght.]
88 Hyl: =this stuff .hh en sh-she jis:t doesn't trus' me:: en she
89 doesn't think I'm mature'r any'v this, .h[hhhhhhh]=
90 Nan: [Uh hu:h]=
91 Hyl: =Abbey says .hh you haftih give yer mother chance tuh(r)
92 (.) to: u. (.) realize thet she: .hh hass- thet she c'n
93 respectchu'n that c'n only be by you acting matu:re..hh en
94 not c'mplaining about the way she- m- yihkno:w=
95 Hyl: =[what] ru[:le she se[t s [do:wn,]
96 Nan: =[Oh:,] [Come o n [are y[ou se]riou[s,]
97 Hyl: [I]
98 s:swea[r.tih*Go:d.*]=

Hyla's complaint, beginning with *she said something mean yesterday* (lines 7/8), becomes a narrative sequence, providing Nancy with an understanding of the context and character of Abbey's transgression ('saying something mean'), and more about Abbey's further transgressions. The turns that make this narrative explicitly about a complainable matter are those in which Hyla overtly displays her emotional state. For example, in lines 34 and 68 she refers to being 'mad' upon reading Abbey's column and similarly being 'pretty upset' (line 80). Nancy's responds to Hyla's complaint with affiliation and I will look, in detail, at Nancy's responses. These responses paired with small collections of excerpts from complainings will allow me to highlight some of the key practices involved in affiliating. These practices being co-constructing, assessments, response cries, clicks and tuts as condemnation of the complained-about third party. I will also touch on a fifth key practice which is not present in this excerpt, but that is quite widely to be found in direct and agentless complaint sequences, namely attempts at resolution.

The practices of affiliation

Co-Constructing

Perhaps the most common and explicit display of affiliation to be found in this excerpt is Nancy's collaboration through co-constructing the complaint about Abbey. Most of the practices I will outline contribute to this collaboration to some extent and show Nancy strongly affiliating with Hyla's complaining. The most apparent collaboration however is presented through the way in which they begin to co-construct the complaint. Though Hyla is the primary complainant in this data, at various moments Nancy takes on the role of complainant through her negative assessments about Abbey's transgressions. The collaboration between Hyla and Nancy emerges shortly after her initial

complainable assessment of what Abbey had written – complainable particularly as ‘saying something mean’ might not be expected from an ‘agony aunt’ column.

From #4

07 Hyl: No:: I c'n Oh:, she said something mea::n
 08 yesterday=
 09 Hyl: =I didn' [like her,]
 10 Nan: [()What'd sh]e sa:y::.=
 11 Hyl: =.tch Well ih wasn't mea:n b't it wz rilly s:stu[pid.]
 12 Nan: [AH]
 13 don't see how she thinks she knows it [all anyway]
 14 Hyl: [.hh-hh-hh.h]hhh I
 15 know she said .hhh

While Hyla initiates the complaining through her assessment at line 7, Nancy is the first to make an explicit complaint through her negative assessment at lines 12-13. Based on the collaborative nature of the prior conversation about Richard, as mentioned above, it is not surprising that Nancy produces a negative assessment before the all the details are explained. Nancy is revealing her stance toward Abbey before the transgression has been fully disclosed, signifying the likelihood of her affiliation once Hyla produces the complaint. Furthermore, this turn of Nancy’s is produced in overlap with Hyla’s (line 11). This overlap is a last item onset, occurring just before Hyla completes her TCU. Research has shown that preferred responses are “done promptly, even a little early in overlap” (Drew 2009, p.82) which appears evident in this case; Nancy is expeditious in producing responses in agreement with Hyla, setting the tone for this collaborative and affiliative interaction.

Later in the interaction, Nancy’s contribution to the complaining becomes more apparent. The repetition of her turn *what a no good answer*, seen at lines 29 and 35 express dissatisfaction in the form of a complaint and creates a brief back and forth collaboration between the interlocutors.

From #4

26 Hyl: A:::n', Abbey en:d'd up saying yuh thankful you gotta
 27 mother, hhhhhhhu[h.hehhhh=
 28 (N): [.tch
 29 Nan: =W[hata no] good a:nswe::[r,
 30 Hyl: [S o : :] [I wanni[da::]
 31 Nan: [Go::]::d.=
 32 Hyl: =tear the paper u:p,=
 33 Nan: =Go:::d.=
 34 Hyl: =(Th)a:'got me so mad,=
 35 Nan: =Really that's no a:nswe:r,
 36 (.)
 37 Nan: tuh he[:r?

Each turn produced by Hyla, revealing the transgression and reporting her reaction, is met with a turn from Nancy displaying a similar attitude of outrage and dismay. Hyla’s laughter at line 27 downplays the severity of the complaint and she is revealing the transgression somewhat cautiously. However, once she has secured an affiliative response from Nancy, her later turns are more explicit in revealing her stance. This is a clear example of how co-constructing allows for participants to build upon one another’s turns, collaborating in their criticism of a third party.

They build upon one another’s complaints again at line 67, where Nancy reformulates something like an inferential upshot or summary of what Hyla said in her previous turn (lines 62-63), *Abbey just side(d) with the mom*.

From #4

62 Hyl: =En Abbey agreed that you don't, i:t- that it's jist
 63 invh~~h~~iting trouble.=

64 Nan: =Oh:::-:.....
65 (.)
66 Hyl: .TCH!=
67 Nan: =A:bbey jus'side with the mo:[:m,]
68 Hyl: [ekh]u-I wz so [mad et[that.]
69 Nan: [G o : [: : d].
70 (.)
71 Nan: You- .tch! How c'n she say tha:t

Nancy's extended vowels, *a* in 'Abbey' and *o* sound in *mom* (line 67) suggest that there is something typical and exasperating about Abbey's behaviour. This is an explicit complaint that contributes to the collaboration of this sequence. In co-constructing, the roles of complainant and recipient can become interchangeable, thereby displaying affiliating clearly to one another. In both taking the same position on the complainable matter, there is clear affiliation throughout this sequence (Drew & Walker 2007).

In excerpt 5 colleagues Robbie and Lesley co-construct a complaint about their co-workers Freddie Masters and Cynthia Pelch. A mention of one of these co-workers in a prior conversation about excitable students has topicalized into a complaint, initiated by Robbie at line 1. Robbie approaches the complainable very cautiously; not knowing what to make of someone is a particularly polite way of expressing dislike. Furthermore, Robbie begins to ask Lesley for an opinion, inviting her to collaborate, but chooses to then abandon her turn. Lesley nevertheless responds at line 5 and makes an explicit complaint about Cynthia Pelch saying *honestly I think she can be rude*.

#5 [M88:1:5:2]

01 Rob: Well I wonder you know I don't always know what to
02 ma:ke of mih- Cynthia Pelch, what do you:. I don't
03 kno[:w.
04 Les: [.hh No, I think she- (.) aa- well. b-di-Quite
05 honestly .hhh I think she c'n be ru:de. An', an' I
06 think Freddie Masters can too[:,
07 Rob: [°Oh:, I kno:w.° I mean I
08 haven't run up against them but I do:n't find th'm
09 overhelpful.=
10 Les: =.hhh No, (.) nuh- (.) no help at all fr'm Freddie
11 Masters an a:n' sometimes I've had f- almost to be:g.
12 (.) .h[hh[for things.
13 Rob: [Ye[s

Lesley builds upon Robbie's cautious approach this by explaining that she thinks *she can be rude* (line 5). Lesley then takes the complaint even further by adding a second complainable agent saying *and I think Freddie Masters can too*. Robbie produces her next turn in agreement and claims that she doesn't find them 'overhelpful'. Lesley once again builds upon this by formulating a stronger criticism of 'no help at all'. Both Lesley and Robbie play the role of the complainant (for more about this example, see Drew and Curl, 2009), building upon and encouraging the continuation of the complaint sequence.

Another example of co-construction as a practice for affiliation is excerpt 6, from a phone call between Lesley and her friend Joyce. They are discussing their mutual friend Nancy's request to Joyce for some assistance at an annual event she runs.

#6 [HOLT O88-1-08]

01 Joy: But going back to Nancy she pho:ned (.) me this[morning=
02 Les: [.h h h h
03 Joy: =you se[e
04 Les: [Yes she[said- she[rang]me too:.]
05 Joy: [aa- [Well I]really wz]cross[:.
06 Les: [.hhh

07 Les: ihYe[s:
08 Joy: [I mean[aa
09 Les: [Sh'uzn give you much (.) n-n[otice
((omitted talk))
28 Joy: But u-then: you see: at the last minute she sud'nly thought
29 w'l she's a bit inexperienced 'n .hhh she said I wondered
30 if you-: uhm: .t you know you're experience'could do it
31 .hhh (.) An' I:- I wz †so: cr:oss† Les that[I
32 Les: [.t Ye:s.
33 Joy: Well I'm terribly so[rry but
34 Les: [We:ll yes becuz u-no:r†mally it's the
35 sort'v thing she'd a:sk you a†n[y†ways::]uh wee]ks=
36 Joy: [E x a c]t l y]
37 Les: =[be†fo::†:re.]
38 Joy: =[E x a c t l y.]

Despite Nancy's transgression not having directly affected Lesley, she empathises with Joyce to such an extent that she collaborates in the complaining. Nancy explains the transgression but does not detail specifically what about Nancy's request made her *cross* (line 5). The collaboration of this sequence is evident when Lesley asserts her understanding and empathy by being the one to reveal the wrongdoing at line 9 (*she hasn't given much notice*). Lesley's turn means Nancy does not need to detail what made her *cross* as the two are co-constructing the complaint together. Lesley then goes on to support Joyce's displeasure further at line 34, at which point she outlines the normative standard of behaviour that has been breached, *normally it's the sort of thing she'd ask you anyways weeks before*. Lesley complains and contributes so often that Joyce begins to form agreements with her, creating a role reversal of complainant and recipient. Lesley assists Joyce in co-constructing the complaint in order to display affiliation.

