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Constructing "an Institution": A Case from a Korean Student Group Meeting

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Using Conversation Analysis, this study describes how 'institutionality' is accomplished in talk-in-interaction by analyzing the ways in which the Korean student group members construct themselves as "an institution" through decision-making. Most conversation-analytic research on institutional talk has been of occupational settings. This study, with data from a voluntary student staff group whose meetings are sporadic and without formal phases, illustrates that the group members' interaction reveals how they construct themselves as a decision-making group whose members embody different social roles, and ultimately as an institution. Two significant practices are discussed. First, the data show that the members actively search for precedents, which later become the most crucial basis for their decision-making. Second, as a strategy of gathering power over others within their institutional boundary, the members frequently depart from the preference structure of ordinary conversation. Overall, this paper contributes to a better understanding of institutionality with data from a quasi-institutional setting in the relatively under-examined language, Korean.

Introduction[1]

Meetings are considered an essential condition of the organizational life in modern society. Meetings are where individuals in an organization gather as a group to exchange information and make decisions (Tracy & Dimock, 2004). However, considering its frequent occurrence, meeting talk as a communicative practice had been relatively under-studied until recently, according to Mirivel and Tracy (2005). The present article, by using the framework of Conversation Analysis (hereafter CA), demonstrates how an institution and institutional identities are constructed in and through meeting talk in a student group meeting at a North American university. This study shows that this type of institution — an informal, quasi-institution without a conventionalized way of conducting a meeting — allows interactional practices of constructing an institution that have not previously been examined in other, more occupational institutional contexts. In this investigation, two dimensions of an institution will surface: 1) stability over time, and 2) constitution of an internal structure. For the former, the members partake in carrying forward

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the institutional history by constantly invoking precedent as a way of accounting for their decision before reaching a consensual decision. The latter dimension is shown by how the members' relations are achieved and talked into being, thereby constituting hierarchy and role differences. This is demonstrated by examining the departure of the preference structure of an everyday conversation as a way of marking their institutional authority.

The central theme of the recent studies on meeting talk has been the construction of identity in and through meetings. One of the first attempts to describe actual meetings came from Atkinson et al. (1978) and Cuff and Sharrock (1985), who viewed meeting talk as an interactional accomplishment. Also notable is Boden's (1994) ethnomethodological/CA work on small business meetings. Criticizing prior research which examined meetings only with interviews or questionnaires, Boden approached the phenomenon of meetings with audio- or video-recorded naturally occurring talk and highlighted their dynamic nature. This has opened up new possibilities for researchers to examine how participants shape their social roles moment by moment and how meetings are constructed as meetings through talk-in-interaction. Taking the same view, Barske (2006, 2009) examined German business meetings and included embodiment in the analysis, showing how non-verbal aspects of interaction become consequential for understanding the dynamic nature of institutionality.

Recognizing the importance of understanding actual practices carried out in meetings, researchers in the field of organization and management studies have also begun to look at leadership and identity employing a variety of discursive approaches (e.g., Cooren, 2007; Fairhurst, 2007). The growing interest of examining meeting talk qualitatively is reflected in the Journal of Business Communication's recent special issue, which is solely dedicated to empirical studies of meeting talk based on analyses of interaction (Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009). Such micro-analytical approaches reveal the actual practices carried out in meetings, which had long remained in the dark, but which ultimately can have implications for improving communicative practices (Clifton, 2009). Such studies also concur that the findings can contribute to showing how "organization emerges out of conversation" (Taylor, 2006, p. 148) and "conversations contribute to the production of organizational roles" (Fairhurst, 2001, p. 86). This shift of a research trend on meetings has advanced our understanding of a meeting as a site for producing identities in an organization.

