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Indexing Power-Distance in Work-related Negotiation

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1. Introduction

The perception of power within business organization and the means by which it is managed and dealt with is shown to vary across cultures (Hofstede 1980). Some societies, for instance, seek to minimalize the hierarchial power relationship between workers, so that perceived authority positions are typically implied --- Hofstede indicates that this attitude exhibits a *low power-distance* value system. The data in this paper represent an unequal encounter in which an English urban planning authority negotiates a planning application with a national development company. As the power status of the planners is rarely encoded in overt ways, the participants are claimed to invoke the interaction in a way expected in a low power-distance culture. This assumption is explored through the analysis of the pragmatic and sequential categories which construct the negotiation. The methodology, therefore, reflects the conversation analytic notion that an abstract, cultural context, such as power-distance, should be analyzed from the perspective of the participant(s) (Schegloff 1987, Boden and Zimmerman 1991).

In work-related negotiation, the participants typically have different professional goals and expectations regarding the outcome of the talk. In this sense, the planners and developers are seen to discuss the relevance of their own proposed outcome in relation to the other party's. Even though the data analyzed in this paper represent an unequal encounter, the talk is pragmatically negotiated: the interactants conventionally address face-concerns to the extent that the absence of face-address is viewed as noteworthy. To this extent, it is claimed interactants holding differential power positions will preserve face to a greater degree in a low power-distance society than in a high one. In particular, it is claimed that power relationships are encoded in implicit ways and that face-address, invoked by both parties in unequal encounters, is *prima facie* evidence of a low power-distance value system.

The structure of the paper reflects the emphasis on the 'micro-analysis' of context, in which the informants must be shown to orient systematically to the contextual matter. As such, the topic of analysis ---a power distance index--- is introduced as problematic with respect to explicating its *procedural relevance* (Schegloff 1987, 1991, 1992a, 1992b) to the planning meeting. In particular, the analysis of sequential and pragmatic phenomena is seen to provide the analyst

with a principled means of showing participant orientation to this context. For instance, pragmatic features of talk (e.g. implicature, presupposition, deictic reference) encode inferential meaning and, often in doing so, indicate face-address (see Grundy 1995, Mey 1993, Green 1989, Levinson 1983). Indeed, Gricean maxim hedges such as "I mean", "well", "you know" qualify and monitor the context being invoked and minimalize the imposition being assumed. Also, pragmatic theories of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987, Leech 1983) explain how interactional strategies reflect perceptions of how to address different members of one's society. In this sense, it will be shown that in work-related talk the central means of resolving conflict in a low power-distance culture is that of *face-preservation* for both parties.

2. Surveying a cultural index

Hofstede's (1980) study of business organization in 40 modern nations indicates that dominant national traits are structured by cultural values. One value dimension is the Power Distance Index (PDI), which relates to perceptions of social inequality and manifest differences in wealth, prestige and authority. Based on data elicited from surveys, Hofstede distinguished between high and low PDI countries of which he associated certain characteristics (as listed, for example, in Table 1).

Table 1 (Hofstede 1980: 119-22 *simplified*):

Low PDI countries	High PDI countries
Inequality in society should be minimalized	There should be an order of inequality in which everyone has a rightful place
All should be interdependent	A few should be independent; most should be dependent
Latent harmony between powerful and powerless	Latent conflict between powerful and powerless

Hofstede indicates that in work-related situations, power is inevitably unequally distributed. As such, higher-status workers in low PDI countries are seen as making decisions after consulting with subordinates, rather than deciding autocratically or paternalistically. In addition, subordinates from low PDI countries are typically viewed as being less afraid or intimidated by authority than those in high PDI cultures. In view of these observations, this paper argues that differential power positions are encoded in either overt or implicit ways in all work-related activity.

