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**THEY SAY IT'S BEYOND WORDS:  
A Study of Professionals' Discourse on Football**

by

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## **Abstract**

This is a discourse analytic study of how professional footballers talk about the game of football. The study reveals how talk about football constructs the nature of the game, its constraints, potentials and contingencies, while attending to participants' accountability in it. An initial observation is that the talk's construction exhibits everyday conventions of discourse, which are what make it intelligible, and that the specific nature of football is provided for within those general discursive conventions. The context of 'football itself' is not some physical entity that determines the type of talk which occurs within it. Rather, it is through their discourse that professional participants build the nature and relevance of that context, and build their own status as individuals who are both competent professionals and competent informants on professional practices.

What also becomes evident, in examining the construction of the talk, is that there are two sides to it. On the one hand, within their descriptions, or versions, there is flexibility in terms of what a speaker can say, or construct as relevant and factual, in building the talk's context. On the other hand, speakers routinely attend to there being constraints imposed upon them in terms of what can be properly or accurately said. The orientation is towards those constraints as imposed by the nature of the world referred to. Participants describe events in a particular manner on the basis that that is simply how they are. However, the constraints upon descriptions are demonstrably social ones. Speakers' attention to them arises out of the interactional nature of how external realities are determined through, or within, talk. These two sides of construction go hand in hand. In the interviews, which provide the data for this study, the professional footballers attend to constraints, in constructing the specifics of their talk, both as externally driven, and as matters requiring the interviewer's confirmation as definitive.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I am grateful to Martin Allen as well as Kevin Kean for getting me the interviews with professional footballers, including themselves, which served as the data for this study. Getting access to professional footballers was a major goal of mine, and Martin, whom I knew prior to coming to England, agreed to help. I think it is fair to say that, at the club he was at at the time, in asking his teammates to do interviews for me he was to some extent going out on a limb for me. To say I appreciate his efforts, and perhaps more importantly everything else he and his family have done for me since I have been in England, does not really tell the whole story. Kevin, a friend of Martin's, also did all he could for me in obtaining interviews at his club.

I would like to thank Derek Edwards for his guidance over the past four years. As bad as my writing was when I first came to Loughborough, he persevered with it in seeking to understand what I was on about and helping me to improve. I feel confident now that I can almost put a couple of sentences together. I think some even appear in the chapters to follow. To his credit, he does actually know a bit about football as well, which was helpful in terms of his approach to my data and is, 'to be honest', 'obviously' worth noting as a consequence of the underlying importance of football, on many levels, within the world 'really'.

Although I did not participate to any great extent (which is a bit of an under-statement) I am appreciative of the members of DARG. Just listening gave me a sense of the types of things I wanted to say about my data as well as the types of things I wanted to stay well clear of saying.

Finally, I also want to express my gratitude for Kevin Mackenzie's presence and comradeship over my final two years. Together we talked about our concerns, agony and successes in pursuing our work and in doing so minimised the pain of that activity to some degree. I am not wholly sure if the pain was minimised through the talk or by the beers that we drank during the talking. Although my uncertainty perhaps points to the latter as the likely cause, neither the drink nor the talk, which has always at least been somewhat engaging (seemingly especially as the nights wore on) would have occurred without Kevin's company and our like-minded-ness when it came to talking about our work.



## INTRODUCTION

*Accounts of matches are very boring. Football as a game is beyond words anyway — at least that's what people inside the game are always saying.*

Davies, *The Glory Game* (1972)

My interest in doing this study has been to take as close a look at football as I can. I chose to do so through looking at how football is talked about. I take this to be as close as can be gotten to what goes on in football, its nature, because in order for it to become an object of analytic consideration it necessarily has, at some point, to be dealt with in discourse — as a matter of descriptions, versions, and so on. Only through talking, or writing, about it is the physical activity of play conceptualized and brought into some understanding, whether mine or anyone else's. The initial aim was simply to look at what are built up as aspects of the game and the way in which they are built up as such; how is football created in the talk? The focus was on the 'football' nature of the discourse. However, as the research progressed it became evident that, despite this aim, what I was taking as the important features of the discourse to be explained were underlying constituent features of discourse in general. As a result, there are two sides to this work.

On the one hand, it demonstrates the normativeness of discourse through looking at what are basic constituent features of it. On the other hand, in doing so it becomes clear that these features are available as resources for participants to deal with the particular sorts of interactional concerns they attend to, the specific matters at issue within a particular stretch of talk. These two aspects of this study, both the general nature of discourse and its specific content and uses on occasions, are like the opposing sides of a coin. One does not exist, or occur, without the other; one cannot be fully understood without the other. One apparent consequence of the normativeness of discourse is that there are a plethora of potential types of football discourse that I could have chosen to examine. I could have looked at the television interview discourse of managers and players, or newspaper articles about football; I could have looked at commentators' and experts' talk on television and radio, or what fans say.

The data I use here comes from interviews done by myself with various professional footballers. I chose to look at professional footballers' talk of this kind because my desire to do this work has to a great extent been based upon the idea that the ways in which the game is spoken about by participants is important for their contribution as players. In looking specifically at professional footballers and their participation within football there is another alternative approach which I do not use — that is, ethnography. Ethnographic work would consist of me formulating observation-based accounts and descriptions of what the players were doing, what was going on. In terms of getting as close to football as I can, however, I have taken an ethnomethodological position of looking at footballers' own accounts, and treating these as the objects under analysis, rather than collecting them as informants' more or less reliable reports about the actual nature of their activities. I wanted to explore what they take themselves to be doing, how they talk about football, what actions they perform and what considerations they attend to in that talk.

I have done interviews, rather than collect spontaneous accounts from footballers produced situatedly within their participation within football, due to problems of access. For instance, I failed to find a professional manager willing to allow a tape recorder in their dressing room prior to, at half-time, or after a game. The interviews were as close to unsolicited, naturally occurring, discourse from professional footballers that I could get. Although such discourse is generated for the interaction of the interview itself, rather than being 'naturally occurring,' a conversation analytic informed discourse analytic approach to interviews (Schegloff, 1992; Potter and Mulkay, 1985; Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995; Wooffitt, 1992) is employed here, which treats the whole interaction, including the interviewer's discourse in asking questions, as data for analysis.

### *Why a discursive approach to football discourse*

In talking about football, issues such as motivation, confidence, performance, and other related matters are routinely topicalised by speakers. Within my own conversations about this work with a friend (which can be classified as football talk given the nature of this work as well as his status as a professional footballer), very



often he has offered up the notion of being positive, or of 'positive thinking,' as a categorization of what I was apparently after. In his book *Learned Optimism* Seligman (1991) makes the same sort of explanatory move in describing all people, including participants within sports, as possessing a certain level of optimism or pessimism. In fact to Seligman, these characteristics are simply opposite ends of a continuum which represents an internal psychological tendency of individuals. They stand as the poles at either end, such that points in between denote varying degrees of optimism/pessimism. Individuals fall somewhere on the continuum, the location being determined by means of a questionnaire designed by Seligman to measure this variable. Here are three examples of the questions and possible answers which appear on the questionnaire (ibid., pages 33-35).

You and your spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend make up after a fight

- a) I forgave him/her
- b) I am usually forgiving

You host a successful dinner party

- a) I was particularly charming that night
- b) I am a good host.

You win an athletic contest

- a) I was feeling unbeatable
- b) I train hard

One of the possible answers denotes an optimistic response, the other a pessimistic one. In adding a participant's optimistic responses, then the pessimistic responses, and subtracting the two, the number derived places the participant somewhere on Seligman's continuum of optimism/ pessimism. The higher the score the more optimistic they are, the lower the score the more pessimistic.

A brief look at Seligman's work, which is emblematic of a wide range of psychologized approaches to how people can come to improve their 'performance' in life and work, will provide a contrastive foil for explaining why I have taken an alternative, discursive-psychological approach to football talk. Seligman's argument is that an individual's degree of optimism/pessimism, or where they fall on his continuum, is consistent with the way in which they deal with the world. That is to say, it is consistent with the way in which they pursue goals, and cope with various failures,



potentially in the face of opposition, criticism, or doubt, in their underlying ability to achieve what they set out to do. The more optimistic (as measured), the better an individual is at dealing with the world and pursuing and achieving goals. However, one aspect of this work in particular serves to confound its findings.

The confounding aspect here is that, typical of cognitivist research of which Seligman's work is an example, the categories of optimism and pessimism are basically observer's categories. That is to say, they are what Seligman takes to be going on, rather than what participants demonstrably take to be relevant. For instance, he looks at talk produced for newspaper articles by participants on two teams challenging for a championship in professional baseball. In doing so he categorises the talk of one of the teams as particularly optimistic, and that of the other team as pessimistic. Briefly, in doing so and looking at the progress of the two teams over two years the outcomes seem to validate his hypothesis about the benefits of optimism. However, the problem is that it is not evident from their talk that the speakers 'are actually' optimistic or pessimistic, nor that optimism and pessimism are categories that they themselves use, of themselves, in descriptions and accounts, in the way that Seligman does. These categories emerge as how he describes them, rather than as part of their own ways of accounting.

Seligman makes a subjective assessment about the nature of the discourse. For instance, he categorizes the statement 'we lost because they [the opponents] made the plays tonight', made by the manager of the 'optimistic' team, as exhibiting optimism. Seligman does so on the grounds that the team is described as having lost as a consequence of an external factor — 'they'; the failure is also described as temporary — 'tonight' and as specific — to tonight's opponent (pg.159). In contrast, Seligman describes the statement 'we can't hit. What the Hell, let's face it', made by the manager of the 'pessimistic' team, as exhibiting pessimism. Seligman does so on the grounds that the factors involved in the team's loss are described here as permanent, pervasive, and personalized (pg.159). However, the two managers do not say anything about optimism or pessimism. What gets missed here is the descriptive and attributional work that the speakers may be doing with their discourse, and the accountability concerns that doing that work may attend to.

For example, rather than the first manager simply being optimistic, potentially he is just 'doing' optimism in attending to his accountability for being so. For the second manager, rather than being pessimistic, potentially he is attending to his own potential accountability as a coach. Perhaps he is trying to annoy, 'wind up' or otherwise motivate his players in saying the team cannot hit, the aim being to influence the players to try and prove him wrong. Seligman takes (the) discourse as a passive medium for conveying information, which allows him to access (in a highly interpretive manner) the internal psychological tendency of the speakers. However, he cannot get into a participant's head in order to check if that is, in fact, what he is getting. True beliefs cannot be accessed. It is not certain that what he is looking at indicates the speaker's level of something consistent with the categorisation optimism/pessimism. Consequently, the outcomes which Seligman takes as validating his hypothesis could be the consequence of any of a number of factors interacting with each other, including Seligman's own circular reasoning and interpretative glosses.

In utilising his own categories of understanding, to describe what is going on, Seligman can be seen as doing the same kind of 'mundane reasoning' engaged in by people within everyday settings in attending to a world out-there, ordered in itself, in order to establish its nature (Pollner, 1987). He is simply doing what we all do in describing the world in our own terms. The basis for an agreement with, or acceptance of, his argument, or findings, can be seen as lying with the point that social scientific concepts are often the result of a 'politics of experience' (Laing, 1967, cited in Pollner, 1987). That is to say, they

are constructed through the treatment of the social scientific version as definitive of reality by reference to which the lay member is found to be a deficient or 'subjective' observer. (Pollner, 1987:70).

Seligman's version of what is going on can be seen as rhetorically designed in common sense opposition to what ordinary people who experience the phenomenon might take to be going on.

The agreement with, or acceptance of, his version of the world would be to a great extent based upon its construction as produced by a 'professional' social scientist; that is to say, its construction as produced by someone taken as being in the position of determining the reality of such a phenomenon. Nonetheless, as a 'mundane



reason account', Seligman's work here is at best described as a representation of what he takes to be going on. Pollner points out that

What really and actually happened refers to the state of affairs as it is in and of itself, independent of the mode and manner of explication. (1987:35)

A representation of 'what really and actually happened' only achieves the status of potentially being taken as that. Others' agreement, or acceptance, is necessary for it to be classified as for all practical purposes what is going, has gone, or will go, on.

This critical view of Seligman's work is informed by an ethnomethodological approach, in which the understanding is that

the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members' procedures for making those settings "account-able". (Garfinkel, 1967:1).

Seligman does not merely work up his version of what is going on as the definitive version because that is what social scientists do and it is convincing to do so. He is also attending to his status, or accountability, as a social scientist who studies such phenomena, rather than merely experiencing them in everyday life, and is therefore in a position to determine the facts of the matter. Research has been done on how scientists attend to their statuses as such, in talking about, and producing in text, their work as scientific (Gilbert and Mulkey, 1984). With Seligman's work, rather than getting a direct line to participants' psychological reality, what we get is a version of that world in which he accounts for his status as an observer, and the type of observer that he is, by constructing his version as definitive, and the product of proper social scientific procedure.

This idea of participants in activities attending to their status as such, within the moment of the activity, has further implications here. For instance, the speakers whose discourse Seligman took from newspaper articles and looked at would have been, in that instance, attending to their status as someone in the position they were in, talking about what they were talking about. What has been assessed by Seligman is how a particular individual has come off in that particular moment according to Seligman's criteria or what he takes to be going on. What exactly that assessment means in terms of what Seligman is after is uncertain, beyond the fact that it is specified by Seligman's own interpretative frame of description and explanation. It certainly cannot be said to

self-evidently access some internal psychological tendency of the participants. What is missed, or gets lost, in this sort of study is the interaction-oriented status of participants' own versions of what is going on. Seligman effectively usurps their sense-making practices by inserting his own.

The discursive approach, in the research which follows, is informed by the same basically ethnomethodological ideas which have served to illustrate the shortcomings of Seligman's work. Avoidance of those shortcomings is treated as significant here. What follows is not merely a representation of what I take to be going on in the data. (Although it will necessarily be a representation.) The interviewees' representations of football are the basis for what gets said about what is going on in the data in terms of football and how it is talked about. The representations have been analysed for how they are built, or constructed, as telling for all practical purposes what goes on, or reporting the nature of football, by interviewees who, as an intrinsic feature of such tellings, thereby attend to their status as professional footballers talking about football. Rather than creating a definitive version of football of my own, the approach has been to look at how the interviewees construct their versions of football as definitive.

I offer this consideration of Seligman's work as a means of highlighting the merits of a 'discursive psychological' approach to discourse data, in contrast to a cognitivist approach. However, I want to point out that I do not take it that I have done an extensive, exhaustive, or definitive critique of Seligman's work here. Much research has contributed to this argument, emphasising the weakness of the cognitive approach through examining the status of cognitive issues within discourse (Edwards, 1991, 1997; Edwards, Middleton and Potter, 1992; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter and Wetherell, 1987) which serves to illustrate the benefits of a discursive approach more comprehensively. Looking at Seligman's work has had two purposes. First, it has helped illustrate why I am doing this research: I am interested in the issue he raises about what is psychologically important for participants in their pursuit of desired ends, which he (naively, in my view) treats as an internal psychological tendency. Second, it helps me explain why I am doing the type of research that I am. In topicalising the issue, of saying that optimism/pessimism is important, Seligman is doing something other than merely identifying its presence and significance. He is



working up a version of the world in which optimism/pessimism is going on behind, and driving, and explaining, a participant's pursuit of desired ends. It is in seeking to be definitive about the topic, through adopting rather than examining such common sense explanatory resources, that the shortcomings of Seligman's approach lie.

Prior to even starting, then, I am acknowledging that the psychological issues, which were the basis for my own interest in pursuing this research, are not going to, and perhaps cannot, be directly addressed. I will not be searching for, and seeking to establish the reality of one or another so-called, internal psychological tendency, such as Seligman does. Consequently, issues such as motivation and confidence will be looked at only in so far as they are issues topicalised, or concerns oriented-to, by interview participants in some way. If they are topicalised, rather than the interviewees simply being seen as exhibiting 'evidence' of them for an observer, they will be seen as building a version of the world in which matters such as motivation and confidence possess some sort of normative and explanatory status for participants within football.

In looking at participants' versions of what is going on I take it that I am getting as close to football, and the issues of interest to me, as possible. On the basis that any understanding of football is accomplished through discourse, any reality of it is a constructed one. The versions provided by participants embody whatever they take themselves to be accountable for, as footballers talking about football within the interview situation. This is at its base a study of people engaged in a profession, or sport, or some such institutionally organized activity. What it shows is that, similar to studies of other such institutionally organized activities as in Drew and Heritage's *Talk At Work* (1992), it is through discourse, or talk, within and about the activity, that the activity is defined, or constituted, as the activity it is, rather than the activity being determinant for the type of talk which occurs. What is real in participating within football boils down to what the participants take to be so.

### *Overview of the thesis*

Potter and Wetherell point out that

it is not easy to convey the analytic process in abstract. ...it is not a case of stating, first you do this and then you do that. (1987:168)

For doing analysis

there is a broad theoretical framework, which focuses attention on the constructive and functional dimensions of discourse ... (1987:169)

Having this in mind, my aim in the second chapter here is to illustrate some of the basic understandings which inform the discourse analytic approach that I employ. For instance, ethnomethodology is important in providing an appropriate starting point for looking at data. Data is not to be looked at as providing the analyst with information whose factual (objective, referential) status has to be worried about or resolved; nor is it to be treated as self-evidently, or even problematically, representing what speakers think or know. It is investigated for the sense-making procedures that speakers employ in constructing their discourse as (self-evidently, even) representing what they say it does. In a similar fashion, I discuss conversation analysis, a form of ethnomethodology, with regard to how it contributes to the way this study has been done, how I have approached the data and gone about analysing it.

The second chapter, then, moves to a consideration of more discourse analytic understandings. Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) work on scientists' discourse is used to illustrate the orderliness of discourse's variation. That orderliness advocates a stepping back when considering any such discourse, in order to see what the discourse's construction is designed to accomplish, rather than whether or not it is correct in relation to some other contrastive information available. Subsequently, Edwards and Potter's (1992) Discursive Action Model is used in order to illustrate the consistency, or coherence, of this approach to discourse. Finally, I outline the more practical aspects of the pursuit of this study, such as sampling, data collection, and participant selection.

In the third chapter, the first analytical chapter, I look at the way in which, through their discursive actions, participants assume the existence of an underlying order within the world. This assumption is an endemic feature of the conversations under examination. The way in which discourse proceeds turn by turn involves an assumption of order within the world, as an understood starting and continuing point, upon which to construct discourse. However, treating order within the world as an understood basis for the construction of discourse is not an example of Gricean cooperation (1975) amongst speakers. On the contrary, within their discursive turns



speakers orient to a particular order as being in operation for the moment in which the discourse occurs. It is always available for other participants to confirm, or dispute, the relevance of that particular order in their subsequent turns. Speakers may attend to this interactional confirmation nature of discourse by inviting others' acceptance of their discourse during its construction. The related issue of discourse's 'loose fit' with regard to its objects of description, is addressed here too. Discourse cannot self-sufficiently represent those objects. It designedly has a loose fit upon the world, which provides room both for indexicality to work, and for alternative descriptions to be deployed. Finally, I look at the practice of constructing the relevance of a prior speaker's turn, by a subsequent speaker, which serves as the major means by which, rather than the 'loose fit' of discourse arising as a constant problem, it is routinely and (mostly unremarkably) resolved as a matter of turn-by-turn practical intersubjectivity (cf. Edwards, 1997, on 'shared knowledge', and Schegloff, 1992, on 'repair after next turn').

So the aim of chapter 3 is to begin illustrating, in the first place, how the construction of discourse affords speakers flexibility; this takes the form (in chapter 2) of how speakers treat some specific underlying order as being in operation at a particular juncture in their talk. In the second place, I consider how constraints are imposed, or are attended to by speakers as imposed, upon them in constructing discourse. In chapter 3, this features in how participants attend to the 'interactional confirmation' nature of their discourse, as well as its relevance being attended to by others in their subsequent turns. The four chapters that follow explore these matters in various ways.

Chapter 4 examines how interviewees attend to the interactional concern, or constraint, of providing 'answer' discourse, thus confirming their recognition of the interviewer's turns as 'questions'. They deal with this constraint to a great extent through providing their discourse in the form of script formulations (Edwards, 1994, 1995): that is, descriptions that offer events and activities as conforming to routine patterns. 'Scripted' responses invite the interviewer to see their status as answers to the questions, those questions being constituted (by interviewer and interviewee) as questions about how things *generally are*, as formulating information about football-as-such, rather than about specific episodes. Through the 'scripted' formulation of

events as routine and expectable, the relevance of answers to questions is accomplished as see-able. In constructing routineness, there is also an orientation to the particularity of specific instances, as instances or anomalies. Consequently, the status of the information provided as 'answers' is accomplished as relevant for the interviewer to have sought, and not to have known already. The status of interviewees' discourse as 'answers' is an accomplished feature of it. That is to say, the interviewees come off, unremarkably, as simply providing the relevant information in the proper manner. Doing so serves to accommodate the interviewer and elicit understanding and acceptance from him for their versions of what being a footballer involves. The information they provide though, is just that — their versions of football — which is where the flexibility of construction comes in.

In chapter 5 I examine how the discourse within the interviewees' own turns, in possessing a dialogic nature, exhibits the same character as dialogue between participants' turns, such as the question and answer dialogue discussed in chapter three. Consequently, the same kinds of flexibility and constraint apply. In commenting upon their own initial discourse within the same turn, the interviewees attend to that as needing to be done. However, in accomplishing elaboration upon their initial discourse as necessary or appropriate, they manage to construct the relevance of that initial discourse and undermine potential alternative understandings of it within the elaboration. A related issue, addressed at the end of this chapter, is that of the 'intricacy' of discourse's construction. I argue that the intricacy of discourse's construction, at the ordinary and basic levels at which it is organized, and how it attends in detail to what other speakers are doing and saying, is (as Sacks first noted) surprisingly subtle in comparison to any assumptions we might have about the intentional, conscious manipulation of talk and action.

In chapter 6 the focus is on how the interviewees, like all speakers, manage the dilemma of interest (Edwards and Potter, 1992). That is, it is routinely a concern of speakers to construct factual reports as produced dis-interestedly, passively conveying the facts, or truth, so as not to be undermined as interested and thereby subjective, biased, or otherwise unreliable. In looking at how this interactional concern is dealt with, I illustrate various techniques of fact construction which contribute towards the interviewees coming off as dis-interestedly providing (the) relevant information.



Coming off as such serves to gloss the work that the interviewees are accomplishing through the construction of their discourse. For instance, I show how the discourse's construction as factual glosses the accountability work interviewees do in attending to their status as footballers and speakers.

Chapter 7 looks more closely at the issue of what the interviewees treat themselves as accountable for, both as footballers and as speakers about football, and how they seek to deal with those accountability concerns. I use one extract here to look at these points which I take to be representative of their underlying nature within the data under examination. With it I argue that the interviewees routinely attend to their responsibility for possessing two characteristics. One is that of being knowledgeable about football. The other is that of being a player, or one who normatively goes out to pursue desired ends within football and knows how to do so. I argue that even when one, or the other, or both characteristics, are not overtly being addressed in the discourse, the discourse's construction nonetheless attends to the interviewees' possession of those characteristics. I also argue that in constructing football as proceeding in a 'situated' (ad hoc, rather than plan-following) fashion, the interviewees accomplish accountability work which underlies and supports their possession of these 'expertise' kinds of characteristics as talkers and players. Finally, I look at the significance of 'function' to the interviewees for their status as 'proper' footballers — not discourse function but football function, the notion of how their talk and actions contribute to the accomplishment of desired ends within football.

The ways in which participants perform this accountability work, with regard to their status as expert footballers and expert reporters on it, exhibits both the constraints upon, and the flexibility of, discursive construction. In attending to their responsibility for possessing these characteristics, the orientation is towards needing to account for that possession. It is not self-evident and they are accountable. However, there is flexibility here in that, regardless of the attended-to constraint of having to account for their possession of these characteristics, they are in a position to, and in fact do, do so. Whatever they might take themselves as accountable for, as 'proper' footballers, they apparently find themselves in a position to do that accounting, and so construct themselves as 'proper' footballers.

In the conclusion I look at how this research can be placed within a wider context of research done on institutionally organized activities, of which professional football is one.

## CHAPTER 1 - A LOOK AT PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND THIS APPROACH AS DISTINCTIVE

In previous research on football social scientists have chosen to focus upon aspects of football which surround it. That is to say, they have not concerned themselves with the participants' doing the job of going out to play the game, looking to accomplish purposeful action and achieve the desired ends of winning games. Rather the research has focused on social, cultural, and economic sorts of issues surrounding football. In this chapter I, first, want to review some of this research. Then, the aim is to highlight the assumptions about language and the world which underlie this sort of research. Doing so will serve as a means to point out and emphasize further the distinctiveness of the approach taken in this thesis. Finally, the status of the data under examination in the analytical chapters of this work as an instance of 'talk at work' (cf. Drew and Heritage, 1992), talk which constitutes the nature of a particular institutional setting, will be addressed. Also touched on will be the significance of the particular type of data chosen, players' talk, and its status as a focus in comparison to the focus pursued by this previous work on football to be reviewed.

### FOOTBALL RESEARCH

Again, the research that has been done on football, rather than looking at players as such, and their concerns, has routinely focused upon that which goes on around the play. For instance, in the introduction to *Game Without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity* (1994) Williams and Giulianotti talk about the situation of the 1994 World Cup occurring in the United States. They discuss such issues as the appropriateness of holding such an event; the most important event for the most popular sport in the world, in a country that is basically a non-football nation. The history of soccer in the U.S. is described with emphasis on the start and stop nature of professional leagues in the states, the lack of economic backing for the leagues leading to their downfall, and that despite soccer being the largest participant sport in the states there is no 'apex of excellence' on the player pyramid' (Scarsisbric-Hauser, 1992 cited in Williams and Giulianotti, 1994). Various aspects of the



commercialization of soccer are also cited as problems of U.S. influence within the game. In terms of lasting effects in the U.S. Williams and Giulianotti conclude that, even though there is some good to potentially come out of the World Cup being held in the U.S., that, in the end, the positive effect on soccer in the states will be short-lived.

Williams and Giulianotti's introduction serves as a general example of the types of work done on football. The research generally looks at peripheral issues of the game which are nonetheless constituent aspects of the game. For instance, in discussing the history of soccer in the U.S. as a spectator sport they touch on a peripheral, yet constituent aspect of the game, in that without spectators, as they point out as having been the case in the states, the professional game would not exist. The existence, or participation, of spectators in professional sports could be argued to be what makes those sports, as professional ones, a reality. However, teams do not take into account the size of a crowd for their tactical approach to games. The size of the crowd is also not an issue in the situated pursuit of playing on the field. (Although, a picture of the FA cup final of 19.. at Wembley does spring to mind where an overflow of spectators on to the pitch and up to the touchlines might have effected how players operated in those areas.) In addition, while players might, and often do, talk about the importance of home field, and home fan, advantage, the research does not touch on this aspect of the role supporters play as part of and/or in influencing the game.

This attention to spectators in Williams and Giulianotti's paper points to a general emphasis of much of the research on football. The focus is routinely upon supporters. For instance, Williams (1994) looks at the status of a particular local football club, and how support for one's local club is relevant in determining one's identity. He went about collecting life histories of club members through interviews in order to access what being a member of the club meant to them. The fact that the football club was one which is dominated by black players, and located in a predominantly black neighborhood, adds race as another potential issue which is made relevant in looking at identity. Williams concluded from his data that being a part of the club was significant for its members' sense of neighbourhood identity as well as identity within society as a whole. The main focus of much of this kind of work is routinely on a particular type of supporter; the focus is upon those supporters who



engage in what is called hooliganism. Earlier work was done by researchers seeking to link hooliganism with Marxist social theory (Taylor, 1971; Clarke, 1978; Hall, 1978) and recent work includes those looking at hooliganism of fans outside England (Giulianotti, 1991, 1994; Horak, 1991). However, much of this research now is done by English social scientists seeking to understand hooliganism in England and how to deal with it (for instance, Williams and Taylor, 1994: *Boys Keep Swinging: Masculinity and football culture in England*). Below I want to focus upon some of this work done predominantly on the hooliganism of English supporters.

In *Football In Its Place: An environmental psychology of football grounds*, Canter, Comber and Uzzell (1989) have done such research, looking at spectator trends and the problem of football supporters in England (Canter, 1988). In approaching the problem they did surveys of fans who continue to go to games and those who stopped going in order to assess the groups' values and attitudes towards going to football. The researchers found the values and attitudes of the groups to differ. Those who stopped going went to games for the entertainment value of the game itself. They went to see good football being played. Those who still go to games go to 'watch their team win' and, to a great extent, because of the confrontation with the supporters of the opposing teams. Canter points out that the 'interviews showed that the atmosphere created by the fanatical supporters was attractive to some spectators but alienated many others' (1988: 29). Canter et al. found the way in which the problems were being dealt with, through containment of the fans with police operations, served to add to negative feeling experienced at football grounds. They found that the fear of violence was in great contrast to the possibility of actually getting hurt, which they blame on media focus. Along with attending to the spectators' perspectives and making games 'nicer' to go to, Canter et al. point to the importance of playing down the hooligan phenomena, in order to attract more spectators. The seriously violent nature of attending English football matches is described by Canter et al. as a 'myth' which, if not dealt with, could lead to the further demise of football as a spectator sport in England.

A major source of such work on hooliganism is the Sir Norman Chester Center for Football Research at Leicester University, which has contributed three major works to the field: Dunning, Murphy and Williams (1988), Williams, Dunning and Murphy

(1989) and Murphy, Williams and Dunning (1990). In general, the authors argue from their findings that

Fans who fight at football matches are engaging in an expression of norms of masculinity that are generally characteristic of a patriarchal society such as modern Britain. However, the 'core' football hooligans, those who regularly go to matches with the provoking and initiation of fights as a principal objective, are deviating from these norms. That is because the dominant norms stress the virtue of being willing and able to defend oneself as an integral part of masculinity but condemn the deliberate provocation of fights. (Dunning, Murphy and Waddington, 1991: 474).

In arriving at this argument the authors build up their evidence through the books in discussing the issue of hooliganism in different contexts, each adding extra elements to their understanding of the phenomena. For instance, in Dunning et al. (1988) the authors look at hooliganism from a historical perspective. They examine the increases and decreases in hooligan activity from the late nineteenth century to the present and provide explanations for these increases and decreases; their look at the marked increase in fan violence which occurred in the mid-1960's serves as an example. They argued that the increase came as a consequence of the media's sensationalization and exaggeration of the violence. The media's reporting of the events in this way led young males from the lower classes to begin attending the games more frequently thinking that that was 'where the (exciting) action was' (Dunning et al., 1988, cited in Dunning, Murphy and Waddington, 1991: 472).

In Williams, Dunning and Murphy (1989) one of the researchers engaged in participant observation of English fans abroad in various football settings in which English football was involved, including the 1982 World Cup in Spain in particular. Through interviews, the authors look to illustrate the attitudes the hooligan element have towards their activities. In the end, the authors propose to limit the hooliganism that might occur; however, they emphasize that these measures to curb the violence would not end it, nor would they provide a solution to the problem of the violence. In order to look at the possibility of a solution, they argue that the problems must be dealt with at the '*social roots*' (Williams et al., 1989: 180) (original emphasis). This is based upon their argument that the data available points to the hooligans being from



the 'rougher' sections of the working classes, at the bottom of the social ladder. The authors' third book, Murphy et al. (1990), is a collection of articles, again predominantly on the subject of fan violence, which was put together in the midst of the World Cup in Italy in 1990 and in anticipation of the World Cup's occurrence in the United States in 1994. (On this latter point, one of the articles addresses the issue of why there is not an equivalent to football hooliganism in the USA.) For the most part, the articles sought to look at the principal causes of football hooliganism in Europe and the world. In this way, the book serves as a continuation of the authors' work in the two previous books.

In his research, Gary Armstrong also looks to provide some insight into the 'reality' of hooliganism. In his approach he exclusively relies on participant observation and ethnography. He looks at one particular group of hooligans, the Blades, who are supporters of Sheffield United Football Club. Armstrong's presence with the group was treated as unproblematic by them, his acceptance as more or less a part of the group being a consequence of his acquaintance with certain of its members as well as his support for, and regular attendance at the games of, Sheffield United. Examples of his work are Armstrong and Harris (1991) which I shall return to later, Armstrong (1994) and Armstrong (forthcoming). In Armstrong (1994), he talks about the Blades' nature as hooligans through their engagements with a particular rival hooligan group, supporters of another team, over a number of years. Through looking at instances of that engagement Armstrong identifies the Blades as a group which lacks homogeneity. There is no leader, nor leadership hierarchy, to determine exactly what they will do and when. What defines them as a group is that they support the same team and that they hold the same principles in terms of their engagement with rival hooligan groups; that is, 'reputation is gained because honour has been gambled', in terms of confronting rival hooligan groups, 'and saved' (1994: 320). That is not to say, however, that this confrontation necessarily includes violence. Armstrong points out that there is more talk than punches. The confrontation, routinely, may be constituted by only verbal engagement; for instance, that of yelling insults prior to, during and after games, at opposing fans. This version of hooliganism, Armstrong argues, is a more privileged one, closer to the 'truth' than one which an 'outsider' might get, as a consequence of his moving in the social circles along with the subjects

of the research, close to the way in which the subjects moved themselves (Armstrong, 1993).

Interestingly, Armstrong has raised a debate as to what is the proper manner in which to research this phenomenon of hooliganism. Frankenberg (1991) explains how Armstrong and Harris's article (1991) raised the debate, thus prompting the *Sociological Review* to provide a forum in which researchers could address the issue. In particular, Armstrong and Harris sought to undermine the validity of the work done by the Leicester group. The main idea of Armstrong and Harris's argument against the Leicester group has to do with their finding that hooligans are predominantly from the lower sections of the working classes. Armstrong and Harris claim that the data upon which this finding is based is flawed. For instance, much of that data was collected from police station records. When hooligans are caught by police while engaged in disruptive and/or violent activity it is routine procedure to ask for their occupation when they are being charged. The data here, Armstrong and Harris argue, is flawed as a consequence of what was said by the hooligans not being questioned; it was simply taken down because it was part of the procedure to ask.

Armstrong and Harris point out that if a man is charged their concern may be, for instance, that the police will go and question those at his workplace, thus creating a problematic situation for him there, his work mates and boss knowing that he is a hooligan. Consequently, saying that one is unemployed might seem safer. They go on to point out that the more intelligent members of hooligan groups would be more adept at avoiding getting caught by police, and avoiding being officially charged if caught, of which they provide an example from one of those in the group which Armstrong went around with. Armstrong and Harris provide as proof for the hooligans not coming from the lower sections of the working class evidence from Armstrong's participant observation of the Blades. They describe various members of the Blades as middle-class, or from 'respectable working-class families', with jobs and some looking to set up businesses of their own. They are not from the lower sections of the working class, then, because Armstrong could plainly see that they were not from his time spent with them.

In Dunning, Murphy and Waddington (1991) the Leicester group argue that Armstrong and Harris criticize 'a confused and limited caricature of' their position (p.



460). In other words, Armstrong and Harris build a 'straw man' version of the Leicester group's position 'which makes it seem weak and therefore facilitate criticism' (Edwards and Potter, 1992: 22). The Leicester group does agree that Armstrong and Harris add to the understanding of hooligans. For instance, their work points to hooligan groups as possessing different natures; Armstrong's group, the Blades, all came from more or less the same area, where as they point out that previous research has shown how the major hooligan group which supports Chelsea come from not merely the local area around where Chelsea football club is based, but from a more widespread area around London.

However, one of the main criticisms leveled at Armstrong and Harris is their claim to have done research that is totally unique to previous research which presents findings that point to it as the proper way to go about doing such research. The Leicester group point out that where Armstrong and Harris focus purely on participant observation and ethnography, that in fact they also used participant observation along with various other research techniques such as historical, content analysis, direct observation and survey research. Also as a weakness of Armstrong and Harris's work, criticism appears for their lack of 'proper' sociological terminology in, and the inconsistent nature of, the way they approach and describe the violence that has occurred. For example, in terms of inconsistency, the Leicester group provide Armstrong and Harris's 'assertion that the Blades were 'only occasionally' involved in 'relatively minor physical conflict' (Dunning, Murphy and Waddington, 1991: 466) in comparison to Armstrong and Harris's description of the violence which the Blades have been involved in over the past two years:

young men have been gashed (knives are not carried in Sheffield but broken beer glasses are nasty weapons), those who fall running away from the rival gang have been badly kicked (even friends travelling together in mini-buses may pass the time amiably picking on one after another of their number, pushing the victim down and clouting him - fallen rivals get a more severe beating, although serious injury is rare) and as well as injuries to individuals there have been damaging attacks on pubs frequented by rivals, and a series of running battles through the city centre that have greatly annoyed the more sober citizens of Sheffield; and on two occasions petrol bombs were

carried. (Armstrong and Harris, 1991: 433-34, cited in Dunning et al., 1991: 467)

The suggestion is made that these inconsistencies are grounds upon which to suspect that Armstrong may have fallen prey to the main potential problem with doing participant observation - 'going native'. Armstrong's having done so would undermine his description of the Blades as on the whole an all right bunch of guys as a consequence of what they, in the end, have gotten up to. There is a bias in Armstrong's writing in how he describes the members of his group. He is not viewing them objectively as a researcher ought to, but subjectively as someone who 'knows' them personally, and so feels that they could not be that bad. He allows his personal feelings to get in the way of what the evidence says.

Further criticism is leveled at Armstrong and Harris for the data they use as evidence for hooligans not simply being from the lower sections of the working class. Of the forty to fifty members of the Blades, Armstrong and Harris provide descriptions of twelve of its members. They are described as being from middle class families, 'respectable' working class families, having jobs and looking to set up their own businesses. It is on the basis of the description of these twelve members that they argue that hooligans are not simply from the lower sections of the working class. The criticism of this data as evidence is that only twelve examples from forty or fifty are given and procedures for choosing this particular twelve are not provided. In addition all that we have to go on is Armstrong and Harris's descriptions of them which can be seen as ambiguous; 'four or five' of the twelve 'have experience in the 'black' economy and four have criminal records' (Dunning et al., 1991: 470), which is to say that although they are perhaps not from the lower sections of the working class they certainly are not angels either. This use of data, in comparison to their own where they acknowledge the potential of a percentage of error, is displayed as problematic. Their findings are based upon data gathered by various sources which all seem to agree despite having been gathered over a twenty year period.

At this point it is useful to bring in another approach to the study of hooligans which provides some view of the problem of resolving this sort of situation; one in which two sides have provided divergent, varying accounts on the same issue. This is the approach taken by Marsh, Rosser and Harré (1978) with their ethogenic method



for the analysis of social action. Basically, Marsh et al. sought to find the rules which underlie the behaviour of fans on the terraces at football matches. One of the main ingredients for such research, that they take as necessary, is participants' accounts of their behaviour. It is not sufficient merely to look at the behaviour itself; behaviour is taken as not possessing a self-evident relationship to its meaning socially, in context. It is social conventions, and participants' knowledge of them, which are the basis for actions to be seen as performances of a particular, known act. Of central importance to Marsh et al., in determining the rule governed nature of fan's behaviour, then, are the fans' accounts of that behaviour; the accounts serve as evidence for the behaviour's rule-governed-ness and its nature as such. Marsh et al.'s data consisted of videos of behaviour on the terraces as well as interviews and conversations with participants about that behaviour.

In uncovering the rules governing fans' behaviour on the terraces, Marsh et al. found the violence which took place to be ritualized rather than senseless, anarchic or serious to the point of major injuries being routinely suffered by participants. What is significant here is that they arrive at this finding from the fans' accounts, despite those accounts displaying variation. For instance:

- Questioner. What do you do when you put the boot in?  
Fan A. You kicks 'em in the head don't you?...  
Strong boots with metal toe-caps on and that.  
Questioner And what happens then?  
[Quizzical look]  
Questioner Well what happens to the guy you've kicked?  
Fan A He's dead.  
Fan B Nah - he's all right - usually anyway.  
(Marsh et al., 1978:83)

Marsh et al. treat Fan B's account of no one 'usually' getting hurt as evidence, over Fan A's account, for the ritualized, generally non-serious, nature of the violence which occurs. They simply treat accounts such as Fan B's as genuine, whereas accounts such as Fan A's are considered a consequence of media exaggeration, or misunderstanding,

of the fans, behaviour which the fans themselves have picked up on and use in order to describe their actions in a more exciting manner. In their research Marsh et al. do not treat such variations in accounts as undermining their findings.

In their critique of Marsh et al., Potter and Wetherell (1987:56-73) point out that traditional research routinely looks towards observation or triangulation in order to solve the problem of varying accounts. With observation the idea is that researchers can look at the behaviour in question to see which accounts are genuine. However, as Potter and Wetherell explain, doing so for Marsh et al. would go against the ethogenic method's focus on participant accounts. Marsh et al. also acknowledge that actions are routinely described in different ways by people. Observation cannot resolve the variation in how accounts exhibit a reality-for-the-participants. Marsh et al., then, cannot, and would not, simply look at their videos of fan behaviour on the terraces to see which fan accounts are genuine (in any case, the variable stories they tell need not be of events thus recorded). What Marsh et al. do can be seen as relying more on triangulation. With triangulation the aim is to get discourse from different sources in order to find the corroboration between the accounts for what really goes on. Marsh et al.'s use of this sort of procedure can be seen in their efforts to obtain fans' comments on the 'summaries' and 'structures' that the researchers pulled out of those same fans' accounts, as evidence for the rule governed nature of their activities. That feedback from the fans was, then, used as a proof procedure for their findings; again, the fans' corroborations are taken as self-evidently documenting the rule governed nature of their behaviour. However, in doing this, as Potter and Wetherell point out, they offer 'no method or criteria for making this division into genuine and rhetorical accounts' (1987: 62).

Potter and Wetherell explain that, rather than allowing researchers to 'home in' on the genuine accounts, gathering more data from different sources will routinely 'compound' the problem of variation. Nevertheless, Marsh et al. take it they are able to see through the variation in accounts to those which are the genuine ones, and those that are merely rhetorical. It is in this sense that Marsh et al. can be seen as relevant to the argument between Armstrong and Harris and the Leicester group. It is not that one can somehow determine which of the versions is genuine, which they both argue for themselves, and which version is rhetorical, which they both argue for the other (cf.



Gilbert and Mulkey, 1984, on scientists' uses of empirical and contingent repertoires). Rather, the point is simply that, similar to with Marsh et al., both Armstrong and Harris and the Leicester group orient to the idea that some accounts are genuine and some are rhetorical, which they can determine in some way through their research method. This orientation towards accounts points to the way in which approaches such as these to the study of football (here, the study of football hooligans), exhibit the same assumptions about language and the world. The world is treated as possessing one underlying reality which language can access, represent, portray for the most part as it actually is. In this case, the assumption made by the various researchers on the problem of hooliganism is that it does possess some particular underlying nature which they can get at and in doing so perhaps provide some insight into how to deal with the problem.

Language, as the means to get to the particular nature of hooliganism, is treated more or less as a passive medium through which information can be conveyed. For instance, Canter et al. (1989) take it that the interview data collected through their surveys reflect their subjects' values and attitudes towards going to football matches. In doing so, they treat values and attitudes as concrete, cognitive phenomena that they can access. The subjects' responses are taken to be instances where they exhibit consistent features of the way they think. However, the way in which the same people describe phenomena at different moments in time routinely varies. As Edwards and Potter (1992: 16) have pointed out, much research 'suggests that attitude talk is better seen as oriented to various sorts of activities (Billig, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1992; Condor, 1988; Potter and Wetherell, 1988; Smith, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1992).' It is designed for the moment of its production, for the performance of interactional business.

The approach to, and understanding of, variation in accounts is a central feature of the distinctiveness of the work which follows in this thesis in comparison to the work reviewed above. Again, what is central about the way in which the work reviewed above approaches account variation, is that some accounts are treated as genuine and some rhetorical, which the researchers take it that they can assess. To these researchers language can be a passive medium through which information about the world is conveyed. For instance, in doing participant observation ethnography,

Armstrong and Harris treat their descriptions of the Blades as self-evidently representing the reality of the Blades' nature. In talking to the different members of the group Armstrong has taken it that he can determine what is the truth behind what they say. He takes it that the Blades would be honest with him, as a consequence of him more or less being a member of the group (as if group members are definitionally straightforward and non-rhetorical with each other), in contrast to how they might deal with the police in reporting their occupation.

The work of the Leicester group possesses this same weakness, of treating language as a passive medium. While they point out that Armstrong may have 'gone native', making his descriptions of the Blades unreliable as a consequence of his lost objectivity, they also point out, as a weakness of Armstrong and Harris's work, the fact that they do not allow the Blades to 'speak for themselves' (Dunning et al., 1991: 465). The idea, here, is again that some accounts can be genuine representations of reality while others are merely rhetorical and interested. As a consequence of Armstrong having 'gone native' his accounts are treated as rhetorical and interested, as displaying the Blades in a particular way which does not properly represent the reality. However, the Leicester group presume that the participants' own accounts would be more genuine, more passive displays of information which would allow the researcher to, then, go and uncover the norms and values of the groups' members which the discourse would exhibit. The Leicester group also have this idea that, as a consequence of different social classes possessing varying explanatory styles, in order to arrive at an objective description of hooligan activity one must adopt proper sociological terminology. The common-sense understanding of, say, the middle class would be insufficient to properly grasp the nature of working-class football hooligan behaviour (Dunning et al., 1988). Again, we have the idea that some accounts represent reality better, or are more genuine under certain circumstances, than others.

Marsh et al. serve as a prime example of researchers choosing between variable accounts in determining which are genuine and which rhetorical. They make a point of obtaining participant accounts as a key aspect of their ethogenic method. They seem to draw strength from the accounts which they take as merely rhetorical, seeing them as almost further proof for their findings which they are able to explain away rather than seeing their variation from participants' 'genuine' accounts as potentially



undermining. They rely further on participants' accounts, and their ability to see the genuine and rhetorical, in going back to their subjects in order to verify their findings. They do all this despite their acknowledgment that

events such as those which occur at football matches are capable of being construed in a number of ways depending upon the viewpoint from which interpretations are made. (1978: 115)

and their insistence that as researchers they are not trying to decide which versions are correct.

A final example of Marsh et al. treating fans' accounts as genuine or rhetorical, at their will, is an instance which they use to support their use of the term 'ritual' in describing fan behaviour, and its status as part of the everyday language of football supporters. As they explain:

At Oxford United, confirmation of the appropriateness of the term came in a rather amusing way. Towards the end of the fieldwork research period a reporter from the BBC came to the ground, walked up to a fan and, thrusting a microphone at him, said:

'There's a psychologist here who seems to think that the behaviour of football fans is really a big ritual - what do you have to say about that?'

The fan, who was not one who had been involved at all in the research programme, looked thoughtfully down at his Dr Marten boots for a moment, shuffled, raised his head, said, 'Yeah, that's right,' and strolled off. (1978: 125)

Rather than, perhaps, seeing the football supporter as displaying that famous English ability towards doing irony or sarcasm, they treat the supporter as simply telling the truth, or what he really thinks. They do not consider the possible ambiguity of the fan's comment, which would serve to throw their findings into question based upon their own reliance on participant accounts.

The assumptions of language and the world evident in these approaches to the study of football are, again, significant in that they point to how the approach taken towards football in this thesis differs and so is distinctive. In the same way that Seligman's work was described in the previous chapter, in utilizing his own categories of understanding, even if sociological categories, to describe what was going on for

participants in some action, the researchers here can be seen as doing the same kind of ‘mundane reasoning’ engaged in by people within everyday settings in attending to a world out-there, ordered in itself, in order to establish its nature (Pollner, 1987). Where variation across accounts is reconciled through the researchers’ own mundane reasoning in the above approaches to football, in the approach taken in the analytical chapters to follow, here, such variation is treated differently. It is treated as ‘a way into analysis’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 64). Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out that

The variation which discourse analysts have found in rule accounts of scientific theory choice is very similar to that found in soccer fans’ discourse. ... However, instead of assuming that one of these versions is correct and attempting to choose between them, discourse analysts have tried to demonstrate that *both* (original emphasis) serve important functions and thus explain them in that manner. (1987: 72)

This understanding of account variation drives the approach to the data within this thesis. However, finding contradictory accounts is not a necessary analytic procedure. Rather, whatever account is being looked at can be considered in light of the fact that it could have been said differently, and, relatedly, that one could routinely imagine a contradictory account being constructed which may be just as reasonable as the one provided. The notion of variations across accounts, or possible variations, plays a part in specifying the functions that specific accounts (whether empirically variable or not) may serve within the interaction in which they take place.

## THE DATA AS AN EXAMPLE OF TALK AT WORK

Talk’s status as constitutive of particular work practices is also relevant for the work to follow in the analytical chapters. In the introduction to *Talk at Work* (1992), a collection of studies of interaction in institutional settings, Drew and Heritage outline the themes of such work; that is, the various ways in which talk can manage to do this business of constituting the nature of the interaction and so the institutional nature of the setting in which it is occurring. The relevance of these themes can be seen in the



data under examination in this thesis. This is the case despite potential arguments to the contrary. However, initially here, I want to go briefly through the themes that Drew and Heritage pick out as central for Talk at Work. The first means of constituting the institutional nature of an interaction they pick out is through the use of lexical choice. The nature of the vocabulary used can play a major role in constituting an interaction in a particular way. One example provided is that of the observation made by Sacks (1992 [fall 1967]: lecture 11) that the use of 'we' in reference to oneself, rather than 'I', may be used when a person is treating their status in a conversation as defined by their membership to a particular organization. The use of technical vocabulary from a particular institution, whether by the member or non-member of the institution, also often signals the institutional nature of the setting through lexical choice in talk.

Another means of constituting an institutional setting through talk, that Drew and Heritage discuss, is that of turn design. The particular discursive action a speaker selects through turn design can serve to show an orientation of that speaker towards the interaction occurring within a particular institutional setting. In addition, the specific details of the description constructed within the turn may also provide further evidence of attention towards the interaction occurring within a particular institutional setting. Sequence organization also serves as a means through which particular institutional settings may be constituted through talk. Particular sequence organization can be seen as signalling that participants are attending to their participation in different types of institutional settings. For instance, as Drew and Heritage note, in classrooms three-part question-answer sequences in which, as the third turn part, teachers repeat student answers in order to confirm their correctness, occur 'out of the management of the activity (instruction) which is the institutionalized and recurrent activity in the setting' (1992: 40).

Drew and Heritage point to overall structural organization as perhaps a less common manner through which institutional settings are constituted. By overall structural organization they mean the constitution of a institutional setting through an extended, routinely occurring organization to the turns within the institutional interaction. That is not to say that in every instance the whole organization of turns occurs but that the great extent of the organization occurs. The basis for the non-

occurrence of particular bits of the organization would be see-able in the design of other turns. The attention of the participants, most likely the institutional member, towards the necessity to touch on each aspect of the overall structural organization within the interaction would serve as evidence for the institutional nature of the interaction being constituted through the talk.

Under the category social epistemology and social relations two more general themes are raised. The design of talk in a way that displays caution is one of the themes brought up here. The idea is that the caution displayed by speakers towards the nature of saying what they are saying, in saying it a particular way, exhibits their attention to the ways in which they may be construed as a consequence of the institution in which they are operating, or a part of. Evidence of such caution can point to the institutional nature of the setting in which an interaction is occurring. The final theme, here, has to do with the fact that 'in contrast to the symmetrical relationships between speakers in ordinary conversation, institutional interactions are characteristically asymmetrical' (Drew and Heritage, 1992: 47). For instance, those acting as members of the institutional setting, or the setting at issue, routinely control the direction which the interaction takes (Heritage, 1985; Tannen and Wallerstein, 1987). Such control over the topical organization, for instance, of an interaction by one of the participants can point to the participants' attention to a constraint being imposed upon their actions due to the institutional nature of the setting.

In the data under examination here the relevance of many of these themes can, again, be seen. For instance, the extract below provides both an example of lexical choice and the caution that the interviewees routinely display in constructing their discourse.

#### Extract [1]

1	Hoff	↑a:: (0.5) disappointing? (3.0)
2		for me it was (0.5) well. (0.2)
3		it was a big move
4		and I hoped the football
5		was going to go a little bit better.



6 I °yeh,°  
7 Hoff u:m in general the team? (2.0)  
8 I don't think we're doing as well  
9 as everyone thought they were going to. (0.2)

The first example of lexical choice can be seen in lines 4 and 5. Hoff talks about how 'the football' went rather than how the team, or he himself, has played and done so far in the season. The blameworthiness, or accountability, for the team not reaching Hoff's expectations is constructed as lying with how 'the football' proceeded rather than, and as if independent from, what the players did. The second instance of lexical choice occurs in lines 8 and 9. Hoff talks about the team, 'we', not doing as well as the team, 'they', thought it (as yet another voice, I write 'it') would. In this case it is not he who 'thought' the team was going to do better. In fact, he only 'hoped' they would do better. Hopes being based on wishful thinking, versus thoughts being based on access to relevant information, accomplishes Hoff here as less blameworthy than the team was for having got it wrong; he did not have access to relevant information in order to properly, or adequately, realize his expectations. Through lexical choice the caution with which Hoff constructs this failure to accomplish expectations can be seen. He subtly deals with his own accountability, as a new player (made relevant in line 3 with 'it was a big move'), who was presumably brought in to help the team reach certain expectations, for having had expectations for the team that they have failed to fulfill. One potential understanding being countered here is that he did not do his job, or that he is one who might be particularly to blame for the failure.

The argument against this data passing as an example of Talk at Work might still remain that the interviewees, the professional footballers, are not producing their discourse whilst engaged in the activity of football - whether that be during the time period in which a game is occurring, during training, or during some period when the players are simply together because of football, talking about football. However, I would argue that accounting for performances and actions within football, their own and others', is routinely part of what footballers do as footballers, whether in interview situations on television, with journalists, or when talking to teammates, explaining what happened, what they did. Importantly, it is in this sort of talk about football that

football exists. That is to say, football possesses no *determinate* reality independent of how it is constructed in versions of it. Talk constitutes the institutional setting of football as football. Players' talk about their participation in football serves to constitute the nature of that participation, much like Hoff's talk in the extract above.

This is the basis upon which players' talk has been chosen as the focus in this research. Even though the talk does not occur within their engagement in the activity of football, which of course is the status of any interview-based study, the talk nonetheless constitutes the nature of football and the participants' member status within it (cf. Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1992). This choice of focus is important in comparison to the focus upon the fans, or football hooligans, in the research reviewed above. One might argue that without the fans professional football would not exist; they are a necessary element and, consequently, their constitution of the reality of football would be of central importance in looking at the game. However, although perhaps without the fans professional football might not exist, the existence of the players participating in the game which the fans will watch is at least as vital. Without fans you might still have people playing football. Without people playing football you do not have fans watching it. In looking at footballers' talk I take it that I am looking at the talk of those whose constitution of the game is basic to its existence as an institution, whether professional or otherwise.

In conclusion, then, the focus of recent research on football has been on aspects of the game as a public institution; a game in which the playing of it is of least interest to researchers. The focus of much of the work reviewed has been on football hooligans. The nature of such research, in the eyes of the approach taken in this thesis, has problems in terms of its underlying assumptions about how language relates to perception and reality. Language, in general, is treated as a passive medium through which participants and researchers convey the social reality of hooligans and hooliganism. Rather than the variation across accounts, by researchers and subjects, being treated as constructed for live interactional concerns, the researchers take it that they can distinguish between accounts which are genuine, or convey the 'actual' reality, and those accounts which are merely rhetorical (as if realism were not itself a rhetorical option). It is in the way that such account variation is understood, and dealt



with, as, again, 'a way into analysis' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 64), that makes the approach taken in the work here distinctive from this other research. Relatedly, as an instance of Talk at Work, the data under examination is significant as a consequence of its occurrence in interviews where the interviewees are professional footballers, participants in the activity of football which is central for the institution: the play. Rather than a study on football in which fans' participation in acts of hooliganism and their talk about that activity is looked at, the main focus here is on the manner in which professional footballers constitute that activity and their participation within it.

## CHAPTER 2: APPROACH AND METHOD

Prior to entering into the analytical chapters of this research I first want to go through some of the ideas which serve as a basis for the approach to discourse which informs analytic work such as this. Initially, I will look at the domains of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, a form of ethnomethodology (which addresses the shortcomings of early ethnomethodological approaches to language use), and how they serve to inform the discourse analytical approach which I employ. Subsequently, I will look at how the neutrality of analysts with regard to speakers' concerns, such as the factual status of their reports or their psychological states or aims, is required by the variation across descriptions which follows from discourse's action oriented and occasioned nature. That is to say, the way in which some phenomenon is described will vary according to what the speaker is doing interactionally with their discourse. Finally, citing Edwards and Potter's (1992) Discursive Action Model (DAM), I provide an idea of the general themes of this approach to analysing discourse.

### ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

'Ethnomethodology' is a term coined by Garfinkel (1967) which covers research on the sense-making procedures employed by participants within their everyday activities. It is central to the discourse analytic approach that I use here. Its importance has already been touched upon in the introduction; it serves to inform this discourse analytical approach in terms of an appropriate starting point in looking at data. It

treats the goals and aims of ordinary people as similar to the goals and aims of the social researcher. That is, people, like the scientist, are constantly attempting to understand what is going in any situation and using these understandings to produce appropriate behaviour of their own. (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 18)

How do people make sense of, and perform, 'appropriate behaviour'? This approach, again, contrasts with Seligman's approach. In his study 'Telling the code' Wieder (1974) illustrates a similar kind of contrast in justifying an ethnomethodological



approach to social scientific work. He does so 'by displaying the shortcomings of... a traditional social scientific approach to language use' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 19).