Although business meetings have received most attention in the studies of meeting talk, meetings in various other sites have also been examined, including a university, the forest services and a mental health center, as well as various interactional spaces, i.e., pre- and post-meetings (Bullis, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1998; Mirivel & Tracy, 2005; Schwartzman, 1989; Tracy & Naughton, 1994; Tracy, 2002, among others). They all clearly demonstrate that "meetings are the arena in which organizational and community groups constitute who they are" (Tracy & Dimock, 2004, p. 140)

One of the most recurrent activities of meeting talk is decision-making. However, while there has been an increasing number of qualitative studies on meeting talk, only a handful of studies are currently available on decision-making in meetings (for examples, see Clayman & Reisner 1998; Tracy & Dimock, 2004).2 Traditionally, a decision-making process was described with highly mathematical or theoretical models, or with experimental studies which attempt to investigate social and psychological effects of the process. While these studies contributed immensely to our understanding of decision-making processes and helped advise groups on how to effectively come to a decision (e.g., Streibel, 2003), most works on decision-making have been abstract and removed from actual decision-makings (see Tracy & Dimock, 2004, p. 135; Zemel, 2002, p. 11-65 for reviews of literature on group decision-making). The present study fills this gap by providing detailed analyses of a decision-making process in a student group meeting and showing how the process serves as a means of achieving, and thus investigating, institutionality.

CA is proven to be an effective analytical method that can reveal the moment-by-moment conduct and orientation of participants in institutional task. Keeping in line with the research tradition of CA, this article takes into account talk's sequential structures and social actions, the resources which Schegloff (2007) shows to be fundamental in understanding talk-in-interaction, and in turn, understanding how one builds oneself to be doing being X through talk. Also, I view an institution as built, perceived and constructed, and thus accomplished by the interaction of its members (Boden, 1994; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Drew & Sorjonen, 1997 among others).[3] In other words, it is through talk that institutionally-relevant identities are constructed and "institutions are enacted and lived through as accountable patterns of meaning, inference, and action" (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 5). Despite such an understanding of institution, however, most previous CA studies have focused on institutional settings that are clearly defined by occupational roles involving service providers and/or hierarchical relationships and settings, of which the turn-taking system is governed by its very institutional roles (e.g., doctor-patient, salesperson-customer, lawyer-witness).[4]

Unlike these institutional settings whose features saliently distinguish them from an ordinary interaction, the student group's meetings this study uses as data are highly informal, infrequently held, voluntary, and do not have definitive phases. These meetings are thus a useful site for examining as a case study the process of constituting an institution for three reasons. First, the group has different kinds of goals and commitment from other business organizations because it does not seek financial interest and its members' participation is voluntary (which will be described in Section 2). Second, although there is hierarchy, the positions the members hold in the organization are voluntarily assigned. In other words, there is no voting procedure for any of the positions in the group; instead the positions are filled either through nomination or volunteering, possibly making the group dynamic different from that in business meetings. Third, most participants were recruited by a recommendation from a friend, which means that many members had

established relationships outside the group. They are thus not only co-staff members in the group, but also friends or seniors/juniors, which is crucial in determining the choice of speech style in the Korean language.

With this voluntarily-organized student group whose members already have other relationships outside the group, this paper empirically illustrates turn by turn how the members' conduct during the decision-making is demonstrably oriented to their roles in the group, and how, in turn, it is lived through as an institution. I will first describe, in Section 2, background of the student group to provide relevant context that will help readers understand the stretch of talk analyzed here, and then in Section 3 discuss the group's three primary ways of constructing their group as an institution by offering detailed analyses of relevant segments.

Data

The site: Korean Graduate Student Association

The data were collected at a research university in the United States with a group called Korean Graduate Student Association (KGSA) between 2005 and 2006. KGSA is a group of Korean graduate students who reach out to all Korean graduate students and visiting scholars currently studying at the university. Any graduate student who is Korean by heritage is considered as a potential member of KGSA. In academic year 2005-06, four to five students served as the KGSA staff. In 2006-07 staff grew to eight, its members including one President, one Vice President, three Social Organizers, one Webmaster, one Public Relations director, and one Marketing and Communications director. The main duties of KGSA include organizing an orientation in the beginning of the year as well as one to two quarterly events, linking the students with Korean companies that are interested in recruiting them, getting sponsorships, supporting clubs under KGSA, and managing their website.

Meetings are held approximately once a month and are devoted to organizing events such as an orientation or a quarterly pizza party. Some meetings are scheduled quarterly; others are called as needed. The members communicate mostly by email to update each other on their duties. My data corpus of these meetings consists of eight hours of video recordings. In these meetings, any staff member proffers a topic for discussion, which is put on the table until they reach a consensus using talk and discussion.[5] The meetings are conducted in an open format; that is, anybody who has an issue or a topic for discussion can talk without permission. However, the members usually come together with a rough idea of the topics that will be discussed. It should be noted that, because they are fellow graduate students who know each other well, they talk about their personal lives at times, shifting in and out of the frame of the institution.