While Hofstede's theory may be based on very sound deductions of questionnaire data, this paper insists that an analytic notion, such as power-distance, should be demonstrated by the

methods people use to invoke the context in situated interaction. This perspective rejects the traditional Parsonian notion that an abstract social order is internalized by social actors, who are then regulated by those norms and values (Heritage 1984). Rather, sociality is seen to be an accomplished and occasioned phenomenon and language use is viewed as a primary means of creating a cultural or social context (Garfinkel and Sacks 1969). As such, the data provided by the planners and developers will illustrate how the behavioral predictions for a low PDI society are relevantly invoked by the interactants' language in the execution of their everyday work activities.

In this paper, a low PDI is revealed within the 'formal' or 'institutional' nature of the planning meeting (Atkinson 1982, Boden and Zimmerman 1991, Drew and Heritage 1992, Firth 1995). Institutional or work-related talk is distinct from ordinary conversation --- it is often explicitly goal-oriented, where participant roles may be pre-allocated and statutory rules may constrain the content of the talk (Drew and Heritage 1992: 20-21). In addition, work-related talk is typically associated with 'asymmetric' (Drew and Heritage 1992: 49) relations between participants. In view of this, the planners, acting as government officials, have the authority to grant or to refuse the planning permission sought by the developers. However, this authority is oriented to and encoded by both planner and developer in implicit ways. As such, even though each party has their own professional perspectives, the talk proceeds with the 'urbane affability' (Anderson et al. 1987: 147) associated with institutional negotiation, which the author argues indicates a low power-distance value system.

This section has raised a methodological problem associated with the analysis of a language and contextual matter, in that a low power-distance index must be shown to be *procedurally consequential* to the planning meeting. That is to say, the means by which a low power-distance index is demonstrated by the analyst should reflect the means by which the context is demonstrated by the informants. The basic linguistic procedures through which a context is constructed (and thus demonstrated) are sequential and pragmatic methods. While it is assumed that readers are familiar with the pragmatic categories of language use, a brief review of the sequential systems through which pragmatic phenomena operate is provided in the following section (see Levinson 1983: 332-345 for an extensive review of sequential systems).

3. Demonstrating a cultural index

The various interactional strategies (e.g., *repair, adjacency pairs, formulations*)[1] available to language users operate within a basic turn-taking system (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson

1974). This section glosses the particular sequential mechanisms observed by conversation analysts that are relevant to the data analysis.

The observation of regularities in talk is displayed in **adjacency pairs** -- two adjacent utterances produced by different speakers (Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 295). The turns are ordered as a *first part* and a *second part*, so that the first utterance provides for a particular or expectable second. It is not suggested that the overall organization of talk is constituted by consecutive adjacency pairs, but that their recurrent character indicates that they are fitted to resolve common problems, such as initiating/closing a conversation or accomplishing invitations, offers and requests. Moreover, the notion of **projectability** enables participants to predict the shape or character of a turn so that in 'the course of its construction, any sentential unit will rapidly (in conversation) reveal projectable directions and conclusions' (Sacks et al. 1974: 709). This aspect accounts for the speed at which speaker transition takes place.

The function of utterances in conversation may be typed according to a system of **preference** in which a second pair part may represent either a *preferred* or *dispreferred* response. The concept is associated with interpretive frames and observed structural features (see below) rather than the psychological notion of preference. Heritage's (1984: 269) table (II) below indicates *preference* formats for selected action types:

Table II (Heritage 1984: 29 *simplified*):

SEQUENTIAL ACTION	PREFERRED RESPONSE	DISPREFFERED RESPONSE
Request	Acceptance	Refusal
Offer / Invitation	Acceptance	Refusal
Assessment	Agreement	Disagreement
Self-depreciation	Disagreement	Agreement
Accusation / Blaming	Denial	Admission

Observations of talk have revealed particular structural features, in which 'dispreference markers' (Pomerantz 1984) are seen to invoke a *dispreferred* contribution (Levinson 1983: 334 *adapted*):

Delays and Prefaces:
> pauses before delivery; markers such as 'uh' or 'well'; token agreements before disagreements; showing appreciation for offers, invitations etc; apologies; qualifiers such as "I don't know for sure, but ... "; hesitation in various forms, including self-editing.