The focus of Wieder's study was on life within a half-way house for narcotics felons. Wieder spent time at the half-way house observing and talking with residents and staff about what goes on within the house. In doing so he was able to uncover a set of rules, a 'code', which was invoked by those involved as the guiding factor for the residents' actions. As Wieder points out

the code was employed to explain why someone had acted as they had and that that way of acting was necessary under the circumstance. ... the code was employed by residents to analyse for outsiders and perhaps for themselves the 'social-fact' character of their circumstance... (1974: 151).

In a traditional social scientific approach such a set of rules would be used by the researcher to make sense of participants' activity. The researcher would watch what happened and then seek to explain it in terms of the code. In effect, the researcher would be taking the participants' word for this 'code' as an underlying guiding plan or scheme for what gets done. The problems with doing that are evident from the way in which the code was revealed to Wieder.

### *The Code As A Resource For Accounting*

The code, again, was used to make sense of some occurrence or action within the environment of the half-way house. It was described (by participants) as having guided what happened. However, its status as such was only accomplished within a retrospective, after the fact, account of what happened. It is also important to note that it was not as if the rules of the code were written down somewhere for residents to refer to in order to determine a proper course of action, or for new residents to study in order to know what was right and what was wrong. Rather, aspects of, or rules within, the code were revealed to Wieder gradually through his conversations with residents and in each instance they were given in terms of the situation. That is to say the relevance of a rule within the code was described 'socially-in-a-context'. The code was not so much a set of rules which directed actions but a resource for participants to use in accounting for what occurred, and for their own actions too.

Wieder provides 'you know I won't snitch' as an example of one way the residents often invoked the code as a resource for accounting for their actions. In these instances the particular action being accounted for was their refusal to answer some question posed by Wieder or the house staff. The residents constructed the situation as one in which they are being asked to 'snitch'. Snitching went against the code, so they did not provide an answer. The issue of whether answering the question would have 'actually' been an instance of snitching is irrelevant here. The important issue is that, in invoking the code in this manner, some practical, situated work gets done. In defining the instance as one in which they were being asked to break the code, they justified and accounted for not answering the question. The residents also managed to come off as being those who followed the code.

#### *The 'Open, Flexible' Nature Of The Code As A Resource*

Whether some action was an instance of rule following, or rule breaking, was potentially arguable (defeasible). The provision of an account (whether by a resident or researcher using the code to make sense of what was happening) would be necessary in order to bring some action into an understanding. Under such conditions no action in itself would self-evidently be rule following or rule breaking. Rather, in order to be seen as such it would have to be accounted for as such. For instance, without the residents saying 'you know I won't snitch' it would not have been evident that the question constituted an instance of them being asked to snitch. The way an action was described by a resident did not reflect some true, self-evident nature of the action, but rather, constituted the nature of the particular situation they were in, while attending to its interactional concerns. Consequently, the code was designed to deal with any possible situation the residents might be faced with. As a resource for accounting,

'telling the code', like every other collection of rules in use, had an open, flexible structure or, in Garfinkel's (1967) terms, had an etcetera clause.

(p.157)

That is to say, like any set of rules that can be said to be operating within a context, the code possessed an 'open, flexible' nature which allowed it to be applied to, so it could



account for, any possible occurrences within the context.<sup>1</sup> Relatedly, though, any action could be, in one instance, described as rule following and, in another instance, described as rule breaking.

As Woolgar points out, 'Action ... is undetermined by rules, logic and reason.' He goes on to say that

logic and reason are key features of discourse that are used to evaluate and characterize action. Action comes first, logic second. (1988: 46)

Rather than guiding actions, rules are used to describe actions as having been guided by and as following<sup>2</sup> some orderly pattern. If analysts were simply to take the code as generating what residents did, even when they themselves invoked the code as determinant, this normative, or accountability-oriented nature of rules would be missed. Their status as an 'open, flexible' resource to account for, by making sense of, actions would be glossed. In approaching the 'telling' of the code ethnomethodologically, Wieder demonstrated the importance of taking participants' rule invocations as a topic for study rather than as an analyst's explanatory resource. This sort of focus, upon how issues topicalised in discourse, such as rules, are worked up and oriented to by participants in making sense of their everyday activities, rather than simply and self-evidently doing so, is where ethnomethodology informs discourse analytic work. Again, ethnomethodology illustrates what the discourse analytical approach used here takes to be an appropriate starting point, or perspective, for pursuing an understanding of what is going on in some discourse.

## CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Conversation analysis is a form of ethnomethodology.

CA set out to detail the tacit, organised reasoning procedures which inform the production and recognition of naturally occurring talk. ... words used in talk are not studied as semantic units, but as products or objects which are designed and used in respect of the interactions being negotiated through the talk: requests, proposals, accusations, complaints, and so on. (Wooffitt, 1990:10)

It is in its focus upon talk that CA is directly relevant to the discourse analytic approach adopted here. An initial way in which it informs my work is in the nature of the data. In CA the data is taped recorded conversation. The significance of such a choice of data is that it provides the researcher with an actual instance of social interaction which can be looked at over and over again. It is the characteristics of being there to look at over and over again which is significant for discourse analytic work, although, in contrast to CA, discourse analytic data can be any form of written or spoken discourse which the analyst can get their hands on. However, it is still approached as a similarly action-performative, interaction-oriented business.

What Heritage (1984a) describes as 'the initial and most fundamental assumption of conversation' also has implications for discourse analytical work. It is that all aspects of social action and interaction can be found to exhibit organized patterns of stable, recurrent structural features. These organizations are to be treated as structures in their own right and as social in character. Like other social institutions and conventions, they stand independently of psychological or other characteristics of particular speakers. Knowledge of these organizations is a major part of the competences which ordinary speakers bring to their communicative activities and, whether consciously or unconsciously, this knowledge influences their conduct and their interpretation of the conduct of others. Ordinary interaction can thus be analysed so as to exhibit stable organizational patterns of action to which the participants are oriented. (ibid.: 241)

I take the significance or relevance of this passage to be quite evident. However, there are a few points worth emphasising. The first is that conversation is organized and that the organization is a social phenomenon. That is to say, conversation is not the way it is because of the way the referent world is ordered in itself. Rather, in our everyday lives we create and re-create the organizations within our interactions, attending to them as correct and proper. The second point is that the organization of some conversation is not, and so cannot be used as, a resource to determine, or an indicator of, some internal psychological state or tendency of a particular individual. Relatedly, speakers are not looked on as deliberately manipulating their discourse in order to achieve various ends (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984a: 7; Wooffitt, 1990: 12).



Whether or not they are, is not an analyst's notion, but rather, something that participants themselves may attend to in various ways (Edwards and Potter, 1992). Finally, the organization of conversation is what an analyst can see in looking at the data over and over again.

Another important aspect of CA, which has implications for this discourse analytic work, is that 'analysis is data-driven' (Heritage, 1984a: 243). Building on the notion that conversation displays organization in each instance of its occurrence, and at any hearable level of detail, the business of analysis is to determine what exactly has been produced and attended to by speakers. It is not the case that, given the general context of some conversation, the nature of the organization of that discourse is obvious. What is important here is that, in approaching data for analysis, the procedure is essentially inductive rather than the pursuit of contextually determined effects. One does not take some data for analysis in order to show that a particular institutional order of social relations is being played out. Rather, the aim is to explicate how the data is organized, and how (if at all) such social relations are attended to, defined, or made relevant. The analyst seeks to determine and demonstrate whatever organization some data exhibits. Schegloff and Sacks have summarized this approach to research as follows:

We have proceeded under the assumption (an assumption borne out by our research) that in so far as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only to us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the co-participants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversation) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another, and it was a feature of the conversations we treated as data that they were produced so as to allow the display by the co-participants to each other of their orderliness, and to allow the participants to display to each other their analysis, appreciation and use of that orderliness. Accordingly, our analysis has sought to explicate the ways in which the materials are produced by members in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness and have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action.

(Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 290)

In contrast to ‘intensional’ approaches such as Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), where the focus is upon discrete speech acts, or utterances, often uncontextualized and created for the purpose of illustrating the theory, the focus in CA is upon the way in which actual instances of recorded talk works as a species of social interaction, turn by turn. Prior and subsequent turns of others are resources for participants to see either how to proceed in their own subsequent turn or whether their prior turn has been sufficiently understood. The way in which subsequent turns provide an interpretative resource for analysts as well as for participants, has been termed an analytic ‘proof procedure’ (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974:729). What this boils down to is that the phenomena under analysis are those of conversational interaction, rather than a matter of attempting to recover speakers’ intentions. The presentation of data alongside its analysis also allows that others have access to it, and so are in a position to do a further check upon the analytical work done.

Finally, CA is also informative in that its accumulating body of findings serve as a resource for discourse analytic work. Potter and Wetherell (1987), for instance, cite Pomerantz’s (1986) work on extreme case formulations as part of their argument that evaluations (or ‘attitudes’), rather than being enduring mental phenomena that must be studied as such, are constructed phenomena within some discourse for some particular moment in time. So, extreme case formulations can be used to warrant particular claims. Potter and Wetherell provide as an example a person saying that ‘everybody carries a gun’ (cf. Pomerantz, 1986; Sacks, 1992) in order to account for their possessing one. Doing so works up gun-carrying as what is simply done. It is a routine, normative matter. In the analytical example Potter and Wetherell point out the use of an extreme case formulation as evidence that, rather than the speaker merely expressing an attitude, they are constructing their attitude as they do in order to warrant a particular claim.

- A1 If [they’re willing to get on and be like us]
- A2 then [I’m not anti them]
- but
- B1 if [they’re just going ... to use our social welfares]
- B2 then [why don’t they stay home]



(Potter and Wetherell, 1987:47)

The use of the word 'just' in this extract serves as an extreme case formulation. As Potter and Wetherell point out in looking at the extract:

The repeated use of the word 'just' paints a picture of people whose sole purpose in coming to New Zealand is the collection of social security, a selfish motive much more blameworthy than, say, coming to provide essential labour but being laid off due to economic recession. By representing it in this extreme way the criticisms are made to appear more justifiable. (p. 48)

The important point here is that the speaker's discourse does not exist as a passive expression of their attitudes.

Wooffitt (1992) uses Jefferson's (1991) work on three-part lists in his study on the factual organization of accounts of paranormal experiences. Jefferson has shown that the use of three part lists as a descriptive practice is routinely taken to convey the completeness of the point being made. Wooffitt points to their use in his data as having some analytic purchase on the factual organization of the discourse. For instance, take the extract below in which a speaker describes the phenomenon of their paranormal experience in a three-part list.

I heard a lovely (.3) s:ound  
like-de<sup>-</sup>dedede-dedede<sup>-</sup>dededah  
just a happy (.) little tu:ne (.5)  
(Wooffitt, 1992: 75)

Wooffitt points out that the descriptions of the particular parts of the list display the paranormal experience in the manner of any normal experience, by referencing only positive aspects of it, glossing its out-of-the-ordinary nature. As a contributing factor to the factual organization of the account, the speaker has accomplished a 'complete' description of the paranormal phenomenon, given the completeness conveyed by three-partedness, without referencing any of the more doubtful, or questionable, aspects of the experience.

Based upon Sacks's (1972, 1974, 1979) work on categories, Edwards and Potter (1992) suggest that the basis for particular claims as factual is often the status of the speaker making the claim. For instance, in the particular data under examination in the analytical chapters of this work the claim by one of the participants that some

particular team needs to get off to a good start in the season in order to have a chance at doing well, would be warranted by the fact that they are a member of the team. Their claim might carry less credibility if they, say, were the woman who makes the tea for the players at half-time, although any such notion of differential credibility is properly referred to actual interactional instances, where items such as 'how would you know?' may occur (see also Whalen and Zimmerman, 1987).

The notion of preference structure, in which much work has been done in CA (Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Pomerantz, 1984a; Davidson, 1984; Drew, 1984; Sacks, 1987) provides another example. The notion of preference structure arises out of a flexibility in a more basic CA concept; that of adjacency pairs. To put it simply, the idea of adjacency pairs is that given the production of a particular first turn, the production of a particular second turn is made relevant. For instance, given the production of a question, the production of an answer is made relevant. In saying that particular second turns are 'made relevant' it is important to emphasise that what is meant is that they are made normatively relevant to provide. Anything that comes next is hearably, interpretably (for the participants) and sanctionably (by them) a response to a prior turn. These 'rules' are normatively oriented to, rather than 'generative' in its grammatical or psychological senses. The second analytical chapter, chapter 3, deals with the idea of adjacency pairs in some greater depth.

With preference structure what is significant is that, given that particular second turns are only normatively, rather than deterministically, relevant to provide, the possibility of different second turns exists. That is, in producing a question there is the possibility of not receiving an answer back. Further, given that first turns make particular kinds of seconds relevant next, such as responses to offers or invitations, it happens that one such response may be produced and received treated differently from another — accepting offers is interactionally 'preferred' to declining them, for example. Discursive activities which have been shown to exhibit preference structure include invitations (Drew, 1984), requests (Davidson, 1984) and blamings (Atkinson and Drew, 1979). The possible second turns being acceptance and refusal, for the first two, and denial and admission for the third. The production of the different possible second turns exhibit distinct features from each other.



Acceptances of invitations and requests, and denials of blamings, are produced with a ‘preferred turn structure’. That is to say, they follow the first turn quickly and simply. The alternative second turns, such as refusals in the case of invitations and requests, and admission in the case of blamings, follow in the dispreferred turn structure. That is to say, the second turn will routinely follow a delay and prefaces (such as ‘well’, ‘actually’), and an account for the refusal or admission. It is important to note, however, that this notion of ‘preference’ does not refer to speakers’ psychological likes and wishes. Rather, the production of the preferred or dispreferred turn structure is a case of the speaker attending to some interactional issue. Here, then, it can be considered in looking at how the ‘answers’, within the data that features in the analytical chapters to come, follow from the ‘questions’. What do the interviewees treat as calling for a preferred or dispreferred turn structure, and what does that tell us about what they treat as normatively accountable? Consider the following extracts from the interview data.

Extract [1.1]

1	I	how do you think things are going
2		so far. for the team
3	TC	f f f f f a: (.) well
4		obviously not very well u:m (1.0)
5		a lot of expectation before the season (.)
6		and <u>I think</u> (0.4) on the a (1.0)
7		on the playing front
8		we we we don't seem to be to: doing too badly
9		its just the results are, .hh
10	I	yeh
11	TC	going against us at the moment so (0.4)
12		I see it as just a: few fine things
13		have to be put right and then we'll be okay?

Line 3 displays a dispreferred turn beginning. With ‘f f f f f’ there is a delay to the start of the answer. ‘A: well’ provides further delay in prefacing the answer. With

‘not very well’ in line 4 TC provides an assessment of the team’s performance so far in the season which is negative yet not excessively so. That is to say, the implication with ‘not very well’ is that the team has not performed particularly, or exceptionally, well but they also have not performed particularly, or exceptionally, poorly. Their performance has been indifferent. In line 5, by which time the interviewer has passed up an opportunity to treat ‘not very well’ as a sufficient answer, TC proceeds to account for the team’s performance. This is, again, consistent with dispreferred turn structure. His orientation can be seen as towards being held accountable for merely presenting the team’s indifferent performance. He can be seen as attending to his status as a footballer and so someone who should be concerned, show concern, for his team not doing well, or in this case, as well as expected. Similar to a person in the position of refusing an invitation, he attends to being in the position of needing to account for, explain the reasons behind, his answer. I am not suggesting that all answers to questions are normatively positive ones, but rather, that the ways in which dispreference is marked in phenomena such as invitation refusals provides an analytic purchase on what participants in any interaction may, locally, treat as accountable, or as some kind of delicate business where accountability is at stake. Consider Extracts [1.2] and [1.3].

Extract [1.2]

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 1  | I  | how about like a: criticism of the staff. (0.6) |
| 2  |    | does it happen?                                 |
| 3  | TC | u:m (0.5) well you get grumbles don’t you?      |
| 4  |    | wher::e somebody’s not happy with coaching,     |
| 5  |    | somebody’s not happy with the way we’re, .hh    |
| 6  |    | we train or warm up and things like that        |
| 7  |    | but you get that at every club.                 |
| 8  | I  | yeh.  |
| 9  | TC | I mean is is .hh you got a big squad of players |
| 10 |    | and you can’t please everybody in that squad.   |

Extract [1.3]



((In the prior questions TK has been asked whether or not players openly criticise each other. Here, the interviewer seeks further information about criticism; however, this time, as in Extract [1.2], he is after information about criticism of the staff.))

- 1 I u:m how about criticism of the staff
- 2 TK ↑u:m (0.2) I don't- (.) to be honest I don't think
- 3 we (.) no one really criticizes the staff (.)
- 4 I [no ]
- 5 TK [because] um (0.6) a: you know you're playing
- 6 the way they want to play.
- 7 I yeh [yeh ]
- 8 TK [you know] and u:m (0.2) if you don't like it
- 9 you don't play. (.) so you I I don't think
- 10 you can really criticize them

Both Extracts [1.2] and [1.3] display features associated with dispreference. In both there is a delay with 'um (.)'. In both there is a preface to the answer; in Extract [1.2] it is, again, with 'well' as in Extract [1.1]; in Extract [1.3] 'to be honest' can be seen as such a preface, and as a way of introducing a possibly delicate or contentious judgment. In both Extracts the interviewees start to account for their answers. The point of interest here is that both answers, despite being produced for ostensibly the same question, differ, and yet both possess a dispreferred turn structure. In Extract [1.2] TC admits to the occurrence of criticism of the staff. In Extract [1.3] TK denies the occurrence of criticism of the staff. Criticism might simply be an issue the interviewees treat as delicate business, as something to be hedged and accounted for, whether in denying or confirming its occurrence. That is, criticism may be oriented to as a delicate, accountability-implicative business. However, it is also just as likely the case that what calls for a dispreferred turn structure is determined by the speaker within the moment of the discourse. This latter point seems to be confirmed by Extract [1.4].

Extract [1.4]

- 1 I yeh yeh u:m how about criticism of the staff  
2 Sack .hh part and parcel. (0.2)  
3 I yeh.  
4 Sack yeh its I mean (0.8) that is part of the game  
5 which a: (.) you got to handle. (.)  
6 I yeh.  
7 Sack criticism in front of your mates. (0.4)  
8 a: and it goes on from there  
9 criticism in the press (.)  
10 you got to handle that. and that's hard work. (.)  
11 you know mentally hard work being criticised  
12 and then they have to go out and play. (0.2)  
13 I yeh,  
14 Sack a: (.) but this is where the mental strength  
15 comes in. (.) you as a character.  
16 are you going to are you going to handle this  
17 or are you going (0.2) to fall by the wayside

In the question prior to this one, Sack was asked about whether or not players openly criticise each other. Here, in line 1, the interviewer formulates a question about 'criticism of the staff', as is the case in Extracts [1.2] and [1.3]. However, rather than getting a dispreferred turn structure Sack's reply exhibits a preferred turn structure. He moves quickly to confirm the existence of criticism as 'part and parcel' of the game (line 2); it is simply a constituent feature of the game. In doing so, it is important to note that Sack effectively defuses the delicacy, the accountability, of this criticism. He defines it as normal rather than accountable; what everyone routinely does. He minimises the negativity of it, rendering dispreference redundant. Similar to the finding that disagreement, rather than the usual agreement, was preferred where assessments of self-deprecation were concerned (Pomerantz, 1984a), Sack's discourse could be seen as ostensibly a 'deviant case' that turns out to be similar to the others after all, in terms of the interactional dynamics.



However, in looking at the account that Sack provides along with his formulation of criticism as ‘part and parcel’ it seems that Sack hears the question as referring to criticism BY the staff, directed at players such as himself. That is how he talks about it, about the need to ‘handle’ it (lines 5, 10 and 16), and ‘in front of your mates’ (line 7). Despite what the interviewer literally (thought he) said, Sack picks it up as an issue of how players such as himself handle being criticized. So the delicacy of complaining about his bosses does not arise. Players being criticized by coaches is, of course, far more recognizable as ‘part and parcel’ of the game, and its hierarchical social organization, than vice versa. Here, then, is another way that this ostensibly deviant case is not one — it was not heard as the question intended.

Another important feature to note here is that Sack has proceeded to provide an account despite the preferred turn structure. However, what he ‘accounts for’ is not the criticism itself, but how ‘you’ ought to cope with it, handle it. The provision of an account displays that some other interactional issue is being attending to by Sack as well, besides that of preference, in answering the question. (This issue is, like the concept of adjacency pairs, addressed further in chapter 3.) However, the main point here, again, is how such CA findings can be used as an analytical resource within the discourse analytic approach which has informed the research to follow. Many of the references to appear in the analytical chapters, in fact, refer to such CA work.

**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS:** Taking a step back as a consequence of variation.

In *Opening Pandora's Box* Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) look at scientists’ variable accounts, both written and spoken, of their own and others’ work in the same field. Their aim in doing so, unlike much sociological research on such topics, was not to uncover some underlying definitive version of scientific knowledge within that field. They did not seek to determine the accuracy, or validity, of the scientists’ accounts in order to access what was really going on, the truth, or who was right and who was wrong. Rather, they sought to demonstrate how the scientists accomplished their accounts as definitive, or as factual reports of what was going on. In doing so, they illustrated that variation within and between accounts, rather than being an artifact of

the 'randomizing factors' of social interaction (Chomsky, 1957,1965, cited in Heritage, 1984a), was both regular and organized.

The scientists were found to be not merely neutrally reporting relevant information but producing accounts in particular ways as ways of managing interactional business within the situation of their production. For instance, Gilbert and Mulkay distinguished between two 'interpretative repertoires' which the scientists employed in building their accounts. The regularity and organization of the variation within and between those accounts can be seen through the interpretative repertoires. Interpretative repertoires can be loosely described as ways in which people can, and do, talk about the world.<sup>3</sup> The first repertoire Gilbert and Mulkay describe is the 'empiricist' repertoire;

it portrays scientists' actions and beliefs as following unproblematically and inescapably from the empirical characteristics of an impersonal natural world.  
(p.56)

The second repertoire is the 'contingent';

it enables speakers to depict professional actions and beliefs as being significantly influenced by variable factors outside the realm of empirical [in this field of science] biochemical phenomena. (p.57)

Gilbert and Mulkay demonstrate that the empiricist repertoire was routinely in evidence when a scientist was accounting for their own direction as the correct and proper direction where research in the field was concerned. The contingent repertoire was routinely in evidence when scientists were accounting for the work of others in the field whose research direction diverged from their own. The contingent repertoire was utilized in accounting for error in the research of such scientists. It was used to explain, or allow others to see, how or why those scientists got it wrong.

### *Taking A Step Back*

Gilbert and Mulkay's work advocates a stepping back from, bracketing, or impartial approach towards, what scientists take, or assert, as the facts. Doing so is important or else analytical conclusions can become confounded by such involvement (Bloor, 1976; Collins, 1981; Mulkay, 1979). What are the facts, or truth of the matter, are



participants' rather than analysts' concerns. Analysts are not to be participants in that conversation. This stepping back is similar to the approach towards mentalistic discourse, or self discourse, advocated and pursued by the likes of Harré (1983), and Coulter (1979, 1985, 1989). Such discourse is to be investigated for the interactional work it accomplishes rather than for its status as representations of 'actual' internal psychological, or cognitive, phenomena (Shotter and Gergen, 1989). For instance, Coulter (1985) points to the use of 'forgetting' within some interactions as an 'evasive device' (p.132) That is to say, in claiming to have forgotten some incident a speaker may be avoiding providing information which would incriminate themselves, or simply go against their interests within the situation (cf. Bogen and Lynch, 1989).

This is not to say that a speaker claiming to have forgotten an incident is necessarily deliberately doing so in order to avoid some consequences they may perceive as potentially following from their description of the incident. The point is simply that claiming to have forgotten has, or can have, that interactional use or implication. Coulter adds that forgetting cannot be shown, or proven. He uses the example of someone saying they have forgotten their keys and showing their empty pocket as evidence. Showing the empty pocket does not demonstrate the forgetting has taken place. The person claiming to have forgotten may have purposefully not brought the keys. The point here being that saying one has forgotten cannot be taken as self-evidently being evidence for forgetting to have actually gone on within a person's head. Consequently, stepping back and not getting involved in the participants' business, of whether or not forgetting has actually occurred, is important to seeing what is accomplished within the discourse by using the term.

#### *The Centrality Of Variation With Regard To The Functions Of Descriptions*

This methodological 'stepping back' reflects the demands of what Potter and Wetherell (1987) point to as the 'principal tenet of discourse analysis'. It 'is that function involves construction of versions, and is demonstrated by language variation' (p.33). The function of some description is visible in the way it differs, or varies, from other (actual or potential) descriptions of the same object, activity, occurrence, etc.. Relatedly,

The fact that discourse is oriented to different functions means that it will be highly variable: what people say and write will be different according to what they are doing.

and

As variation is a consequence of function it can be used as an analytical clue to what function is being performed in a particular stretch of discourse. (Wetherell and Potter, 1988: 171).

For instance, the function of describing one's own research using an empiricist repertoire can be seen in looking at how the validity, or accuracy, of other scientists' research is undermined through describing it with the contingent repertoire.

It is never the case that events are merely reported as they occurred. Rather, any description constructs events in a particular manner. Doing a description is an active process, as the term construction implies (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1988). As I pointed out in the introduction, a description only possesses the status of a version, or representation, of some event. There is no point where a description has self-evidently sufficiently represented the object it is describing. There is always the possibility of further elaboration (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984a), potentially in the effort to reach the point of representing the event as it was. Descriptions 'cannot certify their own adequacy' (Pollner, 1987). The description provided in any situation is only one of an indefinite number of possible versions that could be made relevant (Schegloff, 1972).

For instance, to refer back to Wieder's study of life in a half-way house, the residents' statement of 'you know I won't snitch', as a participants' category of talk, provides only one possible version of that talk. The person who asked the question which elicited this response, for example, may have taken it that they had simply asked an innocent question with no such implications. They may have taken not answering on the grounds of breaking the code as merely an excuse used by the resident to avoid answering the question for more personal reasons of accountability. Like 'forgetting' for Coulter, topicalising the code in these instances might also be treated locally as an evasive device which justifies and accounts for the speaker not providing a desired, or expected, response. It is, however, important to note that, consistently with CA, it is not being said here that speakers deliberately fashion discourse, planfully or in some



Machiavellian manner, to achieve particular ends in particular situations. Any such motivational gloss on the constructive and functional nature of talk would itself be a further bit of defeasible, contentious, participants' business, and just the kind of thing they are likely to attend to, attenuate, or 'inoculate' themselves against (Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) in bolstering the factual status of their reports; in other words, it is nice stuff for constructing contingent repertoires, rather than a good analyst's explanation of what is actually going on.

### A 'MODEL' FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Edwards and Potter (1992) have organized some of the characteristics of this discursive psychological approach into a loose sort of model in order to illustrate its coherence as an alternative to more traditional psychological perspectives. They have called it the 'discursive action model' (DAM). By way of providing further understanding about this discursive approach I want to take DAM and briefly explain the points, providing some illustrative examples. It is important to note that they emphasise that DAM is not a model in the 'usual psychological sense'. They recommend it be taken

as a conceptual scheme that captures some of the features of participants' discursive practices that

they

have found it necessary to distinguish, and illustrates some of the relationships between them. (p. 154)

DAM does not exhibit all features of the discursive psychological approach. However, it does provide a version of it that is easily accessible while retaining flexibility to accommodate other potential features. There are three sections to the model: action, fact and interest, and accountability. Each section has three basic elements. I will start with the action section.

Action:

1. The focus is on action, not cognition.

2. Remembering and attribution become, operationally, reportings (and accounts, descriptions, formulations, versions and so on) and the inferences that they make available.
3. Reportings are situated in activity sequences such as those involving invitation refusals, blamings and defences.

Discourse is not treated as a window through which cognitive processes can be viewed and accessed. Rather, discourse is looked at for what it serves to accomplish within the situation of its use. For instance, we have already looked at the way in which scientists seek to undermine other scientists' research by describing it as a consequence of personal motives, interests, etc., rather than simply following the scientific method. Descriptions are actions, or events, in themselves. Take Wieder's example of 'you know I won't snitch'. It is a description of a conversational event, but of an event which is being taken part in at the moment in which the description is provided. The description, then, is a constituent aspect of the event which it describes. Without it the conversation would possess a different nature. It possesses the status as an action or event, within, and accomplishing, the conversation as one in which the resident has been asked to snitch.

Descriptions of some event, whether situated within, prior to, or after it, are a part of what participants use to determine (for themselves) the nature of the event; what will go, what is going, or what has gone, on. Like Wieder's example, they are designed for the purpose of casting the event in question in a particular light. Analytically, the discourse is approached as such: as methodically designed for the situation of its production. It is, again, never the case that some discourse has passively conveyed the reality of what has happened. The reports provided make available particular understandings of states of affairs, rather than echoing the 'true' state of affairs. This work occurs within a particular situation for that particular situation. It is the situation, or 'activity sequence', which provides for an understanding of the discourse. For instance, the data which will feature in the analytical chapters of this thesis occur in interviews with professional footballers. It is that sequential organization that provides for the orderliness of questions being asked followed by answers.



In looking at discourse as action-oriented it is important to note that whether or not speakers are telling the 'truth' is not a concern for analysts. Again, as was mentioned with Gilbert and Mulkay's work, the issues of what is right and wrong, or factual, are concerns of participants in the discourse. The analyst's job is to look at how they deal with these concerns. For instance, if a footballer provides the report after a match in the changing room to some team-mates, that he is still feeling ill, the analytic issue is not whether the player had actually felt ill. That is not something the analyst will go and check. The analytic interest would focus on how, in producing such an account, the player makes available a particular understanding of his performance (or whatever). The analyst is also in a position to see how others treat the player's account, given the particular understanding of his performance it has made available. Do they accept it or not, and how? Again the interaction is the focus, including the interactional work that the account can be seen to accomplish through looking at others' responses to it.

For instance in the event of a dispute, it is likely that further accounts that warrant, or provide a basis for the initial account, may be provided (Pomerantz, 1984b). However, in the instance of others accepting the account, whether or not they have done so because they believe it, or because they are seeking to avoid the argument, or confrontation, with, and so further accounting by, the player is not evident. What is evident is that through their acceptance of the account within the moment of its production it is treated as sufficient for the interactional task of accounting for the player's performance at that moment. The others might leave the changing room and talk about what a poor excuse they actually took the player's account to be for his performances. Nonetheless, in the situation of its production it is still treated as having served the purpose of accounting, allowing for the player's accounting to cease. The business under analysis is interaction, not the referent events themselves (in whatever sense), nor what folk might (in whatever sense) actually think about them.

Fact and Interest:

4. There is a dilemma of stake or interest, which is often managed by doing attribution via reports.

5. Reports are therefore constructed/displayed as factual by way of a variety of discursive techniques.
6. Reports are rhetorically organized to undermine alternatives.

In explaining Fact and Interest it is useful to start by reiterating the possibility of describing any object or event in indefinitely many ways. In providing a version of the object a speaker chooses the words to do so. The likelihood is that there would at least be subtle differences if and when others described the same object. All versions are reconcilable, or see-able, as representing the same object. However, given the variation, and potential for great variation, there is always the possibility of a speaker's version being taken as 'interested' in portraying the object in a particular way for some purpose significant to them. The consequence of that, is the potential dismissal of a version (description, story, etc.) as 'interested' rather than factual. This possibility, of having one's version of events undermined as interested, the 'dilemma of interest', is a routine one in constructing discourse. It is often dealt with by providing accounts which, again, make particular understandings of the state of affairs relevant, rather than accounts where the speaker merely states what they take the state of affairs to be, or how they want them to be seen. As Potter and Wetherell point out

To present yourself as a wonderful human being to someone, you perhaps should not say 'I am a wonderful human being', but you might modestly slip into the conversation at some 'natural' point that you work for charities, have won an academic prize, read Goethe and so on. (1987:33)

Doing so would provide for the upshot that you are in fact a wonderful person whilst managing (somewhat) this threat of interest.

Constructing reports as factual involves attending to the routine relevance of interestedness. It displays descriptions as being passively conveyed by the speaker from their objective view of the world rather than being a consequence of a speaker's personal viewpoint. The orientation is towards the object being described as determinant for how it is described, rather than consequent on the speaker's flawed, and interested, perceptions. So fact and interest trade off each other, manage each other. The ways in which interest is managed via the factual construction of accounts



is the focus of my fourth analytical chapter, chapter 5. For an example, we can turn again to Wieder's 'you know I won't snitch'.

That description puts its recipient in a position of 'knowing' what it claims. The speaker displays certainty in the recipient's knowledge of the statement's relevance. This certainty contributes towards the factual nature of the discourse. The speaker has constructed his discourse as simply stating what is going on in the interaction and that it is see-able as such. He displays no concern about whether or not the recipient will accept its validity within the circumstances. He comes off as harbouring no doubts about his description. He does not have to account for it. Its status as factual is accomplished through this lack of accounting. If it were a personal view of the speaker's, perhaps to avoid answering, the expectation would be that an account would follow for how this is an instance of being asked to snitch. In simply not accounting the description is treated as factual. Its relevance is accomplished as self-evident, and there to be seen. The orientation is towards its recipient as being made accountable for seeing its relevance as fact.

Undermining other potential versions of the state of affairs through its construction also serves to strengthen an account's status as factual and disinterestedly provided. The rhetorical organization of accounts, to undermine alternatives, is touched on at various points within the following analytical chapters. For an example of it we can, again, refer back to Gilbert and Mulkay. The repertoires they illustrate provide two examples of undermining. In the empiricist repertoire, the way in which the discourse is constructed 'denies its character as an interpretative product and ... denies that its author's actions are relevant to its content' (1984: 56). In the contingent repertoire, the discourse's construction undermines the view that the scientists' research has followed from 'generic responses to the realities of the natural world' (1984: 57) as it would if the scientists were acting properly as such. The rhetorical organization of the discourse works towards of the portrayal of the speaker's research, through the use of the empiricist repertoire, as having proceeded properly, and so obtaining correct results, in contrast to the work of those who pursued a different direction, or theory, described through the use of the contingent repertoire.

I think it is useful to refer back to the football example of the player coming off the pitch claiming to his team-mates that he is still feeling ill. His account is potentially undermined as interested if his team-mates take it that he is simply making an excuse for a poor performance, or trying to make himself look even better in having performed at least adequately well. As a factual account the claim would in part be relying on others' knowledge of the player's illness. He would be unlikely to make such a statement without providing a further account of his being ill if he were talking to strangers, or anyone, who might have been unaware of his condition. The account might also deploy a 'confessional' mode (self-deprecatory revelations from an inner life of personal experience), in accomplishing a difficult-to-dispute factuality.

Basically, admitting to still feeling ill can have negative implications for him. The implication of not feeling well is that his health has affected his performance. He has not played well, or perhaps has not done as well as he could have. It is potentially not in the player's interests to admit to his condition. It could perhaps lose him his place in the team for the next game if the manager decides that, even if he has played sufficiently well, he has still not gotten over his illness and so is a potential weak link within the team. The confessional nature of the discourse contributes to the account's status as factual, given the understanding that a speaker would not provide an account against their interests if it were not true. (Further consideration of this confessional nature of discourse as a technique for fact construction appears later in chapter 5.) The account serves to undermine the understanding that the player is physically back to normal; that he is as healthy as he has been in the past, prior to his supposed illness; and that his performance reflects what can be expected of him under such normal conditions where his physical health is concerned.

#### Accountability:

7. Reports attend to the agency and accountability in the reported events.
8. Reports attend to the accountability of the current speaker's action, including those done in reporting.
9. The latter two concerns are often related, such that 7 is deployed for 8, and 8 is deployed for 7.



There are two levels of accountability which speakers attend to in constructing their discourse. The first is that of the way in which events are portrayed as causally occurring. Why and how events proceeded as they did is an issue dealt with in the construction of discourse. The second level of accountability has to do with the moment in which the discourse is produced, which is a second domain of accountable activities. For example, speakers are concerned with the way in which they are portrayed by some discourse, as a person who was perhaps involved in the events being described, potentially including their status as the speaker of the discourse describing the events. The relationship between the two can be seen within examples. Take the Wieder example of 'you know I won't snitch' for instance. The statement accounts for the event, again, an answer not following a question, on the grounds that providing an answer would be breaking the code. The event is described as having proceeded with the code as its causal factor. The statement accounts for the speaker's status as a resident, in saying (and so doing) what he has, in portraying him as someone who follows the code. That is, he comes off as being a proper, or normal, resident, both in his reports and in his reportings.

The example of Gilbert and Mulkay's scientists provides another clear instance of this accountability work. Scientists account for their own research in describing it as simply having followed, and following, from their attention to the 'realities of the natural world'. Consequently, their views and direction are valid; their findings are correct. The research of those scientists whose views and direction differ, however, is described as the consequence of more personal, less objective, factors operating. Their research is undermined as interested and flawed. Describing the research within their field as having proceeded in this manner serves to account for their status as proper scientists both then (in their work) and now (in their talk). They come off as proper scientists who are able to objectively assess the situation. They are worthwhile to talk to about such matters. They are not blinded by personal interest. These two levels of accountability support each other. As someone who does, has done, proper and correct research they would be the type of person worthwhile to talk to about it. As someone worthwhile to talk to about science, given their level-headed objectivity, they would be those expected to do, and have done, proper and correct science.

Finally, to return to the football example of the player pointing out that he still feels ill, we can also see the accountability work that such a statement would be aimed at accomplishing. Basically, the statement accounts for the player's performance as one that has not occurred under normal conditions. That is to say, it should be viewed in the context of his illness. As I noted when discussing fact and interest, his account can be approached analytically as attending to his accountability both as a player (reasons for playing well or poorly), and as a current speaker, managing his teammates' assessments of him.

In terms of a potentially negative assessment, still feeling ill accounts for the performance as poor in describing the player as not having been one hundred percent. His physical condition affected his play and was the cause of any detriment that may have been observed in performance. In the event of a positive assessment, still feeling ill accounts for the standard of performance as occurring despite the player's condition. That is to say, his performance is not to be attributed to the player having gotten over his sickness. The upshot is that had he been well, he would have done better. He is, on both counts, a better player than today. Again, the two levels of accountability, for his play and for what he is saying about it, support each other.

It is important to emphasise that the aim of this chapter has not been to provide a detailed history of, and basis for, the discursive psychological approach which informs the research to follow. It is not meant to be an exhaustive account of, or for, this approach. For instance, in pointing out the importance of ethnomethodology the focus was simply upon the starting point for analysis which it advocates.<sup>4</sup> In looking at CA, as a form of ethnomethodology, again the focus was on those aspects that inform the pursuit of discourse analytic work pursued here.<sup>5</sup> In both cases the potential of going into much further depth exists. However, my purpose has been to provide an account of some of the basic understandings which inform the approach I have taken and how it works.

In initially considering this approach through Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) work, the analytic move was promoted of taking a step back and not getting involved in, resolving or taking sides on, the topics which are of concern to the speakers, such as the factual status of reports. The basis for this move relates to the action-oriented



nature of how discourse is constructed in variable ways, such that phenomena may be variably described by different people in the same moment and the same people at different moments. With DAM the aim was to illustrate some of the various aspects of this analytical approach to discourse. Again, it is important to point out that DAM is not an exclusive sort of model. That is to say, it does not represent all possible features of this analytical approach to discourse. However, what DAM does provide for is an idea of the underlying coherence of such an approach to discourse.

Finally, it is important to note that, like any scientist's version of the natural world, social scientists' versions of the social world, or lay person's versions of the everyday world in which they live, the analytic work to follow is also simply a version of world. While it is no more a definitive version than any other, it does nonetheless possess the particular status of a discourse analytical version with the features I have described above. It is designed in part for the purpose of being taken as reasonable as such a version. As a consequence of its status as a version it is also a potential topic of research in the same way that the footballers' accounts serve as a topic of research for it.<sup>6</sup> That is, it attends to the situation and accountabilities of its production (being work presented for a doctoral thesis). Nevertheless, I neither topicalize nor explore this reflexivity.

#### A NOTE ON IDENTITY AND CONTEXT

The twin issues of identity and context possess a certain significance for the analytical work which follows. Here, I would like briefly to discuss that significance. Schegloff (1991: 48) points out that a consideration of such issues should constitute

defensible analysis - analysis which departs from, and can always be referred to and grounded in, the details of actual occurrences of conduct in interaction.

In terms of doing such an analysis Schegloff suggests that what observers to some interaction might take as relevant categories within the interaction for the participants are not sufficient for such analysis. The relevant categories are those which the participants can be shown to attend to, or treat as relevant, within the interaction. That includes its 'context'; the analysis must also exhibit how the, or a, context is

significant for the participants within an interaction as an accountable basis for what they do. Furthermore, the recommendation is that rather than some context being the starting point for how interaction should be interpreted, the focus should be on how relevant situation(s) in the discourse are built up through the interaction's sequential organization.

In the analytical work presented here, the data is interview talk with professional footballers about their profession, or occupation. Although produced by participants in the activity of football, the talk itself does not occur within the activity of the footballers' engagement in their profession. It is important to note that there are a number of identities and contexts that the footballers could attend to as relevant within the interaction. In particular, they could attend to being footballers talking about football, or interviewees talking within an interview. The latter possibility can be seen in extract [1.5].

Extract [1.5]

1 TC yeh I (.) I thought I was doing okay  
 2 e e I think everybody wants to do  
 3 a little bit better. (.)  
 4 I [yeh ]  
 5 TC [I mean] I was quite happy with um the goal ratio  
 6 (0.2) u::m (0.6) but a: (.) <like I say  
 7 everybody wants to do that (.) little bit better  
 8 for the side and everything so,>

Briefly, in this extract TC's pause at the end of line 3 can be seen as a transition relevant place. That is to say, TC orients to his turn as potentially over, providing the interviewer with the opportunity to come in, respond, speak at length, or perhaps redirect the interview by asking another question. With 'yeh' in line 4 the interviewer can be seen as passing up the opportunity to speak at length. With 'I mean' in line 5, which overlaps with the interviewer's 'yeh', TC can be seen as having read or even anticipated the interviewer's move, perhaps given the interviewer not immediately



starting his turn after TC says ‘a little bit better’ in line 3, allowing for the pause and so the noticeable transition relevance point. With ‘I mean’ TC orients to his initial contribution in lines 1 to 3 as possibly inadequate in some way, calling for some elaboration, or explanation.

In doing this elaboration TC can be seen as attending to the nature of the interaction, or context of the interaction, as that of a some kind of interview situation, and his own status as interviewee, a person in the position of providing sufficient information for the interviewer on the subject of discussion. Relatedly, despite TC’s orientation towards the need to explain, accomplished with ‘I mean’, he nonetheless treats his initial discourse, in lines 1 to 3, as having been the important point to make, in that after providing further information in line 5 he proceeds to produce his subsequent talk as a reiteration of what he has already said (‘like I say...’). Doing so serves to display the information provided as completed; in reiterating, and in *doing* reiteration, TC is displaying what he has already said as what is of main importance to have said.

In terms of footballers talking about football and potentially seeing them, as interviewees, specifically attending to their status as such, and so the context of football being significant for the way in which the discourse is organized, I think that it is particularly important to note that a prerequisite for interviewing the particular subjects for this research was that they were professional footballers. They were knowingly chosen and spoken to specifically because they were professional footballers. This nature of the interaction can be seen in the way the footballers’ accounts proceed, in that they routinely do not seek to construct a warrant, or basis, for their possession of football knowledge; rather, they simply orient to their possession of that knowledge as understood, as their basis for being asked and for being in a position to answer. Take for instance extract [1.6].

Extract [1.6]

- 1 MH u:m (.) no I think youthethe you know
- 2 one of the: answers to success as well is
- 3 if you've got a group of players that can discuss things (.)

4 I yeh,  
5 MH and u:m really can can understand (.)  
6 individuals as well because obviously  
7 there's a there's there's so many different (.)  
8 little pieces of the jigsaw that have to fit together  
9 to make it (.) u:m a really good good picture and u:m (.)  
10 I yeh,  
11 MH I think that's something that people have to understand that. (.)  
12 you know everybody is an individual  
13 within a team game (.) so: you have to (.)  
14 maybe treat certain individuals in a different way (0.2)  
15 I [yeh ]  
16 MH [some] some (.) you know need to be patted on  
17 the back other need to be shouted at and (.)  
18 and that's ↑part and parcel of football really

In this extract MH does not seek to establish any warrant for his possession of knowledge upon the topic which he is talking about. He simply treats his grounds for speaking knowledgeably on that topic as understood. One argument towards the irrelevance of needing to construct such a warrant might be that the information provided is common-knowledge sort of information that anyone could know. Individuals possessing different sorts of characteristics (lines 11 to 13), and, consequently, that being relevant for how they should be treated (lines 13 to 14), might routinely be expected to be treated as, common-knowledge sort of information. However, what is significant here is that MH works up the relevance of this information about individual differences as particular, rather than common, sort of knowledge for the topic of discussion. He does so in line 11 where the description of 'people' as having 'to understand' this point treats it as not simply known, understood, or self-evident, as relevant for the topic. Furthermore, in describing this information as 'really' 'part and parcel of football' in line 18 it is constructed as not obviously so, despite nonetheless being the case. The way in which MH describes the information he is providing as particular to the topic under discussion while not orienting to the need



to establish a warrant for his knowledge of such information, despite its particularity, is representative of the way in which the interviewees routinely constructed their discourse. This can be seen in the data here prior to any consideration of what the topic of discussion, or context of the talk, is.

What is not being said, then, is that the way in which the footballers accounts routinely proceed in this way serves as proof for football being attended to as the context of the discourse. What is important for the discourse proceeding in this way is the context attended to in which the discourse occurs rather than the topic of the discourse (as a context). For instance, if MH wanted to make such a point, say, at a party where his status as a footballer was perhaps not commonly known by all those attending the party, one might expect him to seek to establish his status as a footballer at some point as a warrant for his knowledge of such information related to football, or similar activities. Here, again, the interviewees were chosen on the basis of their being professional footballers, and so experts on the topic of football. They attend to not having to provide a basis for their knowledge of the information they provide as football knowledge. Attention to this aspect of the context does not particularly point to football as the context. Even in the extract above the reference to the information provided as relevant within football (line 18) is not sufficient as a basis for saying the context of football has been specifically attended to by MH in constructing his discourse in the way he does (Schegloff, 1991).

The data here is not called 'football discourse' because it displays some nature that points to the context as football in the way, for instance, it often can be seen as pointing to the context in which the talk occurs as an interview. It is called 'football discourse' as a consequence of it being talk with footballers about their profession. They are set up as talking from that identity, rather than being put in a position of accounting for their identity as such. (This is not to say, however, that they may not on occasion orient to that sort of accounting as something locally necessary to do.) I am not claiming, nor specifically seeking to exhibit, that the discourse is football discourse; that is, discourse whose organization is influenced by the participants' particular attention to its occurrence within the context of football, possessing the criteria which Schegloff suggests would be the proper grounds for warranting such a claim.

## A NOTE ABOUT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

As I noted in the previous chapter, Drew and Heritage (1992) point out that there is routinely a certain asymmetry in the question and answer situations in institutional settings in comparison to everyday conversational settings. Those who are speaking from an institutional position guide the development of the conversational sequence. The conversational sequence is routinely guided by that person through doing the questioning. In considering the issue of questions and answers, Sacks, in his lectures (1992), noticed a similar nature to questioning in everyday conversational settings as well.

Sacks points out that in doing a question the speaker creates the chance to speak, after some reply, (or no reply even), is provided for their question. In the case of receiving an answer, then, the questioner is routinely in the position of being the first person to comment upon that answer. Relatedly, in order to determine the relevance of an answer to a question one must look to the question itself. In questions, or doing questioning, there seems to lie a certain control or power over an interaction. In everyday conversations, participants, Sacks notes, sometimes orient to this control in vying for who will be in the position of doing the questioning; the underlying orientation being that there is a preferential position to be in, for controlling the sequential organization and upshots of a discursive interaction.

However, Sacks also points out that answerers are in a position to, in effect, change the question. That is to say, in answering and, perhaps, going beyond what the question has particularly asked for, the answerer can create a situation where others, in going back to the question to see the relevance of the answer, will read further information into the question as having been relevant or meant. The answer can have an impact on how the question is read, a constitutive role in what the question was, as an interactional token. In addition, Sacks describes instances in which answerers have options in terms of the replies they provide. For instance, Sacks addresses the issue of questions being used to initiate extended conversation; an example being the likes of 'how have you been doing?'. He points out that while the preference of the questioner in having asked such a question may be for the answerer to provide a reply which



opens up an extended conversation upon the topic of how they have been doing, it nevertheless remains for the answerer to determine whether or not they take that option. They may opt to answer the question briefly, allowing for the sequence to end as a question-and-its-answer. (It is worthwhile noting that the option remains for the questioner to pursue the topic further.)

The simple point that I want to make here is that there is great flexibility in terms of question-answer sequences. This flexibility, and even ambiguity, extends to that which can pass not only as an answer, or sufficient next turn to a question, but also in terms of what can pass as a question. For instance, we have the example of 'insertion sequences' (Schegloff, 1972) where another question, rather than an answer, follows a question, the answer to which is treated as a necessary component for the answer to the initial question to occur. The extract that follows provides another example in which an answer not following the question is reconciled as a consequence of the reply provided being an account of an inability to do so by the supposed answerer.

((Concerning a child's welfare))

M: 'S alri:ght?,

J: Well'e hasn' c'm ba-ack yet.

(Heritage, 1984a: 250)

To consider the potential ambiguity of questions consider this extract.

Mom: Do you know who's going to that meeting?

Kid: Who.

Mom: I don't know!

Kid: Ou::h prob'ly: Mr Murphy an' Dad said prob'ly  
Mrs Timpte an' some o' the teachers.

(Terasaki, 1976:45 cited in Heritage, 1984a:257)

At first, Kid does not see Mom's question as one seeking information, but rather as one setting her next turn where she will tell Kid who will be at the meeting. It is only after Mom's second turn of 'I don't know!' that Kid attends to Mom's first turn as a

question directed at him to provide relevant information. An example from my experience also illustrates the ambiguity of, as well as flexibility of what can pass as, questions. A friend of mine, in the middle of a conversation about high school soccer with others, (I say 'soccer' because the conversation occurred in the United States), turned to me at one point and said 'I want to go to a game next week'. I replied 'you do, why would you want to do that?'. He, then, came back at me with 'no, it wasn't a statement, it was a question: do you want to go?'. My friend sought to use 'I want to go to a game next week' as a means to determine if I wanted to go to a game as well. Discourse whose purpose is to find out some information could be put forward in any form. It need not be an interrogative.

The determination of questions and answerers being sufficient questions and answers occurs through the interaction. For instance, if I had said to my friend after his initial 'inquiry' 'you want to go to a game? why would you want to do that? I would never go to a game', he could have taken his initial statement, as a 'question', as answered despite me not having understood it as such. For him, perhaps, his initial statement served its purpose; however, in looking at the conversation, there would have been no evidence for his initial statement having been treated interactionally as a question. Taking questions and answers as a central focus, looking at what passes for questions and answers, how that status is negotiated by the participants, through interaction, can be an object of analysis. This said, I want to make it clear that in the analytical chapters of this work to follow, looking at questions and answers in this way is not particularly my interest. Rather, in talking about questions and answers my use of the concepts is generally to identify who is speaking: is it the interviewer or is it the interviewee, and how does the speaker design that discourse with the interaction in mind. It simply happens, here, that we have an interview situation in which questioning and answering can be seen as occurring.

## THE PRACTICALITIES OF THIS STUDY

In proceeding with this study the first step, of obtaining a sample, presented a minor hurdle. The difficulty of access to professional players, getting their agreement, and setting up a time and place for them to participate in the study, all posed problems.



Rather than obtaining a random sample, then, getting anybody at all (no matter who) was the main issue here. I was able to overcome these problems as a consequence of having a friend who is a professional footballer that was willing to use his own access to players in order to gain agreement from them to participate in this study. A first step taken by my friend was gaining permission from one of the coaching staff for me to come into the training ground to do the interviews which would serve as data for the study. Despite his status as a professional, obtaining an extensive sample still proved problematic. Some players refused, or said they did not have time, to speak to me. For example one player, when asked to participate, declined on the grounds that he had been injured and so had not participated with the team enough to know what was going on with it and so answer questions about it. Other players were pointed out as those who would refuse to take part and so were not asked. It is important to note, however, that in such discourse analytic work sample size is not a central issue for a study's success, in so far as the aim is to study how accounts of this kind work, rather than to conduct a survey of their typicality or statistical preponderance.

The sample, in the end, included ten participants from two different professional teams. The data are tape-recorded interviews. The first set of interviews were acquired from my friend's team and took place over three days in which I went with him to the team's training ground. Doing so dealt with the problem of setting up a time and place for the players to participate. Rather than meeting up with individual players by formal appointment, in different places and at different times, which would have been problematic given my lack of transport, all the players were met and dealt with at the same place and time. The basic order of these interviews was that my friend would ask a player if he could give me a few minutes to do a brief interview for my university research. I sat with the players individually, wherever they were, and did the interview.

However, doing the interviews at the training ground did pose certain problems. Players go to the training ground to train. Interviews could not be done during training. I had to wait until after training for the possibility of doing them. After training the players normally go home. In sitting down to do an interview with me the players were using their own time. As a consequence it was necessary to exercise a certain degree of restraint in terms of how long I kept the players talking.

The interviews lasted from fifteen to thirty minutes. Relatedly, rather than the players simply sitting there answering questions, they were often doing the interviews while engaging in some other activity. For instance, in one instance a player was eating lunch while doing the interview; in another the player was stretching out after training.

In the second set of interviews I visited a former team-mate and close friend of my friend who was now at a different club. Again, the time of the interviews was during training. However, in this instance it occurred at the particular club's ground as a consequence of my contact being injured and the ground being where the club's treatment room was. This turned out to make the interviewing process easier. The players interviewed were injured at the time and so were not participating in training. Treatment for injuries often does not consist of constant activity. Rather, players are often waiting about in order to get individual attention from the trainer, to get on a particular treatment machine or resting from having gone through some aspect of their treatment. Consequently, rather than only having access to the players in the short period of time between when training ends and when they go home, I had access throughout the period of training. In the one day I was able to do as many interviews as in the three days with the other club. The interviews were also done in quiet room with few distractions or interruptions.

In both cases, the participants were selected to a great extent on the basis of availability. In the first set of interviews, for instance, a player asked to do the interview declined as a consequence of having to leave the training ground quickly. (Whether he actually had to or simply did not want to wait to do the interview is irrelevant. The issue is that in saying they were in a rush they came off as not being available at that time.) In the second set of interviews the players, obviously, had to have been injured to be available. My contacts with both teams also sought to select those who they thought would be good, worthwhile or 'helpful' to speak to. In one instance I was even told that a certain player was not asked because of his accent which was difficult to understand. It is important to emphasise though that who was selected, from my point of view as a analyst, is, or was, not the central issue. The issue of importance was simply that the participants were professional footballers; those whose job it is to play, participate in football.



All the interviews were transcribed with minimal transcription notation at first. Then some detail was added, though not the full set of Jeffersonian conventions (see Atkinson and Heritage, 1984b, for a detailed list). This is because I was interested more in the content of accounts than in capturing particulars of vocal delivery and turn organization, though I would make no strong claims for those being entirely separate matters. In terms of doing the transcription of the interviews, the second set of interviews presented, in practical terms, fewer audibility problems than the first. This is because doing interviews at the training ground, although providing me with access to players, presented problems in terms of the collection of the data. The interviews were tape-recorded where ever the player happened to be at the time. Routinely, this was in the main room of the training ground where there was a lot of activity going on. Consequently, there is often background noise on the tapes which sometimes gets in the way of hearing what the player is saying and providing transcription details such as audible breaths and quiet speech.

The interview questions or topics were developed out of a conversation, or perhaps pilot interview, with my friend. I went into this conversation with a quite vague idea of what I wanted to ask about. As a consequence the conversation to a great extent consisted of my friend speaking at length about what he thought was important with few re-directions by me. The questions or topics that developed out of this conversation, and which were used as a check-list set of prompts for the loose interviews conducted with the other participants, were as follows:

How are things going in the season at the moment

What do you think the team could perhaps improve on or what do you think they need

How are you doing

How do you prepare for games — at home/at the ground

How do you deal with it after [what do you do]

Do you think about it — if played poorly/well

Do you talk about it with anyone — players, etc.

Do you talk about how the team plays or played — well or poorly,  
that type of thing

Do you think about that stuff on your own

What goes on in the dressing before games — in preparation for instance  
Are the guys talking about the game much  
Half time  
After the game  
What is the relationship like amongst the players  
What is the staff's relationship to the players — how do they treat them/you  
What do you think or feel is like your situation or place on the team  
Do you think about things like that much — your place/how you played/  
the team's play  
Do you think you can think too much about that stuff  
Do you think what the staff has to say and how they treat the team is important  
for how the team plays  
Do players ever openly criticize each other  
Does anyone take offence to it  
How about criticism of the staff  
What does the team do when its all together — say on a trip or in the dressing  
room before training  
Is there anything else

These questions were asked of all the participants in one form or another. Related issues were also occasionally touched on depending upon the participants' responses. As the interviewer, I also sought to contribute as little as possible to the interview aside from providing the participants, as interviewees, with topics to talk about, preferring topics and issues to arise as matters of concern for players themselves. I provided as little feedback as possible as an interactional resource for the participants to approach dealing with the issues made relevant in the questions. This approach of mine was based on my attention to my status as a participant in the interaction that I would be analysing. The concern was to not have any undue influence over the interaction. However, in retrospect it is clear to me that, although relevant, the way in which I participated in the interaction, rather than having an impact on it in the manner that I foresaw, has the impact of simply being another aspect of the interaction. In asking the particular questions I have and in the way I have, as well as providing



minimal responses such as 'yeh', I necessarily provided some feedback for the participants to attend to and use in producing their discourse. For example, minimal responses might be taken as signalling that not enough has been said, or that there may be some problem with what has been said.