Assessments

Having touched upon Nancy's use of negative assessments above, through which she collaborated with Hyla's complaint through co-constructing that complaint, it is worth analyzing these assessments as a stand-alone practice. Such assessments work to display outrage and disbelief that display a sense of recognition of Abbey's egregious behaviour. Hyla prefaces her complaint sequence by stating at line 7 that she *didn't like* what Abbey had written as advice in her column; she reiterates her stance toward Abbey throughout by including first position assessments about the transgression. In this extract, Hyla has revealed the details of Abbey's transgression (line 26), and goes on to reveal her feelings toward the transgression (lines 34 and 68)/

From #4
26 Hyl: A::n', Abbey en:d'd up saying yuh thankful you gotta
27 mother, hhhhhhhhu[h.hehhhh=
((omitted talk))
33 Nan: =Go:::d.=
34 Hyl: =(Th)a:'got me so mad,=
35 Nan: =Really that's no a:nswe:r,
((omitted talk))
67 Nan: =A:bbey jus'side with the mo:[m,]
68 Hyl: [ekh]u-I wz so [mad et[that.]
69 Nan: [G o : [: : d].

responds to the first complaint story by saying *what a no good answer* (line 29). This direct criticism of Abbey's behaviour indicates she is dissatisfied with Abbey, much like how Hyla 'didn't like' her answer either.

From #4

26 Hyl: A:::n', Abbey en:d'd up saying yuh thankful you gotta
 27 mother, hhhhhhhu[h.hehhhh=
 28 (N): [.tch
 29 Nan: =W[hata no] good a:nswe::[r,
 30 Hyl: [S o : :.] [I wanni[da::]
 31 Nan: [Go::]::d.=
 32 Hyl: =tear the paper u:p,=
 33 Nan: =Go:::d.=
 34 Hyl: =(Th)a:'got me so mad,=
 35 Nan: =Really that's no a:nswe:r,

As explained above, they are collaborating in expressing their opinions, the only difference being that Hyla's assessments are based on of her first-hand experience of having read Abbey's column. Nancy's reciprocal assessments suggest the two participants share a similar stance on Abbey and her conduct and Nancy is therefore affiliating with Hyla.

Nancy's *assessment* is constructed interrogatively (line 71), but as a rhetorical question indicating disbelief and disapproval at Abbey's egregious behaviour.

From #4

26 Hyl: A:::n', Abbey en:d'd up saying yuh thankful you gotta
 27 mother, hhhhhhhu[h.hehhhh=
 28 (N): [.tch
 ((omitted talk))
 71 Nan: You- .tch! How c'n she say tha:t
 72 (.)
 73 Hyl: 't's easy.She writes it out.=
 74 Hyl: =.hhhh[hhh [(bak(hh)ay)hhh:hinh_hinh
 75 Nan: [Oh: [(bo:y)
 76 (0.2)
 77 Nan: No: I think that's ah[:ful.]

Following this question, the friends jest when Hyla answers Nancy's question literally, after which the conversation is steered back on course – the 'no' preface marking a transition from humorous to serious talk (Schegloff 2001) - by Nancy's more explicit assessment, *that's awful* (line 77). Her management in keeping the topic on the complainable matter is particularly collaborative as she is taking an active role in maintaining and continuing the complaint sequence.

Nancy's assessment in line 77 is particularly relevant when considering the role of second position assessments and epistemics (Heritage & Raymond 2005). As mentioned, Hyla's turns claiming she was *so mad* are first position assessments based on how Abbey's behaviour made her feel. Epistemics is concerned with "the knowledge claims that interactants assert, contest and defend in and through turns-at-talk and sequences of interaction" (Heritage 2012, p.370). Being the one that read the column gives Hyla a K+ epistemic status, whilst having only heard about the complainable matter from Hyla, Nancy is K-. Hyla's higher epistemic status means that Nancy's assessment is merely a resource to collaborate with Hyla as she does not have first-hand knowledge of the details in the Abbey's column. Having been informed of the details of Abbey's transgressions, she affiliates with Hyla by agreeing with her assessment, based on Hyla's report.

Further examples of affiliating through assessments are to be found commonly in other data. The following extract is from a phone call between friends Lesley and Joyce. Lesley has just revealed to Joyce a rude comment made to her by 'Mr R', an acquaintance of theirs. It has been established earlier in the call that the two participants have a mutual dislike for Mr R.

#7 [Holt:C85.4]

01 Les: =In ↑any ↓case we thought th'things were very
02 ex↑pen↓sive.
03 Joy: Oh did you.
04 (0.9)
05 Les: AND uh ↑we were looking rou-nd the ↓sta:lls 'n poking
06 about 'n he came up t'me 'n be said Oh: hhello Leslie,
07 (.) ↑still trying to buy something f'nothing,
08 (): tch!
09 Joy: hh[hahhhhhh!
10 Les: [↑hhohhh!
11 (0.8)
12 Joy: Oo[: : :]: L e s l i e]
13 Les: [↑Oo:.]ehh heh heh]
14 (0.2)
15 Joy: ↓I:s[n ' t] [↓he
16 Les: [↑What]do ↑y[ou ↑sa:y.
17 (0.3)
18 Joy: ↓Oh isn't he ↓drea:dful.
19 Les: °eYe--:s:°
20 (0.6)
21(): tch
22 Joy: What'n aw:f'l ma::[:::n
23 Les: [ehh heh-heh-heh
24 Joy: Oh:: honestly, ↓I cannot stand the man it's just
25 (no[:)
26 Les: [I tthought well I'm gon' tell Joyce that, ehh[heh]=
27 Joy: [()]=
28 Les: =[heh-heh he-e] uh: ↑e[h eh hhhhh
29 Joy: =[O h : : : :.] I [do think he's dreadful

The first assessment at line 1 *oh isn't he dreadful* is produced as a direct response to Lesley's report of Mr R's transgression, Joyce's assessment implying that he is dreadful for making such a comment to Lesley, thereby affiliating with her friend. Lesley's agreement with what is produced as a rhetorical question demonstrates that the pair are in agreement about their opinion of Mr R. Joyce's later turns, particularly lines 18 and 22 go a step further as they are direct assessments of Mr R's character. Referring to him as an 'awful man' and that she 'cannot stand' him reveal her disliking of Mr R and clearly demonstrate an affiliation to Lesley's complaint. The number of assessments in a small extract of talk highlights Joyce's outrage at Mr R's behaviour and her assessments are in fact stronger than that of Lesley making this an overtly affiliative response.

Another example of affiliative assessments can be seen in data excerpt 8. In this case Lesley is complaining to her mother about how British Telecom cut off their telephone line after they had omitted to pay their bill on time.

#8 [H:X(C)85:1:1:6:1-2]

01 Les: But apparently they cut w- ↑fi:ve ↑people off in
02 Galhampto[n: on[: Thursday-
03 Mum: [() [()]
04 Mum: ↑Oh: lo:ve.
05 (0.4)
06 Mum: That's a nuisance isn't it.
07 Les: Ye[s.
08 Mum: [They re getting terrible.
09 (0.3)
10 Les: We:l[l- I ↑s a I d]
11 Mum: [I mean ↑look what↑]

12 (0.2)
 13 Les: I ↑said to ↑them. this is British Telecom for you(h)=
 14 Mum: =Yes..h An' ↑look what they ↑cha:rgē. They charge you
 15 .h three pounds (just t'have) this wretched old thing
 16 in your hou:se
 17 (0.5)
 18 Les: Yes.=
 19 Mum: =An' then ↑all the an' then ↑a:ll that (0.2) money-
 20 (0.3) ↑sev'nteen pounds something on top'v that.
 21 Les: Yes:.
 22 Mum: for se:rvice.
 23 (.)
 24 Les: .hh Ye:s:.
 25 Mum: hI've never ↑had any service from them. ↑Never.

The adjacency pair between Mum and Lesley, *that's a nuisance isn't it and yes* (line 6/7) demonstrates that they share a similar attitude toward British Telecom cutting off people's telephone lines. Mum's use of the term 'nuisance' acknowledges the inconvenience caused to Lesley and thus grants that Lesley's complaint is justified. Mum's assessment at line 8, *they're getting terrible*, suggests that she herself has some knowledge of the company, in this way displaying empathy through have shared the experience. 'They're getting' suggests a change from a previous standard. It is then made apparent in her final turn that her assessments are based on her own negative experience with British Telecom. In making assessments that are similar to Lesley's annoyance, Mum is affiliating with and warranting, or supporting, Lesley's complaints.

Further examples of assessments that are affiliative are found in excerpt 9, which comes from a conversation between Emma and her sister Lottie, in which Emma is complaining about her husband.

#9 [NB:IV:4:3]

01 Emm: .t.k.hhhh ↑Lottie I: can't do anything ri:ght honēs'th
 02 Go:d I ca:n't. e-↑Here I ↑worked ha:rd va::cumi:ng'nd hh
 03 (.).hhh he got up'n fe:lt it tuh see if there wa:s any
 04 du:st,hhh
 05 (0.8)
 06 Emm: NIS RE:DI:cu↑lous?
 07 (0.4)
 08 Lot: °Oh: he's crazy.°

Lottie's assessment at line 8, *oh he's crazy*, is produced as a form of agreement. In stating that Emma's husband is 'crazy' she empathises with Emma's irritation and condemns her husband's egregious behaviour thus affiliating.

Response Cries

Nancy frequently responds to Hyla's complaint story with what are described in research literature as 'response cries'. While Goffman (1978) outlines that response cries can take many different forms, when used to respond to complaints they more closely resemble 'reaction tokens', as described by Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2006). Reaction tokens, or response cries, are associated with unexpectedness and surprise and therefore act as a news receipt. These response cries particularly *oh god, god or gosh* bear empathy and dismay, granting insight into whether affiliation from the recipient is likely. They work in such a way that demonstrates acknowledgement that is heightened and a more animated engagement with the telling, as is illustrated by Nancy's extended exclamations of *god* (lines 31 and 33).