Accounts:
> an explanation for why an act is being done (or is not forthcoming, as in the case of refusing a request).

Relevant to this paper is the association of *preference* organization to other social interaction concepts, such as constituting 'social solidarity' (Heritage 1984: 265-80) and encoding attention to face (Brown and Levinson 1987: 38-43).

In the planning meeting, both planners and developers are seen to invoke **accounts** when discussing their own party's proposed candidate outcome. As Heritage (1988) notes *accounts* are particularly attuned to issues of face: in the context of conflicting proposals, the planners and developers are sensitive to the desires of the other party and thus provide *accounts* for being unable to comply or agree with the proposal. As *accounts* conventionally accompany a *dispreferred* response, and in view of low PDI values, opposing positions are treated as disagreements and therefore, *dispreferred* responses for the other party. In fact, as an unequal encounter, the mere presence of *accounts* by both parties and the fact that different proposals are allowed to be discussed is seen as encoding a low PDI status.

The participants in the meeting are also seen to **repair** and **formulate** their talk. *Repair* represents a procedure by which speakers monitor the understanding of turn units, so that trouble sources such as misunderstandings, mishearings and non-hearings may be corrected. This also includes self-editing, where no discernible correction is present. Akin to *repair*, which provides for the need of on-going qualifications of clarity in talk, is the participants' display of understanding of utterance contexts represented by *formulations:* that method that describes, characterizes, explicates, summarizes what is going on in talk (Heritage and Watson 1979: 124).

While conversation analysts have revealed the organization of sequential systems, little attention has been paid to the **pragmatic methods** people use to construct interaction (cf. Bilmes 1993). Thus, the analysis in this paper aims to show how both sequential and pragmatic components of talk organize an orientation to a low power-distance index through the invocation of face-address. For example, the data presents several dimensions of pragmatic inference in which face-address is signaled: in particular, Gricean maxim hedges are a typical means of demonstrating deference or minimalizing perceived imposition. The analysis of pragmatic *implicature* shows how often contexts are implied rather than overtly expressed, again indicating concern for face. The participants' awareness of their professional status is also invoked by *deictic* categories which organize their relative social relationship. For an in-depth analysis of the face-saving orientation of the interactants' use of deictic reference in these data see Glover (forthcoming). In sum, the presence of certain types of pragmatic inference is seen
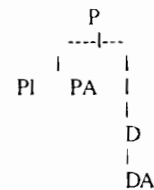
as evidence of the need to preserve face when a context is invoked as *dispreferred*. That is, face-address is a conventional tool for negotiating an agreed outcome and demonstrates a low power-distance attitude between the speakers of unequal status.

4. The face of negotiation

The negotiated issue between the planners and developers regards the location of an access road into the developers' site. The land has recently been contracted from a hospital trust and, because it still owns the adjacent area, the trustees must be consulted with regard to the placement of the access. The authority of the planners to suggest where the access point should be, in part, derives from a departmental document, the planning brief, which describes how the site should be developed. The issue becomes problematic when the developers indicate that a different arrangement from that specified in the brief has been agreed with the hospital trust. While the planners have the authority to refuse to accept this unsatisfactory settlement, their power status is largely implicitly encoded and the developers are provided the opportunity to discuss their proposal as well as suggest a solution.