Finally, in the analytical chapters that follow, extracts have been selected and provided as representative examples of the phenomenon in the discourse being described. The extracts were chosen on the bases of their status as representative in this way. They are not the only potential representative examples that could have been provided. However, that is not to say that in other potential examples the phenomenon at issue occurs in exactly the same manner; there is, of course, variation. Nonetheless, the extracts selected as representative of the phenomenon being described exhibit the nature of those phenomena as regular patterns present within the participants' discourse.

Notes:

- 1 - For instance, although possessing some fundamental differences from the code as a set of rules, the rules of football can be seen to, in general, possess this 'open, flexible' nature. A simple example is that of 'hand ball'. In football, outfield players are not allowed to touch the ball with their hands during the play on the pitch. However, it is up to the referee whether or not a player has done so, and has done so intentionally, or whether or not a team has received an advantage from an incidental hand ball by one of their players. All hand balls are not treated as instances of the rules being broken. The referee's interpretation of particular incidents of hand balls determines whether the incident constitutes a breaking of the rules.
- 2 - Or not as the case may be, such as in a 'deliberate' hand ball within football.
- 3 - For further explanation of the concept of interpretative repertoires see Gilbert and Mulkey (1984) as well as Potter and Wetherell (1987), Wetherell and Potter (1988).
- 4 - For a more comprehensive look at ethnomethodology see Heritage (1984a).
- 5 - For more thorough explanations of conversation analysis see, for example, Heritage (1984a, 1989); Atkinson and Heritage (1984a); Wooffitt (1990); Nofsinger (1991).
- 6 - This point brings up the issue of reflexivity. All versions of the world, such as this social scientific research or research done in the natural sciences, are available to be analysed for their construction. Alternative literary forms have been employed in doing such research in order to emphasise the constructed nature of the accounts being provided thus undermining their status as having been passively, disinterestedly produced, merely representing the definitive



reality of the phenomenon being described. See, for example, Mulkay (1985) and Ashmore (1989).

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### **CHAPTER 3: 'ORDER', AS BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AND ASSUMPTION**

In dealing with the world, interacting in it, people assume that world to be ordered. Their actions routinely embody this assumption, thereby constructing, re-constructing and maintaining that order. Discourse, as action, also displays this aspect of the social world, as routinely orderly and intelligible. This orderliness need not feature as an overt concern in discourse. Order is what any stretch of discourse takes as the basis upon which reality exists, the basis upon which any particular version of reality is discursively constructed. It is what (participants in) discourse treat as the unproblematic, unspoken starting point or background for any local and contingent constructions of reality (descriptions, versions, stories, accounts, questions, etc.). Given that it is what participants treat as understood, there need be no ontological basis, nor overall consistency, to it, though participants may treat consistency as accountable; rather, 'order' is available for analysis as the presumptive background of talk.

Schutz insisted that the social world is, in the first instance, experientially interpreted by its members as meaningful and intelligible in terms of social categories and constructs. (Heritage, 1984a: 45)

In his studies Garfinkel (Heritage, 1984a: 74) set out to demonstrate Schutz's point. In them he illustrated that in participating within the world people treat it as ordered and expect others to do the same. Through their ongoing participation within it they continually create, re-create and in doing so maintain a social order. In this chapter the focus will be on how this assumption of order within the discourse reflects an organisation within social action rather than participants merely attending to the world as it is in itself.

In doing so four aspects, or issues, of this assumption of order will be addressed. The first is the fact that it is only through interaction that the assumption is evident as a normative characteristic of discourse. This point will be demonstrated through various ways in which interviewees treat interviewers' turns. The second is the work done by participants in maintaining and confirming the assumption through



interaction. Speakers attend to the interactional confirmation of the assumption through the construction of their discourse. The important point here is that in their discourse speakers assume the relevance of a particular underlying order for the moment at hand. There is flexibility in terms of what order can be assumed. It is treated as important to have the particular order assumed simply taken up by other participants in the discourse when they speak. This issue will be addressed through a consideration of the way in which the interviewer in the data at issue here constructs his discourse in a way that invites understanding and acceptance from the interviewees. In doing so he provides a flexible discursive context within which the interviewees can construct their answer discourse. He can be seen as attending to the confirmation of the relevance of the particular order assumed occurring through the interaction as a constraint upon his construction of discourse.

The third issue to be addressed here is related to the construction of this flexible discursive context. In simply assuming order discourse takes on a loose fit of the object of its description. Participants do not and could not explain with exactness the relevance of their discourse. There is uncertainty inherent in discursive interaction. Participants' awareness of this uncertainty will be displayed. However, the loose fit of discourse, while exemplifying that uncertainty here, will be illustrated to also provide for the possibility of a resolution, or reconciliation, of that uncertainty. Discourse is indexically tied the moment of its construction. This loose fit allows great flexibility in terms of what can be understood as relevant from discourse within the moment of its construction. It serves as further evidence of the assumption of order within the world as social in origin. Finally, the fourth issue addressed in this chapter will be the construction of context within the answer discourse which occurs in dealing with the uncertainty in the interaction. The interviewees serve to provide contextual particulars in constructing the relevance of the answers. It will be shown here that rather than merely picking up the order assumed in the questions and simply being lead to answering the questions in a particular way, the interviewees attend to the relevance of the questions and answer them in the way they take to be relevant.

However, the first issue of concern here is establishing the existence of this assumption of order. While an analysis of the assumption of order in interviewees' talk is perfectly appropriate and possible, an objection to that analysis might be mounted,

that the interviewees are merely going along with whatever was implied in the questions put to them. Rather than considering that to be an ‘objection’, the approach taken here is to treat both questions and answers as analysable interaction data. Since questions do indeed set up assumptions and relevancies to do with what I have called ‘order’, I shall start by examining some question discourse. By question discourse I mean discourse by interviewers that is treated by interviewees in their responses as there to elicit further discourse. Some of the ‘questions’ therefore do not display any overt questioning nature. Often they are not interrogatives, but things ‘put to’ interviewees, or even merely turns taken in a continuing dialogue. Here I will be calling these sequences ‘questions’ and ‘answers’, not as analytic categories, but mainly to identify whose talk I am referring to. The following discussion initially takes two brief examples of question discourse, put to the interviewees, and works out the various way in which they assume ‘order’ in the sense I have defined it.

#### THE ASSUMPTION OF ORDER

##### Extract [2.1]

1        I        um what do you think  
2                the team will need. (0.2) to do a:?  
3                you know

##### *Opinion*

An assumption of order pervades this extract. Merely asking the question, ‘what do you think ...,’ assumes order. Asking what someone thinks orients to the possibility and appropriateness of versions or opinions, personal views on the point in question. It also assumes a background reality for the object in question; to ask for an opinion on an object assumes the object to exist in the first place (if only as a concept—I acknowledge the possibility of asking opinions on unicorns), and to be plausibly known by the respondent. Asking for an opinion also orients to the factual nature of the object; treating something as ‘a matter of opinion’ is not a neutral description.



Similarly, a neutral response is not asked for, but rather, a description of the object from a particular perspective. Asking for an opinion on some matter, then, may be used to imply some kind of difficulty for the possibility of a merely neutral description. It renders the facts of the matter as not immediately or straightforwardly apparent, but something on which it is appropriate to seek an opinion.

### *Team*

The word 'team' in line 2 categorizes the nature of a particular group of people. It categorizes their association, as a formally specifiable group, together for a purpose. The individuals in it may be presumed to work together under a set of norms, such that their individual contributions, although perhaps not dismissed as unimportant, gain importance in terms of how they contribute to the team's activity as an individual entity in itself. So 'team' introduces a set of normative relevancies for the topic (opinion) at issue. It is that which the interviewee is oriented to as knowing, understanding unproblematically and taking as self-evident. It brings those relevancies into operation, such that it is qua team, and qua team members, that persons' activities will be mentionable, and opinionable.

### *Needs: as knowable*

Further order is done with the expression 'will need to do', also in line 2. A general rule of needing is not explicated. However, any kinds of needs assume order; they are what cannot be done without. 'Will need' anticipates the future, such that the respondent is placed in the position of one who might plausibly be able to anticipate that future. He inhabits, knowledgeably, a meaningfully ordered world in which the future might be extrapolated to, presumably from past experience, at least as a matter of opinion, or of 'thinking'. The team's 'needs' are treated discursively as something that would plausibly be known about. Teams have needs, and this is implicated as normative, nothing out of the ordinary, as perfectly recognizable at first mention, nothing that requires a lot of explanatory work.

### *Needs: as norms for teams to do*

For any team, then, the norm of needs may be relevant. This idea is pertinent here because the team, in this case, is not treated discursively as a particular one in terms of the nature of teams and their needs; its particularity to a specific team ('the team') is accomplished indexically, via the specific participants, who are talking to each other on the basis of a joint association with a particular football club. It is a particular team to which the interviewee is taken to have access, to be a part of, or simply to possess some relevant knowledge of. Otherwise it could be any team; nothing is made of the notion that this team might be one to which the notion of 'needs' particularly applies, or that such needs might be anything out of the ordinary.

'Need to do', being posed as something to consider in advance, also orients to ends or aims in a team's activity. Aims (desired ends) are not necessarily simply achieved. There is presumably an uncertainty of accomplishment with them, which makes the question worth asking. The orientation, then, is that needs are not automatically satisfied, but that something has to be 'done' to satisfy them. That still leaves open whether such actions as are done will be judged effective. However, the underlying orientation is nonetheless that desired consequences are, in the end, do-able and potentially achieved. The question orients to a certainty of ability; ability in terms of the needs.

### *Reasons for asking*

Needing is oriented to as a norm for teams. The focus on particular needs for this team orients to needs being dependent on the team and its circumstances at that time. The question is posed, in the present, concerning actions projected into a future relative to now. The team in question and the circumstances of that team are relative to time. Needs vary along with them. The orientation is towards that variability resulting in the routinely not apparent nature of the particular needs a team will have. Here, in asking for an opinion, the knowledge being oriented to as not apparent can be seen as that of the particular needs for this team in the future starting now. Asking for



opinion, then, orients to the nature of needs. The nature of needs also reflects a significant finding of Garfinkel's (1967) studies on the 'documentary method'. It is that, from the outset of interaction, participants routinely assume some underlying pattern to be relevant for understanding that interaction. Here, needs are a part of an underlying pattern within the topic of the discourse. The pattern is a routine one. However, the orientation of participants is towards the particulars of any instance of a pattern varying.

This variability, which again orients to the not-immediately-apparentness of needs, displays the nature of the documentary method of interpretation. It is a back and forth process between the underlying pattern and specific instances of it. The underlying pattern is used to interpret the instance while at the same time that instance adds to the understanding of the pattern as a set of circumstances that reflect it in some way. The assumption of an ordered world is the assumption of a meaningfully patterned world and a world that is projectable, that can be reasonably anticipated, but normatively and with uncertainty, rather than mechanically and exactly. Particular aspects of order are assumed to be part of an underlying pattern. The individual instances of that pattern, however, add to it rather than being merely defined, or anticipated, by it. In this case, the order assumed by needs and opinions orient to this point. They point to the 'not apparentness' of the particulars of this instance (that is, the information sought) as part of the underlying pattern. They, along with the assumptions they make relevant, make the question reasonably askable. You would not, for instance, ask if the team might need to eat in the next six months.

#### *The interviewee as in a position to answer*

The question assumes, or places, the interviewee as in a position to answer. This assumption of order overlaps with what speech act theorists (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) call 'felicity conditions'. 'Felicity conditions' are described as those conditions which must be realised in order to achieve success in performing speech acts. For instance, here, the interviewee as a professional footballer who is a member of the team he is being asked about is an appropriate person to ask as a consequence of that status;

he is also plausibly in a position to be able to provide a reasonable answer. Although it could be seen as plausible to, say, ask the interviewee's mother the same question within some circumstances, it is nonetheless not what would be expected under 'normal' conditions. Doing so would assume the mother to possess some knowledge on the subject. Such an assumption would not be as routine as the same assumption in asking the interviewee. You could imagine posing such a question to the mother being prefaced by another question which would seek to access whether or not she follows football and her son's team with any degree of normalcy and understanding. This issue of the interviewee being placed in a position of being able to answer, or as someone in the know, will be picked up later under the heading of accommodative work.

Extract [2.2]

((In extract [2.2], the response to the question posed in extract 1, a reciprocal orientation is displayed towards the assumption of order. This orientation is accomplished by the sequential positioning of the interviewee's reply following the question, and also by the reply's specific content.))

1       MH:           well I think  
2                    we we've got to find some consistency in a:  
3                    in our performances, (0.2)  
4                    a: and obviously we've got to try and (0.2)  
5                    play to the best of our capabilities every week  
6                    I [think]  
7        I                [ye], ]  
8        MH            that's the thing.  
9                    whereas maybe last season,  
10                   being in a lower division we could (.)  
11                   get away with  
12                   maybe ninety five per cent performances. (0.2)  
13                   I think we'll need to be:, (.)  
14                   you know? right on our game to win. (.)





### Extract [2.3]

((In extract [2.3], another interviewer's question, further assumptions of order are made. ['at that time' is already established in this interview as the time in the changing room before the game, or before games in general.] ))

- 1 I are you guys
- 2 talking about the game
- 3 at that time (.) much?

### *Asking for fact*

The way in which the question is asked assumes order, although somewhat differently than in extract [2.1]. The question makes relevant the potential of an answer being provided as fact rather than opinion. (I say potential given that whether an interviewee constructs their discourse as fact is not determined by the nature of the question making that potential relevant. It is, in the end, up to the interviewee. This issue of the questions not determining what gets done in the answers will be addressed later in the third analytical chapter.) The way in which constructing a question as such assumes order orients to the presumed apparentness (to the interviewee) of the knowledge in question. The question attends to the likelihood, or potentiality, of there being a right answer. Similar to in extract [2.1], the interviewee is placed is treated as appropriate to ask the question in being asked, and consequently, is treated as in a position to know that right answer. The facts are perhaps not public or readily apparent to all. However, the orientation is towards the interviewee as one who would have access to that knowledge.

### *Orienting to the nature of the interaction*

With 'you guys' in line 1 a group is displayed as at issue, much like with 'the team' in extract [1]. The nature of the group is understood and indexically tied to the topic and moment of the discourse. It is a group the interviewee is familiar with as a member of it. He has direct access to it. And of course, it is the group whose membership makes



him a relevant interviewee. However, here the group is displayed informally. The orientation is towards a lack of hierarchy in the group. All are on equal terms. 'Guys' does not distinguish between individuals, and 'you guys' makes him one of the bunch. As a group, the orientation is towards some common identity existing between them. This common identity reflects the nature of the group, why 'you guys' are together, as a self-conscious, self-avowed, and not just externally defined, group.<sup>1</sup> 'Talking about the game' in line 2 orients to the nature of that bond.

The activity of 'talking about' is accomplished as an informal one as a consequence of being preceded by the description of the participants as 'you guys'. The type of 'talk' at issue here is the kind that folk call 'you guys' would do. 'You guys' indexically specifies the 'talk' as informal in contrast to, say, how 'the team' would specify the type of talk going on. For instance, 'team talks' would invoke a more formal character to the 'talk' occurring. The orientation here is not towards formal planning or deliberateness, but to a kind of 'talking' that might routinely occur. It is a general category that could encompass more particular types of talk.

In the same way that 'you guys' orients to a particular group, or type of group, as being at issue, 'the game' orients to a particular type of game as being at issue. It is 'the game' that is relevant for defining 'you guys' as the group in question, in this interview. It is their common bond. It is why they are together. The particular type of game at issue, then, is also understood and indexically tied to the topic and moment of the discourse. 'You guys talking about the game', then, is displayed unproblematically as a potential norm. It is a potential norm because the topic of the discourse, in which the 'talking' might take place, is part of the world in general. Within the world people together routinely talk to each other. The orientation is towards the most likely topic of that talk being relevant to why they are together; in this case, 'the game' is at issue. Asking for fact, then, merely reflects the expectedly known quality of this kind of knowledge to the interviewee.

#### *Orienting to the moment of discourse*

'At that time' in line 3 displays the context, in which the 'talking' might take place, also as understood and indexically tied to the moment and topic of the discourse. 'At

that time' is treated as a known context within the topic of the discourse, made relevant to the question being asked. Its vagueness orients to its identity as already established. The orientation from the previous discourse is towards it possessing a routine, re-occurring nature in which 'talking' might normatively take place to some degree. The informal nature of the potential 'you guys talking about the game' orients to the context as one in which the group is together. They are together because of 'the game' although not involved in the activity of 'the game' which defines them as a group. 'Much' in line 3 displays talking about the game as occurring to some expected, normative degree, where not that but just the specific facts are at issue—it is the extent of the talking that is in question.

Extract [2.4]

((This extract follows as an answer to the question in extract [2.3]. Again, both its specific content and its sequential position following extract [2.3], serve to confirm the general orientation in extract [2.3] towards the assumption of a particular underlying order to the world.))

- |    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
| 1  | Kos | yeh I mean                             |
| 2  |     | more so its more:: (0.2)               |
| 3  |     | it's more laid back and relaxed        |
| 4  |     | up till maybe: (0.4) half past two (.) |
| 5  | I   | ┌ yeh. ┐                               |
| 6  | Kos | └that's ┘ when lads really start       |
| 7  |     | geeing players up or, (.)              |
| 8  |     | saying you know                        |
| 9  |     | we got to do this today or             |
| 10 |     | we got to do that (.)                  |

The talk does continue on after line 10. However, the significant aspect of it is that the interviewee simply proceeds to construct discourse subsequent to the question discourse. In doing so the orientation towards the assumption of order is, again, confirmed. The content of the discourse supports the orientation as well. Similar to in extract [2.2] aspects of the order assumed in the question are confirmed, in the



construction of the answer, as relevant here and as aspects of the underlying order within the world. For instance, the answer discourse confirms the availability of the knowledge sought after to the interviewee as well as the informality of the interaction in question.

The answer discourse is constructed as fact. It is what happens. The orientation is towards the interviewee having access to the sought after knowledge which is, again, assumed in the question discourse. 'It's more laid back and relaxed' in line 2 confirms the interaction's informality. So does 'Up till maybe: (.) half past two (.)' in line 3, in displaying that there is no set schedule. When things occur can vary to some degree, and precisely when is not monitored or determined. Rather than there being a plan for such meetings, what happens is more a case of what the participants happen to do as the situation progresses. In orienting to this informal nature of the interaction, again, the answer discourse picks up and confirms assumptions made in the question.

#### CONFIRMATION OF THE ASSUMPTION WITHIN SEQUENTIAL ORGANISATION

The assumption is not an overt concern in the questions nor in the answers. It is taken as the basis upon which to construct discourse. Not only is the assumption of order an underlying orientation of discourse but these extracts display a confirmation of specific aspects of that order assumed in the question. While the content of the answer discourse helps to confirm the underlying assumption of order within the world as a basic orientation of discourse, its sequential organisation following the question discourse is the necessary, central aspect of this confirmation and display. By implicitly adopting the question's assumed order, the answer confirms its relevance and 'understands' it. Answer discourse does not always so unproblematically do this work. However, an underlying assumption of order in the world is nonetheless routinely evident.

### *The Problematic*

In terms of answers following problematically the orientation is towards some aspect of the order assumed in the question as not understood. By not understood, I am not referring to some cognitive process of grasping what has been said. What I mean by it, and the use of understood, understanding, etc., in the future is the interactional accomplishment of some discourse as understood, or not understood. They are taken as features of the discourse, or what is said. For instance, a speaker may display themselves to have understood some discourse within a first turn in providing a next turn as relevant to that discourse. Here, the interviewees routinely display their understanding of the question discourse is providing relevant answer discourse. How they construct their discourse as relevant answer discourse, and so displaying their understanding, will be addressed in the chapter to follow. Vagueness in the questions is on occasion oriented to by the interviewees, calling for some elaboration. Extract [2.5] is an example from the main body of data where the order assumed is taken up as relevant despite the problematic nature of the question.

#### Extract [2.5]

1 I u:m what do you think is like  
2 your situation. your place  
3 on the team. within the team  
4 BG (1.0) in what respect do you mean (0.8)  
5 [u:m as a team player]  
6 I [u:m play:ing: ]  
7 BG well I play fullback.  
8 I well no I mean (0.4) you know? (0.6) more than  
9 that [a:: what should I say:]  
10 BG [ well ]  
11 what in (0.8) I'm a defender  
12 I yeh. (.) no I know that um I mean (0.4)





orientation is that the interviewee has understood what the question was after, at least for all practical purposes. This is the orientation whether the particular order assumed is confirmed as relevant under circumstances of the discourse (as an aspect of the world's underlying order) or not. Extract [2.5] provides an instance where, although the answer discourse follows unproblematically, the relevance of the order assumed is disputed. It serves to display that despite this dispute the orientation towards the basic assumption of order is nonetheless maintained.

Extract [2.6]

((This extract is not from the interview data with players which features throughout the analytical chapters here. Rather it comes from television interviews with managers prior to televised games. This set of data will not be used extensively in this thesis. However, in this chapter it helps to make a few points clearer about questions and the assumption of order within discourse in general. Extract [2.6] shows how a basic assumption of order remains in place, despite a dispute over particular assumptions. Despite the dispute, the answer nonetheless follows unproblematically, in that it displays an 'understanding' of the question.))

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | I  | Swindon haven't won on our programme either    |
| 2 |    | so that's good for you as well                 |
| 3 | AC | you keep coming out with                       |
| 4 |    | the good news and                              |
| 5 |    | the bad news and                               |
| 6 |    | everything                                     |
| 7 |    | lets get on with the football                  |
| 8 |    | a that the that's what we're here for isn't it |

The answer follows the question and comments on it. An assumption of order is confirmed, but the relevant order given the moment of the discourse is disputed. AC, in his reply to the interviewer's discourse in lines 3 to 8, objects to the 'news', and more importantly the implications or upshots of it, being made relevant as a central issue to be talking about within the circumstances. That specific assumption in the



interviewer's turn is disputed. In lines 7 and 8 AC appeals to common-knowledge is constructing an argument against the assumptions within the interviewer's turn. The answer defines as relevant that which will be done in 'the football', whose relevance is accounted for as the reason the interviewer and AC are where they are in the first place (line 8). What is important is the game to follow and not, say, that AC's team has lost in the past when playing in televised game. In his discourse AC seeks to dismiss the need to account for his team's poor showing in televised games which the interviewer's discourse makes relevant. 'Isn't it' in line 8 invokes the self-evidence of this point evidence (or its availability to both parties), and makes relevant a forthcoming confirmation from the interviewer which would establish consensus. The assumption of such a consensus strengthens AC's point. He is sure. It is a fact offered as an aspect of background order.

Further aspects of this extract contribute to its status as a strong argument. For instance, lines 4 to 6 provide an example of a three-part list. Three part lists have to be found to be regular occurrences in discourse and are taken to convey the completeness of the point being made (Jefferson, 1991). Evidence that participants routinely attend to three-partedness as an indicator of completeness exists in that when a third item is not readily available to a speaker they often provide 'generalized list completers (Jefferson, 1991:66). As we can see in this extract AC provides on such 'generalized list completer' in line 6 with 'and everything'. Another feature of AC's discourse is that in it he 'goes meta' (Simons, 1989). That is to say, rather than simply answering the question, AC directs his response at the assumptions made relevant by the interviewer's discourse. Importantly, here, despite the disputation of local specifics, the general assumption of order is, again, maintained.

### *the problematic*

Here is another extract from the televised manager interview data. In it the answer discourse follows problematically as well as in dispute.

Extract [2.7]

1 I Arthur so near

2                                   but yet so far  
3       AC                         (.)  
4                                   well its a draw isn't it (.)  
5                                   how do you mean yet so far  
6       I                           well after defending so well  
7                                   for eighty nine minutes  
8       AC                         not only defending they've had at least  
9                                   five or six very very good chances  
10                                  the best chances of the game  
11                                  to win the game and to win it comfortably (.)  
12                                  never mind all the huffing and puffing  
13                                  and the pressure (.)  
14                                  no very little football from Newcastle today  
15                                  we've caught them on the break many many times  
16                                  and we're very very disappointed  
17                                  and I'm annoyed that we haven't won  
18                                  the game comfortably

Initially, the question in lines 1 and 2 is treated by AC as not understood. In lines 4 and 5 he offers his version of the state of affairs as fact and seeks elaboration on how the initial question discourse is relevant in relation to that. AC's orientation is towards the question as inconsistent with that state of affairs. However, AC treats how the question is inconsistent as not apparent as a consequence of its vagueness. In lines 6 and 7 the interviewer elaborates upon the question in response to AC's display of a lack of understanding. The elaboration serves to clarify the inconsistency of the question with AC's version of events. It provides the specifics which AC disputes in his subsequent elaboration on his answer and version of the state of affairs (lines 8 to 18). Again, however, both participants have jointly contributed to repairing the misunderstanding. The orientation of AC, despite his disputing its specific content, is toward a relevant order given the situation, even if the interviewer seems to have missed it.



Within the questions it is apparent that there is an assumption of order in the world. It is oriented to as simply understood. The way in which the answer discourse follows sequentially, and picks up, from the questions serves to verify this assumption of order. It remains unchallenged within the discourse. The assumption of order serves as a starting point upon which discourse is built. It is apparent in the questions and confirmed in the answers. The significance of this confirmation work done by the answers is that it is only within interaction that the intersubjective work accomplished by some discourse can be seen.

### ACCOMMODATIVE WORK

The significance of this interactional confirmation nature of discourse is not simply that the intersubjective work accomplished is only visible through the interaction. It is also significant because participants attend to it in the construction of their discourse. The assumption of order is only a starting point from which discourse is constructed. That which is constructed is not a neutral aspect of discourse. The speaker's interests are at issue within the particular order assumed. It is a concern of the speaker's to have that order simply taken as relevant. The way in which the discourse is constructed attends to this concern. Asking for an opinion as in extract [2.1], as well as asking for fact as in extract [2.3], which would be and are routine features of all the questions, serve to work towards dealing with this concern.

Asking for opinion as well as asking for fact fall into the category of accommodative activity. They are accommodative in that in constructing them within their discourse speakers seek to display an understanding which takes into account that which others have taken or will take as relevant within the situation at hand. Accommodative activity looks for, assumes, and so 'does' order within its topic of inquiry and the world in general. In his experiments on interaction Garfinkel found that participants would go to lengths in order to understand what had been said (Heritage, 1984a:92). He also found that it was an expectation of participants that fellow participants would do so as well (Heritage, 1984a:81). The orientation of these findings is towards a 'reciprocity of perspectives' which relies on trust amongst the

participants for interaction to be accomplished successfully. In his experiments Garfinkel broke that trust. It was in doing that the reliance on and expectation of it were displayed.

### *Opinion*

In terms of opinion, the important point here is that the accommodative activity, or work, in doing understanding is displayed in discourse. The trust is maintained by the producers of discourse doing discourse that can be understood, and/or repaired as it proceeds. How does opinion specifically perform accommodative work? First it appeals to the interviewee as a knowledgeable person. Their knowledge of the topic in question is taken to be important or relevant. The significance of that lies in the fact that, in asking for an opinion, the topic is assumed to be ordered, but the specific content of that order is taken to be not apparent. The orientation is that the interviewee is plausibly knowledgeable about the topic, and that their perspective on it is relevant. Given a choice of whom to ask, the interviewee's opinion is oriented to as potentially more right, more interesting, or less known, or appropriately next to be heard, etc., than others' opinions. The not apparentness of the answer, which the question implies, also entails that the reasoning that supports it may not be apparent a priori either. Since an opinion is asked for, the answerer is placed in a position to provide it, such that not providing it might be treated as accountable. But since an opinion is asked for, the answerer need not be held to account for its being correct. This is, of course, not to deny that the interviewer may also be more or less knowledgeable, may have fact and opinions, his own and other players', and may treat some answers as more or less plausible or satisfactory.

### *Fact*

Asking for fact, or more to the point, making relevant the potential for an answer to be provided as fact, also performs accommodative work, in the sense I am developing here. Similar to opinion, the interviewee is appealed to as a knowledgeable person. The significance of this point, here, being that although there is an assumption of an



apparent, see-able order, that order is not available to everyone. In asking the interviewee the orientation is that the knowledge in question is available to him. For instance, in extract [2.3] the interviewee's participation in the activity of which information is sought as a member of the 'guys' is the basis of the availability of that knowledge to him. In treating an interviewee as such, in possession of the sought after knowledge, the orientation is towards their discourse to come as fact prior to its display. A different order of accountability is relevant here given the potential that facts will, co-operatively, merely be stated. All that the interviewer is (overtly) interested in is the information. Accountability, in the case of facts rather than opinions, is now for the facts themselves, their accuracy or accuracy-as-known (Grice, 1975). This sense that the interviewees are provided with an opportunity to, co-operatively, merely state facts has a further accommodative feature. In constructing a question as such the interviewees are not overtly, or deliberately, put in a position of having to account for what goes on, or their participation. It is as if their potential accountability for such matters has been suspended.

The accommodative work of both opinion and fact contribute to the construction of a flexible discursive context within which reciprocal understandings can be done by the interviewees. Within this flexible discursive context the interviewees are treated as knowledgeable on the subject of each question prior to providing their answers. The flexibility provided for has to do with the seeming suspension of accountability concerns for the interviewees in providing answers. Again, it is as if, with opinion, that the understandings the interviewees will provide will be treated as unproblematically not necessarily correct. Also, again, it is as if, with fact, that because the interviewees are merely being asked to state them, that they will not be treated as accountable for that activity, what happens and, potentially, their participation in it. The upshot in both cases being that the interviewees can construct discourse without such concerns on their mind.

Through the questions the interviewer comes off as providing the interviewees with a situation in which they can simply work to provide the most correct and thorough answers they can. All the discourse in these extracts is strategically designed to do this type of accommodative work. The assumption of a meaningfully patterned world is the main resource for accomplishing it. The accommodative work displays

the interviewer as interested in inviting understanding and elaboration from the interviewees in their subsequent turns. Other aspects of the questions' construction accomplish accommodative work as well.

*Asking for needs as accommodative*

Further accommodative work aimed at similar ends is accomplished as well. Rather than simply relying on the two question extracts dealt with above this work is just as apparent in other similar questions. Take the question of 'needs'. It has been asked to all the interviewees in one form or another.

Extract [2.8]

1 I a:: what do you think the team needs to do to  
2 improve (.) to a:: you know ensure their chances

Extract [2.9]

1 I yea what what specifically  
2 do you think the team has to do  
3 or what do you think you need

Extract [2.10]

1 I yea um what do you think the team needs (.)  
2 to really a: [ interviewee begins to speak ]

In all these instances, the treatment of 'needs' and 'team' is similar to that which appears in extract [2.1]. Their normative status is part of how these terms are offered, and taken up, as understandable to the interviewees. Relatedly, then, needing is not presented as particular to the interviewees' team(s) in the situation they are in at the moment. The orientation is that having various to-be-specified things they need to do is potentially generally relevant, to any team at any time. Its status as generally applicable minimizes the potential negativity that might be associated with being the only, or one of the only, teams to 'need to do' things, given the uncertainty of



achieving desired ends. Needing also orients to the underlying ability to accomplish needs and so achieve desired consequences.

The accommodative work here displays the topic of the discourse, its nature, as accountable for having needs. Similarly, the potential wrongness of the interviewees' answers reflected in asking for opinion is also down to the topic, with the not apparentness of their teams' particular needs. This lack of accountability for the interviewees brings about the flexibility of this discursive context within which they will offer what they 'think'.

### *Attending to potential negativity as accommodative*

In other questions the same lack of accountability of the interviewee becomes apparent through the construction of the sought after knowledge. In many questions, including extract [2.3], attending to potential negativity in the question which the interviewees might attend to in answering the question is accommodative work that we can see occurring. That is, the interviewer deals with issues he takes to be potentially negative ones for the interviewees to deal with in answering the questions. Through this accommodative work the interest displayed is to present the interviewee with a situation in which he is not faced with those potential concerns in answering unless he so chooses. The accommodative work, again, seeks to invite understanding from the interviewee in providing a flexible discursive context in which to do it. The orientation we can see underlying the construction of the questions is that the more defensive the interviewee attends to needing to be, given the question (or how he reads it), the less elaboration he is likely to do in his discursive turn.

In extract [2.3] the interviewee is asked to merely report the facts from his experience. Do participants talk to each other about what they do as a group 'at that time'? Doing so, again, would be a routine characteristic of the everyday world. Football is part of the world after all. The world, rather than the participants, including the interviewee, is treated as (potentially) causally implicated in what occurs. The informality of 'guys' and 'talking' accomplishes this work. The orientation with this accommodative work is towards the potential negativity that might be associated with

that type of group engaging in conversation, 'at that time', about that which defines them as a group, 'the game'.

Extract [2.11]

((This extract provides a further example of the accommodative work routinely accomplished in the question discourse here. In it there are a number of aspects of the discourse's construction which attend to the potential negativity of answering the question.))

- 1 I do you think you can think too much about it  
2 and talk too much about it yeh

*With norms*

The potential norms of too much thought and talk in question here are oriented as not perceptible yet not unlikely aspects of the topic's order. As norms the orientation is towards their negativity. 'Too much' orients to the thought and talk as more than is useful and even counter-productive. The accommodative work accomplished here serves to minimise, or at least attend to, the potential negativity for the interviewee in constructing his answer. It does so in a number of ways. For instance, the 'you' in the extract is ambiguous as to whether it is personal, or plural and impersonal (as in 'anyone'). The significance being that with the personal the potential negativity is focused upon the interviewee to deal with. With the plural and impersonal, similar to the norm of 'needs' in extract [2.1], the norms here would be relevant for all. There is safety in numbers. The negativity becomes merely a constituent aspect of the topic of the discourse that all will have to deal with. The ambiguity of the 'you' leaves it up to the interviewee. The question provides for the interviewee to take on which ever understanding in what ever manner he chooses. The important point being that he is not overtly, or deliberately, put in the situation of having to account directly for himself by the question.



### *With the topic of the discourse*

Whether constructing the norms of too much thought and talk as personal or relevant for all participants, another option is left open to the interviewee which would serve to minimise potential negativity. The option being that of constructing the topic of the discourse, football, as causally implicated for too much thought, and talk, as norms rather than the individuals. The question provides for the interviewee merely treating an order existing independently from the participants' agency as determinant for these possibilities as norms. The risk of too much thought, or talk, can be admitted to without attending to participants', including potentially his own, accountability for it.

### *With opinion*

The opinion nature of the question, again, does work in minimising potential negativity. With 'do you think' in line 1, asking for opinion, again, assumes a meaningfully patterned world and the existence, yet the not apparentness, of the order of the topic. The norms of too much thought/talk are merely possibilities. Their norm status is up to the interviewee's opinion. The interviewee's knowledge as well as the importance of his opinion in particular are made relevant inviting his understanding. However, in the discourse the orientation is also towards the interviewee as, again, not accountable for his opinion potentially being wrong.

### *With the mere possibility*

Related to the accommodative work done by opinion is that which 'can' in line 1 accomplishes. It is with 'can' that the interviewer describes too much thought and talk as merely possibilities. That is, the interviewer attends to them as not the type of thing that, if they did occur, would occur routinely, as in every day, or after every game. Rather, they are treated as the types of things that might occur, perhaps given particular types of circumstances. Constructing the norms as such in the question leaves a certain flexibility open to the interviewee in terms of how he can answer the question. With opinion we saw that the interviewee was placed in a position of not

necessarily knowing, or being sure, prior to providing his answer, and unproblematically so. The potential uncertainty of his answer, as an opinion, is already established. This is the case despite the orientation towards the relevance of the individual's knowledge and so opinion on the subject. If he is not sure, as well as if he is sure, are treated as equally significant potential answer types.

The interviewee, then, is provided with the opportunity to determine whether to construct the certainty or uncertainty of the norms. In providing certainty the interviewee would leave himself open to disagreement. He would leave himself open to the potential negativity of being seen as wrong. However, he need not approach the certainty, or actuality, of the norms. He could, for instance, construct the possibility as hypothetical. The interviewee need not concern himself with whether the norms have occurred in the past or will occur in the future. The realization of the norms can be left uncertain. Providing such uncertainty would serve to bypass the potential of being seen as wrong as well as minimise the potential negativity of the norms given that they may or may not be the case. Leaving this move up to the interviewee can be seen as another instance of the interviewer minimising, or attending to, the potential negativity that he orients to the interviewee as likely to attend to in answering a question on such a subject.

It is important to point out that this is not to say that as an analyst one would, then, expect the interviewee to simply provide an answer about the *hypothetical* possibility of *anyone* thinking too much as a consequence of the nature of football. Regardless of prior turns speakers will construct subsequent turns as relevant as they see fit. There is a certain flexibility inherent in terms of what can be said. It is a constituent aspect of discursive interaction, and so is there for the interviewees, like any speakers, from the out-set of the interview. Of significance here is that the questions are also designed in such a way as accomplish this flexible discursive context as present, presumably, to invite the interviewees to do understanding. The interviewer comes off as simply after having the interviewees say what they 'really' think is important, relevant or right. In order to get them to do so the interviewer has sought to deal with those accountability concerns which he takes it that the interviewees will attend to and treat as restricting what they can say and make relevant.



It is with this accommodative work that we can see the interviewer treating the accomplishment of the order assumed in his question discourse as an interactional matter. While there is flexibility in terms of what particular order the interviewer can construct as in operation for the moment of the discourse, he nonetheless attends to the constraint of having to accommodate the interviewees through the construction of his discourse, and invite their understanding and acceptance of the particular order he has made relevant in pursuit of its confirmation through the interaction.

In seeking confirmation of the particular order assumed the accommodative work attends to the interviewees' position as speakers on the topic of the discourse. Again, the interviewer has sought to take into account what the interviewees may find problematic in answering the questions and so confirming the order assumed. The consequence, again, being the provision of a flexible discursive context within which to construct their answer discourse. However, this flexible discursive context is not merely a feature constructed into the discourse through such accommodative work. For instance, as I have noted it is available to the interviewer in terms of the particular underlying order he could build as relevant within his discourse. The flexibility is a constituent aspect of discursive interaction as well as a feature of this assumption of the existence of order in the world. Its status as such will be addressed in the next section.

## THE LOOSE FIT OF DISCOURSE'S CONSTRUCTION

In simply assuming the existence of order in the world the discourse's construction takes on a loose fit to the object of its description. Rather than over elaborating speakers construct the world as a familiar place. They do not try to explain all the particulars that could possibly be made relevant by their discourse. They simply treat it as understood for all practical purposes to other participants in the discourse.

It is relevant to note that with the formulation 'loose fit' I am not suggesting here that the interviewees' discourse is somehow not clear as a consequence of its 'loose fitting' nature in comparison to other's talk which might be said to have a 'tight fit' to the object of its description. Rather, what I am saying is that *all* discourse has a

'loose fit' to the object of its description, if only because descriptions are categorial, if not downright contentious (Edwards, 1997). As Potter (1996: 65) points out, 'scenes do not determine their descriptions'. The description provided in any situation is only one of an indefinite number of possible versions that could be made relevant (Schegloff, 1972; Wooffitt, 1992; Potter, 1996). The description provided in any given situation, then, is not self-evident for what it represents. Within the situation of a description's use participants in the interaction do the work of seeing how the description is specifically the case, or relevant, there. It is on this basis that I am saying there is a looseness to the way in which descriptions can be said to be representative of what they describe; it is in this sense that I use the formulation 'loose fit'.

This 'loose fit' of descriptions to the objects they describe allows that, for instance, terms like 'book' or 'tree' can be used categorially to represent any book or tree like objects and when an object is described as a book or tree the recipient of the description, although perhaps never having seen the object being described, could be expected to have a reasonable understanding of what it would roughly be like, to be called that. We do not have a situation where each object in the world has its own descriptive term to go along with it. If we did, we would have to have knowledge of all those descriptive terms in order to understand what was being talked about at any given time. Relatedly, 'loose fit' also allows flexibility in the sense that it provides that participants have the opportunity to do their own understandings of the descriptions given to them. For instance, participants will do their own understanding of what someone means in describing something as a book. Despite the possibility of mistaking the use of 'loose fit', here, as describing the relationship between objects and descriptions in a way that points to a negative, not quite right, nature of how descriptions might be seen as poorly representing what they describe, it is nonetheless being used, here, to highlight a positive, functional aspect of the way descriptions work - indeed, a crucial feature of how descriptions can be action-performative and rhetorical.

One feature of this loose fit is that the existence of order within the world is left unverified within the discourse. The relevance of some particular order may be topicalised. However, the existence of order in general and so some particular order as relevant for the moment at hand routinely stands unchallenged within discourse. It is



simply treated as understood. Another feature of this loose fit is that often a lack of certainty arises from the unaccounted for supposed apparentness of the discourse's relevance. Such an instance has already appeared in this chapter above. It occurs in extract [2.5] where the interviewee seeks clarification on the sought after information the interviewer has attempted to make relevant in the question. It can be seen in the extract that although the interviewer initially takes his question discourse to simply be understood that its relevance is uncertain to the interviewee. Such instances appear in the interviewees' answer discourse as well.

In the analysis below I want to take one such instance of interviewees' answer discourse to illustrate both these features. First, that the relevance of some prior discourse is treated as uncertain (within the interaction by a participant). Second, that even in dealing with that uncertainty the existence of order within the world, and the particular ordered treated as the basis for the discourse's status as understood, are left unverified. I will address this second point in illustrating how despite its seeming evidence, the order assumed is available to be undermined, rather than simply being self-evident and above argument.

Extract [2.12]

1	I	yeh do you talk about it with anyone (.)
2		like the players (.)
3	TC	p p p p well a a a <u>no</u> not really
4		I think you have passing comments
5		about how the side's doing and things like that
6		and if somebody say something out of (0.5)
7		what you think is out of order
8		then you just (0.2) put your point (0.2) across
9		but a: its only u:m (0.2) in passing, nothing
10	I	┌yeh. ┐
11	TC	└sit down┘ serious or anything like that

### *The uncertainty*

Here the uncertainty of some discourse despite its construction as understood occurs within a turn rather than between turns, as in extract [2.5]. In this extract TC is answering a question about whether or not 'you talk about it with anyone'. 'It' has already been established as one's football, their play, in a prior question and answer sequence. The 'you', as in extract [2.11], is ambiguous as to whether it refers to the personal, or plural and impersonal. In addressing the question TC takes up the 'you' as plural and impersonal. Initially, in line 3, he says that such talk is not something that is 'really' done. In lines 4 to 7 TC describes the occurrence of 'passing comments' and talking if someone has said something that you do not agree with as the norm of what does occur. That is not 'really' talking.

We can see here that the distinction between the types of talk that might, and do, occur is a participants' distinction. This point has relevance for extract [2.3], where the interviewer sought information about the occurrence of what he makes relevant as informal talk with 'are the guys talking'. The use of 'the guys' which specifies the nature of the 'talk' the interviewer is after is not simply an accident of construction. Rather, it is better off seen as further evidence of the interviewer's attention to what he takes the interviewees attending to as relevant in answering the questions. What is important for purposes here is that TC has left as understood what 'really' talking is. It is not clarified, specified or elaborated on.

However, in lines 9 and 11 TC treats the relevance of the prior discourse as not having been apparent within it. He attends to the need to elaborate. The 'but' helps to accomplish the orientation towards this need. It prefaces the discourse to come as contrastive, and relevant, to the prior discourse. The prior discourse's relevance is treated as not apparent without the discourse to come. However, initially TC simply reiterates the prior discourse with 'only ... in passing'. Rather than the discourse to come as contrastive, it is clear that the discourse to come seeks to clarify what TC is on about in saying talk 'really' does not happen. With 'nothing (...) sit down serious or anything like that' rather than merely treating what he takes to be 'really' talking as understood he describes its nature. Such instances of clarification within interviewees' turns will be looked at in greater depth in later chapters. Here, it is simply important



to point out how the loose fit of discourse upon the object of its description can lead participants in discourse, including its speaker, to attend to its relevance as uncertain, or not understood.

### *The un-verified order*

The contrast between 'in passing' and 'sit down serious' is treated as apparently displaying what 'really' talking is, and what it is not. 'In passing' gives the sense of the talk occurring while other things are going on. For instance, it might occur within the changing room while players are getting dressed for, or changed after, games. The talk is not the main focus of the activity. Rather, 'in passing' describes it as something that is just happening as it does in the world. It is like something that potentially occurs on the side while the real business of the context is being attended to. With 'sit down serious' talk is described as the deliberate and main focus of the activity. To TC 'real' talk is that: done deliberately as the focus of some activity for purpose; to sort out problems within play perhaps.

The order assumed here is that talk 'in passing', where talk is not the main focus of the activity, cannot be this 'real' talk. That sort of talk is described as only occurring when talk is the main focus of the activity, or 'sit down serious'. This underlying order is not verified in the discourse. It is merely treated as understood on the basis that 'real' talk would not occur if it were not the main focus of the activity. 'Sit down serious' emphasises this point because it gives a sense that nothing else is going on but the talk as the focus of the activity. However, how is it the case that in order for talk to be 'real', as I have defined above, it must occur when nothing else is going on, within its own context, deliberately set up for it to occur. Is it not possible that any talk at any time could be done deliberately for purpose to sort out problems. Perhaps 'in passing' is the only chance players get to do purposeful talk and that consequently a lot of work is getting done within it. It is far from beyond reason that players would and do, 'in passing' within some greater context in which talk is not known, or routinely treated, as a main focus, deliberately seek to sort out problems.

It is this unverified nature of the assumption of order within discourse that leads to the potential uncertainty of the discourse's relevance. At some point a

speaker must cease to speak. In doing so they necessarily leave some assumption of order unverified and treated as understood. Speakers cannot describe exactly what they take their discourse's relevance to be. This issue, as an interactional one, will be addressed in the next section.

*A loose fit as understood construction and the normatively appropriate*

It is, again, always possible to elaborate further upon a description. The more in depth something is decried, the possibility of infinite further description becomes more evident (Suchman, 1987:61). Rather than merely an aspect of some discourse's strategic design, discourse necessarily has a loose fit upon the object of its description. The orientation towards discourse as sufficient as a representation of the object of its description is achieved by a speaker in simply ceasing to describe. In doing so participants are, again, treated as able to understand the discourse for all practical purposes in the same way. However, this understood nature is, of course, not actual, or a perfect matching of the minds. There is the underlying potential uncertainty inherent within the loose fit of discourse. The orientation towards discourse as understood is simply a starting point of participants. Participants normatively go to lengths to understand and do understandable discourse.

However, Garfinkel found that this sort of normatively appropriate behaviour, rather than binding participants to some action, only tends to bind (Heritage, 1984a: 117). There is choice involved. Doing the normatively appropriate is not neutral action. There is reflexive consideration of how one's actions will be interpreted. In doing so, the consequences related to the fulfilment of the normatively appropriate are simply routinely taken as within one's interests (Heritage, 1984a: 117). However, 'routinely within one's interests' assumes potential variation. That which an individual takes as right to do in particular, yet perhaps similar, circumstances can vary. What they do is not simply dictated to them by the world. The routine accomplishment of the normatively appropriate is not a case of merely following the rules of the world. It is a case of considering what course of action is most favourable given the circumstances.



The normatively appropriate does not create certainty as the assumption of an ordered world might suggest. There is uncertainty inherent within social action of which this loose fit of discourse is a part. However, in pursuing the normatively appropriate, and seeking to do understanding, participants attend to this uncertainty. For instance, in the extract above, TC's clarification displays such attention. Exactly what will be understood from some discourse is uncertain within that discourse. Routinely, concern is not even explicitly displayed for whether or not the discourse will be understood and how. In extract [2.5] the interviewer displays no concern for the understood nature of his initial question discourse until the interviewee seeks clarification. In the extract above TC also does not explicitly clarify his prior discourse. Rather, he glosses the fact that clarification is going on. He does so with 'but' which packages that clarification as a contrast to the prior discourse that is relevant for its understanding. What we can see from extract [2.5] and the extract above is that the loose fit of discourse as an aspect of the uncertainty of social action is treated as an interactional concern rather than problematic. Participants attend to it as necessary to deal with in their talk.

As such a concern this loose fit can be seen as providing for its own resolution. With it as a constituent feature of discourse there is flexibility in terms of participants' ability to read particular understandings into the discourse. That flexibility serves as a resource for participants in reconciling the uncertainty. This is evident within the data here. The uncertainty of the question discourse created by its loose fit is resolved within, or through, the answer discourse. The loose fit of the question discourse provides for this resolution. Take the issue of a team's needs made relevant in extract [2.1]. The question of needs was put to all the interviewees in one form or another. In doing so the interviewer does not, as extract [2.1] has displayed, make relevant some specific understanding of needs that is at issue only in football so that the interviewees would know 'exactly' what he was after. Rather, the loose fit of these questions is exemplified by their reliance on a common-knowledge understanding of needs.

In answering these questions about needs the interviewees attend to the loose fit of the question discourse. While that loose fit has created uncertainty in terms of exactly what the interviewer is after, the flexibility it allows in terms of what is constructed as a need serves to resolve the uncertainty. Take the four extracts to

follow which come from players on the same team. In the first three the interviewees have been asked about their team's needs for the upcoming season. In the fourth extract the question posed to the interviewee was with regards to how pre-season had been proceeding. The relevance of this difference between the first three extracts and the fourth will become evident later.

Extract [2.13]

1 TK ↑u::m (0.8) I'th just belief really you know  
2 (you like) (0.4) a: like we've got  
3 the team spirit and we've got the players  
4 who are capable of playing well so um  
5 I think if we just get believing ourselves  
6 maybe, a little bit more I think you know a:  
7 (0.2) that that could really see us through yeh

Extract [2.14]

1 JC u:m (0.2) I think confidence is a big thing  
2 I think if we can sort of get a good start and  
3 get the confidence (0.2) you know?  
4 if we get off to a good start and  
5 build some confidence then a: you know?  
6 you can get start rolling.  
7 I yeh.  
8 JC the obv the obvious things are better players  
9 but you know? (0.2) more money  
10 if the club had a lot more money and (.)  
11 a lot better players  
12 they they they're the obvious things  
13 but u:m (0.4) apart from that you know?  
14 we work hard as long as we work hard  
15 at the training ground and



16 get a good team spirit together.  
17 I yeh.  
18 JC I think they're the essentials

Extract [2.15]

1 Kos I just think the team needs confidence, (.)  
2 we need a: bit of self belief (0.6)  
3 we need to get off to a good start.  
4 we need to get off: we a bi  
5 we need to get confidence. (.)  
6 I yeh,  
7 Kos we don't need to, we don't need (0.2)  
8 two or three defeats  
9 we need to get a couple of light defeats  
10 under our belt (.) a couple of wins under  
11 our belt (0.2) a: (0.2) and a basically  
12 just get a: (0.2) a bit of confidence?  
13 we got the players here (.)  
14 maybe: we want strengthening  
15 in a couple of departments  
16 maybe (.) we might need a striker (0.2)  
17 a: we just bought a center half who was just  
18 you know unfortunately he got a bad break (0.2)  
19 I yeh.  
20 Kos so: (.) you know I? (0.2) looking at it from  
21 a positive side I think we've got the players,  
22 (0.2) a:: <this club can't really go out  
23 and like compete with the big boys> but (.)  
24 ↑you know its we've just got to all stick  
25 together and work hard as a as a squad.

Extract [2.16]

1      BG            its going alright (0.6) not bad  
2                    we've been building up gradually so, (0.8)  
3      I                yeh.  
4      BG            I mean that's not been bad. (1)  
5                    maybe we needed another, (1.2)  
6                    I think we might have needed  
7                    another week but (0.6)  
8      I                yeh.  
9      BG            u::m (0.4) we had a game  
10                    we had a game on friday, (0.6)  
11                    and u:m (.) maybe (0.2) do with another game  
12                    before the season starts.  
13     I                yeh.  
14     BG            but (0.5) apart from that  
15                    its going alright I think.

For the moment I want to focus on the first three extracts here. In them the interviewees describe the same sort of needs as relevant. For instance, confidence and belief represent the same sort of intangible factors which are commonly described as important within football. Also important here is that they all make relevant the issue of players. Although they vary to some extent in terms of how they make this issue relevant it is nonetheless treated by all three interviewees as significant to some extent where needs are concerned. The significant aspect of these extracts, rather than the regularity of the needs, is the way in which the interviewees seek to account for the particular needs they make relevant. The loose fit of the question discourse allows for the potential of great variability in terms of the needs described. For instance, the interviewees from the other team make relevant completely different sorts of needs. In extract [2.16] here BG, as a member of same team as the other interviewees, makes relevant a completely different sort of need; the need for another week of training.

In accounting for the particular needs they make relevant the interviewees deal with the concern of making a particular need relevant rather than any other potential



need. Doing so attends to the loose fit of the question discourse because it resolves the uncertainty of the question. This can be seen in the way in which the interviewees account for the needs. In extract [2.13] TK describes belief as the relevant need. In accounting for it as such he talks about what the team already has. They have team spirit and they have the players who can play well. The orientation is towards these factors as potential needs which the team is already in possession of. In accounting for belief as the need to make relevant TK treats it as the only other relevant need to possess under the circumstances. They have everything else.

In extract [2.14] JC describes confidence as 'a big thing'. In lines 8 to 18 he accounts for its relevance as a need. With 'obvious things' he describes 'better players' and 'more money' as self-evident potential needs. However, with 'if the club had' them, JC displays that his team both does not and cannot gain access to these sort of things. Lines 12 and 13 serve to dismiss those sort of 'obvious' needs as the exception and not relevant here. In lines 14 to 18 with 'work hard' and 'team spirit' as 'the essentials' he describes the important needs as those which his team can acquire. JC treats focusing on needs that one cannot fulfil as simply anticipating failure and so not what the interviewer would be after. In doing so he undermines the potential argument that the 'obvious' needs are just the sorts of needs he should be making relevant. Although less apparent, TK can also be seen as doing this sort of undermining work with his account.

In extract [2.15] Kos makes relevant confidence, self-belief and a good start as needs. His account resembles both JC's and TK's. Initially, with 'we got the players here' in line 13 the sort of work TK does is evident. Kos treats players as a potentially relevant need but one that his team has already fulfilled. However, in lines 14 to 18 Kos casts a shadow of doubt upon whether the team does have sufficient players in describing the potential need for strengthening and the loss of a new player. In dealing with this doubt in lines 20 to 25 the sort of work JC does is evident. Kos describes the importance of focusing upon what the team can do in pursuit of desired ends. He also attends to the idea that focusing upon needs that cannot be fulfilled anticipates failure. Like the others, Kos' account serves to undermine potential argument against the needs made relevant.

In accounting for the needs they have made relevant the interviewees' display an orientation towards the potential variability of the needs they could have made relevant to the interviewer's question. The accounts deal with that uncertainty of what the interviewer was after. They serve as a basis for the needs made relevant as what the interviewer was after in that they describe other potential needs as simply not relevant under the circumstances. Extract [2.16] here serves to verify the interviewees attention to the loose fit and uncertainty of the question discourse. Although in it BG has provided a potential need of the team he was not solicited to do so. His answer came in response to a question about how pre-season was going. Of course, regardless of the question what exactly the interviewer is after is uncertain given the discourse's loose fit. The relevance of the potential need of another week's training (lines 5 to 7) is that it is provided within an account for what BG has specifically made relevant in terms of how things were going in pre-season. Here the provision of a need, rather than being accounted for, works within an account as a basis for that which is made relevant as the answer. It is used by BG to account for his answer in dealing with the uncertainty of the question's loose fit.

Before moving on I want to address the significance of the assumption of a meaningfully patterned world given what has been made relevant above. In this section I first noted how in assuming a meaningfully patterned world discourse's construction takes on a loose fit to the object of its description. I illustrated that while this loose fit creates potential uncertainty it also provides for a resolution to that concern with its flexibility. While the uncertainty remains it is glossed. It is treated as an interactional concern rather than problematic and dealt with through the talk. The assumption of a meaningfully patterned world is central here in that it serves as a basis for the uncertainty being treated as such. Rather than uncertainty existing as a consequence of the nature of the world it is treated as a consequence of participants' involvement in the world.

The clear example of this orientation appears in Garfinkel's (1967) 'breaching experiments' (see also Heritage, 1984a). Garfinkel displayed that when participants did not engage in normatively appropriate behaviour it did not lead others to doubt the ordered nature of the world. The breaches were not treated as a consequence of the



world. Rather, they were routinely treated as sanctionable offences. The offended parties sought accounts to clarify the nature and/or grounds of the breach. In accounting for their breach the expectation of a participant would be the production of an understanding which would bring it within the parameters of the ordered world in some way. Participants treat the ordered nature of the world as a basis for determining, and accounting for, actions as breaches. The orientation towards order maintains itself. Breaches are treated as a consequence of actors' participation within the world. Breaches are reconciled by the understanding that people are at times flawed in their ability to deal with, and participate in, the world properly.

Again, however, the normatively appropriate only tends to bind. Rather than the world being constituted of Garfinkel's (1967) 'judgmental dopes', the organization of social action is more a consequence of the two points to follow. The first is that participants expect others to perform normatively appropriate behaviour. The second is that they treat each other, and expect to be treated, as accountable for the performance of normatively appropriate behaviour. The assumption of order within the world, and participants treating the world as such interactionally, reflects these two points. The organization of social action, rather than a consequence of the nature of the world in itself as the assumption of order suggests, is social in origin. To put it simply, there is flexibility in terms of what can be done although participants attend to there being constraints upon that activity as consequence of their assumption of order within the world.