From #4

26 Hyl: A:::n', Abbey en:d'd up saying yuh thankful you gotta
 27 mother, hhhhhhhu[h.hehhhh]=
 28 (N): [.tch
 29 Nan: =W[hata no] good a:nswe::[r,
 30 Hyl: [S o : :] [I wanni[da::]
 31 Nan: [Go::]::d.=
 32 Hyl: =tear the paper u:p,=
 33 Nan: =Go:::d.=
 34 Hyl: =(Th)a:'got me so mad,=
 35 Nan: =Really that's no a:nswe:r,

Nancy's *god's* form the second pair part of an inform-acknowledge adjacency pair, as a direct reaction to Hyla's complaint report. The extended vowel in both utterances add a prosodic dimension to her turns that specifically acknowledges Abbey's egregious behaviour, and are thus a display of affiliation. Change-of-state tokens in this data bear similar characteristics to this *god* response cry.

From #4

62 Hyl: =En Abbey agreed that you don't, i:t- that it's jist
 63 invhitting trouble.=
 64 Nan: =Oh::--:::..

Line 64 from excerpt 4 sees Nancy's *oh* produced as a direct response to the revelation of another of Abbey's transgressions. This *oh* is, like the above example, is produced as an extended sound and carries empathy and dismay. Though such change of state token acts as a verbal receipt of information (Heritage 1984), it represents Nancy's state of unknowing to knowing, whilst presenting a negative stance toward this new information.

Similarly, at line 96, after Hyla completes her third and final complaint story within the sequence, Nancy produces an 'oh come on' response cry that emotes frustration and disbelief at Abbey's behaviour.

From #4

91 Hyl: =Abbey says .hh you haftih give yer mother chance tuh(r)
 92 (.) to: u. (.) realize that she: .hh hass- that she c'n
 93 respectchu'n that c'n only be by you acting matu:re..hh en
 94 not c'mplaining about the way she- m- yihkno:w=
 95 Hyl: =[what] ru[:le she se[t s [do:wn,]
 96 Nan: =[Oh:,] [Come o n [are y[ou se]riou[s,]

Such emotional engagements with complaint telling are not only affiliative responses but they also work to reassure the complainant that their complaint is warranted. Based on their sequential position and display of empathy, response cries are an overt display of affiliation.

Looking again at the data between Mum and Lesley regarding British Telecom, Mum produces a response cry following Lesley's report that five people in their local area also had their telephone lines cut.

#10 [H:X(C)85:1:1:6:1-2]

01 Les: But apparently they cut w- ↑fi:ve ↑people off in
 02 Galhampto[n: on[: Thursday-
 03 Mum: [() [()
 04 Mum: ↑Oh: lo:ve.
 05 (0.4)
 06 Mum: That's a nuisance isn't it.
 07 Les: Ye[s.

Mum's 'oh' is much like the examples produced by Nancy, as a direct response to the report of a transgression, marking her state of unknowing to knowing. In adding a term of endearment 'love' after the response cry 'oh', Mum is displaying empathy toward Lesley specifically. Lesley's previous turn is expressing that her issue with British Telecom is one of many shared by others, emphasising the wrongdoing on the part of the company. Mum's 'oh love' is empathetic to Lesley falling victim to one of the many incidents in which telephone lines have been cut off and also keeps the focus on Lesley's specific complaint, therefore affiliating with her.

Excerpt 11 is another case that demonstrates how response cries are used as a practice for affiliating with complaints. The following data shows a conversation between four friends over dinner. Earlier in the conversation Shane was complaining that he couldn't mash his potato which then led to a complaint story about a time when he went to buy potatoes from a local grocery store but all the potatoes there were rotten.

```
#11 [Chicken Dinner]
01 Sha:  All[the bags w'rott'n they w-all s:me:lled.
02 Viv:      [Theh-
03          (0.2)
04 Sha:  Ri[ght'nna]
05 Nan:      [ O h : ](g) [Go:d
06 Sha:      [Right'nna ma:w:kits.=
07 Sha:  =(The[stu[ff wuh)/(di[squ: [sting)
```

Shane's extreme case formulation of *all the bags* (line 1) emphasises his complainable misfortune, and highlights how outrageous it is that not a single bag of potatoes was in good enough condition to buy. Nancy's *oh god* (line 5) affiliates with Shane and is produced as an outraged response to his extreme case formulation.

Similar expressions can be found in excerpt 12, a conversation between friends in which Edna is complaining about recent issues caused by her psoriasis. Her complaint sequence reveals the extremity of a recent flare up and the medication she's taking to resolve it.

```
#12 [NB:IV:14]
01 Edn:  hhhhh an' I haftuh have ointment oy put on four times a day
02      En I'm under:: violet ra:y fer a few seconds, a:nd I gotta
03      shot'n the butt 'v vitamin: (0.2) A:: Ski:n.
04      (0.5)
05 Oli:  [Jee:ziz.
06 (E):  [(hhhhh)
07 Edn:  O:live, onestuh Go:d yihknow, I('ve)just broke out terribly
08      a:uh- hhwhen I le-eft ho:me. An:d, I jist-
```

Olive's turn at line 5, much like *oh god* in excerpt 1, is a response cry that displays empathy as it is a direct reaction to the long list of medication Edna has to take. In listing her medication Edna is emphasizing the severity of her condition. Olive's 'jesus' acknowledges that the Edna's list is excessive but also therefore empathises with her pain.

Clicks and tuts as condemnation of the complained-about third party

A less overt practice for expressing displeasure at the conduct of the person complained about, most associated with third-party complaints, is the use of clicks and tuts. Clicks and tuts are only affiliative when used to condemn the third party. Tutting, or clicks are used to display a stance, typically negative, and work to project the talk that follows (Odgen 2013). Nancy's tut is produced as disapproval to Abbey's advice and works to affiliate with Hyla's assessments. Prior to this, Hyla has also produced a loud click at line 66 to preface her turn at 68.

From #4

66 Hyl: **.TCH!=**
67 Nan: =A:bbey jus'side with the mo:[:m,]
68 Hyl: [ekh]u-I wz so [mad et[that.]
69 Nan: [G o : [: : d].
70 (.)
71 Nan: **You- .tch!** How c'n she say tha:t

By using this to display her stance, it is possible that Nancy's click mirrors Hyla's display of indignation (line 66 followed by 68), to produce an affiliative response with similar intensity. These clicks serve a similar purpose to response cries, in that sequentially they occur after a TCU and the revelation of a complainable matter. They also convey empathy and disapproval toward the complainable.

Excerpt 13 shows another instance where tuts or clicks are used to convey disapproval of the third party. In this excerpt, Shirley is complaining to Geri about a mutual acquaintance who was caught drinking alcohol under-age, in a bar on an evening when Shirley was serving.

#13 [FTC:Geri/Shirley]

01 Shi: .hhh I said b't lemme tell you something. .hh the nex'time
02 yer caught in here drinking anything. .hh you'll be going
03 out. I sid not only tha:t .hh b't now thet evrybuddy aa-
04 evrybuddy knows you did it, (.) .t.hhh they're g'nna be
05 watchin you just ez close.
06 (0.2)
07 Shi: .hh So I 26told'er if you ever drink ANYthi:ng. .hhh yer
08 g'nna *ee- don' 26Worry. hhah-hah-hah,
09 (.)
10 Shi: .hhh[hhh
11 Ger: **[.tch Oy::hh**

Geri's tut comes at line 11, after the complaint story has come to an end and the complainable has been revealed. Geri's tut is a direct response to this revelation, and much like response cries a tut displays surprise and dismay. While tuts might be more subtle than response cries nevertheless they convey disapproval. Ogden explains that "clicks frequently occur in displays of affective stance" (Ogden 2020, p.68), particularly to convey affiliation with a teller or complainant in troubles-talk interactions. Stand-alone clicks convey disapproval and acknowledge the complainable without disrupting the telling.

Attempts at Resolution

Although this is not present in my opening extract, one key practice for affiliating with a complaint is that of resolving the problem that caused that is the cause of the complaint. One key example is present in excerpt 14 in which Kelly makes an agentless complaint about the blunt knife she is using (lines 1-2).

#14 Extract X [LSIA Sleepover 1 34:30] (Kendrick, 2021, p. 75)

1 + (2.4)+
kel +wets knife in water+
2 + (1.1)+(1.9)+
+.....+begins to cut sushi roll+
3 KEL: >oh my god sister< this is the:
4 *du:llest blade I've ever had in
eri *turns, gazes at KEL-->>
5 my life.

6 TIN: then sharpen# it.
7 (0.4)+(0.8)
kel +sets down knife-->
8 ERI: want me to sharpen it?+
kel -->+
9 (0.2)
10 KEL: ↑yes please.

Another example is in excerpt 15 in which Kerry complains to her housemate about having to eat in front of the camera. What isn't shown in this transcript is James move toward the camera to turn it off immediately after line 8.

#15 [RCE09_9.12 Housemates II]
01 Ker: [the one thing (0.3) [I dislike with this camera being on
02 Jam: [°mini° mince pies
03 Sam: [MUH MUH M- pies
04 Ker: [is that I have to eat my dinner in front of it. (0.5) like
05 feed [myself
06 Jam: [yeah should we put it off now for (.) for a bit (.)
07 put it back on it like twenty minutes

In these cases Eric offers to sharpen Kelly's knife while James offers to turn the camera off for Kerry. While "requests formulate a possible solution to a difficulty and create a normative obligation for the recipient to provide the solution in response" (Kendrick & Drew 2016, p.7), these complaints are a form of recruitment and if such an offer is made by a recipient it would be classed as an attempt at resolution. The difficulty caused to the complainant in each case neither concerns nor affects the recipients. James and Eric empathize with the difficulty and misfortune so suggest and implement a solution for the complainant.

Another instance of attempts of resolution can be seen in excerpt 16, from a phone call between friends Bob and Mark. Mark has called Bob to complain that he has not received an invitation to an upcoming party that he's been told Bob is hosting. Direct complaints are more accusatory than other complaint types and often come to a resolution, or even confrontation, in the same conversation as the complaint.