While the meeting consists of seven members, the participants relevant to the 'access issue' include the following:

```
P.:     Senior planner and chair              P
D.:     Developers' director                ----|---
Pl:     Senior planner                     |      |
PA:     Planning architect              Pl   PA   |
DA:     Developers' architect                      |
                                                   D
                                                   |
                                                  DA
```

The issue of 'the access' is introduced by the senior planner (P), who indicates its unresolved status.[1] The transcription of the data adapts conversation analytic (CA) conventions and is based on Levinson's (1983) notations (see Appendix).

```
        (2.0)                                              589
P.:     the (.) now the access to (...) the adjoining site  590
        umm (.) sites C and (..) E (..) we are a little      591
        unclear and this may now have been (.) resolved      592
        with the (.) hospital trust as to where the access   593
        should be (.) we we felt it should just come         594
        straight through at this point                       595
```

The item "the" at line 590 prefacing "access" and "adjoining site", refers to a speaker-hearer shared one-member set in which the existence of the referent is presupposed and so encodes shared membership knowledge. Before announcing the planners' proposed access point, P refers to the problematic nature of the situation in that the planners are "a little unclear" (591). This is face-saving in the sense that the planner may be predicting a problem. Indeed, he is clear about the planners' actual proposed outcome as introduced with the verb of recommendation "we felt" (594) accounting for the use of the modal "should". The exclusive deictic "we" throughout the turn encodes the membership status of the planners. The hedge "just", as a conventional implicature, entails "exactly" but conveys the implicit meaning "no more than". Line 594 acts as a hedge introducing the planners' access point: the conversational implicature being "simply" this point, which has a minimalizing effect.

Thus, the issue of "access" is introduced pragmatically because of its unresolved status as indicated by the planners being "a little unclear": because the higher status planner addresses the face-concerns of the developers, this turn may be seen to encode Hofstede's notion of a 'latent harmony' between unequals in a low PDI culture. Given that the developers' desired access is different, the director (D) provides an *account* of why this is the case:

```
D.:                          * we (..) before we              596
        submitted the bid and certainly after we'd seen       597
        yourselves (.) and before we submitted the bid (.)    598
        we went - or I went to see the uh (.) the agents      599
        asking on acting on behalf of the hospital trust      600
        (..) with these points of access (..)                 601
P.:     yeah                                                  602
D.:     and they eventually came back and said that they     603
        were happy with a point there and a point even       604
        below this one (..)  because there's a cottage down   605
        from there um Rose cottage s'll be down              606
        * there as well-                                      607
P.:     * yeah that's right                                  608
D.:     which is (.) obviously (.) w-w-why it's not [.]      609
        particularly concerned about access to Rose cottage  610
        (.) certainly that access (.) I mean can go          611
        virtually anywhere=                                   612
P.:     =umm=                                                613
D.:               =whether or not it's got www              614
        (.) they uh were certainly happy with that point     615
        and were happy with that point there.               616
```

By providing an *account*, the developer mitigates his position as the proposer of an opposing desired outcome. That is to say, the *account* represents a *dispreferred* marker which is face-saving with regard to the conflictual context being invoked. A scalar implicature gives rise to the inference that a point higher up on the scale does not obtain; so to intensify quality, as does the developer with "certainly after we had seen yourselves" (597), demonstrates the highest point

on a scale of conviction. The item"certainly" addresses the face concerns of the planners (i.e. the implicature being the planners should be consulted before plans are presented to the trustees) and similtaneously encodes the membership roles of the participants (i.e. the high status of the planners). Thus, the power of the planners is invoked implicitly via a pragmatic implicature which preserves a low PDI orientation.Once the developer has stated the points agreed upon by the trust, he provides a new *account*, signaled by the item "because (605), which explains why the trust agreed on "a point even below this one" (604): the reason being that it would be convenient for Rose cottage. The conventional implicature associated with "even" concerns a scale of probability and in this context, the item gives rise to the conversational implicature that the access was not problematical for the hospital agents while it might be considered a problem by the two parties present. Furthermore, "even" suggests that the trustees are open with regard to where the access is placed, which preserves the face of the planners, who have in mind a different access. Thus, the *account* beginning at line 605, "because there's a cottage", is provided because of what is implied by the item "even".