The participants

Below is a table illustrating each member's role, gender, and age at the time of recording and experience in the group. Age, even a one-year difference, is considered an important factor in Korean society with respect to the speaker's choice of address terms, honorifics and speech levels (as well as paying respect in general).[6] President (hereafter, P), Public Relations chair (hereafter, PR), and Marketing chair are male and the oldest in the group; Webmaster (hereafter, Web) is male and one year younger than these three members; next are Social 2 and Social 3, who are female and three years younger than Web; Vice President (hereafter, VP) and Social 1 are female and the youngest in the group.

The members who served as staff in the previous year are P, VP, Web, and Soc 3. VP and Web had the same roles, whereas P and Soc 3 had different positions and duties in the previous year, PR and Treasurer, respectively. Treasurer was a distinct position in the previous year, but VP has taken over the role in the current year. Thus, VP now manages the budget of the association, such as setting the budgetary limit for an event.

Table 1. Description of participants

Position	Gender	Age	Experience
President (P)	Male	32	Public Relations in the previous year
Vice President (VP)	Female	27	Vice President in the previous year
Public Relations (PR)	Male	32	New
Marketing	Male	32	New
Webmaster (Web)	Male	31	Same position in the previous year
Social 1 (Soc 1)	Female	27	New
Social 2 (Soc 2)	Female	28	New
Social 3 (Soc 3)	Female	28	Treasurer in the previous year

The case

The analysis will focus primarily on one episode of decision-making that occurred in the orientation-organizing meeting held at the beginning of an academic

year. Appendix C shows the meeting's seating configuration. Out of the eight-hour data, this segment was selected as the primary example for the case study because it emerged as the most substantial and concentrated case, presenting many of the practices this group recurrently employs. Thus this is used as an anchor through which to show the process of construction of an institution. Additionally, a few other decision-making episodes will be used to help demonstrate the practice under discussion.

In this primary case, the decision is about how much money to spend on the orientation event and whether to use partial china[7] to create a sense of luxury, or plastic utensils and paper plates to reduce spending. The VP previously had set the budget limit at approximately $2,000 and it is important to note that the members are trying to work out the menu within this budgetary boundary. Three Socials had met in advance to discuss the menu and budget for the orientation because they are mainly responsible for organizing events. Before this meeting, the Socials had been informed of the budget limit from VP. Due to their unfamiliarity of event organizing, the Socials invited Minsek, president from the previous year, in order to get a better idea of the event they are about to organize and to prepare a preliminary menu. Thus, when the Socials met with other current staff members to discuss the menu in the regular meeting, which this paper presents, they already had food items and quantities set in a spreadsheet and brought the copies with them.

Approximately ten minutes into the meeting, all members start looking at the Excel sheet and calculate that the estimated total amount would be $2,500, which is $500 over budget. Once this is known, both P and VP display their concern with a surprise token, wow, and VP further elaborates the surprise source by saying, "it's expensive" and looks at P across the table (see Excerpt 1). This assessment suggests that the estimated cost needs adjustment. Web is the first to propose the exclusion of partial china from the menu, offering a solution to the budget problem. This proposal, which VP endorses and then strongly argues for, is in conflict throughout the case with the three Socials' accounts for having included partial china. Both sides actively search for accountability and base their arguments on past social events, i.e., precedent, during which their practices manifest their orientations to their roles.

In the following discussion, I focus on two features that show how this group, in the context of an informal, non-occupational setting, achieves institutionality through talk. The sequence reveals different aspects of how this student group constructs itself as a decision-making group whose members embody different social roles (e.g., president, vice president, socials), and ultimately as an institution, Korean Graduate Student Association.