## CONSTRUCTING CONTEXT

### *The necessity of contextual particulars or knowledge*

Suchman notes that:

Because the significance of an expression always exceeds the meaning of what actually gets said, the interpretation of an expression turns not only on its conventional or definitional meaning, nor on that plus some body of presuppositions, but on the unspoken situation of its use. (1987: 60)

In ceasing to elaborate speakers expect that the unspoken yet relevant will be taken into account by others in order to understand the discourse. Discourse does not self-evidently represent the object of its description. Rather, its relevance is down to what contextual particulars the participants read into it. The uncertainty of discourse's loose fit is dealt with here. However, doing so is not as straightforward as it seems. This is most apparent where the use of indexical expressions is concerned. Indexical expressions are those which demand contextual information in order to grasp their meaning for that moment of discourse. Terms such as 'it', 'this', 'that', 'she' and 'he' represent typical examples. Routinely, no account is provided to explain their relevance. They are simply treated as understood within the interaction. However, without knowledge of the interactional context, their relevance is not self-evident.

Indexical expressions are the easy case where there is necessity of contextual information for some discourse's relevance. Nonetheless, they are not alone in needing contextual information to provide for their understanding.

For, if other descriptive terms were to be unproblematic, they would have to be related to their referents through some determinate set of 'corresponding contents'. (Heritage, 1984a: 143)

Again, take this question of a team's needs as an example. Team could make relevant any of a plethora of different sorts of groups. Even within football, it could make relevant an almost infinite number of possibilities. What particular type of team and which team within that category is only clear through knowledge of the interactional context. In accounting for the specific needs they make relevant the interviewees display an orientation towards having to constitute those needs as what the interviewer must be after rather than any other needs. This accounting serves to display the not apparentness of what exactly a question of needs is after. Again, there is a potential for great variability in terms of what the interviewees, even with their knowledge of the context, could make relevant as needs. Without knowledge of the interactional context the particular relevance of the discourse, and how to potentially respond to it, or deal with the uncertainty of its loose fit, are concerns that are, at best, difficult to manage. The discourse is indexically tied to the moment of its use.



*Building an understanding of prior discourse*

It is there for participants in the discourse to read contextual particulars into it (in attending to it as understood). In doing so they construct an understanding of the prior discourse within their own through what they take to be contextually relevant. The interviewees do this work in providing contextual particulars in their answers. Their answers construct what they take the interviewer to be on about in his questions. They construct the questions' relevance. The example to follow is the answer which follows from the extract [2.12] question.

Extract [2.12]

1 I do you think you can think too much about it  
2 and talk too much about it yeh

Extract [2.17]

1 TK Loh yeh definitely yeh yeh J  
2 I mean I've (0.2) a: (0.4)  
3 like just the other week I was. a bit down.  
4 where things weren't going right for me  
5 and I was thinking about it all the time,  
6 and it was it was going against me .hh  
7 I °yeh,°  
8 TK but a: I mean (0.2)  
9 we played the other night. at leyton orient  
10 and a everything went went fine you know so,

In the answer the question is constructed as about whether thinking too much about the play can get to the point where it is possibly detrimental for the individual doing it. This may seem to be what the question is clearly about from the question in isolation from the answer. However, the answer also serves to construct more particular aspects of the issue in the question within the context. Lines 1 to 5 describe characteristics of too much thought as a possibility. In the question the interviewer

asks for the interviewee's opinion on the matter. The interviewee does not treat this issue as one of opinion. Rather, he treats it as one which he can deal with factually, using his own experience as evidence. It is not what he thinks but what is simply the case within the context. In describing an instance of too much thought the interviewee can be seen as providing the type of instance in which it can occur and has occurred. Lines 4 and 5 describe the nature of the instance: things are not going right and you are thinking about it 'all the time'. Finally, the object of the thought, represented by 'it' in the question, is constructed in the answer as things not going right.

In lines 5 to 10 the nature of 'too much' thinking, as something that occurs within the context, is constructed. It is when thinking 'all the time' goes against you. The occurrence, impact and cessation of the impact, of too much thought is constructed as down to the status of football as existing independent from the participants' agency. They are in a situation of simply having to deal with it. In describing that 'it was going against' him in line 6 thinking 'all the time' in line 5 is treated as not necessarily too much thought. In this instance, it just happened that thinking 'all the time' ended up going against him. It is not the case that a participant can know that their thought is going to end up counter-productive. It is displayed as something that just happens. The orientation is towards the underlying nature of the thought that occurs as purposeful and directed at sorting out problems. Otherwise, the interviewee would be accountable for thinking 'all the time' when that thought, first, will not help towards providing a solution to problems, and second, can only end up being problematic in itself. In lines 8 to 10 the impact of too much thought is described as temporary. Relatedly, these lines display that in the same way it can just happen it just ends as well.

### *Building an understanding of prior discourse: in dispute*

The 'loose fit' of discourse in general, i.e. its essential indexicality, provides for others reading contextual particulars into it while maintaining the underlying assumption of order. The accommodative work done by the interviewer within his questions displays his expectation of the interviewees to do this contextual work. Again, the interviewer, like other speakers, has assumed some particular order to be relevant in constructing



his discourse. The interest with the accommodative work is to have contextual particulars simply constructed into the particular underlying order they have assumed. The accommodative work attends to the accomplishment of this interest as not a forgone conclusion. There are occasions where the particular order assumed is disputed. Again, extracts [2.6] and [2.7] display such occasions. Extract [2.18] below also serves to display such an occasion. This extract comes from the manager interview discourse mentioned earlier. In it we can see how the particular order assumed in the question discourse is disputed within the answer discourse. The interviewee does so through, first, constructing what he takes the question discourse to be about, and second, constructing what he takes to be the relevant contextual particulars.

Extract [2.18]

1	I	what about coming back
2		to see Kevin Keegan
3	AC	(.) well I don't need to come back to Newcastle
4		to see Kevin Keegan and I don't need
5		to come back to respect him and to (.)
6		um (.) be friends with him or whatever
7		um we're here to play football
8		against Newcastle United
9		and I think he's been quoted as saying (.)
10		whatever the scoreline at the end of the game
11		is he won't score and I won't score
12		so its about the players isn't it

In lines 3 to 6 AC constructs the question as taking 'seeing Kevin Keegan' as the central issue of his return to Newcastle. The question is treated by AC as making the occasion significant as a time for him to meet up with Kevin Keegan, and show respect for, and friendship with, him. AC constructs what he takes the question to be after in denying the relevance of the occasion as such. He does not need to return to Newcastle in order to do these things. In these lines AC disputes the relevance of the

particular underlying order he takes the interviewer as having made relevant. In lines 7 to 12 he describes the players and the football, rather than himself and Kevin Keegan, as the focus, or issue, relevant for his visit. The importance of the visit is the 'scoreline at the end of the game' (line 10). He takes as different particular order to be relevant under the circumstances than does the interviewer.

In constructing this order, AC uses what Kevin Keegan has said as 'footing' (Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988). He says what Kevin Keegan has said *as* what Kevin Keegan has said. Doing so contributes to his argument towards the relevance of the particular order he treats as at issue. It is not only the case that he believes it to be relevant but Kevin Keegan does so as well. The consensus between AC and Kevin Keegan, the individuals that the interviewer has placed in a central position for why he and AC are talking, serves as grounds for this order. The orientation is towards this order as the 'proper' basis for a question at this moment in time. The answer discourse constructs the interviewer's question as not relevant under the circumstances. While the particular order assumed within the question is disputed the existence of order in general, again, remains as an underlying assumption through the construction of another.

*Building an understanding of prior discourse: displaying attention to its relevance*

In the extract above, the interviewer is treated as having misinterpreted the context. The basis for AC's dispute with the order assumed in the question is that it is not relevant within the context. AC attends to not being in a position of merely constructing contextual particulars within the particular order assumed. There is a necessity to construct the relevant particular order within the context. We can see here that the prior discourse in the interviewer's turn has been monitored for its relevance by AC. Constructing the relevance of a question, or any prior discourse, is not merely a case of providing an understanding of what it is after, or displays. In constructing relevance speakers also attend to the appropriateness of the prior discourse within the situation at hand. The interviewees here do the same thing. They do not simply take what the interviewer has to offer in terms of questions and provide some answer discourse for it. However, in contrast to AC, on such occasions when their attention



to the appropriateness of some question is visible, they do not explicitly dispute the relevance of the question. They treat the interaction they are involved in differently.

The extract to follow provides an example where the interviewee's attention to the appropriateness of a question is visible. The way in which the interviewee formulates the issue in the question in a particular way displays that attention. He attends to the issue as not relevant as the interviewer has described. At the same time he attends to some understanding of the issue as relevant. In formulating its nature in a particular way the interviewee attends to a subtly different underlying order as in operation than the question assumes. That subtle difference is not treated as undermining the relevance of the question. It is treated as unproblematic and easily reconciled.

Extract [2.19]

1 I u:m (0.5) do you talk about it?  
2 do you talk about how you played or: (0.2)  
3 how (.) the team has played in general  
4 MH yeh I think we do, (.) immediately after games  
5 there's there's obviously discussions as to  
6 what we did well or what we did wrong and,  
7 (0.2) and then um obviously you reflect on it  
8 yourself later on? so,  
9 I think a: and then its normally left untill:  
10 after a saturday game untill monday  
11 when we're back in. (0.3)  
12 a: obviously we'll then go out onto to  
13 the training field and work on things  
14 that specifically were wrong  
15 I yeh. how about um (0.4) your own specific play  
16 MH um I think you think about it and you realize  
17 (.) maybe the things that are not going so well  
18 and what you have to  
19 I yeh

20 MH improve on, (0.2) so then a: there's always  
 21 little things the you can do individually,  
 22 u:m in training and after training  
 23 which can help a improve those  
 24 you know? those those faults.  
 25 I do you ever discuss it though.  
 26 MH um (.) yeh from time to time  
 27 obviously the coaching staff  
 28 they watch the games (0.4) u:m and  
 29 a they're they're looking at all the players  
 30 individually and also as a group (0.2)  
 31 so: they ca they they will then  
 32 put their ideas forward and say where where  
 33 you're going right and wrong really

The part of this extract of greatest significance here occurs in lines 25 to 33. In the two prior question and answer sequences MH provides answers about, first, whether or not the team's play was talked about (lines 1 to 14), and second, whether or not he thinks about his own play (lines 15 to 24). In line 25 the interviewer is after whether discussion of MH's own play occurs. The underlying order which the interviewer takes to be potentially relevant within football here is to a great extent shaped by the term 'discuss'. It specifies a particular type of talk, in the same way 'the guys talking' in extract [2.3] does. 'Discuss' gives the sense of a type of talk where there is a back and forth, egalitarian nature to the interaction. The participants each have equal standing within the conversation. In line 26 MH confirms the interviewer's query; discussion does occur. In lines 31 to 32 MH formulates the nature of the discussion that occurs. It consists of the staff telling the players what they think: what is good and what is bad in the players' play. The description of this talk is as one-sided. The staff 'put their ideas forward'. They 'say where you're going right and wrong'. The staff do the talking. The back and forth, egalitarian nature of the talk which 'discuss' gives a sense of does not appear in MH's formulation.



It is in MH's formulation of the type of talk that he is confirming the occurrence of that his attention to what is being asked in the question is evident. Rather than simply picking up on discussion as at issue from the question, MH picks up on talk about individuals' play occurring as at issue. He attends to that, rather than discussion, as what the interviewer is 'really', or should be, after. He can be seen as attending to that as what is relevant to ask, or perhaps more to the point answer, about under the circumstances of the interview and particularly given the question and answer sequences which have immediately preceded this one. Despite the formulation and MH not simply constructing his answer within the particular order assumed in the question it is as if MH has simply answered the question provided. MH treats the particular order assumed in the question as for all practical purposes understandable as relevant within the context in the way he describes his answer.

Initially in this section, the necessity of contextual knowledge was posited in order to understand discourse. A participant's contextual knowledge becomes visible through their construction of an understanding, or the relevance, of prior discourse within their own. Here, the particular order assumed within question discourse has been displayed as a starting point for interviewees in constructing contextual particulars in their answer discourse. This has been the case whether that particular order has been simply taken up, disputed or modified. In attending to the relevance of the questions interviewees display that the nature of the underlying order treated as relevant within a context is significant for any understanding of the context. It is not merely the case that any order, or order in general, will do. The particular order treated as relevant serves the purpose of accomplishing the contextual particulars constructed as confirmed, or verified, within the discourse in which they appear.

However, the existence of that order, and the existence of order in general, are, again, not themselves verified within the discourse. Rather, it is simply the mutual assumption of participants, as an aspect of the organisation of social action maintained by participants, towards the existence of order, and a particular order as relevant within a context, that serves as the basis for order as grounding contextual particulars. While this nature of discourse affords speakers flexibility in that they need not exhaustively confirm the relevance of their discourse there are limitations to its significance for the production of convincing, taken as fact, discourse. Recipients of

some discourse are, again, in the position of constructing its relevance within the context at hand. What a speaker may 'intend' with their discourse is not simply taken up by others. This process of building the relevance of some prior discourse within the context at hand also provides speakers with flexibility in terms of construction. However, again, the constraint of interactional confirmation remains. The issue of interviewees attention to that constraint will be addressed in the chapter to follow.

Prior to concluding this chapter I would first like to specify the nature, or type, of 'order' that I am concerned with here. This order, as one assumed as existing by participants, should be seen as their method. That is to say, it is something they attend to as the case, produce and reproduce within interaction. Participants' accomplishment of the world as ordered, through assumptions see-able in their discourse, is an ongoing, practical accomplishment of their interaction. The understanding of order at issue is an ethnomethodological one; it is about how participants orient to their talk's topic. The world is routinely treated as orderly. Again, this relates to Garfinkel's documentary method of interpretation: the world is routinely seen by participants as orderly, with underlying patterns. Instances of patterns, while routinely varying to some degree, are oriented to as providing further examples of potential specifics of the underlying patterns in which they appear rather than undermining the orderliness of the world. The orientation towards the orderliness of the world is maintained despite variations in specifics, through participants' understanding, and appreciation, of the loosely regular nature of underlying patterns.

This understanding of order contrasts to some extent with a conversation analytical sense of order which would be illustrated through the analysis of actions in sequence. The sense of order that I am concerned with is one which participants attend to as underlying their discourse, being represented by their discourse, warranting their discourse's status as factual, reasonable, logical, etc., as statements about the world as it exists in and of itself. I am not talking about an orderly pattern or organization to the discourse itself, where participants' turns are sequentially relevant to each other, as in an answer following a question.

However, this distinction between pattern and method is best seen as a fuzzy one. The status of some discourse as, say, a question is negotiable. The status of any



discourse as displaying some particular, self-evidently represented object is up for negotiation. It is determined locally, in situ, within interaction. Participants determine whether or not some discourse represents the world sufficiently for all practical purposes. Included in doing so is attending to the way in which, as a turn of discourse, what is said is relevant to prior turns; that is to say, whether or not it is relevant within the sequential organization of the interaction. As Schegloff and Sacks (1973) point out, if discourse can be said, by analysts, to exhibit some pattern, or organization, it does so in the first place for the participants engaging in the discourse. For instance, talk provided as an answer to a question which, although perhaps relevant in some context, is seen by participants as not relevant as answer to this question, would be treated much like the interviewer's first turns in the instances of dispute looked at above; it would be treated as not an answer to the question and, consequently, not representing a sufficient, or proper, understanding of the world in that situation.

The analysis in this chapter serves as an illustration of how order is an issue for participants; how its status as an issue gets played out. As an assumption left unverified, it serves as a basis upon which more particular aspects of its pattern are constructed, yet it is also treated by participants as interactionally relevant in terms of having their contributions to the interaction being taken as for all practical purposes reasonable.

A final point to make here is that this focus upon participants' attention to order, in the sense I have built up, has been a consequence of looking at football discourse. In looking at the data what has struck me as particularly significant has been the orientation amongst the participants towards the assumption of football, and the world in general, as orderly, and, relatedly, the way in which the order assumed within the situation of the discourse is treated as the basis for particular information as being relevant to seek, and information provided as being relevant to provide. This investigation of the issue of order here has arisen as a consequence of seeking to provide an understanding of this discourse as football discourse.

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In this chapter I have looked at how within discourse there is a normative assumption of order within the world. That assumption serves as a starting for discourse. However, this assumption of order, rather than merely displaying the participants' attention to the nature of the world, reflects what Schutz's principles on social action make relevant as well as Garfinkel's work in demonstrating the significance of those principles in social action. The aim of this chapter was to illustrate this point.

The first evidence for this point was displayed as lying in that fact that the assumption of order within the world, and some particular aspect of that order as relevant in the particular situation of the discourse, is accomplished through interaction. This is the case even if discourse follows problematically, or in dispute of the particular order made relevant in prior discourse. It is only through the interaction that we can see the normativeness of this assumption in participants treating the world as ordered together. Participants were also shown to attend to this interactional nature of the confirmation of order. While there is flexibility in construction in terms of what can be said, speakers routinely attend to the constraint of others being in the position to confirm their discourse's relevance. It is of interest to participants to have the particular order they treat as relevant within a context taken up by other participants. The construction of their discourse, as accommodative, reflects this interest. The assumption of order, and the particular order assumed, is routinely accomplished within the moment of discourse for the moment of discourse and attended to as such. The interactional nature of the assumption of order's normativeness stands as evidence for the order which maintains this assumption as social in origin.

The loose fit of discourse upon the object of its description, as a feature of the normative assumption of order within the world, provides further evidence for its status as social in origin. Discourse cannot be described in a way to represent exactly what the speaker takes as relevant. The possibility of infinite elaboration exists. In ceasing to elaborate some aspect of the discourse is necessarily left unverified within it. It is treated as simply understood. However, as illustrated, any unverified aspect of discourse is available to be undermined as understood. The unverified nature of what discourse treats as understood creates the routine potential of uncertainty within the interaction where the relevance of that discourse is concerned.



The way in which participants deal with this uncertainty treats it as an interactional concern rather than problematic for the assumption of order. The interviewees, here, were displayed to account for the particulars they made relevant within their answers. They accounted for those particulars as the answer to the question. In doing so they managed this concern of what exactly the questions were after in constructing their answers as correct in relation to other possibilities. The uncertain, unverified nature of the discourse, and interactional manner in which it is dealt with, displays that the assumption of order, rather than being based on self-evident truths we can all get to which are solid against argument, is simply based upon, or maintained through, participants mutual orientation towards it within their discourse.

In dealing with this potential uncertainty the interviewees provide contextual particulars in constructing what they take to be the relevance of the question discourse. In doing so they display themselves as attending to the unspoken yet relevant within the questions. Knowledge of the context is necessary. Again, discourse does, and can, not self-evidently represent what it describes. It is there for other participants to do that understanding. Again, the maintenance of the assumption of order is an interactional matter. Here, the extent of that nature becomes more evident. Participants do not display how prior discourse simply is, or would normatively be described as, relevant. They display how they take prior discourse to be relevant. This was illustrated as apparent within instances of dispute over the order assumed in prior discourse and when the interviewees' answer discourse formulates the question discourse.

Participants attend to the relevance of prior discourse and provide understandings of it they take to be relevant rather than merely working within the framework provided by prior discourse. This flexibility is available to participants given the unverified nature of the order assumed. It remains unverified and so does not restrict what can be constructed in subsequent discourse as relevant in terms of contextual particulars and including the appropriateness of another underlying order. It is also important to note here that participants are afforded flexibility in terms of what they can construct as a consequence of generally not being faced with the task of constantly, and exhaustively, explaining, and re-explaining, the relevance of their

discourse. They can be, and are, at times asked to do so. However, again, eventually their explanation will be allowed to end and some points would remain unverified. That which remains unverified serves as the basis for what is made relevant in that discourse, which, in turn, allows for subsequent speakers to construct what they take as relevant.

The organization of social action provides both flexibility as well as constraints. The construction of discourse, built upon this assumption of the existence of order within the world, reflects this nature. On the one hand, the loose fit and indexicality of discourse provides speakers with the freedom to build their discourse, and understandings within it, as they see fit. They are not forced to use certain descriptions for certain objects. No descriptions self-evidently represent the object they describe. If this were the case, each object within the world would have its own word. Fortunately, we are not faced with such a reality. On the other hand, the assumption of order and participants' attention to their expectations of others and others' expectations of them within interaction, as a consequence of this assumption, ensures their treatment of the construction of discourse as to some degree an activity which imposes constraints upon them in doing it.



Notes:

- 1 - In this manner, the use of 'you guys' as a categorisation device embodies Wetherell and Potter's (1992) view of group phenomena and membership. In contrast to cognitive approaches such as 'social identity theory' and 'self-categorisation theory' where psychological realities are seen as the basis, and driving force behind, intergroup relations, including the processes of categorisation (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987; Hogg and Abrams, 1988), Wetherell and Potter suggest that its basis, and driving force, lies

within discourse as a part of a collective domain of negotiation, debate, argumentative and ideological struggle. (1992: 77)

They add that

the identity and forms of subjectivity which become instantiated in discourse at any given moment should be seen as sedimentation of past discursive practices. A sense of identity and subjectivity is constructed from the interpretative resources — the stories and narratives of identity — which are available, in circulation, in our culture. (1992: 78)

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## CHAPTER 4: BUILDING DISCOURSE AS ANSWERS

In this chapter I shall look at the way in which the interviewees construct their answer discourse as such in contributing to making the interaction recognisable as an interview, or question and answer. The questions and answers within the interviews are a type of adjacency pair (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). An adjacency pair is defined as:

- (1) A sequence of two utterances, which are
- (2) adjacent,
- (3) produced by different speakers
- (4) ordered as a first part and second part, and
- (5) typed, so that a first part requires a particular second part (or range of second parts).

(Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 295-296)

The construction of the answer discourse attends to this normative framework of questions and answers. The interviewer having asked a question which he can treat as being heard by an interviewee can expect a second turn of an answer. The interviewees, as answerers, would normatively be aware of this expectation and so orient to their accountability to provide answers (Heritage, 1984a: 248-254). Doing so, as an interactional concern, would be attended to by them as a constraint upon their construction of their discourse. Heritage illustrates answerers' awareness of the expectation to provide, and their accountability for providing, answers. He does so through instances where providing relevant answer discourse is not a straight forward proposition (1984). The interviewees' attention to this expectation and their accountability for providing answers can be illustrated here as well.

Extract [3.1]

- |   |     |                                  |
|---|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | I   | yeh how about yourself. (0.2)    |
| 2 |     | a: what are you looking to do    |
| 3 |     | what do you think you need to do |
| 4 | Kos | <u>well</u> I mean (0.2)         |



5 from me own personal point of view  
6 I've never played in the premier league before  
7 (0.2 ) but a: (0.4) I'm confident in  
8 me own ability that I can go in there and  
9 give a (.) give a good account of myself, (.)

Extract [3.2]

1 I you personally what are you  
2 looking to do (.) what do you think  
3 you need to improve on perhaps  
4 JC what am I looking to do?  
5 I yeh.  
6 JC (0.8) well firstly just to si  
7 you know get a place in the team and

In extract [3.1] we have an instance where the interviewee, Kos, describes his inability to answer the question; he is unable to provide the sought after information. However, he does seek to provide relevant information to the question even if it is not what the interviewer is specifically after. Kos does not simply not answer because he does not know. In extract [3.2] we have an example of what Schegloff calls an insertion sequence (1972). JC's first turn is not constructed as an answer to the question. The turn displays that he has not understood the question sufficiently to provide an answer to it. Rather than not give an answer he seeks clarification. Upon receiving that clarification he then proceeds to answer the question 'properly'. In both these instances the interviewees can be seen as going to lengths in order to provide answer discourse. Relatedly, it also displays the interviewees' orientation towards their accountability for producing answer discourse. A further characteristic of the answers in this data is that they routinely consist of accounts. In the second chapter this was displayed to be the case even when the answers exhibited the preferred turn beginning.

The extracts below provide further evidence for this characteristic in that the interviewees provide accounts even when yes or no replies are possible.

Extract [3.3]

1 I do you think about it much  
2 JC (0.8) yeh I mean its competition  
3 its good because, (0.2)  
4 I've played at lower levels where, (0.2)  
5 there's no competition  
6 and it doesn't matter how you play  
7 you know you'll play the next week so,  
8 I yeh,  
9 JC you fee you can get a bit u:m (0.4)  
10 what's the word (.)  
11 I complacent  
12 JC complacent yeh.

Extract [3.4]

1 I u::m (3) >do you think much  
2 about that type of stuff< (0.4)  
3 how do how you fit into the team and a:,  
4 MH yeh I think so I think ev everybody um's  
5 aware of their their jobs and  
6 what they have to do. (.)  
7 I °yeh.°  
8 MH within a within a group (.)  
9 within a team work. a team frame

In both extracts the construction of the question would allow for simple yes or no answers. In both cases, the interviewees provide a yes or 'yeh' answer and then proceed to elaborate on the basis for that answer. The significance of the accounts is



not down to the unlikelihood of their occurrence. It is merely down to the routineness of their occurrence. Research has been done on how participants within interviews attend to the nature of the interaction and interactional concerns which go along with it (Greatbatch, 1986; Clayman, 1988, 1992). The routineness of accounting here can be seen as a display of the interviewees' attention to being in an interview situation. They treat the situation as calling for elaboration within their answer turns. The routineness of accounts displays that the interviewees do not merely take themselves as accountable for answering. It displays that they also take themselves as potentially accountable for not elaborating.

The issue nonetheless remains, how does the construction of these accounts make them hear-able as answers to particular questions. It is not simply that any discourse following a question is an answer. This point is apparent with Schegloff's insertion sequences. Garfinkel points out that:

members' accounts, of every sort, in all logical modes, with all their uses, and for every method of their assembly are constituent features of the settings they make observable. Members know, require, count on, and make use of this reflexivity to produce, accomplish, recognise, or demonstrate rational adequacy-for-all-practical-purposes of their procedures... (1967: 8)

A brief consideration of the questions here as a resource for the interviewees in doing recognisable answer discourse will shed some light on this issue. In this data, the construction of the questions orients to the discourse within them as not displaying any knowledge. The content of the discourse is constructed as that which is obvious and apparent. It is done as what everyone or anyone would or could know. The interviewer, here, comes off as merely seeking information. This construction of the questions can be seen as orienting to a folk theory, or (tacit), common-sense understanding, about the nature of questions. The theory is that questions are asked when the answer, or sought after information, is not known. The orientation is that there is only one right answer, and its status, in terms of being known, is at issue to and/or for one, or more, of the participants in the discourse.

It could be an instance of an individual seeking information through questioning others. In this case the asker does not know the information and takes it that who they ask possesses, or potentially possesses, the information sought after. It could be a case

of an individual, possessing some information, asking questions in seeking to determine whether or not another person possesses that information (like with the 'pseudo' or 'test' question frequently documented in school classroom discourse). It could also be that both the asker and the asked are in the know and the questioning is done to enlighten a third participant, or participants. A final possibility (i.e., again, an interactional, oriented-to possibility, rather than 'actual') is that questions are asked in order to get information stated for the record. In this case the question of the knowledge at issue lies with its official, documented status. There need be no person involved, whose knowledge of some information is at issue. The example of confirming one's name in the witness box serves to illustrate.

Other possibilities, or versions of those stated above, potentially exist. In terms of which of the possibilities defines the question and answer of 'interviews', and so this interview, it is important to note that the status of questions and answers is locally managed. Relatedly, whether the interviewees in this data have, for instance, treated the interviewer as asking because he does not know the answers, or because he is merely seeking to get the information stated for the record, is not clear. However, the main point is simply that in asking questions the orientation is towards a not apparent, or potentially not apparent, nature of (1) the answer, or (2) the informant's state of knowledge. The purpose in asking questions, then, ostensibly in search of some information, is the display of that information in discourse, under the conditions where it may be (treated as) differentially known by the asker and answerer. This nature of questions serves as a resource for answers to do recognisable answer discourse whatever their state of knowledge.

Consequently, the interviewees' construction of their discourse as an answers reflects this nature of questions. As the answerers here the interviewees are taken as those in the know. On the one hand, their discourse is constructed as providing information that is relevant, and understood in relation, to the question discourse. It is the sought after information. On the other hand, it is constructed as providing information that is not readily apparent, or known, prior to its appearance in the discourse. It is relevant as information to seek.



## ACCOMPLISHING RELEVANCE TO THE QUESTION

One of the tasks in constructing answer discourse that is see-able as such is displaying, or accomplishing, its relevance to the question discourse. There is a problem here in that discourse, as we saw in the previous chapter with the loose fit of discourse upon the object of its description and discourse's routine indexicality, does not self-evidently represent what it describes. Regardless of what the interviewees construct as relevant in their answer discourse it nonetheless remains up to the interviewer to interactionally confirm that discourse as an answer. The same interactional confirmation holds for the questions being confirmed as such by the interviewees providing answer discourse and is routinely the case in discursive interaction.

The interviewees attend to this issue of interactional confirmation in their answer discourse. They do so to a great extent through the routine construction of the answer discourse as, or in, script formulations.

Scripts are mental representations of routinely structured social occasions such as going to a restaurant or visiting the dentist. (Edwards and Potter, 1992:20)

In cognitive psychology script formulations are treated as merely illustrations of these 'mental representations'. However, in discursive psychology the approach to such formulations is different. The approach is towards looking at the sorts of interactional work script formulations accomplish.

The particular type of interactional work routinely accomplished through the use of script formulations which is important for my purposes here is that within them 'actions and events are described as more or less routine and expectable' (Edwards, 1994: 1). The way in which script formulations present activity within discourse treats the relevance of that activity as simply apparent, or understood, for other participants in the discourse to see. This understood nature serves to invite the interviewer, and other potential participants, to see the relevance of the answer discourse to the questions. In doing this work the script formulations take various forms of which a few will be illustrated here. The identifying aspect of these script formulation types will be the ordering factor for the activity within the script. The way in which the activity's details are ordered within the script formulation contributes towards its accomplishment as routine and expectable.

### *The chronological*

The identifying aspect of these script formulations is that within them time is the ordering factor for how the activity proceeds.

#### Extract [3.5]

- 1        I                    u:m what goes on in the a: (0.2)  
2                            in the dressing room before games °you know°  
3        TC                    again its quite relaxed a::m (0.2)  
4                            usually have the music blaring out. a: (.6)  
5                            then about three quarters of an hour  
6                            before the game, (0.2)  
7                            the boss comes in, (0.2) tells us what he wants,  
8                            (0.2) pattern of play and all that sort of thing  
9                            and then ↑just go out and do it?

In this extract the question makes relevant the formulation of an underlying pattern for the activity within the answer discourse. With ‘what goes on’ in line 1 the interviewer orients to ‘the dressing room before games’ as an ongoing, regular context. The potential of generalising from past instances to the underlying regular features of the activity within that context is treated as apparent and routinely do-able. The interviewer, although treating what the underlying regular features of the activity are as sought after, nonetheless treats the regularity of their occurrence within that activity as known, or self-evident. TC tacitly agrees with this orientation within the question in simply providing a description of the activity as loosely regular within a script formulation.

‘Its quite relaxed’ in line 3 describes the context in question as possessing an underlying dispositional feature that runs throughout it. In line 4 ‘music blaring’ as what ‘usually’ happens is described as a generally re-occurring aspect of the context. With ‘then about three quarters of an hour before the game’ in lines 5 and 6 a the



chronological nature to the context becomes apparent. The period of time within the context is determinant for what one can expect to be going on. With 'the boss comes in, (.) tells us what he wants,' in lines 7 the orientation is towards the music being turned off; the boss is not going to speak with 'the music blaring'; the orientation is also towards the underlying dispositional feature of the context turning towards attentiveness to what the boss is saying; first, he is the boss, or the man in charge; second, what the boss wants is what they are to do immediately after he tells them which they are accountable for as players, and as players who would like to play in future games. 'Then just go out and do it' in line 9 accomplishes this immediacy.

To start with, the expectable nature of the activity within the context can be seen as built through the chronological element of the discourse. As the game nears the activity is described as becoming more game oriented right up to the point when then simply go out to play to take part in the game. It is the loose regularity of the activity, exemplified most clearly by the use of such terms as 'usually' (line 4) and 'about' (line 5), that serves to accomplish the routine nature of the activity. TC describes the underlying regular features which can be expected and generally when they can be expected to occur within the context. This loosely regular nature is consistent with what participants generally expect within the activities they take part in (Heritage, 1984a:96). The question making relevant such a description of the activity serves as an example, or illustration, of this expectation. Participants expect particular instances of activities to display underlying regular features of that activity. The variation of specifics, though, is expected as well and so not totally convoluting generalisations of the pattern. The answer, then, can be seen as displaying the activity in a manner that would routinely be understood given this common-sense knowledge of underlying patterns.

### *Contrasts*

In these extracts contrasting script formulations are described which serve to build the routine, expectable nature of the activity at issue. Included here are script formulations with conditional elements. That is to say, what happens is described as depending on the circumstances. The conditional elements are routinely embedded within if-then

statement in the form of 'if A then B, but if X then Y'. The first extract below provides such an example.

Extract [3.6]

- 1 I u:m (.) do you talk to-  
2 talk about it- (.) with anybody?  
3 BG [the players ]  
4 I [how you played] yeh (.) players or,  
5 BG you do for a little while after the game  
6 I [°yeh.° ]  
7 BG [probably] mor:e sometimes  
8 if you've (0.2) if you have a bad defeat  
9 you'll talk about it a lot more.  
10 on a coach journey or whatever. (0.4)  
11 I yeh.  
12 BG but if you if you play well its (.) like well  
13 done and (.) you know you get on with it and  
14 you (0.2) you enjoy your weekend sort of thing

In this extract the question 'do you ...' in lines 1 and 2 orients to the potential of talk about play as a routine feature of a footballer's life. The basis of this potential is the normality of talk occurring within the world between participants about their activity. Football is an activity within the world, so logically there is the potential of talk about play existing as an aspect of some general underlying pattern within football. In answering BG confirms this routine expectancy with 'you do for a little while after the game' in line 5. 'After the game' represents a re-occurring context within football which takes place immediately after play occurs. It is the ordering factor of the talk that occurs.

Again, the routineness of the activity, here talk, is accomplished through the description of it occurring in a loosely regular fashion. The formulation of 'probably more sometimes' in line 7 contributes to the building of this loose regularity. With it



BG relates the expectation that in particular circumstances talk is likely to occur more. That is to say, he would expect it to occur more in particular circumstances but he attends to it not necessarily doing so. In lines 8 to 14 the underlying pattern of the loose regularity is provided. It is done through the construction of a hypothetical, if-then, statement in which the standard of performance, bad or good, is displayed as consequential for the degree of talk which occurs. The formulations of 'a bad defeat' in line 8 and 'on a coach journey or whatever' in line 10 as when more talk occurs contribute further to the description of talk's occurrence as loosely regular. They are particular potential aspects of instances of defeats rather than general aspects of all defeats.

With the particularity the orientation is towards the likelihood of more talk occurring within normal, run of the mill, defeats as less certain than its occurrence in instances of defeat where these aspects are relevant. More talk can be expected to occur within these instances with greater frequency than in others. Although there is regularity, talk does occur, the particularity here helps to emphasise the looseness of it. Not only is more talk likely to occur when things have gone wrong, which is one distinction; it is even more likely to occur when things have gone wrong under particular conditions, which is a further distinction. It is also important to remember that while the variable nature of circumstances is significant for the talk which occurs, the particular circumstances which become relevant are described as only having likely, rather than certain, influence over what happens. The generality of 'play well', 'get on with it' and 'enjoy your weekend sort of thing' also contribute to this loosely regular nature. They are recognizable routine, generally applicable, non-situation-specific items.

The expectable nature of this underlying pattern is built throughout the extract. It stands to reason that talk about play would routinely occur immediately after instances of play. The game would be a specific instance of play to talk about, fresh in the memories of the participants given its recency. The hypothetical, if-then, nature of the discourse can be seen as providing 'a reassuring sense of rationality' (Edwards and Potter, 1992: 162). It presents the activity within a form that people are used to seeing, come to expect and which serves to build the reasonable nature of the particular within it. The contrast between what happens after playing poorly and

losing and what happens after playing well contributes greatly to the expected nature of the activity as well. The details provided do the work.

The negativity of 'a bad defeat' gives a sense of the circumstance as one in which accounting for the result would be a concern to players. Again, it is not a normal, run of the mill, defeat. It is one where things have gone particularly wrong, or the defeat has particular underlying significance to the team (such as in a derby match). 'On a coach journey' places the players within a situation where they are all sitting down with nothing as the central focus of their activity for some period of time. In contrast to a situation in which they are in the changing room after the game, showering and dressing, moving about, where a sustained conversation might be difficult, 'on a coach journey' provides an ideal situation for sustained, deliberative conversation on the events of the game. 'Or whatever' simply generalises to other such instances of opportunities of talk to occur more.

With 'play well' rather than being particular and excluding general instances as in the previous discourse, BG is inclusive in terms of the performances he makes relevant. He allows for variation between results of winning and losing. That is to say, he attends to the possibility of losing and playing well and not only of winning and playing well. 'Get on with it' and 'enjoy your weekend sort of thing' attend to the normative understanding that teams train and prepare in a certain manner in order to play a certain way in games. ('Get on with it' is particularly indexical totally leaving to shared common sense what kinds of specific activities it might entail and so inviting the interviewer to understand it as he will.) The understanding being that in playing that way they are giving themselves the best chance for success in winning the game. 'Play well' represents performances in which the team has carried out their game plan as well as could be expected, regardless of results. In such instances there would routinely be little to deliberate upon or account for within the performance.

Extract [3.7]

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | I    | u::m how do you prepare yourself for games.  |
| 2 |      | (0.6) you know? at home or at the ground (.) |
| 3 |      | and at the ground I should say               |
| 4 | Hoff | u:::m >I just try and relax                  |



5                                   and not really I don't really  
6                                   try and think about it too much<  
7        I                           yeh,  
8        Hoff                       I'm not one of these who (their self) (0.8)  
9                                   you know mentally prepare their selves  
10                                  for a couple of days  
11                                  thinking about whatever it is (0.2)  
12        I                           yeh,  
13        Hoff                       as far as I'm concerned you know I'd? (0.6)  
14                                  look on a match day I'd rather turn up  
15                                  at ten to three get changed and go out.  
16        I                           yeh,  
17        Hoff                       and then whatever happens happens you know?

Similar to in extract [2.5], in the question the interviewer here presupposes, or constructs, the activity at issue as routine, scripted. He treats as understood that the activity possesses some underlying regularity. In this case, it is that players maintain regularity within their preparation for games. The interviewee, here Hoff, unproblematically accepts that view of the activity and answers accordingly in simply providing some general features of his preparation. Again, the description of the activity as loosely regular contributes to the accomplishment of its routineness. Hoff also builds the routineness of the activity through minimising the significance of it as well as other types of activities which might occur within its context. Hoff treats the activity as more routine than others given this lack of significance of what can, and does, get done.

With 'try' in both lines 4 and 6, using the generalized, or iterative, present tense, Hoff describes himself as normally pursuing, or not pursuing, certain ends within his preparation. 'Try' also attends to the variability of what ends up happening despite what his intentions are. In line 4 with 'just' Hoff minimises the significance of 'try and relax' as a preparatory activity. It is no big deal. It is not some particularly significant preparatory activity within football. With 'I don't really try and think about it too much' in lines 5 and 6, rather than say 'I try not to think about it', Hoff attends to

thought as potentially conceived of as an important preparatory activity while describing it as not possessing any great importance to him as something to deliberately seek to do.

In lines 8 to 11 Hoff describes a contrasting routine of his own. With 'I'm not one of these' in line 8 he signals the status of this routine as standard sort of option for players. It is one that Hoff can say other players do partake in regularly. With 'mentally prepare ... for a couple of days' in lines 9 and 10 he formulates this routine as plan oriented and over the top. The generality of 'a couple' is important within this formulation. It does not provide an account for why the preparation is occurring then. It is as if a player randomly selects the day to begin preparation. It has no specific relevance, or importance, to game preparation other than providing an extended period of time in which to do it. With 'thinking about whatever it is' Hoff does not specify what they get up to in terms of preparing. In doing so he treats the content of the preparation as not worth going into, unimportant and possibly variable. The orientation, here, being towards the players who engage in this routine as making it up. It is what *they* decide, for whatever reason, to focus on.

In lines 13 to 17 Hoff mentions his preferred routine prior to games. It is what he would 'rather' do. In describing it as such Hoff attends to various aspects of games. The first is simply that games are of central importance within football. He could not, as a responsible football, forget about the game up until the time when he changes and goes out to play. Relatedly, he could not do that anyway. Teams have set times when players must be at the ground prior to games. Arriving ten minutes prior (given a three o'clock start oriented to by Hoff) would not be within a team's routine, especially at the professional level. However, as his preference, Hoff attention is focused on the normative inability to specifically prepare for any game. The activity within a match is situated; it must be dealt with then and there.

The contrast serves to build the expectable nature of Hoff's routine. While formulating his own routine as reasonable: he does not do anything specifically for the football on the basis that 'whatever happens happens you know', with the 'you know' inviting treatment of this as common knowledge. The alternative is formulated 'in an unconvincing or problematic manner' (Edwards and Potter, 1992: 163): the



formulation of the contrary routine describes such preparations as other do, as somewhat excessive and contrived. The nature of football does not require all that.

### *Actual events*

Here, actual events are the causal, or ordering, factor of the pattern, or patterns, within the script formulation. Events are displayed as the basis for a particular pattern being relevant to perform, or for what pattern becomes relevant within a context.

#### Extract [3.8]

- 1 I how about yourself. what are you looking to do.  
2 (.) what do you think to a (.) do better perhaps  
3 MH well I think a: (.) I think you just need to:  
4 to be on on the t on top of your game  
5 as much as possible  
6 I [yeh, ]  
7 MH [because] of the opposition  
8 you're now coming against  
9 the best players in the country (.)

In extract [3.8] MH accomplishes the construction of a script as both of particular importance to follow as well as routine within football as one to follow. This work occurs within lines 3 to 5. The script's particular importance is accomplished through its construction as a need. There are two aspects of the concept of needs that are important here. The first is that needs are not simply possessed. The script is not something that just happens. It is not something that players can simply expect. The necessity of the players' intentional pursuit of the script is understood. The second point about needs is that they are constituent necessities in order to achieve desired consequences. That is to say that in order to have the chance at accomplishing desired consequences one must fulfil their needs. The realisation of desired consequences is down to the situated pursuit of them which needs contribute to putting participants

into a favourable position for. Consequently, in fulfilling one's needs desired consequences are not necessarily realised.

The routine nature of the script as one to pursue is built through these lines as well. With 'just' in line 3 the script as something one needs to do is normalised or treated as ordinary. It does not constitute pursuing some particularly specific, or unique, course of action within football. The description of it in lines 4 and 5 serve to confirm this nature as well. Being 'on top of your game' (line 4), or playing one's best, is routinely an issue to players. They would, as a matter of course, be expected to seek to play their best. It is a common knowledge sort of understanding about players. With 'as much as possible' (line 5), rather than leaving the continual, ongoing nature of the script's relevance as understood, MH describes it. Again, players would be commonly expected to seek to play their best whenever they can. Describing this continual, ongoing nature orients to two points. The first is that merely trying to play one's best does not mean they will. The second point, one important here for the construction of the activity as what would routinely be done, is that each time they go out to play presents another opportunity in which to make the effort.

In lines 7 to 9 MH attends to the script as particularly important here despite its routine nature within football as a script for players to pursue. With 'the opposition you're now coming against' in lines 7 and 8 the emphasis is on new circumstances. The change has created this particular importance of the script. It is not, and has not, always been relevant as such. The line also serves to set up and emphasise the significance of the specific nature of those new circumstances to come in line 9. With 'the best players in the country' the new opposition are categorised. The categorisation excludes MH and his team. That is to say, they are not the best players in the country.

The expectable nature of the particular importance of this routine script within football for this team is accomplished here. As the routineness of the script displayed (with 'as much as possible') there is a variable nature to performances. This variability is routine within football. Players and teams are not always on top of their game. Even the best players will not always play their best. It is particularly important for MH and his team to do so in playing against, yet not being, the best players in order to give themselves a chance at success in their new circumstances. Only in being on top



of their game will they give themselves the chance to beat the best players, especially if the best are not on top of their game on the occasion. The categorisation of their new opposition as 'the best' warrants the expectable nature of the script as a particular need for this team. The script, then, is accomplished as both routine and expectable within football, as well as routine and expectable as a particular need of this team in the circumstances they are in.

Edwards point out that:

script formulations can be ways of formulating actions to ... make them perfectly normal, what everybody or anybody would do, as routine, not needing any special account. (1994: 8)

The details of the activities offered in these script formulations serve to build the routine, expected nature of the activity. In doing so they accomplish the relevance of the answer discourse to the question discourse. The discourse presents the actions as understood and serves to invite the interviewer to see its relevance to the question. The script formulations are occasioned by the interactional concerns in constructing the discourse. For instance, the scripted nature of the activity described attends to the presupposition in the question discourse towards the scripted nature of the activity. The interviewer, to a certain extent, gets what he asked for; he is 'accommodated', which contributes to the accomplishment of the answers being taken as relevant to the questions. This is routinely the case in the discourse under examination here. However, the scripted nature of the discourse does not only accomplish the relevance of the answer discourse to the questions. It also accomplishes the information provided as sought after in constructing its particularity. How it does so will be the next issue of consideration.

## ACCOMPLISHING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED AS SOUGHT AFTER

The answer discourse goes further than accomplishing its relevance to the questions in constituting the nature of the interaction through its construction. An inherent aspect of information sought after within questioning is, again, that it is not known in some

regard. The scripted nature of the interviewees' responses can be seen as attending to this nature as well. While script formulations construct activity as routine and expected they also, as we saw to some degree in extract [3.8] above, construct the activity as particular in some regard. That particularity accomplishes the information provided as sought after, or relevant to seek. It is not known or apparent within the world. It is treated by the interviewees as particular information that they, if anyone, have access to or know given their status as professional footballers. The task below will be to illustrate the manner in which the script formulations and the details provided within them serve to build and accomplish the particularity of the information provided within the answer discourse.

### *Chronological*

In these script formulations one issue relevant in accomplishing the particularity of the activity in question is routinely its private nature. Given the private nature of the activity, one would have to be a part of it to know how it routinely proceeds. Another relevant issue is related to the fact that the descriptions provided routinely take the form of generalisations from particular instances of the activity in question. The loose regularity of the activity exemplifies the discourse's generalised nature. The upshot being that individual instances of the activity vary. Here is where the particularity of the activity lies. Not only is the activity routinely a private one, but in order to grasp how it routinely proceeds as a participant in it one would have to routinely be a participant. The experience of one instance of the activity would not be sufficient to see the potential variations of the specific aspects of it.

### Extract [3.9]

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | I  | u::m what do you do:: you know                     |
| 2 |    | prior to games how do you prepare yourself         |
| 3 | JC | (0.6) u:m (0.4) up (.) on a saturday game          |
| 4 |    | I like to lie in bed till maybe eleven (.) o'clock |
| 5 |    | I sleep in quite a lot. (0.2) a: I usually- (0.4)  |
| 6 |    | just- maybe watch a little bit of tv in bed and,   |



7                   (.) usually have some cereals, (0.2)  
8                   about twelve o'clock, and a cup of tea.  
9        I            yeh,  
10     JC            just some just generally (.) laze about and  
11                   then, (0.2) ↑get ready, and go to the game

There are a number of different aspects about the details given in this extract that serve to accomplish the particularity of the information provided in the discourse. The first lies in the mundanity of the details given. Upon first glance they do not seem to represent preparation activity. JC simply describes his morning routine without explicitly constructing its relevance as preparation activity. Its status as occurring prior to going to the game is the routine's only evident relevance to the game. The routine's status as preparation activity is accomplished in part through its appearance as a reply to the particular question; a question which seeks JC's routine preparation activity. For instance, if the question simply asked 'what do you do prior to going to games' the particularity of this script as specifically preparation activity would not be achieved. The particular nature of this activity as such can be seen as lying with its seeming lack of relevance as such. It is not described as, or what would be taken as in the absence of being described as, preparation activity which accomplishes its status as such as particular.

A second aspect of the details contributing to the particularity of the information is their status as personal to JC. 'I like to ...' in line 4 and the continued use of the first person accomplish this personal nature. JC does not describe himself as pursuing some norm of preparation. He describes what he does as particular to him and as a consequence of his preferences. 'On saturday games' in line 3 makes relevant another aspect of the details offered that runs throughout the extract in one form or another. Basically, it displays the particular preparation routine to follow as relevant for games that occur on a particular day. Preparation can vary depending on the day in which the game takes place. 'Usually' in lines 5 and 7 as well as 'till maybe' in line 4 and 'about' in line 8 also serve to accomplish the variability of the activity. Here the variability occurs within the Saturday routine. Instances vary. This script only picks up generalities. There is no plan of preparation JC rigidly sticks to. The sought after

information cannot be exhaustively provided. Its particularity within instances being the cause.

The details contribute further to the particularity of the information displayed. JC describes lying 'in bed till maybe eleven o'clock' (line 4) as sleeping in 'quite a lot' (line 5). In noting that he 'sleeps in quite a lot' JC displays doing so as a particular aspect of his routine. JC describes himself as 'just maybe' watching 'a little bit of TV' (line 6). He treats his TV watching as possessing a particular nature. It might occur as the type of thing available for him to do while he is in bed rather than as something he does for the purpose of watching, say, a particular show or as his particular way of relaxing. Finally, JC also describes himself as 'just generally' lazing about (line 10). He lazes about in the way that anyone would do so. His lazing about does not possess a particular nature. Doing things in the commonly understood manner is routinely a default position. In simply saying, for instance, that you laze about, the orientation would be towards others taking you to mean that you laze about in the way that they, or anyone, might do so. The particularity of this information here is accomplished by JC in making evident the normalcy of what he does. He does not simply leave it as understood. Lazing about in the 'normal' manner is taken by JC to be in some respect a particular aspect of his routine.

### *Contrasts*

In these script formulations the interviewee's orientation is towards the relevance of the answer as not apparent, or clear, except in relation to the contrasting possibilities. The information sought after is treated as particular to the extent that one must see its place within the context as a whole in order to realise its nature.

### Extract [3.10]

1	I	how do you think it'll: work out
2		in the a premier league
3	Kos	(0.8) I think as long as (.) every one of us
4		a u I mean I'm not kidding myself
5		I mean if you go into the premier league



6 thinking its going to be: (0.2) you know? (0.4)  
7 a piece of cake, just going to  
8 go in there and stroll around, (0.2)  
9 you're going to get your asses kicked  
10 but (.) to be perfectly honest if you go in there  
11 with the right attitude with a squad of players  
12 everybody working hard for one another (0.2)  
13 a.: having a go everybody pulling together I'm sure  
14 we'll a: ↑give a good account of ourselves

Kos's team has just been promoted to the premier league. The question here seeks his opinion on how the team will do in their new circumstances. In seeking opinion the interviewer can be seen as presupposing the particularity, or unknown nature, of the information even to Kos. That is to say, he does not expect Kos to tell him exactly how the team will do. In line 3 Kos moves to simply provide an answer and say how he thinks they will do. However, in line 4 he attends to doing so as not sufficiently providing an answer to the question. This line begins to build the particularity of information Kos will provide. 'I mean' in line 4 prefaces an explanation to follow. There is a necessity to explain the relevance of the initial discourse, or why an answer cannot simply be provided. With 'I'm not kidding myself', as an explanation, Kos formulates his awareness of the situation. In formulating his awareness of the situation the orientation is towards the task of answering this question given the situation as not a straightforward issue. For the team the situation is not ordinary.

In line 5 'I mean', again, prefaces an explanation. There is a necessity to elaborate in order to convey an understanding of the immediately prior discourse. In providing this explanation Kos describes two contrasting scripts. In the first script, thinking that the game is going to be 'a piece of cake' and that you are 'just going to ... stroll around' is a formulation that describes participants as not actively pursuing normative desired consequences within football. Rather, they simply expect those consequences to come. Getting 'your asses kicked', or losing and not realising desired consequences, would be an expectable consequence of pursuing such a course of action. In the second script the formulation of the participants' activity describes them

as pursuing normative ends. Giving 'a good account' of themselves as the likely consequence, rather than achieving desired consequences, attends to the routine variability of consequences within football. Despite the routine and expectable nature of these scripts the discourse nonetheless also builds the particularity of the information provided. What is significant here is how the contrast accomplishes the particularity of how Kos thinks his team will do which appears at the end of the second script.

Again, with 'I mean' in line 5 Kos displays the necessity to elaborate in order to explain. That necessity treats the information to follow as not self-evident, or apparently relevant, here. Also in line 5 the scripts to follow are described as particular to 'the premier league'. They are particularly relevant within it, or for Kos's team's participation in it. In the first script, lines 5 to 9, the simplicity of the details provided, rather than merely pointing to the routineness of the script, accomplishes its particularity in that they display Kos attending to the need to explain in terms that are understood and easily accessible. Making common-knowledge understandings relevant through the formulations of 'piece of cake', 'just going to ... stroll around' and 'get your asses kicked' accomplishes this work.

'But' in line 10 packages the discourse, and so script, to follow as contrastive. 'Give a good account' in line 14 as how Kos thinks the team will do if they follow this script, although seemingly cautious, expectable and so not particularly 'news' to be reporting, is built up as particular in contrast to the initial script provided. It is accomplished as not simply expectable within football that the team will 'give a good account' of themselves as a consequence of the need to follow the particular script as well as there being another possibility for how they might approach their circumstances. 'To be perfectly honest' (line 10) contributes to the particular nature of the expectation. With it Kos comes off as attending to his discourse to follow as potentially displaying arguable information. It is treated as not what anyone would see as a possible expectation given the circumstances of going into the premier league for this team. It needs to be grounded as relevant, which Kos does through the use of his honesty. Doing so displays his personal commitment to the discourse as representing the truth.



### *Actual events*

In these script formulations a specific situation, or set of circumstances, is what has made a particular script relevant. Consequently, the information provided is treated as sought after in that it is particular to, or particularly relevant for, the situation or circumstances at hand.

#### Extract [3.11]

1     I            how are things going a:?<sup>?</sup> for the team  
2                so far this season  
3     Dom         u::m (0.2) not as well as we'd hoped,  
4                a from the (0.4) from the start of the season  
5                we had high hopes of being like,  
6                very much up there. (.)  
7                u::m we bought a lot of new players  
8                in the summer good players  
9                and um was looking to be like  
10               you know? in the top three?  
11               it hasn't happened so far,  
12               we're about mid table now,  
13               we've got a few injuries as well  
14               which has contributed to (.)  
15               to us a being where we are? (.)  
16               um and a little bit of bad luck?

In this extract the particularity of the information provided is built through Dom specifying the relevance of initial discourse within subsequent discourse as the extract proceeds. Initially, in lines 3 and 4 Dom describes the team as having not done as they had 'hoped' they would at the beginning of the season. It would be routine and expectable for teams to have certain hopes or expectations for their up coming season. Nonetheless, the specific nature of the hopes, and so failure to achieve them, is left vague here. It is not spelled out in the discourse. In lines 5 and 6 Dom provides some

elaboration on the relevance of that discourse. He describes the hopes as having been 'high' ones aimed at 'being very much up there'. Although these lines begin to specify the nature of the hopes vagueness remains. 'Being like very much up there' refers to the team's position in the league table. Although most likely referring to being near the top, it nonetheless does not specify a particular position.

In lines 7 and 8 further specification of the hopes is provided. They were based upon the team having bought 'new' and 'good' players in the summer. In lines 9 and 10 Dom provides the final specification of the hopes as having been to be in the 'top three' in the league. 'You know' signals these lines as the final specification. With it Dom invites the interviewer to now see the full relevance of what he was on about. Dom, here, attends to the interviewer's common knowledge about football as sufficient to grasp the relevance of his discourse. Doing so seemingly displays an orientation towards the relevance of the discourse in question as apparent for anyone to see. That is to say, it points to the discourse's mundaneness rather than particularity. However, doing so also orients to the idea that prior to this point the interviewer's knowledge was insufficient to grasp the discourse's relevance. It is in, again, specifying the nature of initial discourse as the extract proceeds, and finally, using 'you know' to signal the for all practical purposes understood nature of the discourse at that point, that Dom builds the particularity of the information provided.

Further details provided within the extract serve to contribute to the accomplishment of particularity as well. In lines 7 and 8 Dom mentions that the team bought 'new players'. In specifying that they were 'good players' as well the point is accomplished as having been not apparent. With 'it hasn't happened so far' in line 11 Dom specifies that not only is the team not in the top three at the moment but that they have never been in the top three throughout the season. In describing the team as 'about mid table now' in line 12 Dom displays the team as having not always been mid table. Their position has fluctuated to some extent over the season so far. Finally, in lines 13 and 14 Dom specifies the impact of the injuries on the team's position. It would be commonly understood that injuries would cause problems for a team pursuing desired ends. However, Dom nonetheless treats it as a point to make in accounting for the team's position.



In providing their discourse through script formulations the interviewees accomplish it as 'proper' answer discourse to 'proper' questions. Their discourse is accomplished as both relevant to the questions and particular information relevant to have been sought. It is important to note that, although in the analysis the accomplishment of answer discourse as relevant and as particular were illustrated separately, both occur simultaneously within the script formulations. They can be seen as two sides of the same coin. One does not appear without the other. In fact, they mutually define each other. For instance, that some activity is routine and expectable is dependent upon there being specific variable instances of the activity. That specific variable instances of some activity can be seen as representing the same activity is dependent upon there being some routine and expectable nature to the instances. It is also relevant to point out the possibility of the various types of script formulations I have described above occurring within the same discourse.