It also follows from the implicature associated with "even", that the developer's *account* concerning Rose cottage is viewed as non-consequential (605-612). For instance, as a *repaired* sequence, "obviously (.) w-w-why its not [.]", the proposition is not complete, and the hedge "obviously" assumes a common perspective. The hedges "particularly", "certainly", "I mean" and "virtually" are face-preserving in that the information in the *account* is either not new or not wanted. The clausal implicature that arises from "whether or not its got" (614) shows that the speaker is not in a position to say more; indeed, he does not as the clause is *repaired* with an assertion, which essentially changes the topic back to what is regarded as relevant: a restatement of the developers' preferred outcome. Thus the developer's *account* includes numerous pragmatic and sequential features (e.g., repair, quality intensifiers, assertion following a clausal implicature) which act to at once preserve face and establish his party's position. In addition, the developer shows he is subordinate to the hospital trustees, who have highter status because they own the land in question.

The face-address of the developer's talk pertains to the *dispreferred* nature of *accounts*. In this case, he mitigates the problematic situation by explaining the historical background of the current conflict. Moreover, the mere presence of this *account* provided by the less powerful party exemplifies Hofstede's observation that subordinates are less afraid to disagree with higher status figures in low PDI cultures.

The *acknowledgments* provided by the senior planner (602, 607, 613) function as continuation markers, which is a common informal conversational activity -- in a high PDI situation one might expect the absence of such continuation devices in an institutional setting. However,

often the face-address of positive acknowledgement confirms mutual understanding rather than mutual agreement. And often *accounts* do not contribute to solving the problem at hand, so that the senior planner's response to this situation is structured as a *formulation*:

P.:	right (1.0) but they didn't (.) you didn't discuss	617
	any al-alternatives with them they jus said they	618
	were they were you know satisfied with those- I	619
	mean the reason I ask that is that (.) the brief	620
	(..) saw access umm (..) I think jus coming through	621
	at this point=	622

The "right" at the turn's beginning is a sequential acknowledgment which states mutual understanding and preserves face. However, the conventional implicature associated with "but" challenges the adequacy of the outcome referred to in D's *account*, in that it conventionally indicates a constrast between two assertions. Therefore, while the planner acknowledges the developer's *account*, he also aims to (once more) assert the planners' proposed access. At this point, the *repair*, "they didn't (.) you didn't discuss any al-alternatives" (617) is significant. In repairing "they" to "you", the planner clearly places the onus of responsibility on the developers for carrying out the plans specified in the brief, even though the developer articulated a deference to the hospital trustees in his previous account (lines 596-619).

However, this manner of reprimand is not overt especially given that P continues with a *formulation* (617-619), which politely questions the arrangement made by the developers and the hospital agents. The item "jus" (618) implies that the information in D's *account* is not sufficient; the phrase "you know" (619), which appeals to a common status, actually hedges "satisfied", which redresses the challenge to D's account of the trustees being "certainly happy" (615). The indirectness of these pragmatic inferences act to preserve the developer's face in view of this criticism or reformulation. Moreover, *formulations* typically indicate that a prior context may not be mutually understood or agreed upon: in this case, the developer's *account* is being questioned, indirectly signaling that it is not altogether accepted by the planner.

At this point, the use of "I mean" (619) intensifies relevance/manner and provides the beginning of a *self-formulation* which works to restate the planners' desired access. The phrase "the reason I ask" goes on record, in contrast to the other pragmatic features, and demonstrates metapragmatic awareness regarding his own prior *formulation*. Thus this remark implies that the planner's *formulation* (617-19) was an indirect means of criticizing D's *account*, rather than a lack of understanding. P's *self-formulation* invokes a presupposed context, "the brief" (620), which lends authority to and explains the position of the planners. The hedge on quality, "umm (..) I think" (621), is taken with "jus coming through" to preserve the face of the developers in view of the repeated information. However, this time, the planners desired outcome is invoked with enhanced power status by indicating the "brief".