Analysis of the decision-making sequence

Opening

As mentioned above, the three Socials have brought with them to the meeting a tentative menu in order to get confirmation from other members. Prior to Excerpt (1) below, all members had started looking at the menu together. Since they were able to get a ten percent discount the previous year, Vice President asked a question, 'Are {we} guaranteed of getting ten percent {discount}?' in line 1. However, with a response from one of the Socials that it is not yet definite, VP is now trying to anticipate the total cost of the event, including everything (i.e., items other than food) (lines 18-9). It should be noted that VP is the formally entitled treasurer of the organization and sets the overall budget of the organization for the year as well as the budget of every event to be held. Thus, it is VP's job to make sure of the precise budget of the Orientation, which will be displayed by her choice of verb in the question at line 19 below.

Excerpt 1 (The problem of cost arises)[8]

18 VP: [kuntey kulem, amwu-ke]s-to- amwu-kes-to-but
then nothing-thing-ADD nothing-thing-ADD

19 exempt-ko mwe-ko esp-umyen elma sse-yo?
exempt-or what-or don't.exist-if how.much spend-POL
But then, if nothing- nothing- without exemption or anything like that, how much are {we} spending?

20 (0.3) ((Soc1 and Soc2 looking down at their menu))

21 Soc2: exempt eps[-umyen:]
exempt don't.exist-if
If there's no exemption:

((8 lines of out-loud calculation deleted))

30 Soc2: [i-chen-o-payk.]
two-thousand-five-hundred
Two thousand five hundred.

31 P: [i-chen-o-payk.
two-thousand-five-hundred
Two thousand five hundred.

32 Soc1: [i-chen-o-payk.=
two-thousand-five-hundred
Two thousand five hundred.=

33 Soc2: =°ung.
yes
=°yes.

34 P: [Wow:]
Wow:

35 VP: [wow:] ((moving gaze to P)) piss-a::.
wow expensive-IE
Wow: ((moving gaze to P)) {It}'s expensive::.

36 (1.0)

In asking a question about the anticipated maximum cost, VP chooses to use the verb ssu-ta ("to spend") instead of i-ta ("to be"). Whereas "how much is {it}?" would focus more on the properties of the menu items that the members will buy for the event, the question "how much are {we} spending?" focuses on loss of money from the budget. This formulation makes expenditure an issue of a choice, i.e., voluntary, rather than a "must," which would cast spending in a negative light. Furthermore, it makes "spending" an action they commit to rather than a fact they must adjust to, and thus builds the activity to be perceived as a proactive rather than reactive choice making "spending" more accountable. VP's choice of verb, thus, conveys not only her authority as a treasurer in the organization, but also her stance toward the use of the budget.

As shown in the excerpt, the estimated total amount for the event comes out to be $500 over the VP's budget for this event. This amount surprises and concerns both P and VP (lines 34-35), who receipt it with a surprise token "wow" in overlap (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). Continuing to further elaborate the surprise source by saying "{it}'s expensive," VP shifts her gaze to P across the table, seeking agreement from P. This assessment publicly sets the terms that the estimated amount is too expensive, projecting the need for adjustments. In that P and VP have presented the amount to be more expensive than what they had anticipated, the members are now left with a decision whether to keep the menu as it is regardless of it being over budget, or to reduce the cost by reducing the quantity of items or excluding some items all together. In other words, making a decision becomes a pertinent issue from here on.

After a gap of (1.0) in line 36, Webmaster, not selecting anybody in particular, suggests one option in a rather imperative speech style, "Take this out, this. Partial china, this." in line 37.

Excerpt 2a (The first proposal)

37 Web: ike ppay-pely-e ike. partial china ike. ((looking at the menu))
this exclude-get.rid.of-IMPER this partial china this
Take this out this. Partial china, this.

38 VP: e?
yes
Huh?

39 Web: partial china.
Partial china.

40 (0.3)

Web proposes to exclude partial china. This proposal is a first pair part, offering a solution to the budget problem.

In search of accountability

In any group setting where making a decision becomes relevant, it is observable that the members in the group work toward reaching a common decision. The KGSA uses the method of reaching a consensus, although the use of this method was never explicitly instituted or agreed upon in any way. Thus, it is evident that, although there certainly is voluntary hierarchy in the group, decision-making is being managed consensually rather than in a top-down way.