#16 [SF:2]
01 Mar: .t .hhhhhhh A:nd uh, hhh she said thet uh: you guys were
02 havin a party Friday.h
03 (0.6)
04 Bob: That's corre:ct,h
05 Mar: We::ll uhhhhh:I (.) hwasn't clued in on tha:t'n, hhhh
06 .hhhhhh=
07 Bob: =You weren't,
08 Mar: No: en, hhh I thought maybe: you didn't want me t'come er
09 some[thing.]
((omitted talk))
67 Bob: Mark, hh (0.3) will you come to a party Friddee hmhuh
68 huh huh huh
69 Mar: .hhh No(h)o
70 Bob: hhhh[hh
71 Mar: [(h)I have other pla[:ns.
72 Bob: [.hhhh No:: yih do:n't. hhhh
73 (0.2)
74 Mar: Yeh I know.h
75 (0.3)

76 (M): tch
 77 (0.2)
 78 Mar: .hh[He:y uh
 79 Bob: [() I'm sorry,h

Bob's first attempt of resolution can be found at line 67, at which point he invites Mark to his party. In doing this, Bob is dealing with the complainable and attempting to redeem his transgression. This in itself is affiliative as he is acknowledging Mark's complaint and making an attempt to 'fix' the issue at hand. Further attempts of resolution are made by Bob at line 79 where he apologises to Mark. Apologising insinuates an admission of wrongdoing and is therefore acknowledging and affiliating with Mark's complaint. Bob displays affiliation and resolution demonstrating the two, in the case of direct complaints go hand-in-hand.

Another instance of resolution in third-party complaints can be seen in the excerpt below in which Sarah makes a subtle complaint to her friend Jessica that she has not been offered a biscuit. Much like in the above example, Jessica attempts to resolve the complainable matter by offering Sarah a biscuit at line 10.

#17 [RCE06_14:27 Grass]
 01 Sar: ↑what are you eating?=Where did you ↑get that from↓
 02 Mat: .hh Ye(h)ah I was thi(h)nk[ing the sa(h)me °thi(h)ng°
 03 Jes: [I had a chocolate bi:scuit in
 04 my bag.
 05 (1.4)
 06 Mat A single one.
 07 (1.2)
 08 Jes: I have some.
 09 (0.6)
 10 Jes: Do you want o(h)ne?=-

In all these examples, an attempt is being made to rectify the transgression or wrongdoing. In offering a 'fix' to the complainable issue, recipients are empathizing with the complainant or agree to some extent that there is a problem. Attempts at resolution are therefore an explicit affiliative practice.

This chapter has used excerpt 1 to highlight how various practices are used in one interaction to display affiliation to a complaint story, these being: co-constructing, assessments, response cries, clicks and tuts as condemnation of the complained-about third party and attempts at resolution. The addition of collections showed the prevalence of each of these practices across a variety of interactions including all three complaint types. The next chapter will follow the same analytical structure to outline the practices involved in disaffiliation.

Chapter 3 Recipient disaffiliations with complaints

In disaffiliating with a co-participant, the speakers' stances are misaligned, which if made explicit can lead to disagreements or confrontation. Because of this, overt displays of disaffiliation seem to be avoided – at least, they are not to be found in the main data example below (excerpt 18); interlocutors are more subtle in the ways they navigate disaffiliating with one another. Indeed, as I will explore below the term 'non-affiliation' could be used in the place of disaffiliation, as some practices are able to avoid face-threatening interactions by simply avoiding affiliating as opposed to explicitly disaffiliating. Many practices of non-affiliation avoid face-threatening disagreements or disputes. Non-affiliation and disaffiliation are closely associated to an extent that the practices of each are often extend over both responses however one is merely a more delicate way to navigate through troublesome interaction.

Disaffiliation - An illustrative example

As with my analysis of affiliation (chapter 2), I will identify the principal practices for not affiliating/disaffiliation exhibited in the recipient's responses to an extended complaint story. This enables me to introduce a disaffiliative data example and show how several practices work together to display disaffiliation. It is relevant to note that this specific excerpt is a display of non-affiliation, as this is more commonly found in interaction. However, in my exploration of each practice through collections I will show how these practices can be used to display more overt disaffiliation, thus highlight the close relation between disaffiliation and non-affiliation.

This excerpt is taken from a phone conversation between Dana and her boyfriend Gordon. This excerpt arises from a problematic conversation in which Dana has been expressing her irritation that the previous evening Gordon called late, waking her mother, and causing all kinds of trouble – all of which is a prelude to Dana's account of the events the night before. Dana went out with some friends to see a film then returned to the home of one of them for a coffee. The direct complaint about his behaviour the previous evening impacts Gordon's willingness to affiliate.

```
#18 [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side I: Call 4 (02.05 into call)]
01 Dan: =But I mea[n (.) An'- Mike n- (.) Mike kept lookin' at=
02 Gor: [.khhhhhhhhh]
03 Dan: =iz watch..hhh Christie goes oh: are you hinting an'
04 'ee said no: cz 'ee c'd 'ardly say yes clear off
05 [you (.) silly ( ) An' so .hh An' she said oh: =
06 Gor: [k h h h h h h h h h h h h h h]
07 Gor: [=°.hhhhhhhhh°]
08 Dan: =[an' then carried on talking..hhh An' his mum 'n dad
09 came in 'n says right we're going to bed now th't is
10 t' s(h)ay can't you get out the house?
11 Gor: ( ) Yea:h. hmhh[h hmhhh[h .tlok
12 [(gzk)] [
13 Dan: [An' I wz really
14 [fuming 'n then we went out'n Christie goes]
15 Gor: [((munching-----))] [°hh-h[hh°]
16 Dan: [(0.2) [†I
17 wanted to go ages a[↓go why di'nt you sa:y.
18 Gor: [°.hh-.hh-.hh°]
19 (0.8)
20 Gor: [.k.k]
21 Dan: [And I was so a[ngry
22 Gor: [kuhhhh .hh-[h
23 Dan: [a:n' (0.3) ( )
24 ( [ ) an' oh::: Ghhhod.[C'z-
25 Gor: [.hhhhhhhhhhh [But was: was the ↓film
26 good.↓
27 (0.3)
```

28 Dan: Yes it wa[s b't
 29 Gor: [Did you enjoy it.↓
 30 (0.6)
 31 Dan: Yes but it's: (.) oo I can't hardly remember the film
 32 becuz I got so (bucked) up 'n mm:-mm:.
 33 Gor: ehhhh↓Oh::oo,hh
 34 Dan: It's not you:r fault, but it's just becuz (0.3)
 35 Christie's ((w)) °so damn thick.°
 36 Gor: .plktch hhmh-hmhhh[h-hmhhhh
 37 Dan: [I'm really angry with[er at the=
 38 Gor: [°.p.hhhh°
 39 Dan: =moment I c'n r(h)eally (0.4) bop 'er one,
 40 Gor: °.hhh.koh.klih=
 41 Dan: =bec'z (0.3) I wz[(.)]I[got in[big trouble about it an'
 42 Gor: [.t] [.pl [°hhhhhhhhhh
 43 Dan: .ptch
 44 Gor: [°.hhh[hh°
 45 Dan: [-(0.4)[.hh[h
 46 Gor: [Oh th[at's a pity.]
 47 Dan: [got in a real] state an'
 48 Gor: [.hhhhhh[h
 49 Dan: [-(0.6)-[sniffing all over the place 'n I mean .hhh
 50 J'nette knows I only sniff w'n I'm really upse:t uh so
 51 sh(h)[e
 52 Gor: [hhhmh[h
 53 Dan: [so I mean .hh [Chrissie wz jus' sitting=
 54 Gor: [°.h m h h h h h h h°
 55 Dan: =like a lump of dough an' I wz so angry I c'd'v
 56 Dan: crack'd her one. .hhh[I didn['t
 57 (([click]))
 58 Gor: [khhh-hhhh[h
 59 Dan: ['m a coward
 60 Gor: .hhh[hh
 61 Dan: [But I wz so angry
 62 (.)
 63 Gor: Hm hm, .ptl[k .hmhh
 64 Dan: [°and u]h°
 65 Gor: [.t Oh I 'ad a .hh had a great
 66 evening las' ni:ght .hhh it w[z brilliant. .hhh

Dana's complaint is delivered as a narrative recalling the previous night's events, according to which Christie behaved in ways that were reprehensible and inconsiderate. The complaining is made most apparent through her overt expressions of moral indignation *I was fuming* (lines 13-14), *I was so angry* (lines 21, 55 and 61) and *I'm really upset* (line 50), to name a few. Considering the lengths to which Dana expresses her frustration Gordon's responses are particularly minimal despite him displaying various practices of disaffiliation.

The practices of disaffiliation

Missed opportunities to affiliate

Throughout excerpt 18, Gordon rarely responds to Dana and when he does his responses are minimal. The moments when Gordon might have but did not respond – i.e. his non-responses – can be considered as being missed opportunities to affiliate. This practice is somewhat ambiguous, as is often more evident in 'empty' turns than through spoken utterances. For example, after Dana's complaint story reaches its climax and Dana reveals Christie's transgression (line 17), Gordon's unenthusiastic response consists only of breathing, an out-breath, constituting a lack of reaction insofar this is a

further opportunity for him to have affiliated with Dana's complaint – hence an example of a missed opportunity to affiliate.

#From 18

13 Dan: [An' I wz really
 14 [fuming 'n then we went out'n Christie goes]
 15 Gor: [(munching-----)] [°hh-h[hh°
 16 Dan: [(0.2) [↑I
 17 wanted to go ages a[↓go why di'nt you sa:y.
 18 Gor: [°.hh-.hh-.hh°
 19 (0.8)
 20 Gor: [.k.k
 21 Dan: [And I was so a[ngry
 22 Gor: [kuhhhh .hh-[h
 23 Dan: [a:n' (0.3) ()
 24 ([) an' oh:: Ghhod.[C'z-
 25 Gor: [.hhhhhhhhhh [But was: was the ↓film

It is after the revelation of the complainable matter that a complainant offers an opportunity for an affiliative response, yet Gordon does not react nor explicitly acknowledge Dana's report. Dana's additional turns at 21 and 23 are attempts to elicit an affiliative response from Gordon by highlighting her annoyance and frustration but she is met with another disaffiliative response.