This restatement of the planners' proposal complicates the situation resulting in *overlap* (i.e. simultaneous talk indicated by asterisks) by the two senior planners and the director.

```
D.:        =okay * well what what we'd [..]-               623
Pl:              * [..coming from] tthe main             624
           hospital drive                                625
P.:              * [..] there was the assumption         626
           on their part * [.]                           627
D.:              th-that it-it was* you know provide     628
           access between points A and B uh and B and C (.)  629
           um which is what we did                       630
P.:        right                                         631
D.:        uuh (.) you know you could have in fact been  632
           anywhere (.) b- (.) but you know I think point A  633
           started around here somewhere                634
?:         yeah                                          635
?:         yeah                                          636
D.:        and then (..) point B is somewhere down here=  637
```

Here D accepts the planner's prior *formulation* with the item "okay" and the marker "well" (623) introduces his forthcoming *account* as a *dispreferred*. The planner, at line 626, begins to characterize the hospital trust's position as an "assumption" which is important to the status of the planners' desired outcome, but also face-saving for the developers. However, the developer gains the floor at line 628 with a description which answers to the planners' implied complaint above at lines 617-622. In particular, the auxiliary assertion, "which is what we did" (630), shows his awareness that his party's duty has been called into question.

What is taken as a historical fact is then problematized with the modal and quality intensifier "could have in fact", the conventional implicature "but" and the quality hedge "I think" starting at line 632. Hedges such as "I think" coordinate with the non-deictic and non-specific item "somewhere" (634) and characterize the situation as ambiguous. The hedge "you know" (628, 632 and 633), which claims kinship or assumes mutual understanding, has underlying face-address in that it makes an appeal for agreement. The hedges work to pragmatically ensure agreement from the planners by assuming a speculative orientation and appealing to a shared point of view.

This reponse prompts a *description* by the planners of why the developer's proposal is viewed as problematical -- an action which downplays their own higher power status, in that the conflicting proposal is discussed with reasonable objections rather than refused outright.

```
Pl:        =I think th-that the problem with that one is I  638
           mean if you come this way you're into- there's a  639
           road here and there's a circulating ring road and  640
           if you come this way there's a very tight corner  641
           here, I think it's the norm (.) to get any kind of  642
           (.) sort of decent uh radius * ya             643
PA:                          * jus looking at it-         644
```

```
           certainly the fact is there's not very much more  645
           [room]=                                       646
P.:              =yeah (.) uhh that that might be very tight  647
           t-to any manuveurings in this area at all=    648
```

Pl goes on record in stating a "problem" with the developers' desired access at line 638: the phrase "I think" hedges quality; however this is followed by "I mean", which simultaneously intensifies relevance/manner and acts as a method of *self-formulation*. The "if" statements (639/641) operate as scalar implicatures at the end of a scale of probability and type the issue as unresolved. This is also reflected in the hedge "I think" on "its the norm" (642), which functions to verify his *description*. The item "decent" (643) is face-threatening because it implies a degree of acceptibility which explains the use of the phrasal hedge, "sort of". Moreover, the items "I think" and "sort of" preserve face in that the planner is not being overtly direct in his criticism of the developers' proposal.

The relevance of this *description* is endorsed by the two planners (PA and P). At line 644, the planning architect enters the discussion with the hedge "jus lookin at it" and confirms the accuracy of Pl's assertion with the quality intensifier "certainly the fact is". Again, these turns are seen to minimalize the inherent inequality represented by the planners' authority to potentially refuse planning permission. The developers' response regarding this problem is provided by their architect:

```
DA:                            =could                    649
           that not be anything more than a set of factors of  650
           this building now 'cos that that would be different  651
           [.for some future..*]                         652
PA:                    * yep                              653
?:                         uhum                           654
DA:        [.*]                                           655
Pl:          * I'm not I'm not quite sure what that access  656
           would serve then, what its purpose would be (.)  657
           because it might be taken jus t- (.) to get    658
           refuse truck or something like that but [.]-   659
```

Posing the turn as a *question pair part*, the speaker addresses face in that it introduces a *dispreferred* which essentially opposes the planners' suggested problem (638-43). The hedge "not anything more than" is a marked variant of "nothing more than", so that the former is far more face-saving than the latter. It is possible that the difficulty of retrieving the entire turn unit for the transcription relates to the fact that it is a face-threatening act. In response, Pl's hedge "quite" in "I'm not quite sure" (656) shows face-address in that, despite understanding the developers' proposal, there is still not mutual *agreement*. The presence of these and other hedges do not add truth value to the proposition being expressed they have pragmatic value as face-saving strategies and indicators of a speaker's attitude toward the context being invoked.