Sometimes groups not only reach a common decision but also seek common ground. A case of jury deliberation in Maynard and Manzo (1993), for example, is an extreme one that shows how each member feels obligated to come up with not only a common decision, but a common basis for the decision. Though this kind of consensus making is not evident in this student group, the search for accountability is clearly demonstrated. Regardless of their standings in the group, the participants' attempt to reach a consensus can be observed in their different ways of building an argument through various strategies and in accounting for their decision throughout the whole decision-making process. This shows that the members are not just arguing for their personal preferences, but making logical arguments as responsible members, enacting their roles in the group. The present section will investigate the members' attempts for consensus building through their search for accountability while arguing for their opinion. Here is Excerpt (2a) again in an expanded version.

Excerpt 2 (The Second Phase: the first proposal)

37 Web: ike ppay-pely-e ike. partial china ike.
this exclude-get.rid.of-IMPER this partial china this
Take this out this. Partial china, this.

38 VP: e?
yes
Huh?

39 Web: partial china.
Partial china.

40 (0.3)

41 Web: ikey paykyuksipo pwul-i-ney.
this:NOM hundred.sixty.five dollars-COP-IE
This is a hundred sixty five dollars.

42 (0.1)

43 Soc3: a::: kulay.=ku-ttay kukes-to wuli-ka ppayl-kka ha-taka::
oh right that-time that-also we-NOM take.out-INTERR do-while
Oh::: Right.=At that time, that too, when we were thinking of taking {it} out::

44 Minsek- [ika- ((looking at the Socials))
NAME-NOM
Minsek- ((looking at the Socials))

45 Web: [°kuntey [(.)]khu-ta: ikey.
but big-DECL this
°But {it}'s a lot. this.

Since P and VP made available to the members that there needs to be reduction of the cost, Web (and possibly others as well) has been scanning the menu in order to search for unnecessary items that could be left out to reduce the cost. Especially Web, who opened a decision-making sequence, has had the experience of organizing events from the previous year, and is thus more knowledgeable in reading the menu. However, when none of the participants immediately agrees with Web to exclude partial china, he accounts for and justifies his proposal in line 41 by mentioning its cost, and thus its expensiveness in an indirect way.[9] This, at the same time, renews the relevance of a response (Pomerantz, 1984a). Hence, Web's justification accounts for his rejection of the item and provides for the relevance of a response while also defending his assertion against possible attack.

Soc 3's understanding that Web's proposal is directed to the Socials and that they are the responsible ones for the menu is apparent in lines 43-4. Instead of explicitly (dis)agreeing with Web, Soc 3, on the one hand, starts to give an account of why the Socials, in their previous meeting among them with the ex-president Minsek, decided to include it in the menu. By prefacing her turn with a (more or less similar to "oh" in English [Heritage, 1984]), Soc 3 makes public to others the remembering of why partial china was included. Then, by describing an incident in which the Socials thought about the option of excluding the partial china ("were thinking of taking it out"), she begins to provide the grounds for their decision (line 44). Soc 3's whole utterance, the initial subordinate clause "at that time, that too, when we were thinking of taking {it} out:" and the start of the main clause "Minsek-", prefigures their defense to have left the "partial china" in; it begins to offer a description of the reasoning behind that decision.

At the same time, Soc 3, by gazing intensely at and leaning forward to the other two Socials sitting across the table (lines 43-4), tries to engage them in the joint remembering of the event, thus seeking support from them, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Soc 3's gaze at Soc 1 and Soc 2 in lines 43-44

It is worth noting that Soc 3's reasoning is heading towards the provision of the ex-president's opinion as an account and that it is at this point that Soc 3's utterance is interdicted by Web. Web's interdiction in line 45 begins with kuntey ("but"), projecting a counter account (Park, 1997, 1998), and displays his understanding that Soc 3 was providing the Socials' account.

The actual incident does not get articulated due to the interdiction (line 45). However, from mentioning of the previous year's president as an agent (Minsek-ika- NAME-NOM), it is possible to project that this decision was influenced by the ex-president in some way. As will be shown in Excerpt (3) below, although not currently holding any formal positions in the group, the ex-president was present at the Socials' meeting to help them set the menu and suggested that the partial china be kept in the menu. From their meeting with the ex-president, the Socials are well aware that the partial china was used in the previous year, the precedent which becomes a vital account for their position later in the sequence. The ex-president is known as a keeper of the organizational memory to the members, and his memory is the focal point in the discussion of the precedent.