Gordon's lack of affiliation continues as Dana pursues eliciting a response from him. Dana overtly expresses moral indignation, for example *I got so bucked up* (line 32) and *I'm really angry with her* (line 37) but both pursuits of affiliation are met with mere exhalation from Gordon (lines 36 and 40) and once again he does not respond to the complaint.

#From 18

34 Dan: It's not you:r fault, but it's just becuz (0.3)
 35 Christie's ((w)) °so damn thick.°
 36 Gor: .plktch hmmh-hmhhh [h-hmhhhh
 37 Dan: [I'm really angry with[er at the=
 38 Gor: [°.p.hhhh°
 39 Dan: =moment I c'n r(h)eally (0.4) bop 'er one,
 40 Gor: °.hhhh.k oh.klih=

Missed opportunities to affiliate are overtly disaffiliative in the way they do not grant the complainant the affiliation they are pursuing. By either not responding, or responding only non-lexically with breathy sounds, or responding only minimally, Gordon displays no empathy or condemnation, in response to which Dana's subsequent turns pursue a response from Gordon (lines 34, 35 and 37).

Looking again at friends Geri and Shirley, before Geri produces an affiliative tut as explored above, Shirley spends a number of utterances pursuing a response from Geri. Shirley naturally dominates the complaint sequence as she tells her story. But the various pauses (lines 8, 14 and 20) show that Geri is missing several opportunities to display affiliation.

#19 [FTC:Geri/Shirley]

01 Shi: [.h[i s]aid, (.) if (.) yihknow I s'd if yer so god da:mn,
 02 .hh determine'tih drink.h.hh Why 'ontche j's stay home'n do
 03 it .hh yihknow? .hhh So I took the drink en I poured it ou:t.
 04 W'she got u:p, en she starts yelling at me:. .hhh like who
 05 em I t'tell her thi:s. .hh en I'm her frie:nd, .hh en all'v
 06 this stuff en finally I looked et'er. I s'd jihknow, .t.hhh
 07 I said I c'd very very easily have you kicked out.
 08 (1.2)

09 Shi: I said no questions asked. Very easily. .hhh en I said tih
 10 her. .hh I'm not g'nna do it.
 11 (0.2)
 12 Shi: becuz .hh yihkno:w u-I:: I know you. en ah'll give you the
 13 benefit a'the dou:bt.
 14 (0.5)
 15 Shi: .hhh I said b't lemme tell you something. .hh the nex'time
 16 yer caught in here drinking anything. .hh you'll be going
 17 out. I sid not only tha:t .hh b't now thet evrybuddy aa-
 18 evrybuddy knows you did it, (.) .t.hhh they're g'nna be
 19 watchin you just ez close.
 20 (0.2)
 21 Shi: .hh So I told'er if you ever drink ANYthi:ng. .hhh yer
 22 g'nna ee- don' WOrry. hhah-hah-hah,

In these two cases it is useful to invoke Schegloff's idea of relevant absences. These complaint stories consist of various inform-acknowledge adjacency pairs, of which the second pair part is frequently absent. This absence leads to further turns from the complainants in which they continue to pursue affiliation.

Another relevant example of this can be seen below in excerpt 20. In this case Lesley is complaining to her mother about her mother-in law. Lesley's complaint is produced at line 5 when she says *there's hardly anything the matter with her*.

#20 [Holt:1:1:11]
 01 Mum: Ye:h. ↑Well yuh haven't had uh: (0.2) y'haven't had Missiz
 02 Field () this evening then.
 03 (.)
 04 Les: .h No:, I went tuh see her: uhm .t.hh Mum- there's hardly
 05 ↑anything the↑ matter with he:r?
 06 (0.3)
 07 Mum: ()
 08 (0.2)
 09 Les: Eh:m (.) the doctor ca:lled he hasn't even given he:r'n
 10 antibi↑otic.
 11 (0.3)
 12 Mum: (I s[ee.])
 13 Les: [He's only given'er a cough mixtu:re?
 14 (0.3)
 15 Mum: Hm.
 16 Les: And she's BEEN in ↑BED for a wee:k'n won't get u:p.h
 17 (1.2)

Though Mum's responses are not absent as she acknowledges Lesley's complaining, her minimal responses of *I see* and *hm* are missed opportunities to affiliate. Mum merely produces displays of reciprocity instead of condemning or empathizing with her daughter.

Overtly avoiding affiliating

This practice is not present in excerpt 18, but is a relevant and more overt display of missed opportunities to affiliate. This practice is predominantly evident when recipients provide an explanation or excuse for the complainable. This goes one step further than not responding but is not antagonistic. In excerpt 21, Edgerton is talking to his sister Molly when their mother intercepts the telephone line and makes a direct complaint to Edgerton not visiting her often enough.

#21 [Heritage:V:1:Call 5]

01 Dor: Bihcause, h ah've-u I've be_e:n thinking thet, h hh °yuh-°
 02 you'll °u° nevuh pah:ss by: (0.8) not even fuh ten:
 03 minutes.
 04 Edg: W'l I nevuh go: to West Byfleet nowadays.
 05 Dor: Well dahrling, (0.2) ruhmembuh thet I: live in West
 06 By:fleet.

Instead of apologising to or affiliating with his mother, Edgerton produces an excuse for his transgression (line 4), explaining that he never passes through his mother's town anymore. I explored earlier how attempts at resolution are particularly affiliative. In this instance, Edgerton could have attempted to resolve the matter; here he does not affiliate but instead provides an excuse for the transgression, which challenges his mother's complaint.

Taking this practice one step further, avoiding affiliation can also lead to a denial from a recipient and explicit disagreement between interlocutors; however, this is predominantly associated with direct complaints. Excerpt 22 shows a phone call between friends Debbie and Shelley. Debbie has called Shelley at work to ask why she is not attending an upcoming trip, after explaining herself Debbie produces a direct complaint sequence to her friend, claiming it bothers her that Shelley's reason for not attending is to do with her boyfriend.

#22 [Debbie&Shelley]

01 Deb: =its jus'like you- yaknow:, if you don't wanta do
 02 something with like a gi:rlfriend jus cause th's guy:s
 03 not goin[g it] would piss me o:ff.
 04 She: [no:.]
 05 She: give me a break.
 06 Deb: well Shelley: thats how it sou::nds.=
 07 She: =w'll a-=
 08 Deb: =I mean I'm jus telling you how it sou:nds.
 09 She: I understand that bu- ya I- I mean its not- its not
 10 just tha:t I mean IwaIw I was excited to go befor:e
 11 and I still wanna go its jus I mean I don't wanna
 12 spend the money: and I know I have other
 13 responsibiliti:es:an,=
 14 Deb: =but if- but th- see this is what I'm see:in. I'm
 15 seein well thats okay but if Mark went you would
 16 spend the mo::ney.
 17 She: °we:ll thats not true either= ((begins soft, then rising))
 18 Deb: =I do'know, jus dont blow off your girlfriends for
 19 guy:s, Shel.
 20 She: De:b I'm not. h[ow man-]e- when have I? beside ya-
 21 Deb: [o ka:y]

Shelley's responses are particularly disaffiliative as she acknowledges Debbie's complaints by challenging their complainability. The first example of disaffiliation is shown at line 5, *give me a break*. This formulaic expression of disapproval protests against Debbie's accusatory complaint and displays a clear disagreement. Line 17 then overtly opposes Debbie's claims and challenges her basis for complaining saying *well that's not true*. Similarly, Shelley's interrogative *when have I* is asking Debbie to ground her complaint with evidence, rebutting the claims in her complaint. The difference of opinion between the two turns a complaint into an explicit dispute that is far from affiliative.

A similar case of overtly not affiliating can be seen in excerpt 23. Here, Sam is making a direct complaint to his housemate James about him repeatedly mentioning the camera filming them. In being recorded for a research project, participants were advised not to refer to the fact they're being recorded but James does just that. Sam then criticises James's behaviour in form of a complaint.

#23 [RCE08_Housemates I]

01 Jam: Right I'm gonna ↓leave the film
02 Ker: Why? (.) you have to ↑wait til I've finished
03 [↓my food at least
04 Sam: [why d'cha keep mentioning the ↑filming [because jus- you know
05 Ker: [I know
06 Sam: why do you have-
07 Ker: [I've completely ignored i
08 Sam: [that's about the ↑fourth or fifth time you've mentioned it
09 you're not supposed to be mentioning it.
10 Jam: Al↓right ↑calm ↓down
11 Sam: what happened to you just being ↓natural
12 Jam: I have been natural. (.) you've been very un↑natural
13 Sam: I have NOT I've just be ↑ME

James's first response at line 10 is not affiliating as he tells Sam to *calm down* which is designed to end the complaint sequence. This then prompts Sam to continue his accusatory complaint at line 11 when he says *what happened to you just being natural*, claiming his behaviour is not conforming to what's expected. James's response does not just refute Sam's claims but also shifts blame and forms a counter-complaint saying *you've been very unnatural*. This displays an explicit disagreement between the two and the complaint turns into a dispute.

The most explicit forms of this practice are mostly found in response to direct complaints, as there are confrontational and accusatory implications involved in direct complaints that naturally lead to more overt disaffiliation than third party or agentless complaints.

Disattending complaints with unilateral topic shifts

The most prominent practice of non-affiliation throughout excerpt 18 is Gordon disattending Dana's complaints, the first example of which is found at line 25. In response to Dana's complaint about Christie's conduct, ending with expression of anger (line 21), Gordon disattends her complaint when asking her about the film they went to see. His 'turning' the topic in this way is plainly a means to disattend her complaint, and thereby not to affiliate with Dana. Gordon resists Dana's attempts to continue her complaint by subtly disattending (Mandelbaum 1991) the sequence. Gordon is not taking up an entirely new conversation topic, but he instead simply chooses not to address the issue at the centre of Dana's complaining. He selects a relevant topic of Dana's to discuss creating a positive disjunctive disattending.