However, the interviewees' production of discourse that is see-able as answers to the questions is not merely a case of them seeking to accommodate the interviewer. They do not simply provide the sought after information in a form in which the interviewer can grasp its relevance. This issue will be addressed in the next section.

#### DEVICES CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE DISCOURSE AS ANSWER DISCOURSE

So far from the analysis it seems as if the interviewees merely attend to the interaction and the constraints which they attend to it imposing on them. They are in a position which calls on them to provide certain information in a certain manner. That is, they are in position of providing the sought after information to the questions as such. The scripted nature of their answers gives the impression that they do in fact fulfil this requirement. Doing so deals with the interactional concern of providing answer discourse. They are accountable for providing discourse that is see-able as the answers to the questions. However, the discourse is constructed, or accomplished, as doing so. In the same way the interviewer was seen to actively seek to accommodate the interviewees through the construction of the question discourse in eliciting answer

discourse in the previous chapter, here the interviewees' discourse is actively accomplished as answer discourse to accommodate the interviewer.

In order to display this point more clearly I will look at certain devices that the interviewees routinely deploy within their discourse in constituting this question and answer interview interaction as such. A few of them have already been in evidence both in building the relevance as well as the sought after nature of the information provided in the answer discourse. These devices contribute to the accomplishment of the answer discourse as such. What is significant here is that their use is not merely a case of the interviewees seeking to provide the information within their discourse in a manner which attends to the information's nature as relevant to provide within an answer. Rather, their use serves as a resource for the interviewees to come off as doing so.

As a consequence of doing this work, these devices play a part in the undermining of potential alternative versions, or arguments, to the interviewees discourse. What is evident here is that the interviewees accomplish their discourse as providing the relevant information in a way for the interviewer to see it as such. Again, like the interviewer accommodating the interviewees in seeking to get them to simply construct their answers within the order assumed within the questions, the interviewees build up their discourse as answers the interviewer can see as such in order to have their versions of the issues in question taken as definitive. It is through attending to the constraint of having to provide answer discourse that the interviewees realize the flexibility of construction in terms of building their own versions of football as relevant. Here I will look at three of these devices which appear regularly within the answer discourse and the work they do.

### *Obviously*

With 'obviously' it as if interviewees merely attend to the self-evidence of some information. Providing what is known, or apparent, is a potentially accountable activity. In a question and answer interaction it is perhaps especially accountable given the understanding of questions normatively seeking information that is unknown in some way. With 'obviously' the interviewees acknowledge their awareness of the



information's self-evidence. In doing so they account for the need to say something that is relevant yet self-evident.

Extract [3.12]

1      JC            just a case ofhh (0.6)  
2                    getting some air in lungs maybe you know getting,  
3      I              yeh.  
4      JC            (0.4) rested as much as possible, (0.2)  
5                    >obviously the manager< (.)  
6                    talks about what he thinks can be done  
7                    to help the team in the second half,

Extract [3.13]

1      TC            alright I mean  
2                    Keith Tabatznick the (0.2) the boss  
3                    he's very relaxed and a: (0.4)  
4                    he's under under a lot of press pressure here  
5                    but he's a: (0.4)  
6      I              °yeh.°  
7      TC            he tries to take that away from players  
8                    he um (.) obviously everybody's human.  
9                    he snapped and (.)  
10                   probably said the wrong thing? (.)  
11                   especially after the Watford game

In Extract [3.12] it seems as if JC is merely providing self-evident information in prefacing the manager talking at half-time with 'obviously'. The manager talking at half-time is something that anyone with a minimal knowledge of football could know. 'Obviously' can be seen as attending to JC's accountability for providing information that is known. He is merely acknowledging the nature of the information. However, this understanding of the use of 'obviously' would miss its action oriented nature. As Edwards points out:

As part of the workings ... of any kind of ordinary talk, participants define what counts as given, just so, agreed, contextual, contentious, or 'common knowledge'. The analytic task is to identify those matters as participants' categories, and to examine how they perform interactional work ... (1997)

Rather than the manager speaking at half-time simply being a self-evident point, it is best to treat it as what JC describes as such with the use of 'obviously'.

The issue is what does explicitly formulating the manager speaking at half-time as self-evident accomplish interactionally within the discourse. A look at extract [3.13] will help towards considering this issue. In extract [3.13] what is 'obvious' is that 'everybody's human'. As a human like everybody else the interviewee's boss is described as having snapped. Snapping is treated as a characteristic of all people. Again, it is as if the interviewee, TC, is simply acknowledging the self-evidence of the point in attending to his accountability for providing such information. However, although described as such, humans snapping is not 'obvious'. Rather, it is a potentially contentious point. It is arguable that all humans do not have to snap. Interactionally, the use of 'obviously' can be seen as displaying TC's orientation towards the possibility of alternative versions being produced which would undermine his initial discourse. In that discourse he describes 'the boss' as relaxed, treating the team well and that being normal for him. The potential argument being that no one can be perfect; no could always be relaxed.

With 'snapping' TC acknowledges his boss's imperfection. 'Obviously everybody's human' (line 8) does two bits of work here. First, the boss having snapped, as an exception to how he normally handles the team, is treated as merely a normal characteristic that can be expected anyone. It is not representative of how the boss is an individual. It is an example of how he is like everyone else. Here, the negativity of having snapped is dealt with. It is only an exception, of which there is only one certain example 'after the Watford game' (line 11), and it is what anybody would be susceptible to doing. Second, 'obviously everybody's human' represents an example of what Edwards and Potter called 'systematic vagueness'. It provides 'a barrier' against 'easy undermining while at the same time providing just the essentials to found a particular inference' (1992: 162). It is hard to argue against. In packaging



‘snapping’ within it, the potentially contentious nature of snapping as a characteristic of being human is attended to.

In extract [3.12] the same undermining of alternative versions can be seen to occur. In the initial discourse within the extract JC simply describes what he does during half-times. In formulating the self-evidence of the manager talking JC undermines the potential understanding of his discourse that he is answering the question wrong in only providing personal information, or that he does not know what normally takes place during half-time. The interactional contingency dealt with through the use of ‘obviously’, rather than the need to provide relevant yet self-evident information, is the possibility of alternative versions which might undermine the credibility of the interviewees’ discourse as the answer. ‘Obviously’ contributes to making the question and answer interaction recognizable as such by treating the nature of some information provided as relevant to explicitly convey. Doing so displays the interviewees as attending to the type of information that ‘should’ be provided within the interaction which they are accountable for. The two further devices to follow accomplish the same sort of work. However, rather than treating the information they are relevant to as self-evident, they serve to treat it as in some way not evident.

### *Really*

In looking at how ‘really’ is used as a device which serves to constitute the interaction as such it is first important to make a distinction between two varying uses of ‘really’ in this data.

#### Extract [3.14]

1	Hoff	I was surprised when I come here
2		how <u>relaxed</u> the atmosphere is
3		and it <u>still</u> is <u>now</u> even though we’re not
4		doing that well its, (0.2) really relaxed

#### Extract [3.15]

1	SACK	really trying to <u>apply</u> your own a: (0.2)
---	------	---

2 own a own talents out on a, (.)  
3 for ninety minutes out there

In these extracts 'really' is used to express a particularly greater nature to the activity in question than would commonly be understood. For instance, in extract [3.15] with 'really' SACK describes the degree of 'trying' he is making relevant as particularly greater than that which would commonly be understood if he had merely said that 'trying' was necessary. This use of 'really' is not at issue here for its status as a device which constitutes the interaction.

The use of 'really' that is relevant is captured in the following extracts. With 'really', here, the interviewees can simply be seen as attending to, and in doing so making apparent, the discourse it follows as not apparent, or known, but nonetheless the truth. In particular, in these extracts this apparent status of the information provided as not apparent as the truth is treated as making relevant an explanation, or account, for that nature as the case. Again, the interviewees are in a position to provide answer discourse which is understood as such, and so understood in general, to the interviewer. The use of 'really' in this way constitutes the interaction as such.

Extract [3.16]

1 TK what are they doing? a::: (1.0)  
2 its a m I th I think most of them  
3 psych themselves up for the game really  
4 you know like we have (.) >as I say<  
5 we have a little (.) a little laugh and joke (0.2)  
6 you know (.) hour hour and a half before the game.  
7 you know and (0.2) get have a little bit of fun.  
8 and then (.) I think you know, (.) af with about  
9 forty five minutes to go, to an hour.  
10 you know I think (.) they start concentrating and  
11 start psyching themselves up you know  
12 getting themselves ready



Extract [3.17]

1        I                    how about a (.)  
2                            criticism of the staff  
3        MH                  u:m (0.3) it happens but its not its not  
4                            something that a: that's that unusual, (.)  
5        I                    no  
6        MH                  its its just a (0.2) you know?  
7                            its a normal reaction really,  
8                            you're not always gonna gonna a: (0.5)  
9                            think that they they're doing the right things

In extract [3.16] TK is talking about what players are doing in the dressing before games. In lines 2 and 3 TK describes psyching themselves up as what players 'really' do in the dressing room before games. In lines 4 to 6 he explains that, first, they have a laugh and joke before the game. In lines 7 to 11 he describes this psyching up work going on as the game nears. The laughing and joking must stop. The atmosphere in the changing room must take on a different nature. The basis of psyching up going on as a not apparent truth can be seen as lying in the fact that as TK describes it here it is a personal rather than public activity. Players do it on their own. It is mental preparation for the game. That is to say, TK cannot 'really' see it going on. He can only assess the quietness of the changing room perhaps, or the demeanour of the players, given his knowledge of football and what he personally does, as psyching up activity. Consequently, attending to its truthful nature as not apparent is a bit like JC attending to the self-evidence of managers talking at half-time in extract [3.12]. In both cases the interviewees come off as merely acknowledging the nature of the information they are providing.

In extract [3.17] MH describes criticism of the staff as 'really' a 'normal reaction'. It is normal because players will sometimes disagree with what the staff are doing. Where this explanation occurs sequentially within the extract makes it relevant as providing the basis for criticism of the staff as not apparent yet the truth as a normal reaction. (It occurs in lines 8 and 9 immediately following the description of criticism as normal as not apparent yet the truth in line 7.) However, this explanation does not







own assessment. He is not the only one who thinks it. It is also not a case of players who have been there for a while having developed a particular relationship which suits them as individuals. Even those who have just come to the club have fit in and 'found' the relationship to be good. That is to say, anyone who might come to join the club would be likely to find the relationship good as well.

In the second instance (line 11), Dom attends to the need to explain how 'new players' would arrive at their conclusion. Again, it is evident that he is attending to this need to explain. He describes the 'new players' as being able to go about their business without any hassle from established players (lines 11 to 13). The 'new players' have not been forced into conforming to how things have been. They can do their own thing, which is taken as a basis by Dom for why the 'new players' have found, and consequently anyone who might come to the club would be likely to find, the relationship amongst the players to be 'quite good'. The elaboration explains how Dom's initial discourse is the case. It seems to display the use of 'I mean' here as merely acknowledging the nature of the information provided in the initial discourse. That information needs to be explained because it is not apparent how it is the case which the elaboration is accomplished as subsequently conveying.

In extract [3.19], however, we have an instance of where the elaboration which follows 'I mean' does not simply explain the discourse which preceded it. Hoff attends to the need to explain the game not meaning as much when he sees his baby (lines 5 to 7). 'I mean' occurs in line 8. As a signal of the need to elaborate in order to convey the relevance of the initial discourse for the interviewer as a consequence of the interaction's nature the orientation, or expectation, would be towards the explanation which follows to provide an understanding of how, or why, the game means less to Hoff when he sees his baby. However, 'obviously its important' (line 8) does not explain how the game means less.

Rather, it serves to account for Hoff having minimised the importance of the game. He is after all a professional footballer. He earns his living playing the game. Describing the game as not meaning as much can potentially be taken as him not caring about it. Not caring could potentially be taken as effecting his performances as well as undermining his status as a 'proper' footballer. 'I mean' serves as another device which, when deployed, provides the interviewees with the opportunity to undermine



potential alternative versions of initial discourse as a consequence of accounting for the occurrence of the elaboration to follow. 'I mean' makes relevant the interviewees elaboration as to be done in order to provide proper answer discourse, understandable to the interviewer.

In extract [3.18], then, both instances of 'I mean' serve the same purpose and provide the opportunity for Dom to account for initial discourse. For instance, take the first appearance of I mean in the extract (line 7). Describing 'new players' as having thought the players' relationship was quite good undermines the possible argument that Dom is merely assessing the players' relationship as quite good in order to avoid the interviewer thinking there are problems within the team. 'New players' are treated here as unbiased judges given their new-ness to the situation. They would have no reason for assessing the situation as such if it were not so to them. In fact, one might think it was in a new player's interests to say the opposite; that the relationship was not good. That everyone was up tight. Doing so would provide them with an account, or excuse for potentially not settling in, and playing well, or reaching their form quickly.

#### ACCOMPLISHING ANSWER DISCOURSE THROUGH INSTANCES OF CONCERN FOR THE UNDERSTOOD NATURE OF THE DISCOURSE

I want to illustrate one last way in which the construction of the answer discourse constitutes the interaction as such. Answer discourse routinely orients to the relevance of, and its relevance for, the question discourse. The issue here is the way in which subsequent discourse within an answer orients to the relevance of, and its relevance for, initial discourse within the answer. A certain script, already formulated as relevant, sought after and understood as such in initial discourse, is followed by subsequent discourse within the same interviewee's turn which treats its relevance as nonetheless not apparent within it. The interviewees *display a concern for the understood nature* of the script, or initial discourse in which the script occurs. The initial discourse is maintained as correct. However, the orientation is towards the necessity to elaborate. In elaborating within the subsequent discourse the interviewees

seek to repair the initial discourse's lack of apparentness in providing the particular relevance of the script within it.

It is important to keep in mind the action oriented nature in which the interviewees, like all speakers, construct their discourse in particular ways to achieve a particular purposes: here, the accomplishment of 'proper' answer discourse. That nature is evident within these instances of concern for the understood nature of initial discourse. The interviewees' treatment of the initial discourse within these instances of concern displays it as similar to what Jefferson(1985) described as 'glosses':

a formulation which, on its occurrence, is quite adequate, but which turns out to have been incomplete, ambiguous, even misleading. (1985: 462)

Their insufficiency is not apparent within them. Rather, 'it is in subsequent talk that their "inadequacy" emerges' (1985: 442). Here, the potential of constructing of the insufficiency of initial discourse through subsequent discourse in constituting one of these instances of concern exhibits further flexibility in terms of construction. The nature of this flexibility will be addressed further in the chapter to follow. What is important for the point I am making here is that the particularity of the information in the initial discourse is further accomplished through the subsequent discourse, in particular its relevance not being apparent within it, rather than simply through its own construction. The issue below will simply be to display this point: that the subsequent discourse treats the initial discourse as insufficient on its own, and attends to that insufficiency, through providing its relevance within the context.

Extract [3.20]

1	I	u::m the changing room?
2		what what goes on say, before games
3	JC	(1.0) <u>yeh</u> we like to have
4		a bit of a <u>laugh</u> you know?
5		I think? (0.2) a bit of camaraderie and, (.)
6		um a lot of (.) people taken the mickey out of
7		other people and, (0.2) its starts with that and
8		then it starts getting a bit more serious
9		where people are (0.2) doing some stretches



10 they go in the gym and do warm-ups  
 11 some go on the pitch and do warm-ups (0.4)  
 12 a: ↑but it can be quite tense so, (0.4) a: (0.2)  
 13 the more fun you can have in there the better

Extract [3.21]

1 I do you think about it a lot? (.)  
 2 the game, do you °you know°  
 3 Hoff >yeh.< (.)  
 4 [if ] if we lose. (.) or if we're struggling  
 5 I L°yeh.°J  
 6 Hoff like (.) we are at the minute  
 7 you think you know how? (0.4) what can I do  
 8 to to make things right.  
 9 I [yeh.]  
 10 Hoff L°u:m°J (0.2) can I say something to the manager  
 11 that might make a difference can I, (.)  
 12 say something to a mate?  
 13 that might make a difference.  
 14 I yeh.  
 15 Hoff .hh hh but (3.0) for me a new player  
 16 its a matter of getting my own house in order

In extract [3.20] in lines 3 to 11 JC describes what goes on before games. The script is chronologically organised. The activity is described as loosely regular and as the game gets nearer it becomes more game oriented. In terms of the routine, expected nature of this script in these lines the relevance of the discourse is accomplished. (It is built much like the discourse in extract [3.5] where TC also describes what goes on within his team prior to games.) Lines 12 and 13 orient to the relevance of the initial discourse rather than the question. They do not describe what goes on prior to games, which is at issue in the question. JC's orientation is towards that initial discourse as

not sufficiently representing the nature of the team's activity prior to games. In these lines the description of having as much fun as you can as important does not serve to negate or correct the initial discourse. The initial discourse is maintained as describing what JC's team does. What it does provide, which is treated as not apparent in the initial discourse, is the relevance of that activity; what JC's team does, in terms of having a laugh, is functional within football.

In extract [3.21] the same work occurs. In lines 3 to 13 Hoff describes the routine nature of his thought about the game. However, In line 15 to 16 Hoff orients to the relevance of this initial discourse as not apparent for his particular situation at the moment. The reason being that he is a 'new player'. As such he takes his primary obligations to be contrary to the pursuit of answers that will help to sort out the team's problems on the whole. That is not what he is doing at the moment, due to the nature of the moment for him, despite the routineness of it as something for him to do. In these instances of concern, in repairing initial discourse when it is not apparent that it needs repair, the interviewees orient to themselves as in a position to see the insufficiency of that discourse in contrast to the interviewer. It is as if the interviewees need to go, and so are going, to lengths in order to provide an answer for the interviewer which he can understand as it is relevant. The interviewees come off as going to lengths to accommodate the interviewer in not only providing answers but in seeking to make sure the interviewer does not go away with the wrong idea from the answers.

As I noted above, in the next chapter I will address the issue of how, through constructing the discourse as such, accomplishing initial discourse's relevance as not apparent within it, elaborating, and attending to the constraints of doing so in doing so, the interviewees realize the flexibility of construction, and accomplish some work, much like with the use of the constituting devices, in undermining potential alternative versions of their discourse.

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This chapter has looked at the way in which the interviewees' construction of their discourse serves to make the interaction recognisable as an interview question and answer. The interviewees display their awareness of the normative expectation of



those in their position, answerers, to provide answers. The interaction here simply reflects the normative framework of a question and answer adjacency pair. Relatedly, in routinely providing extended accounts within their answer discourse the interviewees not only attend to their accountability for answering but their accountability for elaborating as well. As I noted, in doing so the interviewees can be seen as attending the nature of this particular interview interaction. In it they have been placed them in the position of those who are being asked because their views are, given their status as professional footballers, of particular interest. In constructing their discourse as answers the interviewees both accomplish it as relevant to the question it is provided for as well as providing particular information relevant for the interviewer to have sought.

To a great extent they do this work through the construction of their discourse as script formulations. Edwards points out that:

scriptedness is, like plans, rules and other categories of common sense knowledge, a feature of how participants formulate and orient to action as recognizable and accountable. (1994: 35)

Through the construction of script formulations the interviewees invite the interviewer to see the relevance of their discourse as answers to his questions. Again, in constructing the activity in question as scripted it is accomplished as routine and expectable. Doing so consists of generalising from particular instances of the activity which vary to some degree, or particularising that which would commonly be taken as routine and expectable as relevant for the moment at hand. The routine and expectable nature of the activity is defined as such in relation to its particular nature and vice versa. I pointed out that despite the interviewees seemingly just providing the relevant information in a manner in which the interviewer could see it as such through the construction of the activity within their discourse as scripted they simply managed to come off as doing so. With the constituting devices I addressed this issue of the active construction of the answer discourse as such.

The use of these devices, 'obviously', 'I mean', 'really', and ones like them, contribute to making the interaction recognisable as the type of interaction it is. However, their use was shown to serve as a resource for the interviewees to come off as doing answer discourse and attending to the nature of the interaction in doing so.

As evidence, I illustrated that coming off as such through the use of the devices, rather than merely attending to the nature of the information provided, afforded the interviewees with the opportunity to undermine potential alternative versions of their discourse. The interviewees managed to accomplish their discourse as simply providing the relevant information in a manner in which the interviewer could see it as such. The issue, again, being to accommodate the interviewer in seeking confirmation of their versions of the issues in question. The use of these devices, then, provided the interviewees with a resource to actively construct their answer discourse as such, not only by building its relevance and particularity, but by dealing with potential arguments which may serve to undermine the status of their answer discourse as such.

The active construction of the discourse was illustrated further through the instances of concern for the understood nature of the discourse. The initial discourse within an interviewee's turn is treated by that interviewee as not apparent for the way in which it is relevant. There is a necessity to elaborate in order to provide that relevance. The insufficiency of the initial discourse, rather than being evident within it, is accomplished through the elaboration on it within subsequent discourse. It is the interviewee, rather than the information provided, who is consequential for the need to elaborate. Nonetheless, the interviewees, again, come off as going to lengths to accommodate the interviewer in providing answer discourse. Doing so, similar to with the constituting devices, serves as a means of getting their versions of the issues in question treated as exhibiting the reality. Again, an issue that will be addressed further in the chapter to follow.

It is through constructing their discourse as answers, in attending to everyday interactional concerns, or constraints upon their construction of their discourse, that the interviewees build the context of football through their versions of it. Although attended to as a constraint on them in constructing discourse, their attention to such everyday interactional concerns serves as a resource to accomplish their discourse as merely providing the relevant information as it has to be provided. In doing so they accomplish their own versions as definitive, or at least reasonable and so not undermining their status as footballers who are worthwhile to ask about football.



## CHAPTER 5: THE DIALOGIC, ARGUMENTATIVE NATURE OF THE ANSWER DISCOURSE

In this chapter I take a closer look at these instances where the interviewees display a concern, for the understood nature of initial discourse, which were touched on briefly at the end of the previous chapter. A central aspect of these 'instances of concern' is their dialogic nature. Discourse, with its turn taking process, routinely displays a dialogic nature. Significant for my purposes here is the way in which, within dialogue, some previous discourse is 'sequentially implicative' for subsequent discourse (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 296). For instance, in the discourse under examination the question discourse, like all question discourse, is 'sequentially implicative' for the subsequent discourse of an answer. The orientation in the subsequent answer discourse is that it is relevant given, or sequentially implicated by, the previous discourse. The previous and subsequent discourse are distinct from each other. In the question and answer discourse the dialogic nature occurs between turns. However, within these instances of concern there is a dialogic nature to the discourse within turns. That is to say, these instances of concern show the interviewees taking the opportunity to comment on the relevance of their own initial discourse before anyone, here the interviewer, has the chance to have a go at it.

Initially in this chapter I want to look at how it is that this dialogue within a turn, given the seeming interestedness of it in allowing the interviewees to attend to their own discourse before anyone else, occurs transparently. It is transparent in the sense that its occurrence within a single participant's turn is not treated as deviating from the norm. It is not treated as deviating despite its seeming interestedness and contrast from the routinely occurring dialogic nature of discourse between participants. The orientation is towards nothing particular going on. This is consistent with the way in which participants treat discourse as normatively proceeding through dialogue between turns. I will provide an example of such an instance. The point I want to stress with this example is that, in keeping with ethnomethodological theory, whether discourse can be said to have proceeded in the normatively appropriate manner or not is a participants' concern in that discourse. Consequently, in these instances of

concern the participants treatment of the discourse as not deviating from the norm displays such within turns dialogue as simply part of the norm.

I will show how this within turns dialogue resembles between turns dialogue, such as the questions and answers. In the same way in which the answers attend to the questions as such, subsequent discourse within these instances of concern attends to initial discourse as what it is constructed as: the answer to the question. This resemblance can be seen as a basis for its treatment as part of the norm. However, one must also look at the work getting done through dialogue in order to explain the treatment of the occurrence of dialogue within turns as simply part of the norm. As I noted in chapter three the uncertainty created by the loose fit of the question discourse, in terms of what the interviewer was after, was dealt with by the interviewees within their answer discourse. That is to say, the uncertainty was dealt with through the dialogic nature of the discursive interaction. Dialogue is the means through which speakers deal with the uncertainty created by discourse's loose fit, whether between or within turns. In elaborating on initial answer discourse, then, the interviewees can be seen as coming off as simply doing accommodative work in going to lengths to provide the answer as it is relevant.

The basic orientation of the subsequent discourse within these instances of concern is that it is merely done as it has to be done. The information provided is what has to be provided to convey understanding. However, similar to the way in which the interviewees were shown to accomplish their answers as such in the previous chapter, here they accomplish the discourse as possessing this nature. They attend to the constraint, or interactional concern, of having to accomplish elaboration as a necessity within it. The need to elaborate is accomplished through their discourse's construction. The interviewees merely come off as needing to elaborate. I will illustrate that accomplishing this need and elaborating, rather than simply to provide the relevance of initial discourse, serves towards the purpose of building the relevance, while undermining alternative potential understandings, of the initial discourse as the answer. The flexibility of construction, in terms of being able to comment on their own initial discourse, affords the interviewees a resource, again, for doing some work in the discourse.



Through the rhetorical design of their accounts the interviewees also accomplish the need to elaborate as a consequence of the context of the discourse being football. The need for elaboration arises in order to convey the initial answer discourse's particular relevance within football which is treated as not apparent within it. Alternative versions of the initial answer discourse are undermined on the basis that they are not relevant within football. Finally, the intricacy of the discourse's construction as a routine aspect of everyday discourse, here in accomplishing the relevance of subsequent discourse to initial discourse and initial discourse's particular relevance in the meantime, will be addressed. Doing so will illustrate another level of constraint upon, and flexibility of, constructing discourse. The intricacy obscures the constructed nature of discourse; that is to say, it obscures that discourse is constructed. At the same time, it also undermines the possibility of participants explicitly manipulating it down to the particular levels at which it is organized.

#### THE ROUTINENESS OF THE DIALOGIC NATURE OF DISCOURSE

Dialogue displays the turn taking process of discourse. It is simply an aspect of discourse's underlying structure. The following extract displays an example of the routineness of discourse's dialogic nature. The interviewer puts forwards some question discourse, 'sequentially implicating' answer discourse as the next discursive turn, which is subsequently provided by the interviewee. It is important to note that part of the force of 'sequential implication' is that anything coming next after question discourse will be heard as an answer, or perhaps some effort to gain clarification of the question discourse in order to provide an answer as in Schegloff's insertion sequences. There are no grammatical features of 'answers', just as 'questions' are often not interrogatives.

Nonetheless, this extract accomplishes the work of illustrating the routineness of discourse's dialogic nature as a consequence of the participants' orientation within the discursive interaction. The orientation is towards the dialogue simply occurring normatively between them and the discourse following as it should, or would, do so. It is also relevant to note that there are no instances of concern within this dialogue;

the discourse is treated by both participants as self-evidently representing the objects of its description. However, this last point should not be taken as significant for the participants treatment of the discourse as proceeding normatively, which will become evident later.

Extract [4.1]: *The question*

((Again, in this data the questions are constructed as if they are not displaying any exceptional knowledge. What they do display is oriented to as what anyone would know. The assumptions made relevant are common knowledge assumptions. The questions are constructed as passively seeking the display of some information.))

- 1 I u:m (0.5) before games. >you know<  
2 how do you prepare yourself

The interviewer assumes that the interviewee prepares himself for games. As I noted in the previous chapter, the interviewer also presupposes this activity to be a scripted one for the interviewee. Games are treated as important in making relevant common knowledge about preparation: important events, activities, are routinely prepared for when possible. This interviewee is not displayed as a particular type of player that would prepare himself. Preparation is treated as routine amongst players. However, individual variation in preparation is assumed in making the interviewee's preparation a particular issue. There is also an assumption towards an individual's preparation taking on a regular appearance. Players, like this interviewee, routinely prepare for games in the same sort of manner each time. The interviewer's orientation is towards there being no need to elaborate on what is meant in the question. The interviewee is treated as for all practical purposes able to understand what he is on about. He displays no concern for whether or not an answer will follow. The construction of his discourse displays the orientation towards that eventuality as inevitably, and unproblematically, occurring.



Extract [4.1]: *The answer*

((In answering the question, this account, and accounts like it, tacitly agree with the assumptions of the questions by treating them as relevant in the manner laid out in the question. Again, there is no disagreement, or concern, displayed towards the relevance of those assumptions. The account as an answer is constructed as passively conveying the information sought after.))

- 3 TK a:: well- >I normally when I when I  
4 get to the ground normally get to the ground  
5 about an hour and a half before the game.< (.)  
6 I yeh.  
7 TK and a: (0.8) a I mean have a little laugh and joke  
8 before hand, (.) you know (.) a and then. sort of.  
9 I'd say forty five minutes before the kick-off  
10 (0.2) start (.) you know concentrating hard.  
11 on the game. and I drink plenty of water, (0.2)  
12 a (.) to get the fluids going and,  
13 I yeh.  
14 TK and what- yeh

The assumptions in the question are simply taken up in this answer discourse. The common knowledge understanding of preparation is taken up in merely having the answer discourse fill in the space that the question set up as about preparation. The discourse does not label this activity as preparation activity. It is simply taken as understood from the sequential organisation of the answer following the question. The routineness, and individual variation, of preparation are picked up with 'I ... normally get to the ground about an hour and a half before the game' in lines 3 to 5. 'Get to the ground ... before the game' is displayed as an aspect of preparation activity. As such it is something everyone will have to do. Everyone 'prepares' in the sense that they at least have to 'get to the ground ... before the game'. Individual variation is accomplished with 'I normally ... about an hour and a half before'. This is when he gets there in contrast to what others might do.

The importance of the game is accomplished by displaying the nature of the preparation activity becoming more game oriented as the game nears. First, preparation is about getting to the ground (lines 3 to 5). Then it is about having 'a little laugh and joke' (lines 7 and 8). Finally, it is about mental preparation with 'concentrating hard', and physical preparation with 'I drink plenty of water ...' (lines 9 to 12). The activity is also displayed here as scripted which, again, simply picks up from the question in which the scripted nature of the activity is presupposed. 'Normally' in lines 2 and 3, along with 'then sort of (.) I'd say forty five minutes before the kick-off' in lines 7 and 8, accomplish the loosely regular nature of the pattern. They also accomplish this preparation routine as regular for TK.

In unproblematically answering the question and building that answer upon the basic, underlying assumptions made relevant within the question, TK constructs his discourse as based on the question and see-able as such. After this answer the interviewer simply moves to ask another question. In doing so he displays the orientation towards the sufficiency, or adequacy, of this answer as such. What is important here is that it is the participants' orientation towards the way in which discourse proceeds that confirms the normativeness of discourse following within dialogue.

The relevance of this analysis for the transparentness of dialogue within these instances of concern lies in Garfinkel's finding that norms become overt participants' concerns, or are made apparent, in their breach (1967; Heritage, 1984a). Proceeding normatively, as the discourse within this extract does, is proceeding transparently. The dialogue within these instances of concern routinely occurs as transparently as dialogue such as that which appears in the extract above. The instances of concern are not treated as breaches of the norm. They do not elicit a statement of the norms of discourse. Rather, they are treated as simply displaying the norm in the same manner as the extract above. The lack of a concern for the understood nature of the discourse in that extract is not part of its status as proceeding normatively. The occurrence of dialogue within turns is treated as merely a variation of the more general norm of dialogue within discourse rather than a deviation from the norm of dialogue between turns. Evidence for this dialogic nature of discourse within turns as normative in the same way as between turns dialogue is can be seen in their similarities.



## THE SIMILARITY OF BETWEEN- AND WITHIN-TURNS DIALOGUE

Despite occurring within a single participant's turn the interaction of the discourse within these instances of concern displays normative characteristics. It resembles the question and answer dialogue. Take the issue of prior turns making relevant particular subsequent turns. The construction of subsequent turns attends to their sequential implicativeness for prior turns. This is not to say that prior turns are determinant for what follows them in the subsequent turns. The prior chapter showed that the subsequent turn of an answer only achieves its sequential implicativeness through its construction. Prior turns do not determine that construction. They are not determinant for the way in which subsequent turns are relevant to, or sequentially implicated by, them.

This point is apparent within these instances of concern through the way in which subsequent discourse attends to initial discourse as correct in a particular way not apparent within it. In the same way that the answers attend to the questions as such the subsequent discourse attends to the initial discourse as what it is constructed as: the answer to the question. In the same way the answers construct the relevance of the questions as such the subsequent discourse constructs the relevance of the initial discourse as the answer.

### Extract [4.2]

1	TC	at the ground? I I think
2		I'm quite relaxed at the ground. (0.2)
3	I	yeh
4	TC	a::m I just (0.4) have a laugh and a joke
5		with the lads and [everything a:] (0.5)
6	I	└yeh yeh ┘
7	TC	just have a chat about
8		the the oppsition sometimes
9		but? (.) nothing that- (.) I don't stick to
10		any a: (0.2) set method or anything

In extract [4.2] TC is answering a question about what he does at the ground prior to games. The initial discourse in this extract occurs in lines 1 to 8. In it TC simply describes what he does at the ground. TC attends to the initial discourse as not apparent for the way in which it is relevant. He does this attending in the subsequent discourse within lines 9 and 10. In the subsequent discourse this description is treated as not sufficiently representing the nature of TC's activity. It is treated as not apparent from the description that TC's activity is not planned. TC describes himself as not having a specific routine he follows. The description in the initial discourse is made relevant as simply what he tends to do. It is loosely regular activity that occurs because the context is routinely the same rather than it being a case of TC seeking to maintain regularity within that context. Although the relevance of the initial discourse is treated as not apparent within it, it is nonetheless maintained as correct as the answer to the question. This same sort of work can be seen as done within extracts [4.3].

Extract [4.3]

1	JC	I played all last season and
2		I'll be starting at the moment so, (.4)
3		but u:m I'm under no <u>illusions</u> ,
4		if I don't play well and score some goals
5		then ↑you know? (.) I expect (.) somebody else
6		to take my place so,

In this extract JC is answering a question about what he takes his place in his team to be. The initial discourse occurs in lines 1 and 2. In it JC describes himself as having been playing for the team regularly and still doing so. The subsequent discourse occurs in lines 3 to 6. In it, what JC attends to as not apparent from the initial discourse is that he does not think, simply because he is in the side now, that he will always be in the side. Being in the team does not mean one necessarily stays there. Within these instances of concern, then, the way in which subsequent discourse attends to initial discourse displays normative characteristics of dialogue. The transparentness



of the dialogic nature of the discourse within them is, at least in part, down to that normativeness.

## DIALOGUE AS A MEANS OF DEALING WITH THE UNDERSTOOD NATURE OF DISCOURSE

A further point at issue with the transparentness of the dialogic nature of the discourse within these instances of concern is that dialogue is the means through which understandings are negotiated by participants. Participants' turns both display understanding of initial discourse and invite understanding within others' subsequent turns. For instance, the interviewees construct the relevance of the questions, particularly and as questions in general, within their answer discourse (chapter 1). We saw how in doing so the interviewees sought to account for their answers as such which displayed their attention to the uncertainty of the question created by the loose fit of discourse. However, they also seek to invite the interviewer to understand that discourse and take it as a, or the, 'proper' answer (chapter 2). The answer discourse does not self-evidently represent the object of its description. Rather, it, again, necessarily possesses a loose fit on that object. It is up to the interviewer to confirm the discourse as a 'proper' answer (as the interviewees do the questions in providing answer discourse in the manner they do). The work occurs through dialogue.

Instances of concern for the understood nature of the questions are also dealt with through dialogue. Examples have appeared in both chapters 2 and 3. The interviewees display their uncertainty in terms of what the initial question discourse is about in seeking clarification of it. Once that clarification is provided the answer routinely follows. Participants routinely deal with the uncertain nature of discourse through dialogue. These instances of concern within turns are, again, merely instances of the norm; in monitoring their own discourse the interviewees treat its relevance as unclear. They do not simply leave that answer discourse to see if the interviewer will confirm its sufficiency. The orientation is towards the possibility of the interviewer not seeing how the prior answer discourse is insufficient on its own. The interviewees

anticipate how that initial discourse will be misinterpreted and repair it within subsequent discourse.

The manner in which the interviewees do so provides an example of their attention to the interactional concern of doing understanding. The status of dialogue within discourse is action, rather than communication, oriented. Within dialogue people do not simply passively convey information to others. Rather, interactional work, such as doing understanding, is accomplished through it. For instance, one of the tasks at issue for the interviewees within these instances of concern is to be understood as needing to elaborate upon the initial discourse.

### ACCOMPLISHING THE NEED FOR ELABORATION WITHIN TURNS

The need for elaboration is not visible within the initial discourse in these instances of concern. There is little, if any, feedback from the interviewer which might influence an interviewee towards the need to elaborate and in the particular fashion, providing the particular information, which he does. Need is not accomplished interactionally between participants here. However, the need for elaboration is nonetheless accomplished in the discourse's construction through the interviewees orientation towards their initial discourse within subsequent discourse. Doing so is attended to as an interactional concern, or constraint, by the interviewees upon their construction of their discourse in elaborating.

One way in which the need for elaboration is often signalled is through use of 'but'. As a single word or utterance, here, 'but' often accomplishes particular work in the interviewees' discursive turns in the way it is used. Looking at particular words or utterances for the work they accomplish within conversational sequences has been done before. For instance, Sacks (1992) and Heritage (1984b) have both commented upon the work which the use of 'oh' accomplishes within talk. Heritage, in particular, goes into depth in looking at what is accomplished through its use and points out that there is a 'deeply structured and conventionalized character' to 'oh's' 'production and interpretation in ordinary talk' (1984b: 336). Rather than being another example of a 'back-channeling response' (Schegloff, 1982), such as 'yeh' or 'mm hm', which



provide evidence of continued attention, 'oh' is a backward looking formulation which Heritage points out accomplishes a variety of work depending on when it appears such as

noticing; having one's attention drawn to something, remembering; being reminded, informed, or correct; arriving at discoveries and realizations of various kinds, and many more. (1984b: 337)

Heritage also notes that the presence or absence of 'oh' within particular sequences at particular points in the sequence can provide certain evidence for the nature of the interaction to the participants. For instance, it is often used as a third part to question-answer sequences where the questioner's utterance of 'oh', upon receipt of the answer, displays a change of state of the questioner in terms of receiving information that, for instance, they did not know before. The absence of the third part of an 'oh' in a question-answer can be telling for the nature of the interaction taking place. It often signals that the questioner is not the main recipient of the information they are seeking to have conveyed. This is the case in institutional settings such as interviews on television and lawyers' questioning in court rooms where in the former the answers are sought for the television audience and in the latter they are sought for the judge and/or jury (Heritage, 1985).

Schiffrin (1987) also does this type of work in looking at what particular words or utterances accomplish within conversational sequences. She looks at the likes of 'well', 'and', 'or', 'so', 'because', 'now', 'then', 'y'know', 'I mean', including 'oh' and, relevant for here, 'but'. Schiffrin argues that these words and utterances possess a particular status within conversational sequences; they are discourse markers: words and utterances which 'select and then display a meaning relation' between discourse preceding and following them (1987: 320). For instance, instances in which 'and' appeared were investigated for the way in which it marks a speaker's discourse to follow as a continuation of their previous discourse in some manner, while instances in which 'or' appeared were investigated for the way in which it marks the discourse prior and subsequent to it as provided as options for other participants in the interaction. In terms of the work accomplished by 'but', the focus was upon the various ways in which it serves to mark discourse to follow it as contrastive with discourse that precedes it.

Here, the way in which 'but' packages the subsequent discourse as contrastive information to the initial discourse, relevant for an understanding of it, is of interest as well. However, the consideration of it here does not stop at pointing out 'but's' status as constructing such a relationship as contrastive. Like the constituting devices mentioned in the previous chapter, rather than simply acknowledging the nature of the information in the subsequent discourse as (actually) contrastive, with 'but' the interviewees are best seen as managing to come off as doing so. It is in coming off as such that the interviewees create the opportunity to elaborate. Elaborating, here, has further significance as well.

Attending, within subsequent discourse, to initial discourse as correct, brings with it the related orientation towards the discourse as merely displaying one argument as the answer to the question. Despite this orientation towards it this is evidently not the case. Subsequent discourse within these instances of concern stands as a distinct discursive action within a single participant's turn. It builds its own argument. It supplements the initial discourse through commenting upon its relevance. It is rhetorically designed in support of a particular understanding of the initial discourse. At the same time, in being brought off as a necessity, the subsequent discourse stands in opposition to, serving to undermine, some other potential alternative understanding of the initial discourse.

I also want to address the issue of 'but' being talked about here as a device that speakers can use to accomplish particular work within their discourse. First, I am not saying that wherever 'but' appears, whether in this data or elsewhere, that the conversational sequences possess these features I have described. Second, I want to be careful about saying that a single word can serve as a device in talk. It is simply the case that its use, or appearance perhaps, under the conditions I have described, allows more work to be accomplished through the elaboration which it precedes, and signals the necessity for, than might normatively be expected; in fact, more than Schiffrin talks about in her discussion of the term. The elaboration provided as contrastive will be displayed in the analysis to follow as not merely contrastive, if contrastive at all, accomplishing further work in terms of undermining alternative views of the initial discourse which it supports. It is as a consequence of this 'other' work being done subsequent to the use of 'but', and glossed as merely exhibiting the expected character



of such discourse, that 'but' can be seen as a device, in a very loose sense of the term, under such circumstances in the discourse.

Extract [4.4]

1 TC yeh I (.) I thought I was doing ok  
2 e e I think everybody wants to do  
3 a little bit better. (.)  
4 I [yeh ]  
5 TC [I mean] I was quite happy with um the goal ratio  
6 (0.2) u::m (0.6) but a: (.) >like I say  
7 everybody wants to do that (.) little bit better  
8 for the side and everything so,<

Extract [4.5]

1 SACK pff a loads of water (.) [and a] few pints (0.2)  
2 I [yeh, ] yeh.  
3 SACK a and chat about the game ((bit of laugh)) (.)  
4 I yeh.  
5 SACK a:: you know:: like a- (0.2)  
6 post analysis sort of thing. (.)  
7 I yeh.  
8 SACK a: (0.2) a an and you know if its a good win. (.)  
9 you know you you you're high (.)  
10 if its (0.2) if it if its a lose  
11 you know you're a bit low  
12 but a (0.2) the game's over. you know  
13 you really got to think  
14 well (.) the game's over. (0.2)  
15 I yeh.  
16 SACK and looking forward to the next game. (.)  
17 you can't dwell on it too much.

In extract [4.4] TC is answering a question about how he thought his play had been going prior to sustaining an injury. The initial discourse, as I have defined it, that is of interest here occurs in line 5. TC describes himself as pleased with the way his football had been going. The subsequent discourse prefaced with 'but' occurs in lines 6 to 8. TC seems to simply be acknowledging the contrastive nature of the information of the subsequent discourse for the relevance of the initial discourse. Even when a player is happy they routinely want to do better. That is to say, players are never simply satisfied with their past performances. In extract [4.5] the 'but' in line 12 packages the discourse to follow in the same manner as it does within extract [4.4]. However, that subsequent discourse not serve to contrast with the initial discourse.

In the extract SACK is answering a question about what happens after games. The initial discourse occurs in lines 1 to 11. SACK describes what players routinely do as well as how winning and losing effects them. In the subsequent discourse SACK attends to the need to emphasise the past, over and done with, nature of the game. It is 'over'. There is nothing you can do about it anymore. Rather, the proper focus is upon future games, for which something can be done. It seems that SACK is attending to his initial discourse not undermining the potential understanding of after game situations that players dwell exclusively on the game; trying to figure out what happened and why. The concern being that in reading such an understanding into the discourse the interviewer may view players as wasting their energy on that which they cannot do anything about anymore.

However, the initial discourse does not lend itself to such a reading. In particular, the 'analysis' that goes on about the game is initially described as 'chat'. Chat gives a sense of the talk that occurs as casual and to some extent light-hearted or inconsequential. It is not 'sit down serious'. The subsequent discourse here does not serve to explicitly contrast with the initial discourse. Rather, it can be seen as contrasting with an understanding of the initial discourse SACK anticipates the interviewer reading into it. This is what we can see this subsequent discourse doing just below the surface. However, we can go a bit deeper to see what potential understanding of the initial discourse it undermines which is see-able as a potential understanding of the initial discourse.



With 'you can't dwell on it too much' in line 17 SACK treats thought about the game as inevitable while attending to the need to limit it. That is to say, players are oriented to as necessarily focusing on the game afterwards to some extent. They do seek to figure out what happened and why. Let us remember again that SACK initially describes the analysis of the game as chat. With chat there is the potential to read the talk that occurs as not particularly important to those doing it. That is to say, a potential reading of the initial discourse is that the players do not show much concern for the game that has just occurred. They do not show much concern despite their participation within that game being important for their livelihood as professional footballers as well as the common knowledge normativeness of caring about winning and losing. With his subsequent discourse SACK can be seen as attending to this potential reading of his initial discourse. The players' concern for the game, and their participation within it, is treated as self-evident by SACK within his formulation about dwelling too much.

While the work done in extract [4.4] is not quite as involved as in extract [4.5] it is nonetheless similar. Rather than simply attending to the nature of the information to follow the 'but' simply allows TC to come off as doing so. The understanding of the initial discourse that is undermined within the subsequent discourse is the potential of complacency. That is to say, one understanding of the initial discourse in the extract is that if TC is happy with how things have gone he may not seek to do any better. He may just look to sustain that level of performance. The subsequent discourse undermines this reading of the initial discourse. Regardless of how well they are doing, or have done, players routinely look to do better. The thread running through these extracts with the use of 'but' is that the need to provide elaboration on the initial discourse is accomplished. However, rather than simply providing contrastive information, subsequent discourse provides a contrasting understanding of how the interviewees anticipate initial discourse potentially be read.

It is important to note that simply because a 'but' appears does not mean the discourse contains an instance of concern. By the same token, instances of concern routinely occur in absence of 'but' as well. The particular construction of the discourse can serve to accomplish need as well. The extract to follow will serve to illustrate.





be said but is being said. It attends to the normative requirement that MH as an interviewee here should be providing 'information' or 'news'. Consequently, with obviously MH comes off as simply acknowledging that what he is saying in his subsequent discourse is not particularly 'news' yet relevant to provide. The important point here is that the subsequent discourse, as a potential alternative answer about MH's place on the team, is treated as known. The initial discourse is accomplished as the answer to the question on the grounds that it is what is not known, or self-evident, as MH's place on the team and so information worth providing.

In terms of the subsequent discourse undermining potential understandings of the initial discourse as the answer, the issue of concern to MH in the initial discourse lies in the description of his status as 'an experienced player' in line 3 as the central issue for his place within the team. The subsequent discourse serves to undermine the understanding that as an older, experienced player MH is no longer an asset to the team for his playing abilities but rather for his knowledge and so what he can contribute to other players knowledge for their own play. MH describes his contribution as a player as having been good in lines 11 and 12. One's status as a player is assessable. He has done his job well in the recent past. In line 13 MH describes himself as looking forward to continuing to contribute as such. His status as player is still relevant. Nothing has changed. MH establishes himself as still an active, useful player.

#### ACCOMPLISHING A CONTEXTUAL BASIS FOR THE NEED TO ELABORATE THROUGH THE DISCOURSE'S RHETORICAL DESIGN

The extract above displays that the interviewees also accomplish the need to elaborate contextually. That is to say, the need to elaborate is accomplished in displaying that without it the relevance of the initial discourse within football is not apparent. There is a need to elaborate in order to sufficiently represent the answer within the topic of the discourse. An answer's relevance within the topic of the discourse would normatively be regarded as a sufficient basis for providing elaboration. It is through the rhetorical design of the discourse that this work is accomplished. There are two ways in which football is routinely constructed by the interviewees as a basis for the need elaborating.

### *Football As Determinant*

Here, the interviewees illustrate, describe the way in which the issue in question in the initial discourse is relevant, or relevant to occur, within football, to a great extent because of football. They need to elaborate to display how football is the underlying ordering factor for what goes, or is going, on which is being described in the initial discourse. In doing so the interviewees, again, serve to undermine alternative potential understandings of the initial discourse.

#### Extract [4.7]

- 1 Dom >I think tha I think that's just natural  
2 that just comes natural to me<  
3 I yeh,  
4 Dom sometimes people say (0.2)  
5 a little bit over the top I am (.)  
6 in terms of that but (0.6) its very hard t  
7 I mean if a if a if I got rid that  
8 then it I might lose something in my game.  
9 I yeh.  
10 Dom >you know what I mean< so:, (0.4) um(0.2)  
11 you know so I don't try and curtail that  
12 but I mean a (0.2) I think sometimes  
13 I could possibly control it a little bit better,  
14 I [yeh,]  
15 Dom [but ] u:m (0.4) you know I think  
16 that's just part of my game  
17 and if I if I lost it then I probably lost par  
18 I'd lose a little bit of my effectiveness

In extract [4.7] the initial discourse occurs in lines 1 to 13, and the subsequent discourse in lines 15 to 18. Dom is talking about how he is a loud, out-spoken sort of



player when he is on the pitch. It is not something he has to work at, or try to do. It is 'natural' to him. He describes others as occasionally thinking he is a bit too loud. However, he displays the concern that this characteristic is potentially an important one for him as a player which serves as a basis for him not seeking to minimise it. In lines 12 and 13 Dom describes his awareness on occasion that he is going over the top and that he could conceivably control that excess. In constructing the relevance of this initial discourse in the subsequent discourse Dom attends to the potential understanding made relevant within it that if he could control his display of the characteristic why does he not do it. After all, he is uncertain as to whether this characteristic of his is important to his play; he only 'might lose something' in his play (line 8). The issue is not one of getting rid of it completely. It is merely a case of exercising some degree of control over it.

Dom undermines this potential understanding in describing this characteristic in the subsequent discourse as something he personally takes to be a constituent aspect of his play. In moving from 'then I probably lost' in line 17 to 'I'd lose ... ' in line 18 Dom displays his certainty in terms of its significance. The common-knowledge understanding of football that a participant's play is the central, most important aspect of their participation accomplishes the initial discourse as reasonable within football. Although Dom's opinion is relevant here it is treated as secondarily determinant. Whether this characteristic of Dom's actually is, or is not, significant to his play is not the issue. The point being that in order to find out Dom would have to risk his performance. The centrality of performances within football undermines the reasonable nature of such a suggestion. His opinion is the best he can do under the circumstances (as a 'proper' footballer, not risking his performance). On the basis of that opinion it is football that is primarily determinant for Dom's actions. The centrality of football, attended to as not apparent in the initial discourse, accounts for the need to elaborate in order to establish the rationality of not controlling the characteristic.

It is the rhetorical design of the discourse that accomplishes the need to elaborate as a consequence of football by building the answer as a rationally justified one. Various aspects of the account exhibit its rhetorical orientation. First, the account is done as a reply to 'what people say' (line 4). It is not simply based upon

what Dom unilaterally thinks about the issue. He comes off as having taken into account, or considered, others' views on the issue. With 'I mean' (lines 7 and 12) Dom comes off as seeing the need to explain himself, his view, and doing so. He is going to lengths in order to get his point across. With 'I think' (lines 12 and 15) Dom displays his acknowledgement that this is his view. It is personal and thought out rather than a fact and simply there to be realized. With 'you know' (lines 10 and 15) Dom treats the relevance of his view as see-able. His view has been the product of a consideration of understandings which everyone has access to. Anyone could follow his reasoning. Finally, with the 'if ... then ...' (lines 7 to 8 and 17) formulations Dom accomplishes his version as following logically from the information available. The account is built up as a thought out, explained, accessible and a logical bit of reasoning by Dom as an answer in reply to others' views.

Extract [4.8]

1	TK	yeh well just- I mean preseason they've been
2		saying about getting crosses in the box
3		you know? (0.2) and a:: I've a::
4		the first few games I wasn't doing it.
5		and they ki they was on at me a little bit
6		so I've now (.) you know whenever I get the ball
7		I'm (0.2) very conscious about getting the ball
8		into the box as quickly as I can
9	I	yeh,
10	TK	so u:m (.) which ain't a <u>bad thing</u>
11		because obviously if you get it into the box .hh
12		you have a chance of (.) scoring a goal

TK here is answering a question about whether or not he thinks about his play. In doing so he initially describes his experience through pre-season leading up to this moment in time. 'They', as in the coaching staff, had told him to get crosses in (lines 1 and 2). First, he was not doing it and they were 'on at' him 'a little bit' (lines 4 and 5). In lines 6 to 8 TK then describes how he 'now' always thinks about getting crosses in.



TK's extreme ('very') attention to this task is described as following logically, with 'so' in line 6, from the staff's treatment of him. With 'you know' (lines 3 and 6) TK also builds the understandable nature of what he is on about. He treats the relevance of the discourse, and so his actions with it, as understandable. TK's story serves the purpose of answering the question. He treats this instance of thought about his play as emblematic of the possibility. The account's rhetorical organization builds it as an answer, and TK's action described within it, as rationally justified.

However, in the subsequent discourse within line 10 to 12 TK nonetheless attends to a potential understanding of his initial discourse as a misinterpretation of it. The issue of concern to TK is how his single-mindedness about getting crosses in will be understood. In describing his single-mindedness as not 'a bad thing' in line 10 TK displays that he does have some understanding of the relevance of getting crosses in. Here, TK undermines the potential understanding of the initial discourse that his actions are simply a case of his blind obedience to the staff. He can see the relevance of getting crosses in. With 'obviously' in line 11 that relevance is described as self-evident. He treats it as something that he would have simply been taking as understood within the initial discourse. Here, TK undermines the potential understanding of the initial discourse that the significance of getting crosses in is new to him. (He did describe himself as having to be told to do it (line 2) and then told again (line 5).)

What is self-evident about crosses is that their importance lies in providing opportunities to score goals. Again, football, its nature, is determinant. Within football crossing the ball is described as routinely one means of creating goal scoring chances. This is why the staff asked TK to get crosses in. This is why they were annoyed with him when he did not do it. This is why TK has pursued this single-mindedness in terms of 'now' doing it. Football, as in the previous extract, accounts for the need to elaborate; here, in order for TK to establish the relevance of his single-mindedness as a participant within football. As in the initial discourse and the previous extract, the rhetorical design of this subsequent discourse builds the answer as rationally justified.

### *The Centrality of (the Interviewees as) Participants*

Here, the interviewees accomplish the relevance of the initial discourse through attending to their status as participants within football. As players, their normative status within football is as those who engage in the play in order to achieve desired ends. The need to elaborate here is in order to make apparent the status of the interviewee as simply a player, possessing and/or displaying normative characteristics of being one.

#### Extract [4.9]

- 1      Kos            its. unknown ground really for me so so, (0.2)  
2                    ↑I mean I'll just go in there and work hard? (0.2)  
3                    a:: get stuck in give? it me best shot? (.)  
4      I                yeh.  
5      Kos            a: that's all you can do? do your best a (0.2)  
6                    and ↑basically: its just a matter of a: (0.2)  
7                    just trying to do a trying to do a good job  
8                    for the side (.) if if selected

This extract comes at the end of Kos answering a question about what he thinks he will personally need to do in the up coming season. His club is entering the premier league and it is Kos's first opportunity to play in that division. As he describes in line 1 it is 'unknown ground' for him. In the subsequent discourse in lines 2 to 8 Kos attends to the potential understanding of not knowing anything about his new circumstances meaning that he is going into the premier league blindly and so at an apparent disadvantage to other players. With 'I'll just go in there' in line 2 Kos attends to his inability to plan. However, he displays no concern for his lack of knowledge. He will take on what he is faced with situatedly. That is to say, he will take them on as they present themselves. 'Just' emphasises Kos' lack of concern for not knowing exactly what to expect. He will not even speculate as to what specifically will be demanded of him. 'Work hard (.) a: get stuck in give it me best shot' as what Kos will do does not reflect any specific knowledge of his new circumstances. Rather, it is that which Kos



could seek to do regardless of circumstances and the specifics within those circumstances he will inevitably be faced with.

With 'all you can do' and doing 'your best' in line 5 Kos describes this course action as representing the extent of what one could normatively be expected to pursue and achieve given these, or any, circumstances. In doing so he undermines the reading of it as merely a representation of what he personally takes to be relevant given his knowledge of football. 'All you can do' as 'your best' is a common-sense formulation difficult to argue against. One's best is, by definition, as good as they can be. Particular descriptions of what it entails may vary but the underlying relevance of doing your best is simply treated as common-knowledge. 'Basically its just a matter of' in line 6 describes that which is to be done as simple, uncomplicated and essentially do-able. With 'just trying to do' in line 7 the emphasis is placed on effort rather than the end results achieved. Effort is something that an individual can be determinant for. 'A good job', as what one is 'trying to do', makes relevant common-knowledge again. It is there for the interviewer to verify as what can reasonably be expected of a person given any circumstances.

With 'if selected' in line 8 Kos describes there being uncertainty in terms of whether he will get the opportunity to play. This admission plays a central role in the discourse's construction. In the discourse Kos treats his lack of knowledge about his new circumstances as not the central and/or determinant issue for how he will cope in those new circumstances. It is not the case that since he does not specifically know what to expect that he is necessarily at a loss in comparison to others. He describes his awareness of all that can reasonably be expected of him as sufficient for entering these new circumstances. With 'if selected' Kos makes the relevant issue here whether or not he will get the opportunity to pursue those expectations. There is no more uncertainty in terms of the likelihood of Kos realising the expectations, regardless of his lack of knowledge, than would normally be relevant for a player within football. The discourse's construction simply attends to Kos' status as a player and what that status normatively entails. When they go out on the pitch all things are equal. What is treated as at issue here for their play is their effort. It is what they can control.