This turn is slightly *overlapped* by the director with a *question pair part* aiming at resolution and begins with the *dispreferred* marker "wull" (660) demonstrating *projection* of the prior turn. This projection is a result of PI's talk (656-659), in which he signals dissatisfaction by first indicating a positive feature of the access with "it might be taken" and then indicating a contrast from positive to negative with the conventional implicature associated with "but"'at line 659 (cf. Bilmes 1985). However, the planner does not finish the turn, i.e. does not invoke the negative context (face-preserving) and the developer proposes a resolution below:

```
D.:                    * wull (.) can we              660
        take that up with uhh (.) with the agents and  661
        discuss  (.) their future (1.0) * proposals    662
P:                         * yeah                       663
D.:     and in fact what they what they hope to achieve. 664
```

The sequential placement and content of the turn indicates that the director has priority as a negotiator among the developers. However, he orients to the asymmetric planner developer membership relations by proposing a resolution in the form of a *question* rather than an *offer*. The sequential ordering of his suggestion at first presupposes that they will have proposals (662) and then presupposes that there is some goal that they hope to achieve (664). The director's quality intensifier "in fact" (664) alludes to the problematic status of the issue in that neither party can proceed without liaison with the trust.

At this point, the developers' architect provides a comment, presumably as a response to the turn by PI at lines 656-59. The sequential placement of this turn is also linked to D's presupposition (664) implying a particular purpose:

```
DA:     I think as long as there is well you know I mean  665
        that's (.) a little group of houses there, it's    666
        much better than if we can build a house there     667
        [you start literally to the reverse of houses...]  668
        which is what would result in *[..]                669
P.:                         * in creating a-a              670
        sort of a closed -                                 671
DA:     yeah [..*.]                                        672
PA          * a stop (.) a stop on the end                 673
        (1.5)                                              674
```

DA's remark is invoked with various face-saving hedges such as "I think", "well", "you know", "I mean". The self-repair after the clausal implicature "as long as there is" (665) pragmatically orients to changing the context of talk to a description with "it's much better" (666-67), which asserts the developer's view of consequentiality. Although the comment is acknowledged as probably consequential by P and PA, it is too late to discuss the issue as P indicates that the planners will need to "rethink that" at line 684 below:

```
P.:     well th-that may be a fair point yes I mean what   675
        the difficulty we had when we were looking at all  676
        these schemes is that (.) we laid down in the brief 677
        a fairly (.) standard and clear way of developing  678
        * the sites                                        679
D.:     * yes                                              680
P.:                    one after the other (.) and what the 681
        hospital trust then did was to kind of set up that  682
        process (.) um that we felt (.) was an arbitrary    683
        [one] (.) s-so we we really will have to rethink    684
        that (.) now obviously we can do that now (.) now   685
        we know its you * and                               686
D.:                     * yes                               687
P.:     none of the others umm (...) and it may be that    688
        yes, that closing that off and just having one way  689
        through might actually (.) fit in well with the     690
        * uh scheme                                         691
```

After acknowledging the prior turn, the planner switches to the point of his own by using the relevance/manner intensifier "I mean" which functions to *formulate* his purpose (675). With regard to "all these schemes" (676), the item "fairly" (678) hedging "standard and clear way" addresses face for the developers who are proposing an outcome contrary to that suggested in the "brief". In this way, P allows for the possibility that the wishes of the planners, as represented in the brief, was not clear or may have been misunderstood. This talk clearly orients to a low PDI by minimalizing the power status of the planners and encoding a sense of 'latent harmony' between the two parties.