From #18

21 Dan: [And I was so a[ngry
22 Gor: [kuhhhh .hh-[h
23 Dan: [a:n' (0.3) ()
24 ([) an' oh::: Ghhhod. [C'z-
25 Gor: [.hhhhhhhhhh [But was: was the ↓film
26 good.↓

Gordon's disattention maintains his engagement with Dana's account of the previous evening, without engaging in any form of disagreement or confrontation (Mandelbaum 1991). Gordon shifts the topic in a way that is still connected to Dana's talk but that subtly moves away from the complainable matter. This decision to not engage in disagreement suggests that Gordon is avoiding affiliating as opposed to overtly disaffiliating.

It is relevant to note that Gordon's turn is produced in overlap with Dana. Dana's 'oh god' then leaves a TRP for Gordon, in which he takes the floor. This overlap onset, therefore, occurs as Dana begins to elaborate her turn with *cuz*; however, Gordon's disattending is already underway. This transition space onset overlap causes Dana to abandon her turn to avoid further overlap. Gordon does

not give way to Dana's turn when the two overlap which only enforces his attempt to redirect the conversation.

Line 29 sees the continuation of Gordon's attempt to disattend, which also occurs at a slight overlap in their talk. In this instance, however, Gordon begins *did you enjoy it* just before the TRP, as Dana has not quite finished producing her first TCU 'yes it was'.

From #18
28 Dan: Yes it wa[s b't
29 Gor: [Did you enjoy it.↓

Given the nature of this overlap being a disattending, Gordon's second question is arguably a blocking move – a move to block Dana's attempt to remain on her topic of the complaint, and instead to promote his topic, the movie; more technically, Gordon is attempting to ensure Dana is unable to elaborate or add a second TCU to her answer, and thereby to prevent her continuing with her complaining.

Furthermore, the second example of disattending in this data is also produced in overlap with Dana. In this case, Dana's conjunctive 'and' indicates that her turn is incomplete, however Gordon's post-transition onset overlap means Dana is unable to continue her turn.

From #18
61 Dan: [But I wz so angry
62 (.)
63 Gor: Hm hm, .ptl[k .hmhh]
64 Dan: [°and u]h°
65 Gor: [.t Oh I 'ad a .hh had a great
66 evening las' ni:ght .hhh It w[z brilliant.] .hhh

This example, unlike the last, is a 'blatant disattending' (Mandelbaum 1991). This turn is something typically found as the second pair part to a question such as 'how was your night' or similar. Instead, Gordon abruptly introduces a topic shift from Dana's complaint sequence and shifts agency to himself. After an already failed attempt to disattend the complaining, Gordon's frustration is most apparent here.

What stands out about this turn is Gordon's unilateral topic shift, specifically, to the great night out he had with his friends. His disjunctive declarative *oh I had a great evening last night* is somewhat contrastive to Dana's experience; he is expressing how good his night was in comparison to her troublesome evening. At no point has he 'sided' with her, against Christie, or expressed outrage at Christie's behaviour nor empathised with Dana.

Excerpts 24 and 25 are examples of disattending complaints. Example 24 has been taken from a conversation between friends Tim and Amy, in which Amy produces an agentless complaint about how boring her week ahead is looking. The prosody of Amy's turn (lines 8-9) turn this list of mundane activities into a subtle complaint. Her pitch changes make the list seem like a chore. Furthermore, Amy refers to 'these student people' at line 10, because the names of the student's are irrelevant (Jackson 2013), further displaying a lack of interest – making this a very subtle complaint about her week ahead. A complaint which Tim does not affiliate with.

#24 [RCE02_Two Friends]
01 Amy: I'm meeting <Ken tomorrow>
02 Tim: Yay
03 Amy: Errr (1.0) going (0.5) t- to lunch with ↑him:
04 Tim: Cool
05 Amy: I'm going to a ↑supervisor meeting. thh gunna ↑pick ↑up my
06 reading. gunna ↑do ↓my reading. gunna ↑write ↓my feature.

Such questions are evident in excerpt 26 where Sarah has been complaining about how a mutual friend, Adam, shared a private joke Sarah made to her partner. Line 1 shows Sarah concluding her complaint story by revealing Adam's transgression. Line 2 is the first of two forensic questions, this being Ashley asking what Charli's (Sarah's partner) response to the joke was. This bypasses or elides Sarah's expression of frustration at Adam and the transgression that Adam did something wrong in telling Charli. Ashley's turn raises more of a concern for Charli than Sarah and she, therefore, does not affiliate nor align with Sarah's outrage and indignation.

#26 [RCE06_Grass_13.20]

01 Sar: [he like told Charli that (0.5) I like ↑Adam <shut up>
 02 Ash: what did ↓she say
 03 Sar: she £just laughed.£
 04 Ash: ↑why did he tell her that.
 05 Sar: ↑I know that's what I MEAN [↑like
 06 Jes: [does she think you're gay
 07 or bisexu:al

At line 5, as Sarah begins to express her frustrations again, Jessica produces a second forensic question, the details of which challenge the complainability of Sarah's telling. The answer to Jessica's question may sway her to either affiliate or disaffiliate and could even invalidate the entire complaint story. To have a recipient begin to question the authenticity or the details of a complaining is particularly disaffiliative. Furthermore, such questions may make it more difficult for a complainant to pursue affiliation, with the consequence that the emergence of forensic questions can mean that, throughout the interaction, recipients are less likely to affiliate.

In both examples, the recipients are not explicitly disaffiliating, but are refraining from affiliating with the complainant. The presence of 'forensic' questions in complaint sequences is generally associated with recipients withholding affiliation. This is clearly evident in this extract between Lesley and her mother in which Lesley complains about her mother-in-law again.

#27 [Holt:1:1:11]

01 Les: SO[SHE STAYED in BED again all day. ((smile voice))
 02 Mum: [()
 03 Mum: () was that toda::y?
 04 Les: No that wz yesterday.
 05 (1.8)
 06 Les: But really: (.) I mean: talk abou:t making the
 07 best'v it,h
 08 (1.3)
 09 Les: I m'n th'z ha:rdly anything th'matter with'er.
 10 (.)
 11 Mum: No:. (),
 12 Mum: Ah well- (0.2) y'won't cure'er now love it's too
 13 late

At line 38, Mum asks a forensic question regarding details of Lesley's complaint (staying in bed all day). With this in mind, the ending of the excerpt supports the notion that forensic questions are the precursors of disaffiliation, as is manifest in Mum's resignation (line 12/13) in which she closes the topic without affiliating. Forensic questions somehow manage to redirect the focus of conversation, either in a way that undermines the complainable or questions the complainability entirely, making this a disaffiliative practice.

Excerpt 28 is another example that shows how forensic questions are used to undermine or question the authenticity of a complaint. In the following data, Luca is complaining to his university

classmate Kyle about being bored with his life, specifically explaining how his desire to have a girlfriend is affecting his motivation.

#28 [RCE4_720_Philosophers]

01 Luc: but because I'm †thinking about †that (.) when I see
 02 someone it's na hhh I- I'm easy °I-
 03 Kyl: but why should you but why should you al:ways
 04 [have to have
 05 Luc: [I just want
 06 Kyl: = but why should you every time you're single should you
 07 think that you need to be (.) finding someone to partner
 08 up with why not jus- why not jus be single what's so wrong
 09 what's so bad about °being single°
 10 Luc: it's not nice. (.) it's not nice. (.) get depressed really
 11 easily

Kyle's response (line 6) is to question the complainability of Luca's turn, by scrutinising the reasons behind Luca's complaints and feelings toward his circumstances and attempts to advise his friend by questioning Luca's negative perspective. He concludes by reformulating his forensic question, asking *what's so bad about being single* (line 8). Instead of constructing this turn as a declarative of opinion 'being single isn't so bad' Kyle's questions are challenging Luca's basis for complaining. Forming this turn as an interrogative is not as explicitly disaffiliative as the declarative form, as it does not overtly disagree with Luca. However, there is a disagreement between how they each view being single and therefore Kyle is not affiliating with Luca's complaint.

Treating complaints turns only as news

In Gordon and Dana's interaction, Gordon's forensic questions discussed above (lines 25 and 29) also display another practice. Gordon is treating Christie's transgression as part of the larger event of Dana's night and therefore displays no empathy with or acknowledgement of the complainable. In asking 'was the film good', Gordon ignores Christie's reported wrongdoing together with Dana's emotional upset, and orients only to Dana's telling as 'news'. When a complaint recipient treats what a complainant is telling only as news, they are not addressing the complainable matter at hand and therefore not affiliating with the complainant.

From #18

24 ([] an' oh::: Ghhhod. [C'z-
 25 Gor: [.hhhhhhhhhhh [But was: was the ↓film
 26 good.↓

Another indication that Gordon treats Dana's talk as news is the minimal responses to her telling. As discussed, Gordon displays passive recipiency throughout most of the interaction, barely responding to her complaining turns. Though not particularly overt in this data, minimal acknowledgement tokens in complaint interactions can be used to display disaffiliation in a similar way. The following excerpt sees Carrie complaining to Skip about not receiving condolence cards from her late husband's colleagues. Her complaint is most explicit at line 4 where she expresses her view that the men hadn't 'bothered'.

#29 [H:88U:2:4:16]

01 Carr: Several of the gir:ls've sent ca[:rds? You kno:w?
 02 Skip: [i h Y e : s
 03 (0.6)
 04 Carr: But uh (1.0) But none of the-: (.) men at (Charrington)
 05 bothered?
 06 (.)
 07 Skip: hOh:::

08 (.)
 09 Carr: (Well'v course) they didn't know me did they,

Skip's minimal 'oh' response acts as a standard form of news receipt (Heritage 1984). There is no empathy or acknowledgement of the complainable matter that is the subject of Carrie's prior turn; he is not treating this transgression as egregious or outrageous, and is thereby eliding the complainability of Carrie's turn. In ignoring the misconduct, both Gordon and Skip, therefore, align only as news recipients, but not as complaint recipients.

Further examples are shown in the excerpts below. In Excerpt 30 Marsha talking on the phone with her ex-husband Tony, discussing their son's new relationship; Marsha is complaining that she is yet to meet the new girlfriend despite how often their son seems to be seeing and speaking to her.