The rhetorical design is, again, central to the accomplishment of the need to elaborate as a consequence of football. For instance, giving it your 'best shot', doing





just does out of habit; it has purpose. It is a necessity because if he does not do it he will 'feel stiff' (line 6). Feeling stiff is a players' concern for when they are on the pitch. BG is describing his preparation routine as dictated by the demands of his play. If he does not do it his play will potentially be effected by his stiffness.

Rather than BG not being a 'proper' footballer because he does not prepare like everyone else, his discourse attends to his status as a footballer in displaying him doing what is best for his play rather than simply doing what everyone else does. Again, the normative status of a player is as one who plays football. They engage in the activity of football in pursuit of desired ends. Here, BG treats preparation as part of that engagement. It is relevant for its impact on the pitch rather than its particular nature off the pitch. Whatever a player does as long as it is helpful to them is justified activity. BG describes himself as just like other players in terms of his preparation. He does what he needs to do in order to sufficiently prepare for his play.

Other players are described as not having to 'do as much' as he does 'to have a good warm-up' (lines 7 and 9). Here, BG can be seen as providing an understanding of other players' opinion on his routine. They take the Mickey out of him because they do not have to do as much to prepare. However, as an account for them doing so it is weak. BG comes off as having rationally justified his answer and activity. At the same time, other players are displayed as perhaps not rationally justified in taking the Mickey out of him. The need to elaborate on the basis of providing the correct understanding of the issues in question within football is, again, accomplished through the rhetorical design of the discourse, which build the answer, as well as BG's preparation activity, as rationally justified.

**THE INTRICACY OF CONSTRUCTION:** The particular orientation of subsequent discourse to initial discourse within these instances of concern

In the final section of this chapter I want to take a closer look at how subsequent discourse particularly attends to initial discourse within these instances of concern. Subsequent discourse serves to maintain certain aspects of the initial discourse while

undermining the relevance of others. The intricacy of the way in which it does so illustrates a dilemmatic aspect of everyday talk.

On the one hand, the intricacy of the discourse's construction, as a routine aspect of everyday discourse, and football talk as a category of it, serves to obscure its constructed nature. It is not apparent that discourse is constructed within the moment of its construction to the participants. Discourse's constructed nature is not there for participants to notice within the moment of its construction. On the other hand, that intricacy also undermines the potential of speakers explicitly manipulating the construction of their discourse down to the particular level at which it is organised in order to achieve some ends. I will look at two extracts in addressing this intricacy.

Extract [4.11]

1 I yeh a: do you think about  
2 that type of thing a lot. °you know° (0.4)  
3 a:: where you fit into the team,  
4 your own play, you know  
5 SACK yeh I mean a: (.)  
6 ↑that's where you want to be? (.)  
7 I yeh.  
8 SACK you know we don't wanna we do:n't. a  
9 ↑that's the attitude. (0.6)  
10 one. (0.2) you should have. (.)  
11 no matter where you go. (.)  
12 I °yeh,°  
13 SACK I want to be in the first team. (.)  
14 I want to be playing regularly (.4)  
15 a: (0.2) and whether that materializes or not.  
16 is a different. (.) matter. but (.)  
17 I °yeh,°  
18 SACK >cause there are so many other factors  
19 whether your face fits or  
20 whether they're (.) playing the right system



- 21                   but .hh the attitude should always be  
22                   I want to be in the first team  
23                   I want to be playing week in week out.<

In this extract the initial answer discourse occurs in lines 5 to 14. The subsequent answer discourse occurs in lines 15 to 20. Prior to a consideration of this extract it is important to point out its relevance within a different light. Edwards and Potter (1992: 15-16) point out that:

several studies ... illustrate variations of attitude talk which are very difficult to reconcile with the notion that it is a reflection of an underlying cognitive entity (Billig, 1988b; Potter and Wetherell, 1987, 1988) and suggest that attitude talk is better seen as oriented to various sorts of activities (Billig, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1992; Condor, 1988; Potter and Wetherell, 1988; Smith, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

In line 9 within the initial discourse the relevance of an attitude is constructed. Throughout the rest of the extract that relevance is the object of concern. As an example of 'attitude talk' this extract, then, is relevant within the light of Edwards and Potter's remarks. The work accomplished within the discourse through the construction of the relevance of attitudes will serve to illustrate. It plays a central part in the particular orientation of the subsequent discourse to the initial discourse within the extract.

#### *Attitudes and wants within the world*

In lines 15 and 16 of the subsequent discourse here SACK seeks to verify the relevance of common-knowledge about attitudes and wants for the 'proper' understanding of the initial discourse. In those lines 'whether that materializes or not is a different (.) matter' attends to the particular nature of the attitude described within the initial discourse. In the initial discourse its nature is characterised in lines 13 and 14 by 'wants'. The description of something as a want treats it as desired yet not merely possessed or attained. Its realization is necessarily in question. This nature is captured within the uncertainty of 'whether ... or not'. With 'materializes', the mental, not see-

able nature of attitudes in general is attended to. Similar to other attitudes the realization of the attitude in question is a case of that which has no physical presence attaining one. 'Is a different(.) matter' serves to verify these aspects of the attitude as relevant from the initial discourse. It displays the possession of the attitude in question as not accountable for physical consequences such as its materialisation. In the subsequent discourse here the possession of the attitude is simply displayed as relevant in the way it would be within the world: separate from the realisation of it.

This subsequent discourse also attends to the nature of possessing the attitude. In the initial discourse the attitude is describes as something a player 'should have (.) no matter where you go' (lines 10 and 11). The attitude is not merely relevant for particular situations. It is routinely, or normatively, relevant to possess for all situations. In attending to the relevance of the common-knowledge understanding of attitudes within the initial discourse, the subsequent discourse also maintains this aspect of it. The possession of an attitude, this attitude, is separate from the realization of it. Lacking in consequentiality is consistent with the possession of attitudes. Consequences can and/or would vary regardless of the attitude one possesses. Not realising the desired consequence, then, is not a basis upon which to determine the merits of possessing the attitude. It is merely a normal potentiality. The attitude as to be possessed is maintained through an acknowledgement of its lack of consequentiality. SACK knows that it will not be consequential. The orientation is towards consequentiality as not the reason to possess it.

In attending to the relevance of common-knowledge understandings of attitudes and wants in the subsequent discourse, up to this point, SACK treats these understandings as not apparently relevant in the initial discourse. It is necessary to make them relevant. In doing so SACK undermines the potential understanding of this attitude as possessing some particular relevance for football within football. Merely possessing the attitude in question is treated as not an answer to success in itself. It is displayed as not some secret within football as a particular phenomena in the world. The relevance of the initial discourse is displayed as apparent through a consideration of what anyone would or could know.



### *Attitudes and wants within football*

In lines 18 to 20 of the subsequent discourse SACK attends to the particular relevance of attitudes and wants within football as well as why their realisation is uncertain or variable. With 'cause there are so many other factors' in line 18 the attitude one possesses is described as a factor. Factors are that which are consequential given some context or circumstance. They are the relevant, influential concerns within a context. Their influence upon consequences is potentially variable. That nature is what makes them relevant as factors. How they influence a situation is a concern because it is not always necessarily the same. Attitudes, then, are treated as significant in this manner. They are consequential to some extent. Yet, they potentially vary. 'Whether your face fits or whether your playing the right system' in lines 19 and 20 can be seen as a representation of the nature of the 'many other factors'. One's 'face fitting' as a factor relevant for desired consequences is a superficial characteristic. It remains constant, or static, regardless of what one does. That is to say, an actor has little control over his 'face fitting' into a situation.

The superficiality of this factor treats the playing of football as potentially inconsequential as a factor. Even the quality of an individual's performances will not get them in the side. Either they fit or they do not. With 'playing the right system' the same sort of idea is made relevant. Here, individual players are described as of a certain type. They play a certain way. Again, they have little influence over changing what type of player they are. Given some 'system' of play a team adopts a certain player either potentially fits or does not fit. The nature of an individual's play, rather than the standard to which the individual can play, is described as potentially preventing them from achieving desired consequences. The variability of how these 'many other factors' will be influential is down to the external situation. The individual's situated attempts to influence his place are potentially not causal. Circumstances are described as sometimes beyond a participant's agency. This lack of influence is offered as the basis for the lack of consequentiality of the attitude in question. The 'many other factors' are not in the hands of participants.

However, attitudes, again, have been described here as a factor. That aspect of the subsequent discourse can be seen as attending to the description of the attitude in

question as 'one (.) you should have' in line 10 of the initial discourse. Describing the attitude as the 'one' attends to the attitude one possesses and this particular attitude as significant. It is the attitude above other attitudes to possess. However, in displaying this attitude as 'the attitude' the orientation is towards it as not simply possessed by participants given their status as such. There is the potential to possess other attitudes. The status of attitudes as a factor within football attends to this initial discourse. It is as a factor that the attitude one possesses is significant yet potentially variable. We can get further mileage out of this factor nature of attitudes in the subsequent discourse as well.

With 'should have' the attitude in question is described as to be deliberately done, possessed or taken on. As something to be deliberately done the attitude, and attitudes in general, are treated as at least potentially agentive. The attitude one possesses is at least potentially determined by the participants. There are two possible understandings of this. The first being that an individual perhaps does not have complete control over what attitude they possess. The second being that it is only a possibility that an individual will deliberately seek to possess a particular attitude. Either way, the orientation is towards individuals as determinant for whether or not they seek to possess a certain attitude. This aspect of attitudes as a factor is made relevant on two counts by the 'many other factors'. In the first place, the formulation 'other factors' attends to the particularity of attitudes as factor. Attitudes as a factor is different to the 'other factors'. In the second place, these 'other factors' are described as beyond the participants' agency for the most part. Consequently, we can see the potentially agentive nature of possessing a particular attitude as the difference between attitudes and the 'other factors'.

There is one last point to attend to here. In describing the normative wants of a footballer within an attitude SACK can be seen as attending to the lack of consequentiality of merely wanting, and even pursuing those desired consequences, within football. The initial discourse, then, can be seen as displaying an awareness of the uncertainty. Again, in the subsequent discourse an uncertainty towards the consequences that will be realised is attended to with the display of the 'many other factors'. There is a lack of control over, and inability to know, how the 'many other factors' will be relevant for particular situations. This uncertainty can be seen as



attending to the awareness displayed through the description of the wants within an attitude in the initial discourse. It is the attitude to have, then, given that it takes into account the underlying uncertainty of football.

The subsequent discourse, here, undermines the potential understanding that common-knowledge is sufficient to grasp the particular relevance of attitudes within football. Lacking consequentiality, for instance, does not point to the irrelevance of attitudes. They are still a factor. Relatedly, a basic understanding of football is also treated as insufficient to grasp the relevance of attitudes. The playing, one's standard of play, is treated as not necessarily at issue for where one ends up within a team. The attitude in the initial discourse is to be possessed, then, because - first, attitudes are significant as a factor, second, they are, in contrast to 'many other factors', potentially agentive, do-able, and third, this one in particular takes into account the uncertainty of football. All these points are see-able in the initial discourse through the orientation of the subsequent discourse. In describing the attitude as one to possess regardless of where one is and what happens SACK can be seen as attending to the importance of maintaining one's principles, or beliefs, through adversity; doing so being a means of trying to overcome adversity.

From this extract it is apparent how involved the particular orientation of subsequent discourse can be towards initial discourse. In the extract to follow the intricacy of the particular orientation is just as evident.

Extract [4.12]

1	I	u:m how th how are how do you think
2		things are going so far? (.) in the season
3	Hoff	↑a::: (0.5) disappointing? (3.0)
4		for me it was (0.5) well. (0.2)
5		it was a big move
6		and I hoped the football
7		was going to go a little bit better.
8	I	°yeh,°
9	Hoff	u:m in general the team? (2)

10 I don't think we're doing as well  
 11 as everyone thought they were going to. (0.2)  
 12 [possibly] the manager thinks  
 13 I [°yeh,° ]  
 14 Hoff we're better than we are  
 15 I don't know  
 16 I think there's a bit of  
 17 quality lacking. (.) personally  
 18 I °yeh,°  
 19 Hoff (1.5) u:m (0.5) but ↑you just- (0.4) work hard  
 20 try and, (0.4) get yourself, (.) going  
 21 and then hopefully  
 22 everything else will drop into place

Here, the initial discourse occurs in lines 3 to 17. The subsequent discourse follows in lines 19 to 22. The interviewer's 'yeh' in line 18 is significant here. Such minimal responses have been investigated for their status as indicators of encouragement for a current speaker to continue with their turn (Jefferson, 1984a; cited in Wooffitt, 1992: 137). Schegloff (1982) has called such minimal responses 'back-channel responses' which serve to display participants as understanding the discourse so far as well as passing up a potential opportunity to speak. The 'yeh' seems to accomplish this work here in that the need for subsequent discourse is oriented to by Hoff after, or from, it. With the one point five second pause at the beginning of line 19 Hoff can be seen as having taken the end of his discourse in line 17 as providing for a transition relevant point (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974).

A transition relevant point, or TRP, allows for a potential end point to a speaker's turn. Hoff takes his account in the initial discourse to be sufficient for its purpose. It is understood for all practical purposes in the way he meant it. The pause at the beginning of line 19, however, displays both the interviewer and Hoff waiting for the other to speak. In proceeding to speak after the pause Hoff treats the interviewer, with 'yeh, as having passed up the opportunity to speak at length and/or re-direct the conversation. Hoff attends to his discourse as insufficient, or problematic, in some



way to the interviewer. He seeks to deal with whatever concern the interviewer could have with his initial discourse through his elaboration.

Instances of concern often occur under such circumstances. Rather than no feedback from the interviewer, the minimal response of 'yeh', passing up a potential TRP, is treated by the interviewee as calling for elaboration on his initial discourse. The particular orientation of the subsequent discourse to the initial discourse follows within this elaboration as it would in other instances. Three aspects of how the subsequent discourse particularly attends to the initial discourse within this extract will serve to illustrate the intricacy of the discourse's construction here.

An initial point to note is that despite the necessity to elaborate being see-able as lying with the interviewer's passing up of the TRP, with 'but' Hoff nonetheless accomplishes the necessity to elaborate within his own discourse. The need to elaborate is not treated as a consequence of the interaction. Doing so accounts for Hoff's inability to know why the interviewer has passed up the opportunity to speak. It deals with the concern of elaborating as a consequence of the interviewer's 'yeh' despite not knowing what to elaborate upon. Hoff comes off as providing information he takes as necessary for the interviewer to understand the initial discourse, rather than as providing that information which the interviewer needs in order to do that understanding. The minimal nature of 'yeh' gives Hoff no clues as to the nature of that information.

#### *The consequentiality of circumstances*

In both the prior and subsequent discourse in extract [4.12] circumstances are oriented to as consequential. In the initial discourse Hoff describes himself as having made a 'big move' in line 5. It is displayed as the basis for what he 'had hoped' for 'the football' (lines 6 and 7). The team is described as having 'thought' they would have done better in lines 9 to 11. With 'thought' the orientation is towards the team as having had some reason for arriving at the conclusion they did. They did not guess or wish. Some aspect of their circumstances was taken as relevant for thinking as they did. Hoff's description of becoming a member of the team as a 'big move' can be seen as providing evidence of the significance of their circumstances. It is not simply the

case that going to this club is a step up for Hoff. The big-ness of the situation is treated as shared amongst the rest of the club's members.

In this initial discourse circumstances are described and oriented to as consequential for Hoff's hope and his team's thought. In the subsequent discourse the consequentiality of circumstances differs. In lines 19 and 20 'you just (.) ... ' displays what to do. 'Just' orients to the exclusion of other possible activities, including hope and thought. Given its relevance to the initial discourse (accomplished, in part, through 'but' in line 19) the orientation is towards it as what to do given the situation that now faces Hoff and his team displayed in that discourse. Here, we have circumstances being treated as primarily consequential for what to do.

#### *The agentivity of football and the team versus that of the individual*

The initial discourse is devoid of reference to the individual participant acting intentionally, deliberately towards some ends within the activity of football it describes. With 'the football was going to go a little bit better' in line 6 and 7 the orientation is towards 'the football' as simply occurring. It is independent of the participants' agency. It is determinant for them rather than them being determinant for it. 'The football' merely happens to them. With 'in general the team (2) I don't think we're doing as well as everyone thought they were going to' in lines 10 and 11 Hoff the describes the failure in terms of the team as a whole.

In the subsequent discourse, with 'you' in lines 19 and 20, the individual footballer is constructed as the doer, the agent. Any footballer, or anyone as a footballer, is made relevant in the discourse. It is not just this footballer at issue. The nature of football remains the same for whoever is taking part in it. Here, individuals are described as normatively active agents within football. 'Work hard' in line 19 and 'try and, (0.4) get yourself, (.) going' in line 20 orient to the active nature of participants within football. Playing is not the central issue here; playing being the common-knowledge understanding of what goes on in games. Participants within football would be expected to play. That is something they would just do. With 'work hard' an approach to play, and related activities, is described. The need to 'try' in order to 'get yourself' 'going' treats doing so in much the same way. Working hard



and trying do not just happen. They necessitate an active, intentioned pursuit of their actions by participants. Effort is involved.

### *Fixed versus variable*

In the initial discourse lines 13 to 17 serve as an account for why the failure to realise expectations has occurred. The concept of ability is made relevant in accounting for the failure. It is made relevant as possessing a static, invariable nature. Players and teams can only play to a certain ability. In lines 13 and 14 the manager's mistaken assessment of the team's ability is described as potentially at issue for the failure. He perhaps thought they were better than they are. The orientation is towards expectations as having been based upon this assessment. The potential conclusion being that the team failed to reach their expectations because they were simply not as good as was thought and so not good enough to do so.

'Quality lacking' as a reason for failure in lines 16 and 17 also attends to a static nature of ability as at issue but in a different way. It does not treat the team's overall ability as a question. Quantity is not at issue. The realisation of the team's ability on the pitch is the issue. Ability, here, is treated as the raw material for a team's performances. It, again, remains static and invariable. 'Quality lacking' does not place doubt upon the team possessing the ability everyone, or the manager, thought. Rather, it orients to that ability as not having been realised to its limits on the pitch. The team is described as not possessing the resources to bring out the best in their ability. The orientation in both these accounts in terms of this team's failure is that if they had performed to the standard that they had all taken it they could perform to their expectations would have been realised. There is a fixed relationship between abilities and outcomes.

In the subsequent discourse a less determinate picture is described. With both 'try and (0.4) get yourself (.) going' in line 19 and 'hopefully everything will drop into place' in line 21 and 22 the realisation of desired consequences is treated as possessing a variable nature. With 'try', 'get yourself going' is described as not necessarily accomplished. In this course of action the focus is upon effort, as in 'all you can do is try, give it a hundred percent'. The aim is towards being consequential for the

realisation of the desired consequence. However, whether or not the desired consequence will be realised in putting the effort in is treated as uncertain. It is treated as unproblematically uncertain through the lack of an account being provided for it.

Relatedly, with 'hopefully' the course of action within lines 19 and 20 is treated as to be performed in the pursuit of the desired consequence of 'everything' dropping 'into place'. There is an intention towards causality in performing them. However, whether or not the desired ends are achieved is variable and, again, unproblematically so given the lack of an account for that variability. Although treated as essentially attainable, the realisation of the desired consequences of 'get yourself' 'going' and 'everything will drop into place' remains variable and uncertain. Ability is not portrayed as central for what can be expected to happen.

The subsequent discourse undermines the potential understanding of the initial discourse as a representation of how football normatively proceeds. Circumstances, although perhaps leading to certain expectations, are not primarily consequential for those expectations within the activity of football. They are primarily consequential for the determination of a course of action. Football does not merely happen to individual participants as members of a team. Participants are normatively the agents, the catalysts, for what occurs. The orientation in the subsequent discourse is towards Hoff and his team as having actively pursued desired consequences yet failed. Failing is treated as not simply a case of the team not having been good enough or lacking in some necessary quality. There is an underlying variability, or uncertainty, to outcomes and their causes within football.

The initial discourse is treated as simply a bit of talk about what went on. In attending to the initial discourse in this way within the subsequent discourse Hoff orients to these understandings as having initially been taken as understood to be relevant within it. There was no need to state them. They were treated as relevant given the football oriented nature of the discourse. Hoff does not explicitly state the relevance of these points for the understanding of the initial discourse. Rather, he accomplishes that work through the intricacy of the discourse's construction; the subsequent discourse coming sequentially after the initial discourse and constructed as relevant for it as providing contrasting information.



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In this chapter I explored the character of these instances of concern and the dialogic nature of the discourse within them. The reason being the seeming interestedness of commenting upon one's own discourse prior to anyone else having the opportunity. It was argued that the discourse within these instances of concern, despite this seeming interestedness, simply follows normatively despite the occurrence of dialogue within turns. In providing a simple example of discourse proceeding routinely through dialogue between turns it was noted that it is the participants' orientation towards the discourse proceeding normatively that is the indicator of whether or not it is doing so. The participants' treatment of the discourse within these instances of concern as not deviating from the norm, then, displays both within and between turns dialogue as variations of the more general norm of dialogue. Evidence for this general norm of dialogue was displayed through the way in which within turns dialogue resembles how between turns dialogue follows. Dialogue serves as the means through which participants negotiate the understanding of discourse. It is through dialogue that the uncertain nature of discourse is dealt with, of which these instances of concern are merely an example.

It was illustrated that the interviewees treated this need to elaborate as an interactional matter. That is to say, they attended to the necessity, or constraint upon them, given the status of the interviewer as in a position to confirm the reasonable nature of their answer discourse, to accomplish the need to elaborate. It was not simply treated as self-evident from the discourse that elaboration was needed. The interviewees routinely attended to the interactional nature of the discourse in letting the interviewer know that elaboration was going to be necessary and would be forthcoming. I illustrated the interviewees use of 'but' as an example of how they did this work. With it the interviewees packaged the discourse to follow as relevant and contrastive information to the initial discourse. However, the interviewees were displayed as merely coming off as needing to elaborate.

Relatedly, the interviewees, in building their answers as rationally justified ones through their discourse's rhetorical design, managed to accomplish this need to

elaborate as a contextual one. That is to say, the relevance of the initial discourse within football was treated as not apparent. There was a necessity to provide further information, that the particular interviewee would perhaps treat as understood to himself as a footballer, yet not the interviewer, as relevant for the initial discourse. In doing so the interviewees constructed the opportunity to provide elaboration, on the basis that they were merely providing what was necessary in order to convey the correct relevance of the initial discourse, which in the end served to undermine potential understandings of initial discourse which were presumably counter to their interests. In brief, what is evident from these instances of concern is that the same constraints and flexibility related to the construction of discourse apply both in doing dialogue within as well as between participants turns.

Finally, I looked at the intricacy of the way in which the discourse managed to accomplish all this work. By all this work I refer to the accomplishment of dialogue's occurrence within turns as routine as well as the accomplishment of need. I argued that the intricacy of construction obscures the constructed nature of discourse. For instance, the initial discourse within these instances of concern routinely displays no signs of being insufficient as a representation of the object of its description. The interviewees nonetheless attend to and construct that insufficiency. In doing so, again, they manage to undermine potential understandings of their discourse. It is routinely available for speakers to do this sort of work. The intricacy of construction obscures that there is work being done.

However, I also argued that this intricacy is not a resource that speakers can be said to have at their disposal to knowingly do with as they please. Participants in discourse are routinely unaware of the intricacy of its construction, or organization. This is the case for the simple reason that this intricacy undermines the possibility of a speaker explicitly deploying it in order to accomplish some work. Rather than something that we have deliberate control over, it is best seen as something we simply do naturally. Down to the particular levels at which it is organized we have tacit, rather than explicit, knowledge of how to do it. We have knowledge of 'how' to do it but not knowledge 'that' we are doing it in some particular way (Ryle, 1949).



## **CHAPTER 6: THE CONSTRUCTION OF TRUTH AND THE DILEMMA OF INTEREST**

According to Edwards and Potter:

participants should be thought of as caught in a dilemma of stake or interest: how to produce accounts which attend to interests without being undermined as interested. (1992: 158).

In this chapter I explore how the discourse under examination attends to the interactional concern, or constraint, imposed by this dilemma upon the interviewees' construction of their discourse. For instance, discourse routinely performs accountability work for the current speaker, as well as for the actors in the events reported, who may of course include the current speaker(s). This potential for involvement, between reports and reportings, gives rise to particular kinds of dilemmas for fact-and-interest management. It is a concern to deal with issues of accountability without being seen as doing so. If seen as doing so the discourse would be undermined as interested and its credibility, along with the credibility of its speaker, would be damaged. The factual, or truthful construction of discourse serves towards the ends of dealing with the concern of this dilemma of interest. In constructing discourse as such the orientation is towards it as disinterestedly, passively, conveying the relevant information. That is to say, rather than, as Grice (1975) would have it, people are simply co-operating in providing 'relevant' information in the way they do, it is the case that speakers come off as simply co-operating.

In the first half of this chapter I will address this issue of truth, or fact, construction. Various techniques used by the interviewees here to accomplish the truthful, factual nature of their reports will be illustrated. Again, as I noted in chapter two, one of the pervasive characteristics of the interviewees' answer discourse is its scripted nature. It is through the details provided within the script formulations that the techniques are routinely deployed. One particular technique, which I have called formulation and modalization, will be dealt with separately for two reasons. The first is that, like the instances of concern which were the focus of the previous chapter, the nature of this technique is exemplified by the interviewees commenting on their own

initial discourse within a single turn. The interviewees' visible attention to their own initial discourse here provides another clear example of discourse's nature as constructed at the moment for the moment in which it appears. The second reason it is dealt with separately has to do with the fact that it will become relevant later on in the chapter.

In the second half of the chapter I want to look at how the factual, truthful construction of the discourse serves towards dealing with the concern of the dilemma of interest. This issue will initially be addressed through another look at the instances of concern. As I noted in the previous chapter, the subsequent discourse within the instances of concern is accomplished as necessary to provide with the consequence of undermining alternative versions of the initial discourse in the turn. According to Clark and Brennan (1991) and their concept of 'grounding' the interviewees would still be going to lengths to cooperate (according to Grice's maxims of doing so) in order to share their knowledge. The view would be that they were undermining the wrong version of the initial discourse so the interviewer could be sure of seeing what was right.

However, a seeming contradiction will be pointed out between the construction of the initial discourse within the instances of concern, as the answer to the question, and the construction of the subsequent discourse, as necessary in order to convey the relevance of the initial discourse as the answer. The discourse's factual, truthful construction will be shown to gloss the seeming contradiction. Again, as the previous chapter illustrated, the discourse within the instances of concern is treated, by the interviewer, as simply proceeding normatively. The interviewees bring off their elaboration as an instance of them going to lengths in order to cooperate rather than them simply doing so.

The way in which the factual, truthful construction of the discourse serves to gloss the particular accountability work being done will then be addressed. This issue is approached in the chapter through looking at how the interviewees routinely attend to the accountability concern of the potential negativity of the issues they are talking about for themselves as footballers as well as worthwhile people to be talking to about football. In deploying the various techniques for fact, truth construction the interviewees manage to minimise that potential negativity.



Finally, I will look at the way in which the interestedness of the discourse is glossed even when it is seemingly overtly interested. Here is where the formulation and modalization technique of fact construction becomes relevant again. In the extracts where it appears the interviewee's status as a knowledgeable footballer is built upon as the discourse proceeds. Despite the interviewee's status being improved the discourse is nonetheless treated as acceptable, proper, and proceeding normatively. Again, the factual construction of the discourse is at issue. The gloss upon the work done in the discourse accomplished by its factual construction provides flexibility in terms of what can be constructed within the interviewees' interests.

## TECHNIQUES FOR TRUTH AND FACT CONSTRUCTION

In terms of discourse that merely displays the truth, Edwards and Potter point out that:

factual accounts are constructed to appear external to the actor, to be representations of features of an 'out-there' world, rather than reflections of the actor's own desires or concerns. (1992).

The interviewees here use various techniques to accomplish their discourse as such, merely displaying the truth. A number of them will be illustrated here.

### *Providing evidence through actuality, or from experience*

The use of actual instances, or one's experience, serves to warrant the interviewee's report. The actuality, or experiential nature, of the report serves as evidence for it as factual. The interviewee comes off as merely saying what happened, or happens.

#### Extract [5.1]

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | TC | if you're having a bad time I've found (.)  |
| 2 | I  | yeh,  |
| 3 | TC | even myself I've found                      |
| 4 |    | that I was sitting down and try and analyse |
| 5 |    | where things are going wrong. (0.2)         |

6 I yeh,  
 7 TC and then the more you do that  
 8 the more you a: (0.4) the more you start.  
 9 worrying about what you're (0.4) what you're doing

Extract [5.2]

1 Hoff >I would think nearly all the players<  
 2 if they come in with someone in the car,  
 3 I yeh.  
 4 Hoff would talk. (0.5) u:m more to them  
 5 than anyone else  
 6 I [yeh, ]  
 7 Hoff [saying] what they think's right and  
 8 what they think's wrong.  
 9 who they think should be playing  
 10 who they shouldn't.  
 11 I yeh,  
 12 Hoff I think that happens a lot. like me and Diaz  
 13 used to speak, (0.4) u:m so me and (. )  
 14 Logan speak about what we think.

In extract [5.1] TC moves to report the general underlying nature of what happens during 'bad times'. The normative 'you' in line 1 accomplishes this work. With 'I've found' in line 3 he proceeds to make relevant his own experience as the basis for this nature as real. Already we have actuality being deployed in order to warrant to validity of the account. TC is not going to be generalising from what he thinks goes on when players are having a bad time. He is not merely relying on his expert status as a professional footballer talking about football to warrant the factuality of his account. His first hand experience is at issue. In lines 4 and 5 TC goes a step further. In displaying what happens during a bad time he uses himself as the example. He is not merely generalising from his experience within football of what happens to other players when they have had bad times. It is the experiences he has had that are serving



as the basis for the report. He is describing specifically the type of thing he did during his bad times in the past. It did happen. The orientation in lines 4 and 5 is also towards it having happened more than once.

In extract [5.2] Hoff is dealing with the issue of whether or not players talk to each other about football. In doing so he makes relevant in lines 1 to 5 a particular relationship amongst footballers as significant for talk. Those who travel to football together would talk more to each other. In lines 7 to 10 Hoff distinguishes the nature of that discourse as about football. With 'I would think' in line 1 the report is constructed as opinion. Hoff displays that he is not certain of its factual nature. 'Would' emphasises this uncertainty. He can be seen as attending the fact that he could not know what all other footballers do when they are together travelling to and from football but he 'would think' this was the case. 'Would' conveys the idea that what Hoff is providing, here, reflects expectations of what players' talk.

It is in lines 12 to 14 that Hoff constructs and deploys actuality as evidence for his report. He makes relevant his experience as a basis for his opinion and expectations. In the past he travelled with Diaz and they 'used to speak'. Now, he and 'Logan speak about what' they 'think'. Although Hoff has no access to what other footballers do normally when they are travelling to and from football he does have his own experience. Furthermore, his experience cannot simply be dismissed as a one-off. He has had two relationships which validate his report. The actuality, if nothing else, displays Hoff as striving to provide a reasoned answer given what he can know about the information he has taken the question to be making relevant. In both extracts, then, the provision of evidence in the form of the interviewees' experience serves to warrant the factuality of the accounts.

### *Gaining credibility through the confessional nature of the discourse*

There are two features which signal the occurrence of confessional discourse. The first is that of the interviewee coming off as speaking from the heart ('true confessions' mode) which is a kind of 'honest soul' discourse, or displayed sincerity (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). One indicator of such discourse occurring here is the use of the formulation 'to be honest'. Take these extracts for instance.

Extract [5.3]

1       Kos           (0.8) I think as long as (.) every one of us  
2                    a u I mean I'm not kidding myself  
3                    I mean if you go into the premier league  
4                    thinking its going to be: (0.2) you know? (0.4)  
5                    a piece of cake, just going to  
6                    go in there and stroll around, (0.2)  
7                    you're going to get your asses kicked  
8                    but (.) to be perfectly honest if you go in there  
9                    with the right attitude with a squad of players  
10                   everybody working hard for one another (0.2)  
11                   a:: having a go everybody pulling together I'm sure  
12                   we'll a: ↑give a good account of ourselves

Extract [5.4]

1        I            u:m how about criticism of the staff  
2        TK          ↑u::m (0.2) I don't- (: ) to be honest I don't  
3                    think we (.) no one really criticizes the staff

In both cases, with 'to be perfectly honest' in extract [5.3] (line 8) and 'to be honest' in extract [5.4] (line 2) the interviewees come off as saying that which is not obviously the case. They come off as saying what they do because they feel compelled to simply tell the truth. It is as if there is some other, more obvious, thing to say which would perhaps be safer for to say under the circumstances. However, rather than saying what 'everybody else' might say, they simply tell it like it is. The second feature of confessional discourse which can contribute to the factual nature of an account, which will be addressed in greater depth here, is the negativity. That is, the saying of derogatory or potentially image-threatening things about yourself, which can act in reverse and perform a kind of stake inoculation, i.e., it forestalls the kinds of 'self-serving' 'stake and interest' threats to factual reporting, displaying the speaker as honest, and the report as truthful.



Such a confession appears in extract [5.1] above. In using himself as the example in describing what happens when participants are ‘having a bad time’ TC’s admission is potentially negative. When he has had a bad time he deliberately sought to deal with the problem through a consideration of what happened. The consequence being ‘worrying about ... what you’re doing’. ‘Worrying’ while one is in the process of doing, or playing, within football is made relevant as negative, or counter-productive. It gets in the way of one doing what they are trying to do. ‘Even myself’ in line 3 signals the confessional nature of the discourse. It happened to him as well. He is no different than anyone else. TC had been in situations where his worrying effected his play.

The significant point here, for the issue of how ‘truth construction’ is interest-managed, lies in TC’s status as a footballer and, even more to the point, as a professional footballer. A constituent aspect of this status as a footballer is as one who normatively seeks to influence the course of play towards its normatively defined ends. As a professional footballer TC is a member of the group that is taken to be the best at pursuing these ends. In describing himself as not having had control over his pursuit of those ends TC risks displaying himself negatively, as possibly incompetent or careless. Such a confession, in this instance, is therefore contrary to, rather than within, his interests, which can further accomplish him as being truthful. The two extracts to follow display similar instances of confessional discourse.

Extract [5.5]

1	I	do you think you can <u>think</u> too much about it
2		┌and talk too much about it yeh┐
3	TK	└oh yeh <u>definitely</u> yeh yeh ┘
4		I mean I’ve (0.2) a: (0.4)
5		like just the other week I was. a bit down.
6		where things weren’t going right for me
7		and I was thinking about it all the time,
8		and it was it was going against me .hh

Extract [5.6]

- 1      BG            its going alright (0.6) not bad  
2                      we've been building up gradually so, (0.8)  
3      I                yeh.  
4      BG            I mean that's not been bad. (1.0)  
5                      maybe we needed another, (1.2)  
6                      I think we might have needed  
7                      another week but (0.6)  
8      I                yeh.  
9      BG            u:m (0.4) we had a game  
10                     we had a game on friday, (0.6)  
11                     and u:m (.) maybe (0.2) do with another game  
12                     before the season starts.  
13     I                yeh.  
14     BG            but (0.5) apart from that  
15                     its going alright I think.

In extract [5.5] the confession occurs within line 8. With 'it was going against me' the thinking made relevant in line 7 is described as working contrary to its intended purpose. The orientation is towards that thought as having been aimed at sorting out problems in TK's play. However, it only made the problems worse. TK, while in control of his own attempts to deal with the problems and in doing so exhibiting normative characteristics of footballers, is nonetheless displayed as not in control of the consequences of his actions. In extract [5.6] the confession occurs within lines 5 to 7. BG reports that the team 'might have needed another week' of training before the season starts. The upshot being that the team is potentially not ready for the season. The importance of preparation is made relevant. BG's admission orients to the team as potentially having not sufficiently prepared. They have not done as much as they could have. BG, as a member of the team, is also displaying doubt, or uncertainty, in it.

In both extracts the confession potentially undermines the interviewee's status as a participant within football. In extract [5.5] TK's status is potentially undermined through his lack of control over the consequences of his actions and those



consequences turning out to be negative. His own thought went against him. In extract [5.6] BG's team not being ready is the potentially undermining factor for the team, which includes BG. It is also potentially undermining for BG as a member of that team as a consequence of him not showing confidence in the team. However, the acknowledgement, in TK's case of the lack of control, and in BG's case of the potential of not being ready, serves to accomplish the interviewees as being truthful in the same manner as TC in extract [5.1]. The confessions seemingly place the interviewees in a negative light. However, in doing so the confessions contribute to the disinterested nature of the discourse's construction and so its status as factual.

An important point to make here is that both the use of actuality, or experiential information, and confessional discourse can, and, as I noted with extract [5.1], do, occur together. In fact, all the techniques for truth, fact construction that I will illustrate here can and do occur together. However, the point in explaining them separately is that each does different types of work in contributing to the truthful, factual nature of accounts. Explaining them separately also presents them in a manner in which the different types of work done are easier to grasp.

### *Making relevant common knowledge*

Common knowledge, when discursively invoked, invites participants to utilise what they 'know' about the world in order to see the truth of the discourse, to see how it applies. The two extracts to follow will serve to illustrate.

#### Extract [5.7]

1	I	how about like (0.6) how does:
2		what's the staff's like relationship
3		with the team, >how do they< how do they treat you
4	TC	alright I mean
5		Keith Tabatznick the (0.2) the boss
6		he's very relaxed and a: (0.4)
7		he's under under a lot of press pressure here
8		but he's a: (0.4)

9 I °yeh.°  
10 TC he tries to take that away from players

In the interview question in lines 1 to 3 the issue of the staff's treatment of the players is raised. TC immediately begins to build the response's truthful nature in relation to this issue. He does so through making relevant a particular individual in line 5 with 'Keith Tabatznick the (.) the boss'. This individual is made relevant through categorisation. As if the interviewer may not know who he is, 'Keith Tabatznick' is identified as 'the boss'. A common knowledge understanding of bosses is employed here. Bosses are part of, as well as in charge of, the staff. As 'the boss', 'Keith Tabatznick' would normatively be relevant in constructing a response to such a question.

He's very relaxed' in line 6 describes the boss's nature, his disposition. It describes his disposition (rather than, say, some current, past, or otherwise temporary state), what he, as an individual, relevantly brings to the status of being boss. So the common knowledge of individual differences (personalities, etc.) is made relevant here. Different people presumably do the job of boss in different ways according to their individual characteristics, such that it is a relevant and informative thing to point to Keith Tabatznick as 'relaxed'. Individual characteristics are relevant within football.

The description of the circumstances which Keith Tabatznick is in and what he does within them (lines 7 to 10) also appeals to what the interviewer 'knows' in a common knowledge sense. Firstly, and seemingly obvious, the description tells about how Keith Tabatznick treats the team which is what the question is about. Secondly, the interviewer is invited to see how the way in which Keith Tabatznick routinely treats the team, given the circumstances he is in, reflects his relaxed disposition. Rather than allowing the pressure on him to effect the way he treats the team he deliberately seeks to prevent such an occurrence. In looking at the two descriptions what becomes clear is that the description of Keith Tabatznick's disposition serves to warrant the factual nature of what he is described as doing within the circumstances and vice versa. Neither description on their own is warranted. It is the invocation of common knowledge, simply allowing the interviewer to see the relevance of the descriptions as



well as their relevance to each other, that is central to the accomplishing the factual nature of the discourse.

It is important to note that the basis for these descriptions as truthful ones is the interviewee's own experience. That knowledge is private to the interviewee within this interaction. In fact, the private nature of that information is the basis of talking to this group of interviewees in the first place. The interviewer, as stated above, is in a position of simply taking the interviewee's word for it. Throughout this data the interviewer does not display any orientations towards there being something within the construction of the answer discourse to lead him to question the interviewees' truthfulness. Despite the interviewer's lack of explicit response to the answers as sufficient, in simply proceeding to ask further questions, the orientation is towards the answers simply being taken as such, and at face value. That is to say, the way the questions simply follow the answers, to the extent that they may be taken as sequentially relevant to the adequacy of prior answers, treats them as acceptable, proper, and possessing face-value credibility.

Extract [5.8]

- 1      MH            I think that's something that  
2                    people have to understand that. (.)  
3                    you know everybody is an individual  
4                    within a team game (.) so: you have to (.) maybe  
5                    treat certain individuals in a different way (0.2)
- 6      I                [yeh ]
- 7      MH            [some] some (.) you know need to be patted on  
8                    the back other need to be shouted at and (.)  
9                    and that's ↑part and parcel of football really

In this extract common knowledge is invoked in a different manner. It is not simply left understood as relevant. It is explicitly described as relevant within football. Individual differences is, again, the common knowledge being invoked. The description of 'everybody' as 'an individual within a team game' (lines 3 and 4) explicitly accomplishes the relevance of this common knowledge within football. It

serves as an example of a technique for fact construction which Edwards and Potter (1992) call 'systematic vagueness'. It is a 'global formulation' which serves as 'a barrier' against 'easy undermining while at the same time providing just the essentials to found a particular inference' (1992: 162). What this 'global formulation' serves to found is the necessity and importance of treating players differently which lines 4 to 8 describe.

In line 9 with 'that's part and parcel of football really' MH describes this variable treatment of individuals as a consequence of their differences as a constituent aspect of football. It is not merely some issue that is relevant in the world being made relevant within football because it happens to be functional. Rather, it is a relevant factor within football whether it is treated as such, or not. The common knowledge of individual differences as the causal factor here serves to found this claim as factual as well. Football is part of the world. Consequently, aspects of the world and their consequences would be just as relevant in football, as constituent aspects of it, as they are in any activities within the world.

### *Treating football as an agentive phenomenon*

The interviewees routinely treat football as an entity existing independent of their agency. They describe their participation within football as to a great extent a case of simply having to deal with the realities of the game. Constructing the discourse as such resembles what has been referred to in an earlier chapter as empiricist accounting.

Empiricist accounting

treats phenomena themselves as agents in their own right, and either deletes the observer entirely or treats her as a passive recipient. In this discourse, the facts force themselves on the human actors who have an entirely secondary role (Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984; Mckinlay and Potter, 1987; Mulkay, 1985).

(Edwards and Potter, 1992: 162).

Here, football is the agentive phenomenon. It 'forces' itself on the players. The description of the facts as determined and so there for the participants, and so the particular interviewee, to deal with contributes towards the accomplishment of the discourse as factual and disinterestedly produces. In describing football as such the



interviewees come off as merely reporting the nature of football as it exists rather than providing an interested version of football which places them in a positive light.

Additionally, constructing football as such can be seen as similar to the construction of confessions. In displaying themselves as not in control the interviewees statuses as footballers are potentially, or seemingly, undermined. The interviewees' coming off as being truthful, again, follows. However, within confessions it is routinely the particular interviewee whose status as footballer is potentially undermined. A confession is a personal matter for the most part. For instance, in extract [5.1] it is TC's status that is potentially undermined through the confession. He admits to having had his worrying effect his play. He admits to not having had control in those situation. Making the possibility relevant for other participants, however, does not serves as a confession for them. It is the personal nature of the report that is significant where its confessional nature is concerned.

Here it is participants' statuses as footballers in general that are normatively in question. That concern is created by the nature of football. It is part of the underlying basis of participation within football: interacting within an activity in pursuit of normative interests where the accomplishment of those interests is normatively variable. This uncertainty in terms of what ends they might achieve is the potential, or seeming, undermining factor for the interviewees' statuses as footballers. In describing football as existing independent of their agency the interviewees display their attention to this uncertainty. Footballers can be seen as normatively at the mercy of football. The circumstances football creates are there for them to deal with in their participation within it. The following extracts will serve to illustrate. The three extracts to follow will illustrate different ways in which football is treated as agentive, or independent of the participants' agency, which serves to contribute to the truthful nature of the discourse.

Extract [5.9]

- |   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| 1 | SACK | ↑that's the attitude. (0.6)             |
| 2 |      | <u>one</u> . (0.2) you should have. (.) |
| 3 |      | no matter where you go. (.)             |
| 4 | I    | °yeh,°                                  |

5        SACK        I want to be in the first team. (.)  
6        I want to be playing regularly (.4)  
7        a: (0.2) and whether that materializes or not.  
8        is a different. (.) matter. but (.)  
9        I                °yeh,°  
10       SACK        cause there are so many other factors  
11       whether your face fits or  
12       whether they're (.) playing the right system

Here, SACK is distinguishing a rule within football. One 'should have' this particular attitude where ever they go, regardless of the situation. However, possessing this attitude is described as not sufficient for the realisation of the attitudes content: being in 'the first team' and 'playing regularly'. As an attitude, a cognitive or psychological phenomenon, this lack of consequentiality would simply be a part of its common knowledge understanding. However, SACK makes relevant the stating of this point in the discourse to follow as not merely a consequence of its common knowledge status. In lines 10 to 12 the agentivity of football as an entity is constructed. The discourse attributes the attitudes lack of consequentiality to its status as only one of 'many other factors' within football. Within the nature of those other factors, constructed in lines 11 and 12, a basis for that lack of consequentiality can be seen.

One's 'face fitting' is a superficial characteristic that a participant has little control over. For instance, the people in control, the manager and his staff, could take a personal dislike to a player and consequently keep them out of the side for reasons other than their playing ability. A team 'playing the right system' describes another variable in which the participant has little control. Players here are made relevant as being of a particular type. They either fit, or don't fit, into a particular system, not wilfully or accountably on their part, but because of a mismatch between player type and the slot available in some system of playing which, of course, is decided on by managerial staff. The effect of possessing the attitude as a relevant factor within football is altered, or potentially minimised, by other such relevant factors. The players have little control over those other factors. They are simply there, within football, as consequential for players regardless of their intentioned pursuit of normative interests,



such as being in the first team and playing regularly. The interviewee is merely reporting given realities, or how things are. They are determinants of, rather than determined by, players' participation within football.

Extract [5.10]

1       MH               well I think I think the thing from: (0.4)  
2                       now (0.2) from experience  
3                       when you get a little bit older  
4                       you you you (0.2) remember a: the situations  
5                       you've been in before  
6                       and positions you take up to  
7                       where chances are created  
8                       and opportunities to score, (0.2)  
9        I                yeh  
10       MH             come from.

A conceptual distinction between fact and knowledge will serve to illustrate the way in which this extract constructs the agentivity of football. Knowledge is information that is possessed. That is not to say that all people possess it. It is simply information that can be said to be known or possessed by someone. Facts, on the other hand, have the status of that which exists as the case, independent of whether it is known or not. Facts make up knowledge. They cannot be changed by people. They are that which simply exist in the world. Their existence is potentially discovered. With discovery comes a new categorization as knowledge.

In this extract MH describes himself as having gained knowledge through his experience within football as he has gotten older. The more experiences he has had has made the facts of goal scoring more apparent to him. There are regular, normal 'situations' and 'positions' to 'take up' where 'chances' or 'opportunities' to score goals 'come from'. The existence of such 'situations' and 'positions' is made relevant as fact within football. They do not change, and they are not particular to MH. They are facts there to potentially be discovered which can help one play, in MH's case, as he has gotten older. Their reality is there for participants within football to cope with,

in trying to score and perhaps in trying to defend as well, whether they are known or not.

Extract [5.11]

- 1      Kos            it all depends in what sort of situation  
2                      we're in at the time you know  
3                      [whether] its a big game, (0.2)  
4      I                [yeh. ]  
5      Kos            you know I think you should approach  
6                      every game the same but. (0.2)  
7                      obviously all the ga  
8                      some games are different to others? (0.2)  
9      I                yeh.  
10     Kos            its a: you might be playing  
11                      a physical side,  
12                      you might be playing  
13                      a team that likes to stroke it about a bit? (.)

In building the factual nature of this discourse, through the agentivity of football, Kos can be seen as utilizing the conflicting, dilemmatic, nature of common-sense (Billig et al., 1988). Initially, here, Kos expresses his commitment to the idea of always preparing for games in the same manner. Doing so invokes a particular common sense understanding that participants should seek to control their circumstances rather than allowing their circumstances to control them. For instance, in extract 7 TC, in describing his boss, Keith Tabatznick, as not letting the pressure on him effect how he treats the team, orients to his doing so as good. However, Kos constructs his discourse as simply his opinion, with 'I think' in line 5. Furthermore, in using the term 'should', also in line 5, to describe what he thinks is to be done Kos attends to some uncertainty in terms of its status as such.

Something that should be done is something that is not necessarily done. 'Should' gives a sense that while it is Kos' belief, or a principle he tries to hold to, that it is not a rule that he necessarily puts into practice. The 'but' at the end of line 6



makes relevant further potential undermining of its status as to do in prefacing the discourse to follow as contrastive to it.

In the discourse that follows, in lines 7 to 13, a conflicting common sense understanding is deployed. With ‘obviously ... some games are different’ in lines 7 and 8 the basis of what ‘should’ be done as only that rather than a practical bit of information is established. The nature of games varies. Lines 10 to 13 make relevant the nature of the variation. Different teams having different playing styles. The participants have no influence over how other teams play. With ‘obviously’ in line 7 this variability is described as self-evident. Its status as forced on participants is accomplished through this self-evidence in contrast to what Kos thinks ‘should’ be done. The common sense understanding deployed here is that circumstances within the world, and here football within the world, routinely change, and consequently they must be dealt with. The implication is that a ‘proper’ footballer would attend to such variability because doing so is significant for giving them a chance at success.

The construction of this understanding as such, in contrast to the unconvincing construction of the principle described in the initial discourse, accomplishes it, and so the agentivity of football, as overriding and primary for players to attend to. The reality, here, rather than providing factors that a participant simply has no control over as in extract [5.9], or making relevant the existence of facts potentially learned as in extract [5.10], is towards a factor, or fact, known and to be dealt with intentionally by the participants. It, to some extent, dictates what participants do in as much as they have to prepare for particular team’s in particular ways. They cannot simply prepare for them all in the same way.

## FORMULATION AND MODALIZATION AS SUCH A TECHNIQUE

This is the last technique I want to look at in depth, as another means of constructing the independence of football from players’ agency. However, it is different from the other techniques for fact construction in that it performs this through a formulation of initial discourse. It manages to transform the basis of the formulated initial discourse into a factual account. In doing so the formulation strengthens the factual status of the

account through modalization. All this will become more clear within the analysis. This technique will also have relevance later on in the chapter.

A fragment of the extract to follow appeared earlier in the chapter. Here, the extent of the question and answer are relevant for my purposes.

Extract [5.7]

- 1 I how about like (0.6) how does:  
2 what's the staff's like relationship  
3 with the team, >how do they< how do they treat you  
4 TC alright I mean  
5 Keith Tabatznick the (0.2) the boss  
6 he's very relaxed and a: (0.4)  
7 he's under under a lot of press pressure here  
8 but he's a: (0.4)  
9 I °yeh.°  
10 TC he tries to take that away from players  
11 he um (.) obviously everybody's human.  
12 he snapped and (.)  
13 probably said the wrong thing? (.)  
14 especially after the watford game  
15 but apart from that (0.5)  
16 I °yeh,°  
17 TC he's a: (.) relaxed and (0.4)  
18 he knows shouting hollaring  
19 is not going to get a result?

The discourse of particular relevance within this extract occurs within lines 15 to 19. This discourse constructs the agentivity of football. 'Shouting hollaring' not getting 'results' is presented as a fact within football. 'He knows' displays the 'boss' as possessing the fact as a part of his knowledge. The interviewee's knowledge of the fact is also established. This is accomplished simply through his statement of the



discourse. He must know it in order to state it as well as recognise the boss's knowledge of it. These lines also serve as a formulation of the initial discourse.

The formulation of versions of initial discourse has been an object of consideration within research in the past (Heritage and Watson, 1979; Wooffitt, 1992). In their research on news interviews, Heritage and Watson found that these formulations serve to preserve, delete and transform aspects of initial discourse. In this formulation discourse the boss's disposition, his commitment to doing that which is good for the team and the possibility of exceptions are preserved. 'But apart from that (.)' in line 14 formulates 'snapping' as the exception. It treats 'snapping' as a particular phenomenon which strays from the norm. 'He's a: (.) relaxed' in line 16 reiterates and so maintains the interviewee's disposition. The orientation is towards the exceptions as isolated, occurring and then ending, not having a lasting impact on the routine, normal passing of events. The fact of 'shouting hollering' not getting 'results' is made relevant here as guiding the boss's actions.

In terms of that which is deleted, in the initial discourse what the boss seeks to do is presented as down to his disposition. The orientation is towards how he is as a person as the determining factor for how he goes about dealing with his players. His disposition as the determining factor for his actions is deleted within the formulation. In the formulation he is described as acting on the basis of his knowledge of what get results. His disposition merely serves as a contributing factor to the normalcy of him doing so. The basis of his actions is transformed and displayed as determined by the normative structure of football. He does what he does because of what he knows about the game.

Wooffitt points out that these formulations 'can reveal the tacit practical reasoning processes which informed their design' (1992: 129). This formulation points to the aim of establishing a truth, or fact, above the potentially confounding impact of participants' displayed involvement. That is to say, the boss's actions are not good within football merely because they are assessed to be so by the interviewee. They are normatively good. This fact is not created or determined by those involved. It is constructed as remaining the case regardless. This formulation resembles what Latour called a 'positive modality'.

positive modalities are those sentences that lead a statement away from its conditions of production, making it solid enough to render some other consequences necessary.' (Latour, 1987: 23)

As this extract proceeds, it moves from the basis of the boss's actions being internal to that basis being the external, normative structure of football. The basis is solidified. It makes the boss's actions, rather than something he merely does given what he as an individual brings to football, something routinely relevant within football. It accomplishes the agentivity of football as determinant, in this case, for what participants in it might do as well as the impact of them doing it or not doing it. Consequently, it strengthens the factual, truthful nature of the discourse's construction. The same work is accomplished through the formulation in extract [5.12].

Extract [5.12]

1     JC            YEH I think (.) °I think° (0.4)  
2                   sli yeh its got slight importance.  
3                   at the end of the day .hh  
4                   I think the most important thing is  
5                   who the who they choose and put on the pitch. (.)  
6     I             [yeh. ]  
7     JC            [once] you're on the pitch then they can't really  
8                   (0.5) alter much you know? (0.4)  
9     I             °yeh.°  
10    JC            >I mean obviously th< the work we do here ands  
11                   (0.3) at at the training ground is important  
12                   but once the team's selected on the pitch. (0.4)  
13                   there's not a lot they can do really you know  
14                   its up to the players.  
15    I             yeh. a.:  
16    JC            they can change systems and,

In this extract the formulation discourse occurs within lines 12 to 14. The discourse serves to delete or minimise the importance of the staff picking and preparing the team



for games. Their influence is described as for all practical purposes ceasing once the players are 'on the pitch'. The discourse serves to maintain the limitations of the staff's significance accomplished within lines 7 and 8. 'Really' in lines 7 and 13 orients to the potential not apparentness of this lack of influence despite the reality of it. 'You know' in lines 8 and 13 invites the treatment of the point as common knowledge. The interviewee seeks corroboration from the interviewer. The common knowledge invoked here is simply that the staff does not go onto the pitch therefore their influence over what goes on upon it ceases 'once the team's selected on the pitch' (line 12).

In terms of how the initial discourse is transformed there are two points to make. The first has to do with line 20. In it players are explicitly displayed as consequential for the play. The task within the play of dealing with the specific circumstances that arise is within their hands. The initial discourse can be seen as orienting to the agentivity of players within the play but it does not explicitly display it. The significance of players within football is established here. Its factual status is accomplished via the everyday understanding mentioned above: the staff do not go onto the. The second point is related to this formulation discourse as a 'positive modality'. It is constructed as fact. The initial discourse with 'I think' in lines 1 and 4 is mere opinion. The establishment of the discourse as merely displaying facts, facts confirmed by an external reality, routinely that of the nature of football, is at issue as it was in the previous extract. As fact, it is above and beyond the interviewee's opinion. It is more than a consequence of reasoning. It is a constituent aspect of football. That is to say, it is a basis for reasoning.

The orientation here is towards the consequentiality of the players on the pitch as the underlying fact upon which the previous opinions are based. It is the basis for the interviewee's opinion upon the staff's significance. Relatedly, then, it is also the basis of preparation's importance as self-evident. The interviewees in instances such as these last two extracts go to lengths in order to establishing the factual basis of their discourse; as fact the discourse is above argument. It stands as a basis for determining the truthful, relevant nature of other points.

## FACT CONSTRUCTION AS AN OCCASIONED PHENOMENON

An important issue to consider is why it is that the interviewees engage in practices of fact construction. After all, in the interview situation here the interviewees are set up as experts. They are professional footballers talking about their profession. Why would they feel the need (to put it psychologically) to construct their discourse as factual, truthful? The organization of accounts as factual can be expected when speakers have reason to anticipate potential doubt from others about the credibility of what they are saying (Smith, 1978; Wooffitt, 1992). Factual accounts are provided, rather than for how they merely reflect passively the events they are describing, for how they undermine other possible alternative versions of those events (Billig, 1987; 1988a). What grounds are there for the interviewees anticipating doubt and counter-arguments against the versions constructed in their discourse? Here we have a situation in which such potential doubt could be seen as suspended given the positioning of the participants: a social science researcher talking to professional footballers in order to learn about football. The researcher is seeking information from those in the know.