The *account* acts to build up to the objective of the talk -- to postpone a decision on the issue. This is announced with the discourse deictic marker "so" (684), which is a logical connector indicating that the planner's description concerning "all these schemes" acts as a premise by which the conclusion to postpone decision on the issue is arrived at. This conclusion is prefaced by the hedge "really", which intensifies quality at line 684. The description both indirectly demonstrates his status as a negotiator and encodes face-address for the developers.

At which point the repeated item, "now" (685), which appears to move from discourse deictic "now" to temporal "now", provides the focus by which the planner alludes to the developers' "now" to temporal "now", provides the focus by which the planner alludes to the developers' proposed outcome. The action of viewing the situation from the developers' perspective has certain face-address. The modal phrase, "it may be that yes" (688), displays acknowledgment of the developers' desired outcome and alludes to the power of the planners to grant planning permission. In describing the developers' proposed access route, the hedge, "might actually" (690), comments on the problem the planners have in seeing the beneficial consequences of that location. That is to say, the literal meaning, "in actuality/in reality", is at odds with the conventional implicature that credibility is questioned. Indeed, the "uh" which prefaces "scheme" at line 691 is a hedge orienting to the tentativeness of the situation: however, it

provides face-address in that "the" presupposes a set scheme as opposed to the more uncertain nature of "all these schemes" at line 677. This final description functions as an *agreement* with the developer to resolve the present conflict by postponing discussion of it -- indeed, a very face preserving means of resolution in which the authority of the planning department is not overtly recognized.

The discussion of the access issue has shown that the participants in the planning meeting have differential power positions and yet show attention to operating in a low power-distance culture. That is to say, an *agreement* is achieved in a non-confrontational manner, as evidenced by the presence of *dispreferred* structures and concern for face-address. This is exemplified in the organization of their *account-giving*, in that responsibility for the unresolved issue is attributed to an outside source. For example, the restraints the hospital 'trust' imposed and the authority of "the brief" were accountable contexts invoked by the participants. Heritage (1988:136) also observes a similar "no-fault" quality with regard to the *accounts* considered in his paper: "All of the responses avoid any threat to the speaker, and they also avoid any threat to the social relationship between the parties". So that *accounts* with their face-maintaining pragmatic content are significant *preference* devices used by both parties to invoke a low power-distance index.

5. Conclusion

The nature of work-related negotiation involves accountable members using common-sense understandings to collaboratively settle issues of interest to the participating parties (Firth 1995). The extent to which this collaboration differs across cultures is abstractly illustrated by Hofstede's (1980) study of power perception and values regarding authority. This paper analyzes how Hofstede's abstract power index is demonstrated by the negotiators of a planning application in the way in which they construct the interaction. For example, the *dispreferred* response of an *account* is directly associated with conflicting proposals and the participants' attention to face-wants. In providing accounts, the negotiators created an environment in which unequal membership was less differentiated -- illustrating Hofstede's notions of 'latent harmony' between unequals and the tendency to "minimalize inequality" in low PDI cultures. In this sense, the participants' actions and decisions can be seen to problematize the extent to which the power difference actually exists. That is to say, the **interdependent** nature of negotiation is emphasized, in that both parties have similar interests in reconciling opposition.

Appendix

Transcription Conventions

*	co-terminious overlap
(.)	micropause; tenths of seconds
(..)	two syllable duration
::	lengthened syllables
=	latched uterances with no gap
?	rising intonation contour
.	falling intonation
[..]	uncertain passages of script
hh	audible out-breath; .hh an in-breath
-	glottal-stop self-editing marker

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Here and throughout the paper, the *sequential phenomena of talk*, described in conversation analysis literature, are italicized.

2 The planning meeting consists of a series of negotiated topics (e.g., tree preservation, house styles) of which the issue of 'the access' is discussed within the first half of the negotiation.

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