#30 [MDE:MTRAC:60-1:3]
 01 Mar: ehh hha hha hhuh 'hhhh She call(s)/(ed) him evry ni:ght.
 02 (0.3)
 03 Ton: Ha:h?
 04 Mar: She call(s)/(ed) him evry ni:ght.
 05 Ton: Oh really?
 06 Mar: An' he wz out evry n(h)i(h)gh(h)t hnh
 07 (0.4)
 08 Ton: Tha:t's uh,hh (0.4) They're rilly quite a nice couple.

Marsha's repeated use of the phrase 'every night' highlights her complaint about and frustration with her son; however, Tony does not affiliate. Tony's turn at line 5 'oh really' displays him engaging as a news recipient. Much like in the above examples he does not treat the complainants turns as complainable and instead uses an oh-prefaced news receipt (Heritage 1984) followed by a positive assessment of the couple at line 8 to bypass the complaint and respond only to Marsha's report.

In the next example, Joan is complaining to her friend Linda about an item she ordered remaining out of stock - the complainable matter being that the same company had subsequently supplied her friend with the same item. Joan is expressing her frustration to Linda, but Linda responds minimally, as a news recipient.

#31 [TC:1(b):16]
 01 Joa: .t.hhhh En no:w, when she called th'company, (.) they don't
 02 have um.
 03 Lin: Oh::[:,
 04 Joa: [.t.hhhhh () I'm really disgusted now I aftih tell
 05 those people thet-we don't (.) yih[know well they don't=
 06 Lin: [Yeah.
 07 Joa: =have'em yih gitcher money back b't yet .hhhhhhh How come um
 08 Chleo got yihknow en here I've been waiting fer
 09 two months.hh.khh
 10 Lin: Ye:ah.
 11 (.)
 12 Lin: Ri:ght.=
 13 Joa: =That's what rilly made me ma:d.=
 14 Lin: =Hu:h.

Linda produces an 'oh' news receipt at line 3 and her subsequent turns are then minimal acknowledgements of *yeah* (lines 6 and 10) and *right* (line 12). In treating this complaint as only news, Linda is able to display passive reciprocity without engaging with the complaint specifically. In treating a complaint as news, recipients do not convey the condemnation or empathy that a complainant pursues, making this a disaffiliative response.

Sighing as a display of uninterest

Many of Gordon's turns consist of heavy breathing and sighing, though we don't have access to the visual cues that may distinguish sighing from simple breathing, lines 26, 34 and 54 appear to be explicit sighs in Gordon's talk based on their volume, length and sequential position. Looking first at lines 26 and 33, both instances are prebeginning sighs. The sigh at line 22, though subtle because it occurs in overlap with Dana, acts as a precursor for the disattending that is about to follow: *but was the film good*.

From #18

21 Dan: [And I was so a[ngrɪ
 22 Gor: [kuhhhh .hh-[h
 23 Dan: [a:n' (0.3) ()
 24 ([) an' oh:: Ghhhod.[C'z-
 25 Gor: [.hhhhhhhhhh [But was: was the ↓fɪlm
 26 good.↓

While this sigh could act as a minimal acknowledgement to Dana's complaint before a topic shift, it also works to "forecast the valence of the upcoming talk to premonitory a dispreferred response" (Hoey 2014, p.180). The sequential position at which it is produced both asserts speakership and gives an indication of Gordon's disinterested and negative stance.

Line 34 is also a prebeginning sigh, however in this case the talk that follows is simply an *oh* exclamation. This prebeginning sigh, much like at line 25, acts to indicate the tone of the talk to follow.

From #18

31 Dan: Yes but it's:(.) o I can't hardly remember the film
 32 becuz I got so (bucked) up 'n ↓mm:-mm:.
 33 Gor: ehhhhh↓Oh::oo,hh
 34 Dan: It's not you:r fault, but it's just becuz (0.3)
 35 Christie's ((w)) °so damn thick.°

As a result of Dana's resistance at line 31 and 32, Gordon fails to redirect the conversation, as he had tried to do earlier. This voiced sigh likely demonstrates his frustration that Dana is continuing the complaint sequence, which further indicates that his *oh* acknowledgement is more likely a way to hurry along the conversation.

The third example of sighing in this data is found at line 58, this being different from the previous as it is a stand-alone sigh. While it might seem that this stand-alone sigh serves the same purpose as a minimal acknowledgement token, this specific example occurs as an overlap during Dana's turn as opposed to a second pair part to Dana's actions.

From #18

55 Dan: =like a lump of dough an' I wz so angry I c'd'v
 56 Dan: cracked her one. .hhh[I didn['t
 57 (([click]))
 58 Gor: [khhh-hhhh[h
 59 Dan: ['m a coward

Having discussed the implications of overlaps and interruptions above, the combination of this practice with a particularly extended sigh projects a frustration with this ongoing complaint. This is then supported by the second disattending of the complaining seen at line 66. Hoey proposes that stand-alone sighs convey a "negative emotion of weak intensity" (Hoey 2014, p.186), meaning that while the stance being conveyed is negative, it is not extreme enough to be considered disaffiliative, affirming that this data is an example of a non-affiliative response.

Excerpt 32 is from a telephone conversation between friends Nora and Bea in which Nora is complaining about a man she has recently hired to decorate her kitchen, claiming he is not doing a sufficient job. As with extract 18 above, Bea's sigh is produced in overlap with Nora's turn, and although short, is a pre-beginning sigh to her *well* (line8) interjection.

#32 [SBL:2:1:8:9]

01 Nor: Well he's coming ba:ck I'm g'nna tell im I: had unki:nd
 02 thoughts 'bout im
 03 (.)
 04 Bea: uhhh huh huh huh hh khh hhehhhh
 05 Nor: °En°
 06 (0.2)
 07 Nor: So[: uh[I've b]een:
 08 Bea: [hh [°Well°]
 09 (.)
 10 Nor: fussing with tha::t.
 11 Bea: IT'LL GET STRAIGHTENED OU:T,

Her sigh forecasts her upcoming expression of resignation *it'll get straightened out* (line 11). The sigh signals a uninterest in the ongoing complaint and her resignation confirms this.

A disaffiliative stand-alone sigh can be seen in excerpt 33 which has been taken from the same call as excerpt 9. This however is much later in the call, and sisters Emma and Lottie have discussed several other topics in the meantime. Here, Emma reintroduces the complaint about her husband Bud. Despite Lottie's affiliation earlier in the interaction, in this instance her responses are particularly minimal as a result of which she does not engage with her sister's complaints in the same way.

#33 [NB:IV:4:R]

01 Emm: Buh YIHKNOW HE e-he ↑does this so many ti:mes.'e k-.hhhhh
 02 He PA:CKS UP'n LEA:ves yihkno:w 'e did it up (.) tuh me in
 03 the'parm'n'e gits ev 'e doesn'tlike sup'm I sa:y er.hhh.hhhh
 04 (0.2)
 05 Lot: pthrhh[hhh
 06 Emm: [E:n I'm bitchy hhhhhh Well anyway,hh
 07 (0.9)
 08 Emm: MAYBE AH'LL SEE YUH (0.2) uhLL bu (.) u-We:ll l't's see
 09 AH ↑talk to y'be-fore you gō:

Lottie's stand-alone sigh at line 5 projects a frustration that the complaint has been reintroduced. Her negative and minimal response leads to Emma abandon the complaint and redirect the complaint topic as the sigh confirms to her that Lottie is not going to affiliate in this instance.

Sympathy

I have explored in chapter 2 how empathy can play a role in affiliating. Empathy is the expression of having shared an experience, relating to the ones feelings and displaying a level of understanding. Sympathy on the other hand, merely means to convey a form of sorrow for another's misfortune. The difference between the two is the line between affiliative and non-affiliative. For example, see below Gordon's *oh* exclamation at line 33. In sharing a problem or trouble with a co-participant, a sympathetic response is an acknowledgment of the complainant's feelings toward the complainable. Whereas an empathetic response displays an understanding of the complainant's feelings to an extent at which they share the same feelings toward the complainable.

From #18

31 Dan: Yes but it's:(.) o I can't hardly remember the film
 32 becuz I got so (bucked) up 'n mm:-mm:.

33 Gor: ehhhhh↓Oh:oo, hh
 34 Dan: It's not you:r fault, but it's just becuz (0.3)
 35 Christie's ((w)) °so damn thick.°

In his 'oh' at line 33 (noting the prosodic character of 'oh') Gordon expresses sympathy for Dana, which creates a narrative that Dana is a victim to something Christie has done. Dana's resistance at line 35, redirecting the conversation back to Christie, highlights that Gordon has missed the point here. By highlighting an element of the complainable again, she is pursuing a response that engages more with Christie's wrongdoing and less with Dana being a victim of Christie's behaviour.

The second example of this is Gordon's use of a formulaic expression of sympathy *oh that's a pity* (line 47). Dana has been expressing how Christie's actions caused her to get wound up and irritable, and again instead of empathizing with Dana through expression of disapproval of Christie's behaviour, Gordon focuses on pitying Dana. Sympathising with the complainant's predicament does not acknowledge the role of the person who is complained about, in the harm she has done; Gordon is not sharing Dana's view of the fault and blame to be attributed to Christie's conduct.

From #18

40 Dan: =moment I c'n r(h)eally (0.4) bop 'er one,
 41 Gor: °.hhhh.koh.klih=
 42 Dan: =bec'z(0.3)I wz[(.)]I[gotin[big trouble about it an'
 43 Gor: [.t] [.pl] [°hhhhhhhhhh
 44 Dan: .ptch
 45 Gor: [°.hhhh[hh°
 46 Dan: [- (0.4) [.hh[h
 47 Gor: [Oh th[at's a pity.]
 48 Dan: [got in a real] state an'

Examples of this practice can be found in excerpts 34, 35 and 36 the first of which revisits Joan complaining to her friend Linda about an ordered item going out of stock. Earlier in this data, Linda was shown treating Joan's complaint as news. In this excerpt, Linda's turns are more than just acknowledgements and in line 10 she displays sympathy for her friend's misfortune. *Well that's too bad* acknowledges Joan's negative feelings, but her turn lacks any condemnation of the company at fault.