Pomerantz (1984b) also points out that participants routinely seek to warrant their claims, through providing sources and basis for them, when there is dispute over them. However, Pomerantz also explains that once a claim is made the speaker is accountable for it being right. It is in this respect that we can perhaps see how the interviewees' factual accounts are occasioned. Despite being put in the position of experts they are nonetheless accountable for their claims about football. For instance, take the simple example of extract [5.2]. In it, Hoff makes the claim that footballers speak to the teammates with whom they travel about football more than they speak to any other players about it.

Now, although this may not seem a particularly sensitive topic within football for a footballer, in terms of the occasioning of Hoff's factual construction of the claim it is worth pointing out that Hoff would have known that other players have been and/or would be talked to and asked more or less the same question. He could expect that his answer may be looked at along with other's answers on the same topic. Relatedly, Hoff may orient to the interviewer's rather passive, receptive manner as



signalling some kind of problem with the adequacy of what he has said such that providing an account, a basis for knowing, is an option alongside, say, repeating, clarifying or repairing what he has said.

To simply, straightforwardly make his claim, treating his status as an expert as the basis for his knowledge and so sufficient to class it as fact, would allow for the possibility of his status as such to be undermined, or thrown into some doubt, by the potentially contradictory answers of the other participants in the study. Instead, Hoff builds his claim up as factual, or at least as an instance of him telling the truth given his experience, by providing the basis for it: he used to speak to his traveling partner at his old team, and, now, he speaks with his traveling partner at his present team. If the answers of other participants in the study happen to contradict his claim, Hoff is not accountable for being wrong because he has only made a suggestion about other players based upon his experience.

The simple point here is that the interviewees, after making claims, are then, and, importantly, can often be seen as attending to being, accountable for them. Rather than presenting their claims straightforwardly without warrant except for that which is treated as understood, the interviewees routinely construct into their accounts sources and basis for their claims as fact, or at the very least, as concerted efforts to provide the correct information to the best of their knowledge or ability. In general, then, factual accounting can be seen as occasioned as a consequence of the interviewees dealing with their accountability for their claims about football. It can, for instance, be seen as occasioned by the interviewees orienting to the interviewer's minimal feedback on their answers as signalling the answer inadequacy; it can also be seen as occasioned by the interviewees' attention to the possibility of other evidence being found to the contrary of their claims, such as the other interviews being done, or given the increasingly more publicly accessible nature of football in many ways through the media, as in TV and newspaper coverage, as well as the large amount of books on football, in the form of biographies and training guides.

Whatever the reason of the construction of facts being occasioned here the analyses above display the normativeness of the discourse's construction as the truth and

various techniques used by the interviewees in order to accomplish that construction. Formulation discourse such as the above is similar to the instances of concern addressed in previous chapters and in the section to follow, in that both display the interviewees as monitoring the situation of discourse. The significance of this similarity is that both display instances of discourse within turns commenting on and/or orienting to initial discourse. In doing so they display the moment to moment, situated nature of the discourse. discourse, again, is not planned, or self-evident for what it represents. It is strategically designed for the moment of its use, attending to the interests of the speaker.

The construction of discourse as merely displaying the truth serves to gloss that moment to moment, situated nature. The orientation is towards it simply representing how the object of concern is relevant and would routinely be displayed. As the truth the discourse achieves out-there-ness, or objectivity. The interviewees are displayed as disinterestedly stating the facts, the reality. The construction of the discourse as merely displaying the truth, in glossing its interested nature, deals with the dilemma of stake or interest. In the next section I will look at how this is the case even with the instances of concern despite a seeming contradiction in the discourse's construction within them.

#### INSTANCES OF CONCERN:

The gloss of a contradiction within the construction of the discourse

#### *Elaboration as co-operation in conversation*

Within instances of concern elaboration within subsequent discourse is, again, attended to, and constructed, as a necessity when initial discourse is not apparent for the way in which it is relevant. The elaboration serves to provide that relevance. The orientation towards, and construction of, this elaboration resembles what Clark and Brennan (1991) refer to as 'grounding'. According to Clark and Brennan grounding is a form of co-operation amongst participants in discourse; the desired consequence being the



creation of common understanding. For instance, take this extract used by Clark and Brennan to illustrate their point:

Alan: Now, - um, do you and your husband have a j- car

Barbara: - have a car?

Alan: Yeah

Barbara: No-

(Clark and Brennan, 1991: 129)

In her first turn, with ‘- have a car?’, Barbara displays that she is not certain of what Alan is after in his first turn. She is seeking elaboration to establish the relevance of that discourse. With ‘yeah’ in his second turn Alan confirms Barbara’s tentative understanding as relevant. Barbara’s ‘no’ confirms that common, or mutual, understanding (of Alan’s first turn) has been reached. The interviewees, here, can be seen as in the position of Alan. In elaborating within these instances of concern, like Alan, they would only be doing what they must in seeking to establish the relevance of their initial discourse in order for knowledge to be shared. The elaboration, as a form of grounding, is a necessity so that the interviewees can allow their audience to know what they know. However, the grounding here occurs within participants’ turns, in contrast to Clark and Brennan for whom it occurs through dialogue between participants’ turns. In their extract the grounding occurs through Barbara’s display of uncertainty and Alan’s confirmation. The two work together to accomplish the common understanding.

For the interviewees, elaborating in instances of concern interactional confirmation by the interviewer of the need to elaborate, and provide the particular information provided, is not visible. The need is not made apparent by the interviewer explicitly expressing a lack of understanding towards some particular aspect of the initial discourse. There is little, or no, feedback from the interviewer. The decision, or orientation towards the need to elaborate, or do grounding, and what information to provide, is firmly in the interviewees’ hands. Within the discourse elaborated on, the interviewees’ own initial discourse, there is no confirmation of the ‘actual’ need to do so either. That discourse is simply constructed as the truth and understood as such. Elaboration is oriented to and constructed as a necessity for initial discourse despite its construction to the contrary. Extract [13] will serve to illustrate.

Extract [5.13]

- 1      JC            I played all last season and  
2                    I'll be starting at the moment so, (0.4)  
3                    but u:m I'm under no illusions,  
4                    if I don't play well and score some goals  
5                    then ↑you know? (.) I expect (.) somebody else  
6                    to take my place so,  
7      I                yeh,  
8      JC            its always been like that throughout my career  
9                    you you have to (0.2) you have to  
10                    do the business to stay stay in the team.

In this extract the interviewee, at least initially, is addressing the issue made relevant in the preceding question discourse of his place, or situation within his team. Three instances of concern appear in the extract. In lines 1 to 2 the interviewee merely reports his playing status in the past and present. There is no reason for the interviewer to doubt his word. The seeming ease of confirming the validity of the report also lends to its plausibility. In lines 3 to 6 the first instance of concern appears. The interviewee attends to merely displaying himself as having been, and still being, in the team as insufficient as an answer to the question. Being in the team does not mean that one will remain in the team. A common knowledge understanding of football is invoked here. Along with that understanding, the expectation of losing his place if he does not score has a confessional nature as well. He is admitting the possibility that he will not succeed in accomplishing a task, 'scoring goals', which he treats as a normative responsibility of himself as the type of player he is, a forward.

The second instance of concern appears in line 8. The grounds for JC's expectation to lose his place on the team if he does not score is treated as not readily apparent within it. Line 8 provides evidence of the expectation's relevance as a normative feature of JC's career. He expects it because that is the way it has been in his experience. Finally, the third instance of concern occurs within lines 9 and 10. Here, rather than the expectation merely being a norm of his own experience, JC



displays his own experience as representing the norm within football. The agentivity of football is constructed here. That agentivity is accomplished by explicitly making relevant a common knowledge understanding through systematic vagueness. Scoring goals is his job. If he is not scoring he is not doing his job and so the expectation to not play under such circumstances simply reflects common sense knowledge of the world. It is clear in this extract how elaboration upon initial discourse follows despite the truthful, factual construction of the initial discourse. Within that truthful construction there is no evidence of the discourse's supposed insufficiency. It is simply constructed as the truth in terms of its relevance for the discourse it follows, whether that be the question or initial discourse within the turn.

The absence, or minimal, nature of the feedback from the interviewer making relevant a need for elaboration is also see-able. As I noted in the previous chapter, the feedback, in the form of minimal responses such as the interviewer's 'yeh' in line 7, are often used to invite the current speaker to continue with their turn (Jefferson, 1984a; Schegloff, 1982). Here, though, despite the 'yeh' the way in which the discourse proceeds displays that JC, rather than having had to be encouraged to continue, oriented to the need to elaborate further from monitoring his own discourse. He does not pause at the end of line 6; he does not orient to having completed his turn. The interviewer may have anticipated JC providing a transition relevant point there. However, JC does not come off as having provided one.

The 'yeh' also serves as an example of what Clark and Brennan refer to as 'positive evidence of understanding' (1991: 131). As such, it would allow the speaker to take their initial discourse as for all practical purposes understood and move on to another point. However, this does not happen in extract [5.13] or other instances where such minimal responses precede elaboration within subsequent discourse in these instances of concern. JC simply orients to the necessity to elaborate further on the relevance of his initial discourse. He does not move on to another point.

There is a seeming contradiction, then, in the discourse's construction. If providing elaboration on initial discourse were merely a case of co-operation, as that which is constructed as the truth and understood as such, the not apparent nature of the initial discourse for what it represents would be visible within it. However, this is not the case. Its not apparentness, and so the necessity to elaborate, is accomplished

within subsequent discourse. There is a construction of need to elaborate in the subsequent discourse despite the construction of the initial discourse as the truth and understood as such. This seeming contradiction is glossed through the subsequent discourse's truthful construction as relevant to initial discourse. It manages to display the interviewee as merely performing normatively appropriate behaviour. He is going to lengths to provide discourse that is understood as it is relevant. Grounding is not merely a case of participants co-operating to accomplish mutual understanding. Grounding is a case of coming off as co-operating, or doing the normatively appropriate.

Coming off as such serves to gloss the inherent interestedness of the discourse. It allows participants to continue within the interaction on the same footing as others. For instance, in Clark and Brennan's extract, Barbara seeks to come off as merely looking for elaboration because she has not understood Alan's question. If she does not come off as such, and so as not oriented towards answering Alan's question, why the normatively appropriate behaviour has not occurred will become an issue. Not performing the normatively appropriate is, again, a potentially sanctionable offence within social action. It can undermine the offending party's credibility in future interactions. The seeming contradiction within the discourse's construction in these instances of concern does not throw doubt upon the discourse's truthful nature. As I pointed out above, the interviewer does not orient to any aspects of the interviewees' answer discourse as problematic, questionable or interested. He simply proceeds to ask further questions, thus treating and interactionally confirming the answers as acceptable, proper, and possessing face-value credibility. The construction of the discourse glosses its situatedness along with its interestedness.

## THE GLOSS OF ACCOUNTABILITY WORK

The accomplishment of the need for elaboration within these instances of concern is part of the interviewees' pursuit of constructing their discourse as disinterestedly displaying facts, or truth. Consequently, rather than initial discourse being insufficient as a representation of the object of its description, its insufficiency to the interviewees



is better seen as lying with the way in which it attends to and represents their interests. The interviewees' accountability is the concern at issue in terms of the representation of their interests. Through its disinterested construction subsequent discourse serves to attend to and deal with concerns of accountability raised by initial discourse. This is the case whether the initial discourse is a question (as we saw in terms of the interviewees' construction of their discourse as answers in chapter 3), or within a particular interviewee's turn (as we saw in chapter 4 which addressed these instances of concern).

In order to illustrate this point I will look at how one particular type of accountability concern is attended to and dealt with by the interviewees. It is their concern for minimising the potential negativity of the issues they are talking about for themselves as footballers and so worthwhile people to be talking to about football. This concern is routinely at issue within confessional discourse. While contributing to the credibility of the speaker, confessions nonetheless display the speaker in a negative, or potentially negative, light. In seeking to minimise the potential negativity the discourse also routinely contributes further to the plausibility of the account. Instances of this concern have already appeared within some of the extracts used above, such as extracts [5.1] and [5.5]. Those extracts will be reproduced here for ease of reference along with one other relevant extract.

#### Extract [5.5]

((The extent of this extract, which was not displayed above, is relevant for purposes here. In it there are two instances of the minimisation of potential negativity. The two instances display how various techniques for fact construction serve towards the ends of accomplishing this minimisation.))

- 1 I do you think you can think too much about it  
 2 and talk too much about it yeh  
 3 TK oh yeh definitely yeh yeh  
 4 I mean I've (0.2) a: (0.4)  
 5 like just the other week I was. a bit down.  
 6 where things weren't going right for me  
 7 and I was thinking about it all the time,





serves towards minimising the potential negativity. The construction of football's agentivity here also contributes greatly towards accomplishing that minimisation. A brief look at 'you know so' in line 12 and how it relates to lines 10 and 11 will serve to illustrate this point. It orients towards the relevance of 'everything went fine' as not requiring further elaboration, explanation, or account. 'You know' orients to the understood, apparent nature of the conclusion arrived at. 'So' orients to that conclusion as following unproblematically from the initial discourse. What is understood is the potential variability of consequences, or the normativeness of that; there is no underlying pattern to their variability except that they vary.

This understanding is evident through the lack of accounting that occurs for the consequences realised. 'You know so', in not accounting explicitly for 'everything' going 'fine', displays an orientation towards it as not an unlikely occurrence. It is not unlikely despite 'things' having recently been 'going against' TK. There is no need to account for it. In the initial discourse there is also no account for why 'things' were 'going against' TK. Similar to this subsequent discourse the orientation is towards that possibility as not unlikely and so not demanding an account. The lack of accountability in producing these descriptions reinforces the lack of accountability in being someone who is not responsible for how events themselves may have 'gone'. Football's status as the underlying basis of this variability of consequences contributes to the truthful nature of the discourse and so the minimisation of the negativity for TK not having had control in the events described within his confession. The discourse's construction does accountability work. It is not simply a disinterested, truthful construction of what happened. In the extracts to follow the way in which various techniques of fact construction which appear serve towards the ends of minimising the potential negativity of the discourse will be illustrated. In extract [5.1] actuality, confessional discourse as well as the independence of football together help work towards the accomplishment of minimisation.

Extract [5.1]

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | TC | if you're having a bad time I've found (.) |
| 2 | I  | yeh,                                       |
| 3 | TC | even myself I've found                     |

4                   that I was sitting down and try and analyse  
5                   where things are going wrong. (0.2)  
6        I            yeh,  
7        TC          and then the more you do that  
8                   the more you a: (0.4) the more you start.  
9                   worrying about what you're (0.4) what you're doing

The actuality here, again, is apparent through TC's use of his own experience as evidence for his account. The confessional nature of the discourse rests with the admission of his worrying having effected what he was doing, his playing. He was not in control. The agentivity of football is accomplished through constructing this account as displaying a normal pattern of events for footballers when they have bad times. The 'you's' in line 1 and then lines 7 to 9 help accomplish that work. The footballers might decide what to do in terms of thinking about it when their play has been bad, but the consequence of worrying and worrying effecting one's play negatively rests with the nature of football. In terms of potential negativity, it is in addressing the question, which puts forward the issue of the possibility of thinking too much, that makes relevant for TC the use of his own experience as evidence. The confessional nature of reporting that experience makes relevant the concern of potential negativity. Again, TC was not in control. Two main aspects of the discourse's construction serve to minimise that negativity here.

One appears in lines 3 to 5. TC uses his own experience as evidence. However, he makes it relevant in the past tense. It 'was' what he was doing. The point being that it is not what he does anymore. The second aspect of the discourse that serves to minimise the negativity for TC lies with its status as normative within football. It having happened to him merely displays TC as having been a normal player. However, the discourse goes further. Where the confession creates the potential negativity of having lost control in the past, the discourse displays TC as nonetheless now possessing that control. He is displayed as such through providing a mere description of what happens. He is aware of what happens rather than it happening to him. His account is unclouded through his status as a non-participant. He is able to merely report on its nature as someone who was once involved. The



orientation is towards the facts forcing themselves onto the unaware. Awareness provides control. TC's current status helps to minimise the negativity of past events. In extract [5.14], as in the previous one, the same techniques of fact construction can be seen as at work in minimising the negativity.

Extract [5.14]

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | I  | do you think about it much               |
| 2  | JC | (0.8) <u>yeh</u> I mean its competition  |
| 3  |    | its good because, (0.2)                  |
| 4  |    | I've played at lower levels where, (0.2) |
| 5  |    | there's no competition                   |
| 6  |    | and it doesn't matter how you play       |
| 7  |    | you know you'll play the next week so,   |
| 8  | I  | yeh,                                     |
| 9  | JC | you fee you can get a bit u:m (0.4)      |
| 10 |    | what's the word (.)                      |
| 11 | I  | complacent                               |
| 12 | JC | complacent yeh.                          |

In the extract JC describes the good-ness of competition through constructing a contrary example from his own experience of what happens when there is no competition. In line 12 JC confirms the interviewer's contribution of 'complacent' in line 11 for how he himself was looking to formulate his description of what is bad about a lack of competition.

The potential negativity of this discourse lies with the term complacent. In confirming its relevance JC can be seen as doing some confessional discourse here. Complacency is a state in which one does not strive to improve their position. They do not fear challenges for their position. It gives a sense of misguided security. The orientation being towards the pursuit of improving one's place as a normative task within football which the presence of competition is consequential for. Not having done so in the past is a potentially negative admission for JC. The discourse's construction, of course, serves to minimise that potential negativity.

With the 'you's' throughout the account the significance of competition is made relevant for everyone. Anyone in a situation in which there is a lack of competition is likely to suffer from complacency. It is not merely what happened to JC when he was at lower levels. It can happen to everyone. 'Get a bit' in line 9 represents the degree of complacency which JC is admitting to the potential of suffering. The description represents a minimal case formulation again. Within the situation JC did not fall into a deep complacency in which striving to improve himself ceased to be an issue to him. He was able to maintain some semblance of normalcy despite the nature of the situation working against him doing so. In providing a mere description JC displays himself as not having been a passive agent within football allowing the facts, or reality, to dictate his movements. Rather, he comes off as having been aware of his circumstances and not having allowed them to be determinant. His account here, then, is displayed as unclouded by the circumstances as he was when he was within them in the past. The discourse's construction, again, contributes both to its truthful nature and the minimisation of potential negativity.

#### THE GLOSS OF BUILDING (THE INTERVIEWEE'S) STATUS

The accountability work accomplished is transparent as a consequence of the discourse's construction as merely displaying the truth. Again, the interestedness of the discourse is glossed. Significantly, this is the case here even when the discourse's construction is seemingly overtly interested. Here is where the relevance of formulation and modalization as a technique for fact construction is at issue. A brief look at the significant aspects of the formulation and modalization extracts used previously will serve to illustrate. The transformation that occurs within the formulation is of central importance. Extract [5.7] moves from:

7	TC	he's under under a lot of press pressure here
8		but he's a: (0.4)
9	I	°yeh.°
10	TC	he tries to take that away from players



to:

18 TC he knows shouting hollaring  
19 is not going to get a result?

The issue here is not the status of 'he', the boss. The issue is the status of the interviewee's knowledge that the discourse displays. The relevance of the initial discourse in lines 7 to 10 is based upon the interviewee's experience. His reasoning abilities given that experience are at issue for his description of the boss's actions as good within the situation at hand in football. His status as an expert on football as a professional footballer serves as grounds for the validity of his account. The relevance of the subsequent discourse in lines 18 and 19, however, is based upon fact. Fact is displayed as the basis for the boss's actions and their status as good. Again, in displaying the boss's awareness of the facts the interviewee accomplishes his own awareness. Modalization is the issue within the formulation here. Fact construction leads the statement away from its source to greater independence. The orientation is towards the interviewee merely reporting that which exists in football rather than that which is based upon his powers of observation and thought process.

The transformation relevant here is that of the basis of the discourse moving from reasoning to fact. The significance of this transformation is that where TC is initially described as having to reason in order to provide an account, subsequently he is simply displayed as knowing. Rather than his status as an expert serving as grounds for the account, his status as an expert is accomplished within the formulation. It is what he knows, not what he thinks. TC's status as a knowledgeable footballer is built upon as the discourse proceeds. Doing so is seemingly interested. However, the orientation within the interaction, again, with the interviewer simply proceeding to ask a further question, is towards nothing problematic occurring within TC's discourse. As the accountability work unfolds it objectifies the discourse while building upon the status of the interviewee. That objectivity comes in the form of the construction of football as an agentive, independent entity, which participants must deal with whether they know the facts of it or not.

Extract [5.12] moves from:

- 3     JC             at the end of the day .hh  
4                    I think the most important thing is  
5                    who the who they choose and put on the pitch. (.)  
6     I                [ʔyeh .ʔ]  
7     JC             [ʔonce] you're on the pitch then they can't really  
8                    (0.5) alter much you know? (0.4)

to:

- 12    JC             but once the team's selected on the pitch. (0.4)  
13                    there's not a lot they can do really you know  
14                    its up to the players.

Here, the transformation is, again, from reasoning as the apparent basis of the discourse in lines 3 to 8, to fact in the formulation within lines 12 to 14. Reasoning is apparent with 'I think' in line 4. The fact, made relevant by the common knowledge that the staff do not go on the pitch, but the players do, serves as basis for the reasoning within the initial discourse. More importantly, it displays JC as possessing knowledge of facts rather than merely trying to reason towards the nature of facts. Again, the formulation discourse builds upon the interviewee's status as a knowledgeable footballer. Routinely within extracts such as these where modalization occurs within formulation discourse this strengthening of the interviewee's status as the extract proceeds appears. However, despite the seeming overtly interested nature of the discourse the accountability work accomplished remains transparent. Rather than building his status as a knowledgeable footballer, the interviewee comes off as merely reiterating a point made earlier and providing a basis for the reasoning that occurred in arriving at it.

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In this chapter I have looked at how the discourse under examination attends to the constraint imposed by the dilemma of interest of speakers in constructing discourse. I noted that the discourse is strategically designed as factual to appear disinterested, and passively conveying information, so as not to be undermined by its inherently interested nature. To refer back to DAM, this chapter has dealt primarily with the issues of points 4 and 5 in the fact and interest section. However, in doing so it also touches upon issues of accountability. In the chapter, I initially sought to illustrate some of the various techniques for fact, truth construction utilized by the interviewees. A central issue here, one which became more evident as the chapter proceeded, is that it is not the case that a speaker will deploy only one technique at a time in order to accomplish their discourse as factual. Rather it is routinely the case that different techniques are used within reports together in order to do so. The combined effect of using the techniques as such is the not apparentness of the discourse's construction as fact within the moment of its use.

I, again, used the instances of concern, here, to help illustrate the work getting done by the truthful, factual construction of the discourse. Their visibly rhetorical, or argumentative, design makes them useful targets for examining the types of work the interviewees are constructing discourse to accomplish and how. Here, I argued that, within them, there exists a seeming contradiction between the construction of the initial discourse and that of the subsequent discourse. If, within the instances of concern the interviewees were simply co-operating in providing elaboration in subsequent discourse, as the subsequent discourse orients, it seems that, like in Clark and Brennan's(1991) extract, the need to elaborate, would be evident within initial discourse. If the need was not evident, how would one know elaboration was necessary. The contradiction here lies in the fact that the initial discourse is constructed as simply understood as the answer to the question; the need to elaborate is accomplished within the subsequent discourse.

Nonetheless, as I have shown, this seeming contradiction, of providing subsequent discourse as needed despite the understood construction of initial discourse, is glossed by the factual construction of the discourse. In constructing the subsequent discourse as fact the interviewees come off as providing necessary information relevant to the initial discourse. This glossing work was also shown to

occur when interviewees attended to the particular accountability concern of minimising the potential negativity of the discourse. Furthermore, we saw how the factual construction of discourse accomplished this glossing work even when the discourse was seemingly overtly interested in having built up the interviewee's status through formulation and modalization. Through attending to the constraint imposed by the dilemma of interest the interviewees build the context of football through their versions of it. Herein lies the flexibility available to speakers in constructing discourse. There is flexibility in terms of what can be constructed as relevant as a consequence of this glossing work accomplished by the construction of discourse as merely conveying the facts.



## CHAPTER 7: ACCOUNTABILITY: AN INSTANCE ANALYSED

In the previous chapter the issue of accountability was touched on in order to illustrate how the discourse's construction serves to deal with the dilemma of interest. The issue of accountability, however, has its own central importance within the analysis of discourse. Within different contexts and topics of discourse particular speakers attend to different accountability concerns as relevant. The investigation of these sort of concerns is a main focus of discourse analytical work (Watson and Sharrock, 1991, cited in Edwards and Potter, 1992: 166). The aim of this chapter will be such an investigation. Again, how speakers are displayed within discourse as speakers, and also as actors within the activity being described by the discourse, are matters of 'interest' to them. What they take themselves as responsible for in talking about what they are talking about is significant here. The main focus of this chapter will be on what the interviewees take themselves to be responsible for as professional footballers speaking about their profession and how they attend to their accountability for those characteristics in the discourse. What is evident is that while the interviewees attend to the constraints of having to do the accountability work they do, the flexibility of construction affords them the resource with which to do so, and account for their statuses as 'proper' footballers in whatever way they treat as necessary within the moment of the discourse.

The interviewees routinely treat this interview situation as an exercise in coming off as, or 'doing being', competent footballers who know about the game and so are, or have been, worthwhile to ask about it. They work up their discourse as merely reporting the relevant information to the question. Their attention here is towards being responsible for possessing the status of a knowledgeable footballer. The interviewees also routinely attend to another responsibility. That responsibility is for possessing the status of a player. That is to say, one who normatively pursues purposeful action within football.

One extract, used previously, will be used here to look at how the possession of these characteristics is accounted for in the discourse. There are three main reasons for using this extract. The first is that it includes an instance of concern. As I noted in

the previous chapter, their visibly rhetorical, or argumentative, design makes them useful targets for examining the types of work the interviewees are constructing discourse to accomplish and how. Using an instance of concern is also significant because, very simply, all that occurs in extracts where there is no instance of concern also occurs within extracts where there is. However, this is not the case in the other direction. The second is that the extract is representative, reflective, of the nature of the accountability work that routinely appears within other extracts. Finally, the extract provides a clear example of this underlying nature of the accountability work done by the interviewees within this data on the whole.

It provides a clear example of this underlying nature of the accountability work done as a consequence of the characteristics the interviewees take themselves as responsible for possessing occurring in isolation from each other in it. In the initial discourse it is as if the interviewee attends exclusively to his status as a knowledgeable player. He does not talk about his, or anyone's, individual play within the discourse. He glosses individual's active pursuit of desired ends within the events describes. In isolation it is evident from this extract that establishing himself as a knowledgeable footballer is an issue to the interviewee from the outset of the discourse. In the subsequent discourse it is as if the interviewee attends exclusively to his status as a player. He does not talk about, or do any, reasoning within the discourse. In isolation it is evident that establishing his status as a player, possessing normative characteristics as such, is an issue to the interviewee. Attention to each characteristic, although routine, does not always occur in isolation from the other.

Initially, these characteristics will merely be displayed as an issue within the discourse. The interviewee's attention to them in the discourse will be illustrated. The related issue of their status as simply characteristics the interviewee could reasonably be taken to possess will be considered as well. Subsequently, the issue of the interviewee's attention towards his responsibility for possessing these characteristics will be addressed through how the discourse's construction accounts for that possession. It is not merely the case that as a footballer the interviewee, and other interviewees, self-evidently possess these characteristics. Through the accountability work done in the discourse the interviewee manages to come off as such. An interviewee's status as a knowledgeable player is accomplished through the discourse's



construction. Then the chapter will move on to a consideration of other aspects of the discourse's construction which also serve to do accountability work for the interviewee, and his possession of these characteristics, as a 'proper' footballer.

The first aspect considered will be the absence of one of the characteristics from some stretch of discourse. It will be shown that, rather than that absence of attention being a case of the characteristic not being relevant, its absence is part of the discourse's strategic design. The interviewee's possession of the characteristic is still accounted for. The occurrence of these characteristics in isolation provides further evidence for their underlying importance to the interviewees. As issues to the interviewees these characteristics go hand in hand in speaking about their profession in the discourse under examination. Consequently, when attention to one, or the other, or both, is absent from some stretch of discourse it is useful to consider what that absence accomplishes in terms of the interviewee's status as a footballer. The second aspect of the discourse's construction considered will be its situated action nature. The description of the activity of football being done situatedly will be displayed to have underlying significance for the accountability work done. Finally, also significant to the accountability work done, I look at how function is a central issue to the interviewees where their status as 'proper' footballers is concerned. By function I mean the issue of contributing to the accomplishment of desired ends within football.

Extract [6.1] (previously Extract [4.12]):

- |    |      |   |
|----|------|---|
| 1  | I    | u:m how th how are how do you think           |
| 2  |      | things are going so far? (.) in the season    |
| 3  | Hoff | ↑a::: (0.5) disappointing? (3.0)              |
| 4  |      | for me it was (0.5) well. (0.2)               |
| 5  |      | it was a big move                             |
| 6  |      | and I hoped the football                      |
| 7  |      | was going to go a little bit better.          |
| 8  | I    | °yeh,°  |
| 9  | Hoff | u:m in general the team? (2.0)                |
| 10 |      | I don't think we're doing as well             |
| 11 |      | as everyone thought they were going to. (0.2) |

12                    [possibly] the manager thinks  
13        I                    [°yeh,° ]  
14        Hoff                we're better than we are  
15                                I don't know  
16                                I think there's a bit of  
17                                quality lacking. (.) personally  
18        I                    °yeh,°  
19        Hoff                (1.5) u:m (0.5) but ↑you just- (0.4) work hard  
20                                try and, (0.4) get yourself, (.) going  
21                                and then hopefully  
22                                everything else will drop into place

#### INITIAL DISCOURSE: The interviewee's status as knowledgeable

The initial discourse within this extract occurs from lines 3 to 17. The characteristic Hoff attends to being responsible for within this discourse is his status as knowledgeable, or the competence of his reasoning abilities. Initially, I simply want to illustrate how the issue of reasoning abilities is evident within the initial discourse here. It is evident in the way in which Hoff's discourse describes reasoning to have gone on and/or how Hoff comes off as doing reasoning in the discourse. By reasoning here I mean that in his discourse Hoff orients to or displays conclusions to have been arrived at through a consideration of the available information. I will also discuss how the appearance of reasoning can be seen as merely what could normatively be expected from Hoff.

#### *Reasoning*

Lines 3 to 7 contain the first display of this characteristic within the initial discourse. Hoff has assessed how things have gone as 'disappointing' (line 3) because he had 'hoped' they would 'go ... better' (lines 6 and 7). Hoff also describes his



circumstances of a 'big move' in line 5 as having been the basis for what he had 'hoped'. Hoff both does some reasoning, about how things have gone, and describes reasoning as having gone on in the past, to determine expectations.

As one of the interviewees within this data Hoff is asked questions such as the one here on the basis that as a professional footballer he can answer the question and his answer is particularly worthwhile. His ability to reason in answering the question is treated as understood or expected. As a participant within the activity being described his reasoning ability within it would also be within the realm of expectation. Unless seeking to test his competence was the issue of asking the question, from the outset of Hoff's discourse his reasoning abilities on such topics would not be a focus of doubt. It would reasonably be assumed that Hoff is sufficiently competent to have arrived at such conclusions based upon the information available to him.

In lines 9 to 11 Hoff does some reasoning about the nature of the team's expectations. This is evident within line 10 where he describes what he does not think. The orientation is that he has considered the issue based upon what he knows about it. His status as a member of the team during the relevant period of time is important here. He possesses first hand experience of the situation as a basis for determining the team's expectations. As something he would know about doing the reasoning does not call attention to itself as deviating from some sense of what could normatively be expected.

The team's reasoning abilities are at issue here as well. With 'thought', again, reasoning is described as having gone on. With 'everyone' a consensus on what was 'thought' in terms of expectations is described (line 12). With 'they' (also line 12) Hoff describes 'everyone' as consisting as all those other than himself. Hoff's status as new in this situation, accomplished with the description of him having made a 'big move', is relevant. The 'everyone' are those who are not new, or, at least, the majority of the team. It can be expected that the majority of the team would have been there to some degree in the past. They would have experiential knowledge of that past as the basis for determining their expectations.

Lines 11 to 17 display the final instance of this reasoning characteristic in the extract. The discourse in them represents an instance of reasoning by Hoff in which he seeks to account for the team's failure to realise their expectations. In lines 12 and 14

Hoff describes the failure as potentially occurring because the team simply was not good enough to achieve them. The concept of ability is relevant here. Ability, again, is a set potential, or standard, of performance that a player, or team, can be expected to achieve in their play. That potential is static. The orientation is that given the knowledge of abilities proper expectations can be determined. The team simply not being good enough is one routine possibility for their failure to reach expectations.

The manager, here, is described as at fault for the potential of the mistaken expectations. He incorrectly assessed the team's and individual player's abilities. The orientation is towards the team as having based their expectations upon the manager's assessment. He is in charge of picking who is to play. Along with the category of manager, similar to all categories, would go with it expectations about members skills (Jayyusi, 1984; cf. Sacks, 1972, 1974, 1979). Being in that position, especially at such a level, leads to the reasonable assumption, or expectation, that he is sufficiently competent, and possesses the necessary skills, to do the job. However, whether or not he is can be up for debate. The orientation in these circumstances is that the players have treated him as competent enough to do the job by basing their expectations upon his assessments. It is not that case that the players would blindly go along with what he thought merely because he is the manager. While it would not be unexpected that they would do so, in orienting to them as having done so a related orientation is towards some reasoning having gone into to arriving at the conclusion of his competence.

In lines 16 and 17 Hoff's description of himself as thinking, again, signals that reasoning is going on. With 'quality lacking' ability is still relevant. Here, however, it is not a lack of ability to reach expectations that is at issue. The proof for this reading lies in lines 11 and 15 where Hoff describes his uncertainty where the question of a lack of ability is concerned. With 'possibly' in line 11 Hoff packages the account to follow as simply a reasonable conclusion to arrive at although unverified. With 'I don't know' in line 15 he describes his uncertainty towards the potentiality of the team not being good enough and the manager having got it wrong explicitly. He comes off as having considered the issue and acknowledging that a definite conclusion has eluded him.



'Quality lacking' orients to the application of ability as at issue. The team has not played to its ability. Their attributes have not been applied efficiently and/or successfully. The realisation of ability, here, is treated as not a forgone conclusion. The failure to realise expectations is described as potentially down to the team simply not having realised their ability. With 'personally' in line 17 Hoff describes this reasoning as down to his own assessment of what has gone on rather than some potential common-knowledge understanding of why the team may have failed. Hoff's status as a professional footballer that is a member of the team in question, again, contribute to the routine expectation of his reasoning abilities on the matter.

Although perhaps not exhaustively illustrated it is evident from the above that in this extract reasoning is described as having gone on, or is being done within the discourse. From the discourse it seems as if the ability to reason is simply a self-evident, expectable characteristic of participants within football. However, this appearance is an accomplishment of the discourse's construction through the accountability work done.

### *Accountability Work*

Rather than being knowledgeable about football as simply a self-evident characteristic of participants in it, or, at least, professionals like these interviewees, that status is accomplished through the accountability work done in the discourse. Hoff accounts for his status as a knowledgeable footballer through dealing with potential concerns for his status as such which he attends to in constructing his answer. The construction of the discourse serves to undermine those understandings.

#### —Being wrong

In accounting for his status as knowledgeable the most evident concern for Hoff to deal with is having described himself as having been wrong about what to expect. Here, I first want to look at how Hoff, in attending to the concern, manages to diffuse the negativity of being wrong for himself while also building his status as knowledgeable. A lot of this work is accomplished through the contrast between the

team having 'thought' and Hoff having 'hoped'. 'Thought' orients to the possession, and so consideration, of relevant factors in arriving at a conclusion. 'Hoped' gives the impression of wishful thinking having been at issue. It orients to the possession of little, or no, relevant factors upon which reasoning was based. Hoff treats the team as having possessed a stronger basis upon which to determine expectations. Their experiential knowledge of their circumstances provides them with greater information than Hoff to determine expectations.

Of significance here is that Hoff, again, describes there having been a consensus of thought amongst the team. There was general agreement upon expectations. Hoff, despite his lack of knowledge, had for all practical purposes also arrived at the same expectations as the team. Here, having not been the only one to be wrong minimises the negativity of having been so for Hoff. That negativity is further minimised for Hoff as well in that the team's consensus corroborates Hoff's expectations as reasonable. The construction of consensus and corroboration has been examined for the way in which it works towards accomplishing, or strengthening, the factuality of accounts (Smith, 1978; Potter and Edwards, 1990; Edwards and Potter, 1992). Here, it helps to build the competence of Hoff's reasoning abilities. Despite having possessed little information he nonetheless arrived at that which is a reasonable conclusion given the corroboration of the team's expectations.

In lines 12 to 17 in accounting for the team's failure to realise expectations Hoff continues to account for the mistaken nature of the expectations. First, it is the manager's mistaken assessment of the team's ability that is described as the cause for Hoff and the team having got it wrong. The manager's assessment of ability has been determinant for the players' expectations. He got it wrong so they got it wrong. He is to blame not Hoff's (or the team's) reasoning ability. This is, of course, only if they were wrong in the first place. With 'quality lacking' Hoff, again, describes the failure as down to the team possessing the ability assumed but simply not having realised that ability in their play. The expectations, here, are not necessarily mistaken. Given the realisation of ability the potential realisation of those expectations is still possible. Further aspects of this initial discourse contribute to Hoff's status as knowledgeable. In the next section I will look at how Hoff builds that status through acknowledging the limits of his knowledge.



—Acknowledging limits

One of the main ways in which Hoff accounts for his status as knowledgeable is through acknowledging the limits of his knowledge. Doing so is seemingly against Hoff's interests. It would seem to harm his status as such. However, the way in which it is done serves to account for a number of concerns in contributing to that status. Three instances of this work will be looked at here.

Instance one: being wrong as a new player.

In lines 3 to 7 the concern Hoff deals with in accounting for his status as knowledgeable is, again, having described himself as having been wrong. The discourse serves to undermine the argument that since he was wrong, his reasoning abilities must be suspect. His status as a new player for the team plays a significant role here.

With 'for me' in line 4 Hoff's circumstances of a 'big move' as the basis for having expected what he did is described as particular to him. It is not the, or a, routine basis for expectations. With 'big move' Hoff describes the new-ness of his circumstances for him. Again, a question of category membership is relevant here. Hoff comes off as belonging to the category of a 'new player'. Along with belonging to such a category goes with it expectations about Hoff's knowledge (Jayyusi, 1984; cf. Sacks, 1972, 1974, 1979). It would be expected that he possesses a lack of knowledge from experience of those circumstances. Specifically, as a new member of a team, the only knowledge he would be expected to possess would be that of a non-member. That knowledge, which would have contributed to the 'big-ness' of the 'move' for Hoff, would be to a great extent the basis for his expectations.

'(0.5) Well (0.5)' also in line 4 accomplishes some work here as well. The preface of 'well' signals that the discourse to follow constitutes a dispreferred reply (Levinson, 1983) (as it was defined in chapter one). The accompanying delay contributes to that orientation. In prefacing his description of his 'big move' as the basis for what he had 'hoped' this way Hoff treats simply displaying that reasoning as

problematic. 'Hoped' in line 5 can be seen as depicting that problematic nature. With it Hoff can be seen as attending to the weakness of that personal basis of his expectations. He can be seen as acknowledging that hope is the strongest belief he can place in his expectations based upon his 'big move'.

Not only was Hoff wrong but the basis for his belief was not very strong in the first place. However, in attending to this as the case Hoff comes off as aware of his lack of knowledge. He discretely acknowledges it. In doing so we can see Hoff as seeking to attend to his accountability for having possessed expectations despite a weak basis for doing so, and yet feeling obligated to provide a true version of events despite that being counter to his interests. This move goes a long way towards accomplishing his status as knowledgeable. The reasoning that went into determining his expectation is particularised and externalised. It is merely one instance of reasoning. It is an instance of reasoning displayed as a consequence of his new situation. His lack of participant knowledge is causal. The orientation is towards this instance as not emblematic of Hoff's reasoning. It is not a case of his reasoning abilities being at fault. He is not responsible for having been wrong as well as having arrived at those expectations in the first place. Rather than compromising his status as knowledgeable, in acknowledging the limits of his knowledge under the circumstances Hoff comes off as having done the best he could given the information available to him.

Instance two: what he cannot know as an individual.

In lines 9 to 11 one concern Hoff can be seen dealing with is that of his status as one who would know what the team, as a whole, had thought. The issue here is not whether or not Hoff has sufficient experiential knowledge of the team. The issue is how would Hoff, as an individual, know what another individual thought. Relatedly, a team is made of up of many individuals. With 'in general the team' in lines 9 Hoff attends to the concern. With it Hoff comes off as aware that he is unable to know specifically what each player might have thought as well as of the routineness of variation between individuals. He makes it evident that he can, and is only, generalising for the group. With 'think' in line 10 that generalisation is also displayed



as opinion. Hoff describes his reasoning as specifically not arriving at facts. With the uncertainty of 'possibly ... I don't know' (lines 12 to 15) Hoff accomplishes the same sort of work. He is able to introduce the notion of what the manager may think, on the grounds that he is a member of the team, while distancing himself from how he might know such a thing, accountably. Hoff's attention to the limits of his knowledge, again, works towards his status as knowledgeable. He comes off as doing the best he can with the information available. In doing so he undermines the potential argument that he is talking about something that he could not possibly know.

Instance three: when being right and wrong is not the issue.

In seeking to account for the team's failure to realise their expectations in lines 12 to 17 there are two concerns Hoff can be seen as attending to through displaying his awareness of the limits of his knowledge. The first is the potential of being wrong and the doubt it raises where his reasoning abilities are concerned. The second is the potential of being right. Hoff's attention to this second concern will be addressed under the heading of absences or omissions. However, in this instance it is like the other side of the coin to being wrong its mention is necessary. Hoff accounts for being right or wrong, here, by describing his knowledge as limited, rather than merely attending to it as such which he has to a great extent done in the prior examples. That description is accomplished with 'possibly' in line 12 and 'I don't know' in line 15 along with 'I think ... personally' in lines 16 and 17. Hoff treats being right or wrong here as not of concern to him in the discourse. He is not responsible for either. Rather, Hoff attends to being accountable for his ability to provide reasonable conclusions.

In all three instances, acknowledging limitations is used differently but the result remains the same. It accomplishes Hoff's status as knowledgeable despite him, in the first case not having been right, and in the two to follow not having provided certainty. In coming off as aware of the limitations of his knowledge, Hoff orients to being right as not the main criterion for a determination of one's reasoning ability. His inability to

reason with certainty, rather than a reflection upon his status as knowledgeable, is passed off as a reflection upon some other issue in football or the world in general. In the end, Hoff comes off as doing the best he can with the information provided.

—A brief note on the use of ‘personally’

Hoff’s use of ‘personally’ in line 17 can also be seen to contribute to his status as knowledgeable. It signals that he is coming to his own conclusions rather than that of others. Despite others potential disagreements - in fact, in the face of other potential disagreements - Hoff comes off as nonetheless showing confidence in his own judgments. At the same time ‘personally’ allows for how, even if others disagree, he may still be right, having already acknowledged that others may differ. Hoff comes off as believing in his own reasoning abilities as competent in comparison to others. His belief, in the face of the potential accountability issue of being disagreed with, contributes to his status as knowledgeable. In the final accountability section here I will look at how Hoff accounts for having done the reasoning, or speculation, in the past in determining expectations as well as in the discourse.

—The normativeness of speculation and accounting.

### Speculation

The construction of the discourse attends to the potential concern for Hoff of having done all this reasoning and speculation despite his awareness of the limits of his knowledge. The point being, why would he do it if he knew he could not provide certainty. The concern is attended to through the treatment of speculation as a normative characteristic within football. Providing an account in which he displays speculation having occurred, unsolicited, in the past goes a long way towards accomplishing this normativeness. He ‘had hoped’ it would go better (lines 3 to 7). The team is not ‘doing as well’ as they had ‘thought’ they would (lines 9 to 11). Again, the speculation was mistaken. Providing discourse when it is seemingly against his interests to do so is also relevant here.



Hoff does not explicitly seek to account for the occurrence of the speculation, and its mistaken nature. For instance, in acknowledging the limits of what he could know as a new player he merely attends to those limits in the construction of the discourse. He does not explicitly describe them. He does not topicalize and use those limits as an account for having arrived at the wrong conclusions. Rather, those limits are out there for others to see. Hoff also does not account for the team having speculated. Lines 12 to 17 account for the failure to realise, and having possessed mistaken, expectations. They also do not account for having done the speculation in the first place. In not explicitly accounting for the speculation the orientation is towards its normativeness. It as if speculation is simply a routine aspect of taking part in football. Attempts at, or displays of, reasoning routinely occur. The ability to speculate towards thoughtful conclusions given the topic of football is oriented to as a routine assumption of participants.

### Accounting

The account in lines 12 to 17 can also be seen to accomplish the routineness of speculation within football although it seems as if it merely displays a routine characteristic of everyday discourse. Explanations are commonly provided when things do not go as expected or planned (Suchman, 1987: 53). The explanations come in order for speakers to account for the unexpected occurring. For instance, script formulations, as a means to construct activity as routine and expectable, act as a resource for speakers to describe occurrences as unexpected, and perhaps out of the ordinary, through a contrast. Through them, events, or scripted activity, can be constructed as having deviated, or deviating, from the 'normal' scripted activity within the context at issue (Edwards, 1994).

Activity not going as expected or planned creates accountability concerns for participants. As I noted in chapter one, there are two levels to this accountability. The first, and more obvious, is that of the participants' accountability for their participation within the activity in question. The second is a participant's accountability as the person who is reporting the unexpected event. For instance, Sacks (1984) and Jefferson (1984b cited in Wooffitt, 1992) have investigated how witnesses to out of

the ordinary events routinely explain the event through the use of the device: 'At first I thought ... but then I realised ... '. The realisation of the event as out of the ordinary occurs second. The description of their 'first thoughts' displays the speakers as having initially taken the event to have possessed a more mundane nature than the described actuality. Describing their 'first thoughts' as such accounts for their status as the person reporting the event. It displays them as not having been predisposed to expecting the out of the ordinary to occur. The speakers come off as having approached the event like any 'ordinary' person might have.

The way in which Hoff's accounts for his team's failure, and having possessed mistaken expectations, serves to account for Hoff's status in doing the accounting despite his acknowledged lack of knowledge. The way in which his account occurs here orients to the routineness of accounting within football as possessing a subtly different nature than its occurrence within the world. The sequential organisation of the discourse is particularly significant here. The area of importance is the way in which lines 11 to 14 follow each other. At the end of line 11 Hoff pauses briefly. He, then, proceeds to account for the failure with 'possibly ...' in line 12. The interviewer read the pause as calling for at least a minimal response displaying his attention and understanding of Hoff's initial discourse. The interviewer can be seen as treating this pause as a potential transition relevant point. With 'yeh' in line 13 he passes up the chance to have an extended turn of talk. However, the overlap of 'possibly' and 'yeh' display Hoff as having treated the pause as possessing a different nature. It was not provided as an opportunity for the interviewer to speak.

The significant point here is not whether or not the interviewer actually took the pause as a TRP. It is that the pause allows for the potential orientation towards a TRP. It is a routine, everyday aspect of the nature of pauses that they may be taken as a speaker ending their turn. In pausing, then, Hoff can be seen as displaying a lack of concern for either his or the team's blameworthiness for having failed to achieve expectations and their mistaken speculation. He allows for the potential of the interviewer to take the opportunity to speak. Although the interviewer's quiet 'yeh' passes up the opportunity, he could have more forcefully imposed his right to speak. Pausing allows the possibility of other participants forcefully taking the opportunity to speak and producing more blameworthy accounts of the speaker's initial discourse



before the speaker's opportunity to account for that blameworthiness. Hoff comes off here as not merely seeking to deal with his and the team's blameworthiness. Such an account would be expected to follow immediately if such a concern were at issue.

The orientation is towards the routineness of the unexpected or unfavourable occurring within football. Teams will play badly. Teams will lose. Accounting for such occasions may be a consequence of the routineness of doing so in the world. However, doing so, rather than a concern in terms of speed in order to account before anyone else, seems to be simply what footballers expect to be allowed to do; especially, but not exclusively, within interactions such as interviews. Hoff orients to simply being allowed to account. The account is treated as part of the answer despite its lack of particular orientation towards the question. The account is not treated as an instance of concern where the discourse must be done in order to provide the 'proper' understanding of the initial discourse. The casual nature in which Hoff proceeds to account orients to routineness of doing so within football as possessing a subtly different nature than it does within the world in general. The orientation towards the routineness of speculation, or accounting, within football accounts for Hoff doing so despite his acknowledged lack of knowledge, or inability to provide certainty.

In this initial discourse I have shown that Hoff is attending to this characteristic of being knowledgeable. I also illustrated the common-knowledge behind simply taking Hoff's, as well as other footballers', ability to competently do reasoning on football as self-evident and understood. However, in looking at the accountability work done it is evident that, rather than simply being knowledgeable, in speaking about football, footballers accomplish their status as such through their discourse. Let us just take one example from above of how this is clearly the case.

As one of the instances of Hoff acknowledging the limits of his knowledge I looked at how his status as a new player at a club came into play. Whether or not Hoff was actually a new player at a club, or he actually felt that his knowledge was insufficient to determine expectations properly as a new player, is irrelevant. The issue is that in talking about a 'big move' Hoff comes off as being a new player. He has just arrived at a new club. Category membership, here, is important for the knowledge

Hoff could be expected to possess. It would be commonly understood that as a new player he would not know a lot about the club except perhaps as a non-member. In pausing and his use of 'well' and 'hoped' (lines 4 and 6) Hoff comes off as aware of, and acknowledging, such a lack of knowledge, or the weakness of the basis of his expectations. This discourse does the interactional work of attending to Hoff's status as knowledgeable. For our purposes here the reality of it is not a concern. The issue is what we can see Hoff attending to and seeking to accomplish within the discourse. What is important is the way in which the discourse is designed for the particular moment in which it is made relevant.

The last aspect of this initial discourse I want to comment on is how Hoff's attention to his status as a knowledgeable footballer is evident from the outset of the discourse and throughout the extent of the initial discourse. This is, again, routinely an aspect of how this characteristic is attended to by the interviewees on the whole. It displays how this interview situation is treated as an exercise in coming off as a competent footballer, knowing about the game and so being worthwhile to ask about it. Hoff can be seen as continuing with his report until he is satisfied with having sufficiently attended to his status as a knowledgeable footballer. Evidence for this point can be seen in the way in which accounting for the failure to realise expectations is treated as a routine aspect of answering such a question, or talking about failure within football, despite such an account not seemingly being relevant to the question.

In the next section I will look at the status of a player which Hoff, as well as the rest of the interviewees, routinely take themselves as responsible for. It will be treated in the same manner as the status of a knowledgeable footballer has been above. For ease of reference the relevant discourse from the extract will be provided again.

#### SUBSEQUENT DISCOURSE: The interviewee's status as a player

The subsequent discourse occurs in lines 19 to 23. The characteristic that Hoff attends to his responsibility for, in this discourse, is his status as a player, or someone who goes out and participates within the playing of football. This issue is evident in the discourse in how Hoff treats the intentioned pursuit of purposeful action as normative for participants within football. Again, initially the characteristic will simply be



illustrated as at issue in the discourse along with how it can be seen as simply an expectable feature of Hoff's discourse.

16	Hoff	I think there's a bit of
17		quality lacking. (.) personally
18	I	°yeh,°
19	Hoff	(1.5) u:m (0.5) but ↑you just- (0.4) work hard
20		try and, (0.4) get yourself, (.) going
21		and then hopefully
22		everything else will drop into place

*Purposeful action as normative*

The discourse in these lines displays a course of action. The relevance of this discourse for the initial discourse, in part accomplished by 'but' in line 19, displays the orientation towards this course of action as what to do given the circumstances of the initial discourse. 'Work hard' in line 19 and 'try' in line 20 orient to the active nature of participants within football. They display approaches to activity that do not just happen. They demand the participants' active, intentioned pursuit. Effort is involved. The scripted nature of the activity as what is to be done in such circumstances serves to build the agentivity of participants as routine and expectable. The individual participant is described here as the doer, the active agent, in pursuing the course of action.

With 'you' in lines 19 and 20 the course of action is made relevant as what should be done by any footballer, or anyone as a footballer, in these sort of circumstances. The nature of football remains the same for whoever is taking part in it. The course of action is constructed as normative, or that which participants within football in such circumstances are accountable for doing. The participants agentively pursuing such a course of action is the way in which 'hopes' are turned into outcomes (lines 21 and 22). Their involvement within football is not passive. The orientation is towards them as influential, or normatively seeking to be so. Hoff, here, can be seen as

merely attending to the normative status of participants within football. That is what they are there to do: try to succeed, or achieve desired consequences. Their actions within football are not random, but routinely intentioned and deliberate towards some ends. However, similar to status as a knowledgeable footballer, the self-evidence of participants as such is accomplished in the discourse through the accountability work done.

### *Accountability work*

Hoff accomplishes his status as a player in much the same way as he accomplishes his status as knowledgeable. Concerns, in the form of potential understandings of the discourse, which may serve to diminish his status as a player, are undermined through the construction of the discourse. Two main concerns dealt with by Hoff will be addressed here. One is attended to from the initial discourse. The other is attended to as a consequence of the subsequent discourse itself. However, the first issue to address here is how Hoff accomplishes the accountability work for his status as a player through the construction of individuals as normatively active agents within football.

#### —Individuals as active agents.

It seems from this subsequent discourse that rather than attending to his own status as a player Hoff is attending to the status of each individual on his team as players. However, doing so can be seen as a necessary bit of accountability work for Hoff in accounting for his own status as a player. It is already established that Hoff is a professional footballer. That is why he is being interviewed. It would not be information that the interviewer was particularly after. He can be said to already know it. Consequently, Hoff attending to his status as a player, which he orients to the necessity to do here, can be seen as presenting him with a particularly dangerous situation. How does one talk about that which is already taken as a given even if it is relevant?

Relatedly, it is also the case that singling himself out in attending to his status as player might be taken as a case of Hoff seeking to distinguish himself as such. That



is to say, Hoff might be seen as trying to make himself appear as better than other professionals as a player in some way. In attending to his status as a player in the way he does, as a player like other players, which possesses a routine and expectable nature, Hoff displays that information as not particularly special, or 'news', but nonetheless relevant to provide under the circumstances. Doing so serves to deal with these concerns of attending to his status as a player.

—Having failed and not knowing why.

Hoff attends to the failure to reach expectations along with not knowing why the team has failed to reach their expectations as raising concerns. If his team cannot reach their expectations, which are supposedly within their ability, what can they do? What can they be determinant for? Relatedly, if why the team has failed is uncertain how do they proceed purposefully in the future? How do they correct the problems? How do they determine a course of action without the fear of repeating the mistakes that lead to the initial failure? These concerns focus on the team. From the initial discourse it seems that as the team goes so does Hoff with the consequence of these concerns having relevance for his status as a player. The football has not gone as he had 'hoped' and relatedly the team has not done as they 'thought' (lines 6 to 11). In dealing with the concerns above Hoff separates out his accountability as an individual footballer from that of the team as a whole. Such concerns are treated as not at issue for individual players. Hoff does this work through constructing the course of action as both knowable, or known, and do-able. He accomplishes the course of action as such through its normativeness and the details provided within it.

In describing the course of action as normative Hoff orients to the sort of circumstances that make it relevant as not unlikely within football. The only aspects of these circumstances that Hoff displays certainty in are the team's failure and his inability to account for that failure with certainty. These aspects, then, are the not unlikely ones within football which make relevant this particular course of action. Rather than throwing doubt upon the team's ability to be consequential within football for that which they are seeking to achieve, their failure to realise expectations is oriented to here as simply a not unlikely possibility. Relatedly, the underlying

orientation is towards knowing what to do as a normative aspect of being a footballer. Even when one does not know why events have proceeded as they have for them in failure there is nonetheless a particular normative course of action to pursue. The details of the course of action also contribute towards this understanding.

‘Just’ in line 19 packages the course of action as unexceptional, or not extraordinary, within football as something for participants to do. The orientation is towards it as essentially do-able. ‘Just’ also gives the sense of Hoff having not provided some unique insight into how to accomplish desired ends within football in describing this course of action. It is what anyone would, or could, know to do. With ‘work hard’, also in line 19, Hoff makes relevant a common-sense understanding about what players are to do. As something that Hoff knows to do, football knowledge, knowledge of the particulars about why they failed, is not necessary for that determination. Anyone can see what Hoff is on about and the relevance of it. ‘Work hard’ can be seen as routinely applicable to any activity. Rather than dictating how, or what, specific actions to take it describes the nature of the effort necessary with which to pursue whatever specific actions one is faced with. Working hard is simply a case of effort which an individual can control. They are determinant for it.

‘Try and (.5) get yourself (.) going’ in line 20 makes relevant effort as well. Here, Hoff describes the effort as to be directed towards a goal, or purpose. It is not merely a case of blindly working hard. The effort is to be focused by the participants towards this desired consequence. The construction of ‘get yourself (.) going’ as the purpose of the effort is general, vague. The orientation is towards to its relevance as simply understood. As something to do, it is treated as common-knowledge. In terms of what it is, Hoff can be seen making relevant here the doing of that which would be routinely expected of an individual within the circumstances at hand. Playing to one’s ability, then, is the goal here. Participants are determinant for their pursuit of playing to their ability.

Hoff attends to his status as a player, here, in accounting for both the ability of players to know what to do as well as their ability to pursue that purposeful action. In doing so Hoff treats his accountability as separate, at least in part, from, rather than wholly associated with, the entity of the team’s. He is part of the team yet an individual within



it. The team's failure as well as the inability to determine why the team has failed are treated as not determinant for an individual's status as a player.