#34 [TC:1(b)

01 Joa: [.hhhhh En I thought maybe they've gotta some: supply:, .hhh
 02 A::n' (.) but uh:m .tk.hhhhh since she wz a dealer then they
 03 sold um tuh her.
 04 Lin: Hm:..
 05 (0.2)
 06 Joa: .t [°Ah don't kno:w.°]
 07 Lin: [°Ah don' kno:w.°]
 08 (0.3)
 09 Joa: .t.hh[hh
 10 Lin: [W'l th[at's u too ba:d.]
 11 Joa: [B't anyway it] rilly makes me: (.) kinda
 12 disgusted,.hhhh Fay siz I'd write them a letter en tell um jus
 13 whatchu think about that kind of bui(h)si(h)nes[s .hhhehhhhh=
 14 Lin: [Ye:ah,

Excerpt 35 revisits Lesley on the phone with her mother. In this case, Mum has suggested to Lesley's sister-in-law that she gives Lesley's children money for Christmas, in response to which Lesley complains that her sister-in-law is not particularly generous with her money. Mum's minimal responses show her lack of engagement with Lesley's complaint, but her *dear dear dear* at line 8 acknowledges Lesley's indignation without collaborating with her.

#35 [Holt:X(C):1:1:1]

01 Les: [.hh An' she gets it the other way. B't she['s ne- ih-
02 Mum: [°()°
03 Les: but we get nasty remarks about not being able to affo:rd
04 uh: Christmas presents.
05 (.)
06 Mum: Ah hah
07 (0.2)
08 Mum: Dear dear dea:r hn
09 (0.6)
10 Mum: Hm::
11 (.)
12 Mum: Never mind,

A similar exclamation can be seen in excerpt 36. In this example, Jenny is explaining to her friend Vera why she didn't attend her typing class, complaining about the events that caused her to miss it. At line 7 Vera's *oh dear me*, much like above, is an exclamation of dismay that acknowledges Jenny's misfortune but does not do enough to affiliate or empathize.

#36 [Rahman:1:2]

01 Jen: No: ah[kah ah thought well I c]an't leave=
02 Ver: [O h : : : : .]
03 Ver: =[n:No.
04 Jen: =[im fih two houiz eef I'm if he's crying when I've
05 left im fer one.
06 (.)
07 Ver: Oh: dear me.
08 Jen: So: ah euh yihknow ez I say I didn' get
09 t[ih typing,]
10 Ver: [Oh::: yer] well tie:d dow:n ah'ntchu

Complainants introduce a complainable matter to express some form of egregious behaviour and design their turns in a way that highlights the wrongdoing of a third party. In expressing sympathy, as seen in the above examples, a recipient's focus is on the complainant and not the agent of the complainable. While expressing sympathy acknowledges there is an element of wrongdoing, there is no condemning, no outrage and no empathy meaning the recipient is not affiliating.

This chapter has used excerpt 18 to highlight how various practices are used in a single interaction to display non-affiliation to complaints. In supplementing small collections, I have demonstrated that the practices of: missed opportunities to affiliate, avoiding affiliation, disattending, empirically-based questions, treating complaints only as news, sighing as a display of uninterest and sympathy are all frequently found in other complaint interactions. Many practices showed they could often be taken a step further to display overt disaffiliation, highlighting the close relationship between non-affiliation and disaffiliation.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

This dissertation is a contribution to the conversation analysis of complaint responses. Most existing work on complaints focuses on their construction and management in conversation. While some research touches on the possible responses to complaints, little has been done to understand how recipients construct these responses. Thus, I have presented a systematic analysis of affiliation and disaffiliation to contribute to the understanding of complaint responses in everyday interaction. What I have found is that affiliation and disaffiliation can be expressed in subtle and perhaps even indirect ways, and the line between the two is more blurred than often implied in complaint literature. These findings suggest that (dis)affiliation can be measured on a continuum ranging from explicitly affiliative to explicitly disaffiliative. This idea of a continuum effectively demonstrates how the practices of affiliation or disaffiliation are sometimes implicit. Furthermore, it acknowledges the existence and relevance of non-affiliation as a midpoint between the two general response types.

In making this contribution I have highlighted the different types of complaints and their significance when considering complaint responses. Complaint research is typically centred around third party and direct complaints, and the implications these have on a moral standard of conduct. I established that a third type of complaint can be found in interaction - agentless complaints - that is equally as relevant when considering responses from a wider scope. The literature explored in the introductory chapter further highlighted this analytical approach and established how a systematic analysis allows for the understanding of the particular features of complaining, such as extreme case formulations, overt expressions of emotion, reported talk and idiomatic expressions (Pomerantz 1986; Drew 1998; Drew & Holt 1988; Holt & Clift 2007). I also reviewed literature that explores affiliation and disaffiliation in interaction to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of existing research and academic conversations surrounding the relationship between complaints and affiliation in interaction.

In the same way linguists have established the specific practices involved in complaining, my analysis allowed me to identify the key practices involved in responding to complaints. By analysing both comprehensive complaint sequences and smaller collections, this analysis has deconstructed affiliation and disaffiliation in a systematic format that allows for such practices to be identified in interaction. In analysing an extended data example, I explained how identifying particular practices and highlighting how these practices work together in interaction affects the course of the entire complaint sequence. The benefits of collections meant that I could show the prevalence of each practice across varying interactions but also the different ways each practice can be navigated in conversation. Collections also allowed for an exploration of all three complaint types, meaning analysis was comprehensive and well-grounded. I have established that key features of affiliation are *co-construction, assessments, response cries, clicks and tuts as condemnation of third party and attempts of resolution* while the practices involved in disaffiliating with complaints are *missed opportunities to affiliate, avoiding affiliation, disattending complaints with a unilateral topic shift, empirically-based questions, treating complaints as news, sighing as a display of uninterest and sympathy*. This list is not exhaustive but is comprehensive in understanding the mechanisms of complaint responses and how recipients go about navigating interaction with their co-participants.

While the highlighted practices have been categorised as either affiliative or disaffiliative, some are more ambiguous and subtle than others, meaning they fall at somewhat of a mid-point between affiliation and disaffiliation. It is worth revisiting Jefferson et al.'s idea of a response continuum (1987) to consider how complaint responses exist on a scale. For the purpose of this explanation, I have created a continuum, labelled with each practice explored in my analysis, ranging from explicitly affiliative to explicitly disaffiliative. This is not an in-depth or a definitive continuum and has simply been drawn up to visualize what this continuum could look like. I categorised each practice based on the brief criterion of to what extent each practice encourages or discourages the complaining.



For example, *co-construction* is the most affiliative of the listed practices because of its collaborative nature. Recipients are conveying empathy whilst encouraging the complaining to such an extent that they co-complain. On the other end of the continuum I have categorised *disattending complaints with a unilateral topic shift* as the most overtly disaffiliative of the practices as it is an obvious attempt to redirect the conversation and disengage with the complaint sequence. The more ambiguous practices lay closer to the mid-point of the continuum. *Sighing*, for example, is disaffiliative practice based on its design to display of uninterest. However, my analysis proved that the sequential position of sighing is imperative in making it disaffiliative. The combination of sighing with disattending or overlapping speech is what makes sighing a practice of disaffiliation, meaning that it relies on other practices to be overtly disaffiliative. A feature of talk excluded from my analysis that could fall at a midpoint for this continuum could be *displays of reciprocity*. *Displays of reciprocity* neither encourage a complaint story nor convey stance therefore are neither affiliative nor disaffiliative. *Not affiliating* is a complex practice, being that it seems the most self-explanatory yet is probably the most ambiguous. It is a very minimal response type that is more disaffiliative than affiliative yet does not carry emotion or stance. Excerpt 18 demonstrated that the line between disaffiliation and non-affiliation is particularly blurred, seeing as Gordon was not affiliating more than he was disaffiliating, yet many of the practices he produced qualify as the practices for disaffiliation. This continuum demonstrates that the categorisation of complaint responses is not as black and white as simply affiliation or disaffiliation. Some practices are more (dis)affiliative than others and are used cooperatively in interaction to navigate complaint discourse appropriately. Particular complaint types warrant particular response practices and vice versa, and the acknowledgment of this continuum means that we may be able to gain greater understanding of the relationship between complaints and recipient response.

What I have shown is an advanced exploration of affiliation and disaffiliation in relation to complaints and presented a continuum as the foundation for considering how recipients respond to complaints. That is not to say there were not limitations to my study. The restrictions of COVID-19 meant data collection was impossible (Silverman 2021) and my data search was bounded to that in the University archives. While the data I found proved to be advantageous, collecting data from alternative contexts that is more up to date and combining it with that taken from existing corpora could have potentially led to a more extensive list of practices. Such limitations could be eliminated in future research to better understand the implications of my results. By exploring a larger, and perhaps more up-to-date corpora of data, a more definitive and extensive continuum could be established. Further research could explore the specific relationship between particular practices of (dis)affiliation in comparison to the practices of complaining itself. This continuum and the practices of (dis)affiliating could be carried into alternative interactional environments incorporating response types that are subjective to complaints made in institutional settings. Furthermore, this continuum could be developed and modified in relation to alternative social actions, for example, the practices involved in responding to gossip, criticism, tellings or demands from this perspective.

Appendix

Transcription Conventions

(.)	Brief pause
(1.0)	Timed pause
-	False starts
[talk]	Overlapping talk
=	Latched/continued talk
<talk>	Slower talk
>talk<	Faster talk
talk.	Falling intonation
Talk,	Slight falling intonation
talk?	Rising intonation
talk	Emphasised talk
TALK	Shouting/Louder talk
°talk°	Whispering/Quieter talk
↑talk	Higher pitch
↓talk	Lower pitch
.hh	Inhalation
Hh	Exhalation
word	Non-verbal sounds
Ta:lk	Extended sound
tahlk	Exhalation/laughter within talk
£talk£	Talk smiling/laughing
(N):	Uncertain speaker
():	Unknown speaker
(talk)	Uncertain talk
()	Unknown talk

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