—Attending to an 'admission' of failure

The pursuit of desired ends is treated here as part of what is normatively expected of participants. Consequently, the orientation is towards Hoff and his team having actively pursued their expectations in the events reported in the initial discourse. In the initial discourse the failure is described as just happening. The participants' intentioned pursuit towards desired ends does not appear. In the subsequent discourse Hoff attends to this orientation towards that intentioned pursuit as a concern. It is like an 'admission' of failure. The concern is treated as raising doubts in the team's ability to achieve what they set out to. The failure did not just happen. They tried and it did not go their way. Hoff accounts for this concern through illustrating the nature of the relationship between participants' determinance, or consequentiality, within football and the realisation of desired consequences. A central aspect of this work is how ability is treated as a desired consequence rather than an expectation.

Participants, as I noted above, are displayed as determinant for their pursuit of purposeful action. They are determinant for the effort they put into their attempts to achieve desired ends. The desired ends, here, are described as 'get yourself (.) going' (line 20) and 'everything will drop into place' (line 22). In terms of the former, the effort that 'try' makes relevant also orients to that desired end as not simply achieved because a participant sets out to achieve it. 'Try' orients to the variable nature of its achievement. In terms of the latter desired end 'then hopefully' in line 22 serves to convey this same nature of the relationship between participants' consequentiality and the realisation of desired ends that Hoff is attending to. With 'then', similar to with 'try' above, the orientation is towards the participants' determinance being directed at these desired consequences. The desired consequences are that which is to follow from the participants' active pursuit of this course of action. Again, it is their agency which helps to turn 'hopes' into outcomes.

However, 'hopefully', again similar to with 'try', accomplishes participants' determinance as possessing a variable nature. The course of action is to be performed

in pursuit of the desired consequences. There is an intention towards causality in performing it. However, whether or not the desired ends are achieved is variable. With 'try' and 'then hopefully' participants' active pursuit of some course of action is displayed as only providing the chance for the realisation of desired consequences. Having actively tried to achieve their expectations and failed is oriented to here as not necessarily raising doubts about the team's, as well as individual players' (and so Hoff's), ability to achieve what they set out to. Desired consequences remaining unrealised is treated as routinely a not unlikely possibility.

Playing to one's ability as the desired consequence contributes to this accountability work. As we saw above, 'get yourself (.) going' is a formulation that points to playing to one's ability as the purpose, goal, of individual participants' effort. The participant as an agent is the catalyst for the realisation of it as an aim. Its realisation is, again, variable. Participants must try to achieve it. Playing to one's ability, then, is treated here as not just happening. It is not a normative realisation of simply being a participant within football. With 'everything will drop into place' we can see the same sort of work being accomplished. It possesses a vague construction similar to 'get ... going'. 'Everything' is displayed as having a 'place'. It describes a normal state of affairs in that things being in their place would be expectable. The orientation here is towards ability again; this time it is the team's ability at issue. With 'drop into' Hoff displays 'everything' as not where it should be at the moment. Again, the realisation of ability is the aim.

Playing to one's ability is treated as that which is normatively understood as the standard to which participants, and the team, can be expected to play to when they are at their best. It is a desired end to achieve in terms of performance. It does not just happen. Participants' pursuit of the relevant course of action is the catalyst for achieving it as an aim. Again, the failure to achieve desired expectations despite having actively tried to achieve them is accomplished here as not raising doubts about Hoff's status as a player. It is evident from the accountability work displayed here that, and how, Hoff attends to, and in doing so seeks to accomplish, his status as player in the discourse.



In the section above I have looked at how, similar to his status as a knowledgeable footballer, Hoff's status as a player is present as an issue in the discourse and accomplished as self-evident. Despite the nature of the interaction seemingly having established Hoff's, as well as the other interviewees', status as players, Hoff, like the rest, routinely attends to and accounts for his status as such which is shown above. When the interviewees attend to their status as players becoming an issue in the discourse, one that must be addressed, the construction of their discourse serves to build their status as such rather than it simply being left as understood as a consequence of the interaction. One last point to add is that merely because this characteristic is taken as understood within some initial discourse and not explicitly attended to, as it is here, does not mean that it is not an issue in that discourse. In the next section I will address this point.

#### ABSENCES OF ATTENTION TO ASPECTS OF THEIR STATUS

The absence of either characteristic from some discourse, rather than being a sign of its irrelevance in that discourse, is an aspect of its strategic design. This absence of Hoff's status as a player from the initial discourse, although seemingly justified given that status as to some extent established within the interaction, can nonetheless be seen as part of the discourse's strategic design. The absence of Hoff's status as a knowledgeable footballer from the subsequent discourse can also be seen in the same light.

##### *The absence of Hoff's status as a player from the initial discourse*

In the initial discourse, as I have noted, there is a seeming absence of attention to Hoff's status as a player. In lines 5 and 6 'the football' was expected to 'go ... better'. The failure is described in terms of how 'the football' went. 'The football' is treated as having an existence independent of the agency of those participating in it. It merely happens rather than the participants having influence over it. In lines 12 and 13 the team has not done as was expected. The failure is described in terms of the team as a

whole. The individual contributions of those within the team are glossed. However, in accomplishing the discourse in this way, as merely reporting about outcomes, Hoff manages to do some sensitive accountability for his status as a player.

For instance, Hoff subtly separates himself from the rest of the team in describing himself as a new player who had 'hoped' things would go better. He comes off as possessing a positive attitude towards wanting to do well. Hoff did not doubt the team's ability. The basis of hope is also internal. The team, again, is described as having 'thought' they would do better. For them it is the 'facts' which indicate what to expect. The basis for their expectations is external. 'Thought' gives the sense of their approach as logical, and neutral. It is not so much a case of what they want to happen but what they take as likely to happen. Hoff, here, comes off as having been more, in a sense, committed to the team achieving the desired ends.

Where Hoff seeks to account for the team's failure in lines 12 to 17 the individual's situated attempts to be influential within the play are also glossed. Ability and its static nature are made relevant. Abilities, here, are consequential. What happens is treated as a consequence of how the corresponding abilities of opposing teams match up against each other. However, Hoff manages to account for his status as a player here as well. For instance, as I noted previously, in seeking to account for the team's failure Hoff can be seen as attending to two concerns through displaying his awareness of the limits of his knowledge. The first is the potential of being wrong which I have addressed above. The second, which I will deal with here, is the potential of him being right. If Hoff is right, and the manager got it wrong, then the team is not as good as they thought.

More importantly for Hoff is the consequence of that for him being a new player at the club. As a new player, he is one who the manager presumably bought in order to improve things; he is one whose purchase the team's expectations were perhaps in part based upon. Consequently, the reality of the manager having got it wrong is potentially negative for Hoff. Hoff deals with this concern through constructing the idea that the manager got it wrong with uncertainty. He does so with 'possibly' (line 12) and 'I don't know' (line 15). Hoff can be seen as accomplishing 'plausible deniability' (Bogen and Lynch, 1989:203). He manages to introduce the idea that the manager got it wrong and yet with the uncertainty he shields himself from the



negative implications of that possibility. It is the focus on reasoning abilities in the initial discourse which serves to gloss the omission of individuals as active agent within the events in question. He comes off as just doing a bit of talk about football. It allows Hoff to accomplish this work in accounting for his status as a player when that status is not visibly an issue of concern.

We can see here that Hoff's status as a player having already been established as part of the basis for the interview occurring provides Hoff with a useful resource. He need not make it relevant, and therefore need not explicitly account for, his status as a player. This resource is particularly significant in the initial discourse here given the topic of the discourse being the sensitive issue of the team's failure to achieve expectations. Although he is a member of the team he does not specifically implicate himself, or other individual team members, for the failure. However, he does manage to attend to his status as nonetheless perhaps less blameworthy than the others. In not seeming to attend to his status as a player Hoff is able to deal with particularly sensitive issues of blameworthiness as a member, and, more importantly, as a new player, on the team.

As we can see, the absence of attention to Hoff's status as a player is an important aspect of the discourse's strategic design in doing accountability work. The absence of Hoff's status as a knowledgeable footballer from the subsequent discourse is also important in terms of the discourse's strategic design.

*The absence of Hoff's status as a knowledgeable footballer from the subsequent discourse*

In the subsequent discourse Hoff does not attend to his status as a knowledgeable footballer. He comes off as merely reporting the normative course of action given the circumstances within football. It is simply a known fact within football. The 'you', again, serves to accomplish its normativeness. Its status as a known fact is accomplished through describing it with the common-knowledge formulations of 'work hard', 'get yourself going' and 'drop into place'. The interviewer is invited to confirm its status as what anyone could know which contributes to its status within football, described here, as what footballers would know and be responsible for

knowing. Being a knowledgeable footballer, possessing competent reasoning abilities, is not at issue. Hoff does not have to reason in order to determine what he should do. He has treated it as simply apparent given the nature of the circumstances. This absence of concern for Hoff's status as a knowledgeable footballer is significant within the discourse.

As I noted in looking at this extract previously (chapter 4) the interviewer's turn of 'yeh' in line 18 is taken by Hoff as passing up the TRP he has provided and so the opportunity to speak at length. In providing the subsequent discourse Hoff attends to the interviewer as expecting more talk to come. His initial discourse, then, has not served its purpose. It is not understood, or sufficient for all practical purposes in the way he meant it. In attempting to deal with this inadequacy Hoff, again, accomplishes the information within his subsequent discourse as the necessary information to provide. It is necessary in that it is not understood to the interviewer as relevant within the initial discourse. However, the orientation is also towards the information as understood to Hoff; it was taken as understood by him in the initial discourse. Through the absence of concern for his status as knowledgeable Hoff accomplishes the discourse as both necessary to provide yet as having been understood to him within the initial discourse. His description of it takes no reasoning on his part. To him, it is, again, simply a known fact.

A related issue here is the understanding of reasoning being inherently potentially wrong. If reasoning has gone into arriving at some conclusion whatever conclusion is arrived at does not attain the status of fact. The interviewees' attention to this understanding has recently been addressed in chapter 5 in the discussion of formulation and modalization as a means of fact construction. Conclusions described as arrived at through reasoning in initial discourse are formulated in discourse to follow as simply being fact rather than products of participants' thought process. The interviewees attend to the potential of underlying doubt upon the validity of reasoning present with the human factor. Omitting it here and describing the normative course of action as a known fact within football is central to the accountability work done. The underlying orientation is towards Hoff merely doing a bit of talk about football in the initial discourse. The subsequent discourse treats such talk as secondary. It serves to minimise the negativity of the failure to achieve expectations and not knowing why.



What is treated as primary within football here is the individual's pursuit of the relevant course of action given the circumstances in seeking to achieve desired ends. That is what they are accountable for. The relevant course of action, as a known fact, is what anyone in Hoff's position as a player would know. Again, it is not a case of reasoning, which contributes to its display as what players are accountable for doing. There is no question about its status as what to do as a known fact. However, Hoff does nonetheless manage to accomplish some sensitive accountability work within the discourse in, again, subtly separating himself from the rest of the players here. The orientation is towards all the players as in the position to know what needs to be done; there is only the possibility, although perhaps a likely one, of their possession of that fact as knowledge. In contrast, Hoff, as the speaker of the discourse, comes off as simply knowing the fact. There is no potential doubt. As we can see, the absence of concern for Hoff's status as a knowledgeable is important to the discourse's strategic design.

The interviewees' statuses as knowledgeable footballers and players are routinely prevalent within this data, whether in being attended to through talking about them or in their seeming absence, in being dealt with as concerns of accountability. In their absence they serve to deal with potential accountability concerns in much the same way as when they are explicitly attended to. Although, in their absence the accountability work accomplished for them is characteristically sensitive work.

#### SITUATED ACTION: The nature of how football proceeds

There is another aspect of the discourse relevant for the accountability work done here. It is the way in which activity within football is oriented to as proceeding. The uncertainty and generality present in Hoff's descriptions serve to convey that nature. With uncertainty and generality Hoff attends to activity within football as proceeding situatedly. Suchman (1987) argues that action, whether physical or discursive, routinely proceeds in a situated fashion. That is to say, the actions performed in any given situation are performed, then and there, within that situation given the

circumstances the actor is faced with. The likes of plans and tactics, although used, have the purpose of orienting actors so that they 'can obtain the best possible position from which' to use their skills upon which their success is dependent in the end. They fall short of actually dictating what an actor will specifically do in pursuit of their desired ends.

In looking at how attending to the situated action nature of football is part of the strategic design of Hoff's discourse, and discourse under examination as a whole, it is first important to note Hoff's attention to his limitations. Above we saw how Hoff accounts for his status as a knowledgeable footballer in acknowledging the limits of his knowledge. Hoff also accounts for his status as a player through acknowledging the limits of his status as such: as a player he is not directly consequential for desired ends. Again, displaying limitations is seemingly against one's interests. However, Hoff does attend to these limitations as concerns in the discourse. Situated action as the nature in which football proceeds is central to the way in which these limitations are treated. It underlies and supports the accountability work done in serving as a basis for these limitations as, rather than concerns for Hoff in constructing discourse, normal for participants within football.

Similar to with Hoff's status as a knowledgeable footballer and player, initially I will simply illustrate the attention towards situated action as the manner in which football proceeds. Then I will address how it serves to accomplish the accountability work stated.

### *Generality in the initial discourse*

Again, in lines 6 and 7 Hoff displays himself as having expected 'the football ... to go ... better'; in lines 12 and 13 the team are displayed as 'not ... doing as well' as they expected. The discourse is vague in terms of what exactly was expected and happened. In assessing what has happened Hoff generalises from the specific instances of play to provide an overall understanding of how things have gone. Doing so exhibits Hoff's attention to the variable nature of situated action. The situations that one will have to deal with within a game are not evident until one is faced with them. Seeking to achieve desired ends in one match will come from dealing with different



particular situations than in other matches. Providing an overall understanding of how events with such variable specifics went would routinely necessitate such generalisation. Relatedly, in determining expectations in the first place, Hoff's focus would have also not been on the performance, or occurrence, of some particular situated action. The situated action will vary. What is expected is a general nature of how, or standard to which, the situated action that does occur will be performed and how that will effect the achievement of results in general.

In accounting for the failure to achieve expectations in lines 12 to 17 the generality of the description in the discourse continues. Hoff does not account for the occurrence of particular instances, or refer to specific faults of, or mistakes made by, the team or players. The account lays potential blame on ability. In looking at ability Hoff is, again, simply generalising from instances. One underlying factor is treated as relevant for where the team is at the moment. Here the generalisation can be seen as a consequence of the nature of the specific situated actions that would serve as evidence for an assessment of the realisation of the expectations. A game consists of many and varied situated actions being performed by individual participants at the same time over an extended period of time. Hoff could not provide an overall account for why things have gone wrong and take into account all the potential variable, perhaps even contradictory, instances where the team, or a team member, has succeeded and not succeeded. The generalisation exhibits Hoff's attention, in providing an answer, to situated action as the way in which activity within football proceeds.

#### *Uncertainty in the initial discourse*

With the negative assessment of 'disappointing' in line 3 Hoff initially describes himself as not pleased with how things have gone. What can be seen here is that Hoff did not know how events would proceed. This uncertainty of expectations is reflected in Hoff's description of himself as having 'hoped' (line 6) and his description of the team as having 'thought' (line 11). The determination of expectations indicates an instance of reasoning. As I have noted above, uncertainty is inherent, and routinely attended to as such by speakers, in practical reasoning. The uncertainty can be seen as a consequence of the difficulty of knowing what will happen given the variable nature of

specifics that may occur within situated activity. Again, the specifics of the situations to take place are unknown prior to their occurrence. Consequently, there is an inability of participants to plan and prepare specifically for the actions they will seek to perform. Participation is simply a case of assessing those situations on the spot and acting accordingly (which plans, again, can help prepare a participant for).<sup>1</sup>

In accounting for the failure to realise expectations the uncertainty continues as well. Here Hoff explicitly describes himself as uncertain. That is to say, Hoff provides his accounts as specifically not displaying what he takes as fact. In lines 12 to 15 he does this work with 'possibly ... I don't know'. In lines 16 and 17 he does it through the description of the discourse as specifically his own opinion. 'I think ... personally' accomplishes this opinion work. He displays himself as not knowing exactly why the expectations have not been realised. Here, the uncertainty can be seen as exhibiting the difficulty of being sure in terms of what happened and why given the variable nature of the specifics that would have occurred within the situated activity of the team's past performances up to this point in the season. The general assessment of all the relevant specific situated actions performed in seeking to arrive at one underlying factor as the cause for failure, with any degree of certainty, would be problematic.

#### *Generality and uncertainty in the subsequent discourse*

The subsequent discourse possesses the same uncertainty and generality as the initial discourse. To reiterate, these lines are displayed as the course of action that is made relevant by the circumstances of the initial discourse. The generality of the course of action's description attends to the unknown nature of the situations that one will be faced with in their situated pursuit of it within football. With the generality the course of action is accomplished as both pursuable and achievable regardless of the specific situated actions one will be faced with performing. The generality begins in line 19 with 'work hard'. Its fulfilment in pursuit of the course of action does not necessitate the performance of any specific situated actions. Again, with 'work hard' the effort with which one pursues their actions is at issue.

'Try and (.5) get yourself (.) going' in line 20 continues with the generality of the course of action. 'Get yourself (.) going', again, possesses a common knowledge



understanding. Its relevance is general and applicable routinely within the world. Again, it refers to doing that which one could routinely be expected to do given the relevant context and circumstances at hand. The generality treats the pursuit of 'get yourself (.) going', similar to 'work hard', as not dependent on some specific set of situated actions being performed. It is pursuable, and achievable, regardless of the specific situated actions whose performance is necessitated, or undertaken. The appearance of successfully realising this goal will vary and be treated as determined within as well as by the situated action. With 'everything will drop into place' in line 23 the generality continues. The same sort of common-knowledge, generally applicable, understanding is relevant here.

The basis of the uncertainty in the discourse can, again, be seen as the variability inherent in situated action. 'Try' in line 20 orients to the potential of not realising the goal of 'get ... going'. There is a need for effort. The goal does not simply happen. In pursuing the course of action the effort is the focus. That is to say, while the achievement of the goal is the aim, it is not a constituent aspect of fulfilling this course of action. The effort is treated as what is important given that it is what participants control. Regardless of the effort the realisation of the goal remains uncertain. The uncertainty accomplished with 'hopefully' in line 22 is similar. The desired consequence is not necessarily achieved. However, it is important to note here that with 'hopefully' the uncertainty is treated as a neutral phenomenon. The variability of situated action does not simply work against participants. The pursuit of the relevant course of action is treated as providing a basis for hope, or the orientation towards an increased chance of achieving one's desired ends despite the uncertainty. With 'hopefully' the orientation is towards the potential of a positive impact.

### *Accountability*

In terms of accountability work an initial point to make is how situated action, as the way in which football proceeds, is accounted for. The description of the expectations as unrealised provides an instance of the uncertainty of situated action within football being realised. In proceeding situatedly events have deviated from expectations. Again, providing this description of the team's failure is potentially against Hoff's

interests. However, the actuality serves to accomplish accountability work. The generality and uncertainty of Hoff's descriptions does attend to, and serve to account for, the concerns of potentially being disagreed with, or proven wrong, as well as having failed and potentially failing in future situated attempts at achieving desired ends. However, In providing discourse that is seemingly against his interests, as a consequence of the actuality of the failure, Hoff comes off as simply reporting the facts and in doing so exhibiting the nature of how football proceeds. Doing so can be seen as accounting for football as proceeding situatedly; if it were not already treated as common knowledge and understood.

There are two further related aspects of the discourse which point towards the norm of situated action here. The first is that the unrealised expectations did not force Hoff to question his status as a footballer. Having mistaken expectations is treated as a not unlikely possibility within football. The second is that despite the unpredictability of the future, and his awareness of it, Hoff nonetheless displays an orientation towards the ability to speculate as to likely outcomes. The situated action nature of football is treated as simply a constituent aspect of the game the players have to, and routinely do, deal with.

It is this status as a constituent aspect of the game accomplished in the discourse that is central to the accountability work done through displaying football as proceeding situatedly. It serves to reconcile Hoff's limitations as a footballer where his status as knowledgeable and as a player are concerned. Rather than concerns for him in particular Hoff attends to these limitations as simply normative for participants within football. The situated action nature of football is consequential for participants' limitations. Hoff supports his status as knowledgeable in coming off as aware of his limitations. The orientation is towards Hoff's attention to limits, rather than merely pointing to his knowledge of what he does not know, displaying his knowledge of the underlying nature of football as an activity.

In terms of his status as a player, Hoff's limitations do not undermine his effectiveness. The relevant course of action takes into account the situated action nature of how football proceeds. It is, again, pursuable as well as achievable regardless of what specific situated actions are necessitated, or undertaken. The potential to set a purpose and seek to achieve it within the play is in the hands of the



participants. The achievement of desired ends, however, is not directly in the hands of the players as agents. The orientation is towards them as not simply to be held accountable for the achievement of desired ends as a result of situated action. Outcomes remain essentially variable regardless of participants and their pursuit of goals. The limitations, given their status as caused by the situated action nature of how football proceeds, are treated as not a concern in talking about football. Rather they are a concern for the participants in playing football.

The norm of limitations accomplished through displaying activity within football proceeding situatedly treats all participants as faced with the same underlying situation within football. They do not dictate that situation. Rather the situation is there for them to deal with. In terms of the play, prior to a game participants do not know the situations they will be faced with or the actions they will seek to pursue in dealing with those situations. In the course of a game they are faced with constantly changing situations for which they must specifically determine their course of action at that moment. Rather than an issue of concern in constructing their discourse, the interviewees treat situated action as simply an understood aspect of football. It serves as a potential resource routinely available to them in constructing their discourse about their participation within football to account for that participation and their status as the provider of the account. In the last section of the chapter I want to look at the issue which all this accountability work in the discourse, done for Hoff's status as a footballer, is aimed at. It is the issue of function.

#### 'FUNCTION' WITHIN FOOTBALL

Another aspect of this extract that is representative of the way in which the interviewees routinely account for their status as footballers is the importance of function. By 'function' I mean the issue of contributing to the achievement of desired consequences. The manner in which function is made an issue varies greatly. However, it is there and can be picked out. In extract [6.1] the relevance of function is

not initially evident in the initial discourse. It is in the subsequent discourse where the relevance of function becomes evident in establishing the participants as determinant within football. As I have noted, Hoff accomplishes his status as a player in attending to the normative consequentiality of participants for their pursuit of desired ends. What they try to achieve and how is down to the participants themselves, of which Hoff is one. Relatedly, and of significance here, is that Hoff also attends to participants', and so his own, potential consequentiality for the achievement of those desired ends. Their consequentiality for what they pursue is important because of their potential consequentiality for achieving it.

In his subsequent discourse Hoff accomplishes his status as knowledgeable as well. Again, the normative course of action given the circumstances is treated as a fact that would be known by those in Hoff's position. That is not to say that all players know it. Hoff's status as the speaker of the discourse accomplishes his knowledge. There is another point related to Hoff's status as knowledgeable also relevant here. Reasoning abilities are, again, not involved in determining the specific nature of the course of action to follow. However, that course of action only becomes evident as relevant through reasoning. It is Hoff's assessment of the circumstances, or, more to the point, his inability to determine the reasons for failure as the circumstances, which are determinant for the course of action provided as relevant. His status as knowledgeable is accomplished as functional. It plays a significant role in determining, and knowing, the 'right' thing to do. Hoff comes off as routinely capable of assessing circumstances in order to determine the proper course of action.

Function is a central aspect of the accountability work done in dealing with the concern Hoff attends to being raised by the initial discourse as insufficient as an answer. It is attended to as, at the end of the day, what Hoff is accountable for. He is accountable for being able to contribute to the achievement of desired ends. Other concerns in the discourse are treated as secondary and as such within football they are accounted for. For instance, failing to realise expectations, and being unable to determine why, are treated as minimally significant by Hoff for his status as a player. This is clear in that Hoff, again, had oriented to his initial discourse, where those points were evident, as sufficient as an answer without the subsequent discourse which



confirms their secondary nature. Hoff takes that secondary nature as having been understood.

The interviewees use of function in this data, again, routinely appears in this manner and accomplishes this sort of work. When concerns arise for their status as 'proper' footballers within initial discourse in these instances of concern the interviewees routinely use the issue of function as a resource in dealing with the concern. I want to look at two further extracts briefly in order to illustrate this point as well as the variability of the manner in which function is made an issue.

Extract [6.2]

- 1 I how about a (.) criticism of the staff  
2 Dom I think that- that- that's the same again  
3 that happens  
4 I yeh.  
5 Dom yeh that that will happen because  
6 people are looking to point their fingers. and a  
7 (.) players will point at a different person,  
8 players will point at the staff,  
9 that's that's only natural  
10 I would have [thought.]  
11 I [yeh. ]  
12 Dom [you know] what I mean?  
13 I [yeh. ]  
14 Dom whether or not its its true its its you know its  
15 ((laughter)) it makes you feel like  
16 you're doing something you know,  
17 I [yeh. ]  
18 Dom [towards] like. .h getting it right. (0.4)  
19 but (.) you know it might be wrong  
20 it might be right, I don't know

In the initial discourse, here, lines 2 to 12, the admission of criticism of the staff occurring within football is attended to as a concern by Dom. As a concern it is dealt with in working up criticism as simply something that 'happens ... will happen' within the world and so football as an activity which occurs within the world. This work begins in lines 3 to 6 where criticism is described as simply a potential situated action within the world. That is to say, it is not a planned activity. Rather it is something that the actor deems necessary, or relevant, within and for the moment in which it is done. In moving from 'people' to 'players' in lines 6 to 7 the orientation towards football here is as simply an activity within the world in which criticism can occur: players are people. In moving from 'different person' to 'the staff' in lines 7 to 8 the staff are treated as within the group that are potentially relevant for the players to criticise. With 'natural' in line 9 criticism of the staff is described as not occurring as some normal intention, or inclination, within football to label them as blameworthy. Criticism is done by players because of their status as people within the world doing the types of things they do rather than their status as players.

However, the subsequent discourse attends to the initial discourse as raising another concern. It is in attending to this concern that the relevance of function comes into play. The concern is for having described criticism as occurring despite its seeming irrelevance within football given its everyday nature. Why do players take part in an activity that is seemingly irrelevant to the potential achievement of desired ends? In dealing with this concern Dom initially describes the uncertainty of criticism in line 14. It is not evident, or clear, if the criticism is correct. It is, after all, merely an assessment; an assessment of blameworthiness. Significantly, here, the potential relevance of criticism is allowed for, if correctly attributed. This uncertainty and potential relevance, however, is treated as secondary within this account. What is primary, in lines 16 to 19, is the feeling of being consequential in doing criticism. The 'you' displays this feeling as a normative one amongst participants, including Dom. The participants are described as seeking to contribute to the team's cause with their criticism. There is purpose to it.

With 'feel' participants are described as having a sense that what they are doing is good, or contributing to the team's pursuit of desired consequences.<sup>2</sup> The orientation is that within the situated action of doing criticism only its potential



correctness is apparent to them. The feeling of being correct has an over riding effect on the possibility of being wrong. In doing criticism the participants are described as 'believing' they are being functional. Dom also allows for the possibility that they are. Dom, here, treats the participants' intention towards contributing to the achievement of desired ends as sufficient as an account for the occurrence of criticism. Pursuing desired ends is, again, treated as what players are consequential for. It is what they are accountable for. In describing their participation in criticism of the staff as an aspect of that pursuit to participants Dom accounts for its occurrence. In terms of Dom specifically, function here accounts for his status as a 'proper' footballer in both talking about, and as a potential participant in, what he is talking about.

Extract [6.3]

1 I u:m what is like the relationship  
 2 amongst the players  
 3 BG I think its very good.  
 4 a club (0.5) a club like this u:m (0.8)  
 5 you know we're sort of (0.2) maybe  
 6 a middle of the road club. (.)  
 7 you haven't got a (0.2) massive squad  
 8 there there's a lot of teams in the league (.) and  
 9 the difference between, (0.6)  
 10 staying, (0.2) in that league or doing quite well  
 11 seems to be a lot to do with team spirit and (.)  
 12 the sort of atmosphere you get amongst you (0.4)  
 13 I yeh.  
 14 BG u::m it does go a hell of a long way  
 15 towards (.) a successful team really,  
 16 and plus keeping a bit of continuity um (1)  
 17 the same eleven players or  
 18 you know if you if you if you get  
 19 a lot of changes all the time  
 20 you know? um (.) things that come naturally (0.2)

21                   you know its harder to (.)  
22                   keep changing all the time so, (0.8)  
23                   in that respect its important to try and  
24                   have a fairly settled team  
25                   as much as you can and  
26                   then the team spirit builds.

Here, within the initial discourse in lines 3 to 22 BG attends to the need to account for his description of the ‘relationship amongst the players’ on his team as ‘very good’ within football. He does so in describing the relationship as an important factor in contributing to the team’s potential of achieving desired ends. As BG describes, ‘there’s a lot of teams in the league’ (line 8) and such a relationship amongst team members can contribute to the team ‘staying in that league or doing quite well’ (lines 9 and 10). It ‘seems’ to be functional within football. As he is describing this relevance of his team’s relationship BG attends to and describes a further related point. He makes relevant the issue of ‘continuity’. ‘Continuity’ is described in much the same light as the players’ relationship. It is ‘harder’ to play when players in the side are constantly changing. Possessing ‘continuity’ is treated functional as well. Again, as in the previous extracts as well as routinely within such instances of concern, within his subsequent discourse BG attends to the initial discourse as raising another concern.

In the subsequent discourse the concern attended to is for the absence of command over the factors of relationship, or team spirit, and continuity. BG attends to their description in the initial discourse as making them relevant as factors which you either have or do not have, and in the case of the latter there is nothing you can do about it. The factors are beyond participants’ agency. In describing effort as significant for continuity with ‘its important to try and have a fairly settled team’ in lines 23 and 24 BG deals with this potential understanding. With ‘fairly settled’ as well as ‘as much as you can’ in line 25 BG attends to a lack of certain and complete determinance for the maintenance of continuity. Keeping the same eleven players all the time is unlikely. However, the relevance of effort with ‘try and have’ nonetheless orients to the potential of some degree of consequentiality; that is, keeping most of the



even the same is possible. The relationship factor, team spirit, is described as simply following from the maintenance of a degree of continuity.

The main point here is the description of the participants' effort as functional. It potentially contributes to the maintenance of continuity and so the building of team spirit. Similar to for Hoff and Dom above, function accounts for BG's status as the speaker of the discourse and as a participant in the activity described. The three extracts illustrate the significance of function to the interviewees in accounting for their status as 'proper' footballers within these instances of concern. In subsequent discourse the interviewees attend to their status as 'proper' footballers as not sufficiently accomplished within initial discourse. Deploying function serves to account for their status as such.

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This chapter explored the underlying nature of the accountability work that the interviewees within the discourse under examination routinely do. I used one extract in which that nature is clear in order to illustrate it. It served as a representative example. First, I argued that there were two characteristics which the interviewees routinely attended to their responsibility for possessing as footballers. The first was the status of being knowledgeable about football. The second was the status of being a player who agentively goes out and pursues desired ends through their actions in football. I illustrated how both these characteristics were attended to and accounted for by the interviewee.

I pointed out that the way in which the interviewee attended to the former characteristic from the out-set in this extract is a routine feature of the way in which the interviewees do so. It was noted that the interviewees doing so displays their treatment of this interview situation as an exercise in coming off as a competent footballer, knowing about the game and so being worthwhile to ask about it. In terms of the latter characteristic, I noted that it could be seen as established by the nature of the interaction. The basis of the interviews is that the subjects are professional footballers. They are players at the highest level of the game. However, the significant point here in terms of the accountability work routinely done by the interviewees is that, like Hoff, when they attend to the need to make their status as players relevant

they proceed to construct their status as such through their discourse. Their status as such is not simply left understood as a consequence of the interaction. Once it becomes an issue in the discourse, the interviewees treat it as necessary to accomplish, or account for, in their discourse.

With the extract I also illustrated that the characteristics were an accountability issue to the interviewee throughout his discourse. Even in the absence of the interviewee visibly attending to them the construction of the discourse nonetheless accounted for his possession of them. Again, this is a regular aspect of the interviewees' discourse. Underlying and supporting all this accountability work is the relevance of situated action as the nature of the way in which activity within football proceeds. In attending to their statuses as knowledgeable and as players, again, the interviewees acknowledge limitations. With situated action they treat those limitations as normative for participants. The limitations are concerns in playing, rather than talking about, football and so do not undermine the interviewees' possession of the characteristics in question. Relatedly, the situated action nature of football serves as a basis for the interviewees constructing generalisations about the game with uncertainty throughout. Constructing the discourse as such serves to do accountability work for the possibilities of the interviewees both being disagreed with, or proven wrong, and not being successful in the situated pursuit of desired ends within football.

Finally, I looked at the appearance of the issue of function in the discourse. Function is routinely central in the participants' accounts for themselves as 'proper' footballers within the subsequent discourse of instances of concern. The orientation is towards participants' statuses as functional in pursuing the actions they pursue in football as routinely taken as understood, or to be understood, within initial discourse in these instances of concern as well as those extracts where no instances of concern appear. Again, the information provided by an interviewee within subsequent discourse in instances of concern is treated as having simply been self-evident and understood to the interviewee in his initial discourse. In deploying function in such instances in order to account for themselves as 'proper' footballers, the orientation is towards the initial discourse alone as potentially undermining their status as such. Function is treated as the underlying factor of that status. It is what they take as self-evident in terms of their status as footballers. It is what is within their interests to have



others take as self-evident in terms of their status as a footballer. While making it an issue in discourse can serve to account for and accomplish the interviewee's status as such, it also leaves that status open to potential debate.

There is a final point to make here in terms of the flexibility of, and constraints upon, construction. It is that while the interviewees treat accounting as they do as a need its status as such is only attended to by the interviewees. That is to say, accounting as they do is not a self-evident necessity when it comes to, or given the task of, talking about football. The constraint to do so is not imposed on them. Rather, it is attended to by them as imposed on them. Relatedly, accounting as they do is displayed as a constraint upon their construction of discourse by the interviewees doing that accounting. The upshot being that what ever the interviewees, or any speaker for that matter, attend to the need to account for, it would be available for them to do that accounting. Their attention to the need to account is only visible in their doing so.

Notes:

- 1- This is not to say that in acting situatedly, assessing the situation as it is proceeding, and pursuing a particular course of action as a result, that success will follow. Regardless of what a participant seeks to do and how well they can be said to do it, anything can still happen. The point here is simply that in pursuing the performances of purposeful action, we do so situatedly.
  
- 2 - It is also interesting to note, tentatively, that with 'feel' rather than, say, 'thought', Dom can be seen as attending to potential criticism. 'Feel' formulates a subjective sense of doing something good, or right, rather than having reasoned it out, say, as a judgment that one would want to stand by and defend. While getting it wrong still possesses some potential negativity, the basis of that negativity lies with having acted without necessarily having properly considered the action prior to performing it.



## CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to determine the status of talk within football, or, perhaps more to the point, of football within talk. I set out to examine how a group of professional footballers talk about their profession. What they said about talk within football was not the issue. Nor was the issue to find answers to football itself, to determine what is right and wrong, how to play, what really happens within it, or what is really important in participating in it. Relatedly, assessing the interviewees' knowledge of football was not a concern. Their discourse was also not seen as a window on to an individual interviewee's psyche which displays his strengths and weaknesses mentally as a footballer. I noted earlier Garfinkel's point that 'members' accounts, of every sort, ... are constituent features of the settings they make observable' (1967: 8). The issue of concern here has been how the interviewees, as professional footballers, talk about the game. Their talk's status, as constructed interactionally for the moment of its occurrence, is analytically significant. The analysis has served to explore features of the discourse's construction.

In chapter 3 I looked at the underlying assumption of order within the world present in discourse. I pointed out that rather than being an aspect of discourse that could be confirmed in merely looking at one speaker's turn it was necessary to look at the interaction for confirmation. Only through the interaction is it evident that participants treat the world as ordered in itself, and as such, a starting point upon which to build versions. Participants' orientation to this interactional-confirmation nature of their talk was shown in how the interviewer sought to accommodate the interviewees, and invite understanding and acceptance of the particular order assumed, through the construction of the questions. I also argued that the 'loose fit' of discourse upon the object of its description, which accompanies this assumption of order, rather than undermining the flow of the interaction, is dealt with interactionally as a routine feature of talk's business. In the data this took the form of the interviewees constructing the relevance of the question discourse within their answer discourse. At no point is the order assumed, or order in general, verified. Rather, it is something participants tacitly treat as being in place.

In chapter 4 I considered how the questions and answers, rather than self-evidently (or grammatically) being so, were accomplished as such. The focus was upon the interviewees' contribution in treating the questions as such, through constructing their discourse as answers. Routinely doing their answer discourse as a series of script formulations went a long way towards accomplishing this work. On the one hand, within script formulations activity is described as routine and expectable. Here, the interviewer is invited to see the discourse's relevance as an answer to questions concerning how things generally are. On the other hand, script formulations generalise from instances, and in doing so the particular nature of episodic instances is attended to as being worth asking about. I also argued that, rather than the interviewees doing this work passively, they routinely monitored their discourse for how it would be understood and actively sought to accomplish it as an answer in a particular way. In illustrating this point I looked at two ways in which this active nature of construction was apparent with the 'constituting devices' and 'instances of concern'.

In chapter 5 I took a closer look at these instances of concern. It was evident that the monologic discourse within these instances of concern possessed a dialogic nature. However, despite its occurrence within a single participant's turn the discourse was treated as proceeding as discourse normatively does. I argued that, rather than the interviewees getting away with something, their discourse here is treated as normative because it exhibits normative characteristics. The dialogue within these instances of concern displays the same nature as dialogue between turns. Relatedly, I pointed out that dialogue is the means by which participants attend to concerns for the 'understood' nature of prior discourse. Here, we simply have it occurring within a turn rather than between turns. However, it was shown that discourse proceeding normatively is an accomplishment of the discourse in that, within these instances of concern, the interviewees manage to come off as needing to elaborate upon prior talk. Lastly in the chapter, the intricacy of discourse's construction was looked at. It was noted that, on the one hand, the intricacy of construction obscured the constructed nature of discourse. On the other hand, it was noted that the intricacy of construction also serves to undermine the possibility of speakers explicitly manipulating the



construction of their discourse, at the basic levels at which it is organised, to achieve certain ends.

In chapter 6 I examined the interviewees' construction of their discourse as merely displaying the truth, and how this served to deal with their dilemma of interest. I argued that in terms of these instances of concern, merely providing the truth as an accomplishment of the discourse displays that rather than going to lengths in order to co-operate and provide the right answer, the interviewees are glossing the interestedness of their discourse and why they attend to the necessity to elaborate. Rather than the concerns being for the understood nature of the discourse, they are merely accomplished as such. The concerns end up being for how the interviewees will be understood as the speakers of their discourse, and as participants in the activity the discourse describes. In constructing their discourse as merely displaying the truth the interviewees serve to gloss the accountability work done. It was observed that accountability work was glossed even when the discourse was seemingly overtly interested.

Finally, in chapter 7 I explored this issue of accountability in the data more closely. I argued that the interviewees routinely took themselves to be responsible for possessing two characteristics as footballers. The first is that of a knowledgeable footballer. The second is that of a worthwhile player. It was observed that even when the characteristics are not seemingly attended to in some discourse that its absence is nonetheless significant for the accountability work done. I argued that, in attending to the activity within football proceeding in a situated fashion, the interviewees served to do accountability work that underlies and supports that work done in attending to their possession of the characteristics mentioned above. The interviewees account for their possession of these characteristics in part by acknowledging their limitations. With situated action those limitations are treated as simply normal for those engaging in the activity of football. The interviewee is portrayed as simply like other footballers in that he has to deal with his circumstances within football situatedly which necessarily limits a player in terms of what he can 'know' or 'do' for certain within football. Relatedly, and importantly here, the interviewee also comes off as aware of this nature of football and so able to deal with it. Lastly, I argued that function, or the issue of contributing to the accomplishment of desired ends within football, while taken as understood by

the interviewees as the central aspect of their statuses as 'proper' footballers, becomes an explicit issue within instances of concern where the interviewees attend to prior discourse as potentially undermining their status as 'proper' footballers.

The analytic points I have focused on here serve to illustrate the everyday nature of football discourse. It is through that everyday nature that the context of the discourse is constructed recognisably as football.

## TALK AND CONTEXTS

Football discourse resembles, indeed is a sub-category of, everyday discourse. I am not saying here that some discourse exists which stands as a model of everyday discourse which other types of discourse potentially resemble. What I am saying is simply that all discourse displays certain features which are being categorised here as everyday features. The different contexts in which discourse occurs serve as the basis for categories of everyday talk. Some discourse can fall within more than one category. For instance, the data here is both football discourse and interview discourse. No category resembles everyday discourse any more than any other. What is important for my purposes here is that it is through the use of conventions of everyday discourse that specialized contexts are constructed and distinguished.

This is a study of people engaged in a profession, or sport, or some such institutionally organized activity, where public criteria of performance apply, where there are goals, means, concerted efforts, measures of success, jobs on-the-line, job-oriented accountability, divisions of labour (on and off the pitch), and so on. Through the conventions of everyday discourse, football, and this nature of it as an activity, is constructed. This point links this work with other studies of institutionally organized activities such as those in Drew and Heritage's edited collection *Talk At Work* (1992), and with Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) and Latour's (1987) studies of the construction of scientific knowledge, as well as the many ethnomethodological studies on various work environments (e.g., Lynch, 1985). This thesis is a contribution to the study of how institutionally organized activities are constituted, by the talk within and about them, as the activities they are. Talk is examined for how it orients to and constructs



its contexts, rather than context being cited as a causal variable determining the type of the talk that occurs within it.

This 'reflexive' nature of talk (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970) is important for how football is significant for those who engage in it. I shall approach this issue through a consideration both of discourse generally, and of football generally, as kinds of situated action.

## THE SITUATED ACTION NATURE OF DISCOURSE

In investigating the issue of purposeful action Suchman argues that plans, rather than guiding a participant's actions within some activity, are

formulations of antecedent conditions and consequences of action that account for action in a plausible way. (1987: 3).

Plans are not the underlying driving force of how participants accomplish purposeful action. Rather, Suchman points to situated action as the basis upon which participants seek to accomplish purposeful action. Suchman uses discursive interaction as the model to illustrate this point. Participants use their understanding of the interaction at hand, which includes their knowledge of how such interactions normatively proceed as well as contextual information about the particular situation they are in, in order to determine and accomplish, or perform, a relevant next action. 'The situation is crucial to action's interpretation' and so for how to proceed (1987: 178). Planning for what to do does not determine, in the end, what gets done. Participants must determine what specifically to do as the situation, including the activity itself, unfolds.

As an instance of such discursive interaction, this football discourse serves as an example which supports Suchman's argument. The answers following the questions as such is a simple example of the situated action nature of the discourse. Again, it is not that the answer discourse in merely following some question discourse is an answer. Its status as such is constructed. There is another relevant point here as well. It is not simply that in constructing discourse as an answer that it is taken as sufficiently representing one. Doing purposeful action is a case of performing an action that is treated by other participants as having been relevant within the interaction. Purposeful

action is an interactional, rather than unilateral (that is to say, accomplished and see-able as such by looking at one participant's turn) achievement. It is evident that purposeful action has been accomplished here both by the interviewer and interviewees in that answer discourse is provided for question discourse and question discourse follows answer discourse. In both cases the former discourse serves to confirm the status of the latter discourse as such.

As I sought to bring out in the analysis, in pursuing purposeful action there is a two-sidedness to discourse for participants. On the one hand, there is great flexibility, or freedom, in terms of what can be said. On the other hand, it is evident within discourse that there are interactional constraints upon, or considerations attended to as constraints by, participants in constructing their talk. For example, in chapter 3 we saw that the assumption of order within the world as a starting point of the discourse, as well as the particular order assumed in the discourse, were, and are routinely, left un-verified. That is to say, speakers are not under pressure to provide exhaustive evidence for the existence of order, or the relevance of the particular order assumed.

However, the relevant order in any situation is up for negotiation and interactional confirmation. Speakers attend to this aspect of the discourse in seeking to accommodate others and invite understanding. Relatedly, the referential 'loose fit' of discourse, that ties in with the assumption of order, and also serves in how understandings are 'invited', allows for others to construct the relevance of the order assumed in prior discourse as they see fit. Finally, as we saw, there is also routinely a potential for dispute over the particular order assumed. Consequently, while participants are routinely in the position of being able to construct any potential underlying order, and related particulars, as relevant, their discourse is nonetheless under the scrutiny of other participants for its status as a reasonable version of the world. With flexibility comes constraint, or restraint, in constructing discourse.

In chapter 4 we saw that the interviewees attended to their accountability for providing answers to questions. However, while the interviewees displayed a certain restraint in constructing answer discourse and in attending to the nature of the interaction, this was not merely a matter of providing objectively relevant information as answers, but of coming off as doing so. Flexibility, in terms of what could be constructed as relevant within football, was afforded the interviewees in attending to



the interactional concern of having to provide discourse in a particular manner. That is, it is through attending to the nature of the interaction, and providing discourse which displays everyday conventions, that the interviewees build the context of football and its particularities through their versions of it.

In chapter 5 the dialogic nature of the discourse, within the instances of concern, were shown to possess this same sort of nature. In constructing their subsequent discourse as relevant to their own prior talk, participants did so in a manner which served to undermine alternative potential understandings. Again, we have the flexibility of construction being realised through attention to interactional considerations. In chapter 5 we also saw how, despite the 'intricacy' of discourse's construction obscuring its constructed nature, it undermines the potential of explicit manipulation as well. In chapter 6 we had the constraint of the dilemma of interest on speakers. In dealing with this dilemma, in constructing their discourse as merely providing the truth, the interviewees managed to gloss the accountability work done.

Finally, in chapter 7, although the interviewees attended to and constructed their status as 'proper' footballers through this gloss upon the accountability work done, their manner of doing so also displayed having to do so as a kind of interactional constraint. It was treated by them, whether in being attended to explicitly or in its absence, as a delicate issue for them which they had to deal with. What we can see here is that the way in which speakers understand the situation of discourse is central for what they treat as relevant in doing purposeful action. Interactional concerns, or what speakers take themselves as responsible for then and there, are attended to as constraints upon how discourse is to be constructed. Those constraints serve to drive the discourse's construction. In attending to them, context is built as possessing a specific and relevant nature. Significantly, the constraints are social, rather than being imposed by some order of the world independent of the agency of participants within it. Illustrating this two-sidedness of flexibility and constraint was a focus in the analytical chapters because I take it to be central for the way in which discourse is significant within football.

## THE NATURE OF DISCOURSE WITHIN FOOTBALL AND THE TWO-SIDEDNESS OF CONSTRUCTION

### *Discourse within football*

Discourse, as an aspect of the activity of football, possesses a central role within it. Discourse is central where the activity that occurs off the pitch is directed at, or for, past and future play. The play is not in itself determinant for that discursive activity. Rather, it is the assessments of play, which are instances of discourse, that make relevant whatever further instances of it follow, and then, what is to follow on the pitch during a subsequent game. Participants themselves may treat play as the determining factor behind what is said about it, but that is itself discursive work. Prior actions, whether physical or discursive, do not provide their own automatic representations in any further discourse that accounts for them. Accounts of prior football activity construct the status of that activity, rather than simply representing the actuality of it.

The play is dealt with normatively through talk. This normative relationship is consistent with the view of 'situated action' as the basis for how people go about doing purposeful action. Suchman points out that the way in which activity proceeds within situated action is 'not predetermined, but neither is it random' (1987: 179). Participants take into account the situation in which an action takes place in order to determine its relevance. They do so as part of determining what action to perform as a relevant next turn; they determine what is relevant to do next, given (a version of) what has just occurred. Of significance here is the status, as actions in themselves, of the interpretation of prior actions, such as assessments of play, for what action is to be pursued. As such, subsequent actions are routine and normative next turns in the pursuit of purposeful action. Within activities such as particular football matches, such 'second turns' are normally not visible as such. It is as if the footballers are simply acting physically. However, the status of what they do, as apparent next turns, again, features in the discourse that assesses the play afterwards, including on-field comments, instructions from the touchline, and comments at half-time.



### *The relevance of this two-sidedness of construction*

Discourse has a place within football, given the uncertainty of the achievement of its interests, in addressing, explaining, planning for, and reducing that uncertainty as a matter of concerted efforts and purposeful actions. The two-sidedness of discourse, in accomplishing such purposeful action, is relevant here. There is flexibility in terms of what and how aspects of some game can be described as having gone right or wrong. However, speakers also attend to interactional concerns, or constraints, in assessing how things went in order to be taken as disinterestedly reporting the facts. The explicit aim is to determine what happened. More tacitly, the business is to get one's version of events taken as factual. The important issue, for my analytic purposes, is not whether an assessment is the 'actual' right assessment given what has happened. Assessments of any given performance, or game, will vary due to the flexibility of description. What is important, given the flexibility of what can be said, are the interactional concerns, or constraints, that participants attend to, and how they do so, in speaking.

The point I am getting at here is that the significance of discourse within football, like the significance of discourse within a wide range of institutionally organized activities, arises out of its status as a situated activity in which participants attend, in their construction of versions, to the reality of the activity in question; the reality upon which they act and determine what to do within that activity. Discourse is significant as an examinable basis of participants' attention to that worked-up and made-relevant reality, and the constraints they treat as in place when constructing versions of the activity—here, football. The participants produce their talk as significant. Through it they attend to what they take themselves as accountable for. As is generally the case, their discourse is no passive medium for conveying information. We can see pervasively in the data analysed here, how their discourse is significant to, and for, the interviewees. However, as an example of how discourse is significant to and for them, within their participation in football, the data also has potential shortcomings.

## THIS DATA AS AN EXAMPLE OF (SUCH) FOOTBALL DISCOURSE YET SITUATEDLY DISTANT

The interviewees' discourse examined in this study can be seen as assessment-like discourse. While a specific instance of play is seldom the understood topic, the talk nonetheless serves as an interpretation, or assessment, of the general activity of football. As an assessment it does not specify particular actions as to be performed in order to correct mistakes, or maintain positive aspects of one's play. Rather, it provides an understanding of what has happened, or routinely (scriptedly) does happen, which can be taken as making relevant some general course of action, or direction, one should pursue in seeking to achieve interests through purposeful action in the future. In their discourse the interviewees, again, attend to the performance of that activity as situated; the pursuit of purposeful action is dependent on the situation of the action, and so is not guaranteed to succeed.

This attention, to the situated action nature of the way in which activity within football proceeds, is an aspect of the discourse which reflects the flexibility of what can be described. Situated action is accomplished as how football proceeds. It is not simply self-evident given that the topic of the discourse is football but rather an aspect of the discourse that is constructed. If it was self-evident given the topic of football, rather than being constructed as such, it would not have to be attended to, or constructed, at all. The interviewees' statuses as 'proper' footballers is also an accomplished aspect of the discourse. In attending to their status as such it is clear that it is not self-evident, but rather, a matter potentially at issue. Again, the constraints, or interactional concerns, that the interviewees attend to drive their construction of their discourse. What is constructed within the flexibility of descriptions embodies the concerns of the interviewees in speaking at that moment about football. In terms of their status as 'proper' footballers, the concern is to portray themselves as able to go out and perform purposefully in games and accomplish desired ends, as well as normatively seeking to do so. That is how the discourse is significant here.

Where situated action is concerned, although this is addressed on and for some specific discursive moment, the implications of the interviewees' attention to it can be



seen as going further than that moment. The question is, what is the particular concern, in constructing their discourse about football here, that the interviewees could take 'situated action' as a response to? Their culpability for past actions, whether in failure or otherwise, is an obvious concern. However, the notion of situated action accounts for the potential of failure in future instances of football too. The participants' attention to football as situated action orients to its ongoing, to-be-specified, uncertain nature. Football is routinely not just about one game; it is about a season full of games, and a career full of seasons. The discourse does not merely account for activity that has occurred in the past, and the interviewees as participants within that activity who are now talking about it. The interviewees, in attending to football's nature as situated action, account for their participation within that ongoing activity as footballers. The concern with situated action appears in response to the uncertainty of achieving desired ends routinely present within football, and to the prospect that any well-laid plans and preparations may yet fail, and yet be accountably not failures of those plans and preparations themselves.

What is important here is the way in which the interviewees construct the world and football within it as possessing an underlying order independent of their agency. The world they construct reflects the constraints they attend to as imposed upon them in their participation within football (including their talk). Again, this order is see-able in the interviewees' construction of their discourse as more a participants' method than a pattern, or organization, of the discourse. However, as I noted earlier, this distinction is not a clear cut one. Again, in determining the adequacy of some discourse, as a representation of the world, participants routinely look to see the relevance of the discourse within the sequential organization of the interaction: how is it relevant to what has gone before. Attention to prior turns as a resource in order to see the relevance of some discourse is not isolated to those listening; those listening routinely become those speaking. A speaker's attention to those resources which he treats as available for others to assess the adequacy of their discourse serve as constraints imposed upon them in constructing discourse. In attending to such constraints as imposed upon them in constructing their discourse that construction routinely exhibits a pattern or organization. Again, providing an answer when attending to having been asked a question serves as a simple example. In terms of

talking about football here, then, an organization to the discourse's construction, such as attention to the situated action nature of how discourse proceeds, can be seen as a consequence of the interviewees' attention to constraints upon what they can do, and what goes on in (and so what they can say about) football.

However, this is not to say that the interviewees' attention to situated action in football and their statuses as 'proper' footballers points towards their attention to the context for the discourse as football in Schegloff's sense (1991) that I described earlier. The data analyzed in this thesis serves as an example of how footballers talk about the game, and the sorts of constraints, or interactional concerns, that they attend to in doing so. The significance of that talk, here, displays its significance in general as not simply lying in its status as determining what people may do next in pursuit of desired ends. Rather, its significance includes how it portrays its speaker indexically as an individual who routinely participates competently in football. However, where the significance of discourse within football is concerned, it is important to note that my data is situatedly distant from the play. By situatedly distant I mean that it does not occur as an integral part of the players' routine working lives, but in interviews, away from the immediate contingencies of work.

The interaction might have been set up as one in which professional footballers are being interviewed about their expertise. However, football is nevertheless not the apparent context of the interaction for the sequential organization of the talk. From the sequential organization what can be seen is that the context is that of an interview; the participants constitute the interaction as an interview. Calling the data 'football discourse', rather than a categorization arrived at from looking at its organization, is simply the way I have chosen to identify the data as a consequence of who were the deliberate subjects of the interviews, that being the reason why this particular discourse has been obtained and analyzed. However, given that the context visibly at issue to the interviewees is the interview nature of the interaction there is the question of the relevance of the particular constraints attended to by the interviewees, here, within the context of their engagement in the activity of football. Is their identity as professional players who play the game - perhaps having just played, in the midst of playing or who will play, the game - being attended to as a constraint in some way in constructing their discourse here; or is it their identity as professional players who are talking *about* the



game in an interview, here, that is exclusively at issue? Analytically speaking, only the latter can be said.

In addition, of course, both participants in the interview, the interviewer along with the interviewees, are relevant for the analysis of the interaction. The data was not fly on the wall talk. Nor is it talk done by the interviewees while participating in the activity of football. The interviewer, who deliberately went to talk to professional footballers about football, has asked particular questions. The interviewer has to a great extent made the discourse happen. He has influenced its nature, as well, by asking particular questions, on particular topics, in the particular way he has. However, the discourse has not just been elicited and analyzed. Again, the interviews have been analyzed as interactions including the interviewer's contributions. The interviewer's place within the getting of the data, then, is not a problem or fault with it, but an analyzed feature of it. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the situatedly distant nature of this data as interview discourse, looking at it as an instance of football relevant-to-play is somewhat strained, difficult to pin down, or establish, and therefore is not directly the aim here.

Consequently, in terms of participants' talk, the question of what happens in more naturally situated discursive contexts remains. In approaching those more naturally situated discursive contexts, those in which footballers are engaging in the activity of football, through this sort of analysis of discourse as action, rather than content, how players construct the context, their participation in it and what they attend to as constraints in doing that work would be the focus. Treating the 'reality' of football as passively conveyed through descriptions of it would miss this action-oriented nature of discourse. In looking at participants' discourse, not getting involved in the issue of what the truth is, or treating the discourse as a window on to what 'really' goes on, or is important, the analysis will provide further understanding of football as the activity it is, and of participants' engagement in it, in showing what participants act on in their discourse.

## Appendix: Transcription Notation

The transcription conventions used here come from a larger set developed by Gail Jefferson. The symbols used in the data are given below. The explanations of them provided appear in Wooffitt (1992:xi).

- (0.5) The number in brackets indicates a time gap measured to tenths of a second.
- (.) A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.
- .hh A period before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath. The more h's, the longer the in-breath.
- hh An 'h' indicates an out-breath. The more h's the longer the out-breath.
- (( )) A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity or ethnographic comment. For example ((looks at baby)).
- A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
- :
- Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
- ( ) Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
- (guess) The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear fragment.
- .
- A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
- ,
- A comma indicates a continuing intonation.
- ?
- A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.
- Under
- Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
- ↑↓
- Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.



- CAPITALS** With the exception of proper nouns, capital letters indicate a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.
- ◦ Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
- > < 'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
- ┌ ┐ Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech
- └ ┘ indicate the onset of and end of a spate of overlapping talk. For example:
- Hoff: ┌possibly┐ the manager thinks
- I: └yeh,◦┘
- Hoff: we're better than we are

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