While other members begin to formulate their arguments, P, rather than taking a position in this argument, tries to find out what the argument is about, thus engaging in fact-finding from line 47 below; that is, he attempts to first identify what partial china is before making any decisions. On the other hand, having heard Web's second round of rejection of partial china, the Socials handle Web's rather assertive proposal with a series of accounts in lines 51-54.

Excerpt 3 (Socials' accounts)

47 P: [ikey mwe-cyo, ikey?]
this:NOM what-INTERR:HON this
What is this, this?

48 Soc2: [<kuntey ikey-yo:::] kukey ku:- (0.1) kukka
but this-IE that.thing:NOM that I:mean
[<***But this i:::s] That's u:m- (0.1) I mean***

49 Soc2: plastic-(.)ku kulus-i ani-ko:,(.)ku:- [<u>chi</u>na kulus-ulo tule-kayo.
plastic that plate-NOM not.be-and that china plate-with go.in-go-IE:POL
{they're} not plastic (.) plates, (.) u:m- [{they} supply <u>chi</u>na plates.

50 Soc3: [yakkan com luxurious-han
a.bit little luxurious-ADJ

51 Soc3: nukkim-ul cwuki-wihay [hayss-<u>nuntey</u>,(.) ike ppay-kka?
feeling-ACC give:NOML-for do:PST-but this exclude-INTERR
{We} did {it} because {we} were trying to give a little bit of luxurious feeling, <u>but</u> (.) should {we} take this out?

52 Soc2: [cheum- Minsek-ika- wuli-ka ike ppa[yn-ta kule-nikkan=
first NAME-NOM we-NOM this exclude-QT say-after
At first- Minsek- When we said {we}'ll exclude this=

53 Web: [pissa-ta:: ike:.
expensive-DECL this
{It's} expensive:: this:.

54 Soc2: =Minsek-ika, orienation <u>che</u>um ha-nun ke-ntey [yakan-
NAME-NOM orientation first do-ATTR thing-CIRCUM little
Minsek {said} when organizing the Orientation, the first event,

55 Web: [<u>a</u>: tto Minseki
ah again NAME
<u>Oh</u>:: again Min(h)sek

56 Web: [t(h)to(h), hh
again
ag(h)ain(h), hh

57 VP: [<u>a</u>:: Minseki
ah NAME
Oh:: Minsek

58 Soc2: [<u>kyek</u>sik-uy nukk]im-ul cw-eya toy-ntay::.

formal-GEN feeling-ACC give:should become-QT
{We} should give a little bit of formal feeling to it::.

59 Soc3: [hahahhh]

While P is engaged in fact-finding, Soc 2, in line 48, tries to justify the expense of the item by describing what is included in it (lines 48). She initiates her utterance with kuntey ("but"), which marks that her soon-to-be-made position is oppositional to Web's argument (Park, 1997, 1998). As soon as P's question is heard in overlap, however, Soc 2 abandons her previous utterance and re-starts with "that {is} u:m-". In describing partial china, Soc 2 switches the referent from "this" to "that," in which "this" marks the referent in her domain of responsibility and epistemic authority (for use of i "this" in person reference, see Oh, 2007; Stivers, 2007). This switch shows a change in Soc 2's stance on her description of partial china from giving an account on behalf of the Socials to just simply answering P's question.

In lines 48-58, Soc 2 and Soc 3 build and elaborate on each other's position by arguing that 1) the plates are not made of plastic but are china plates (lines 48-9), 2) the china plates give a little bit of luxurious feeling (lines 50-1), and 3) although the Socials thought of taking them out, Minsek told them to include them for the Orientation (lines 52, 54, 58). First, in answering P's question to identify the item (line 47), Soc 2 strengthens her argument by contrasting partial china with plastic plates, thus making "partial china"superior. This contrast is further supported by Soc 3 in lines 50-1, where Soc 3 explicitly explains partial china as giving a more luxurious feeling. However, the absence of immediate agreement or acknowledgement from the other members puts more pressure on the Socials. Sensing disagreement in the air, Soc 3 backs off by saying "should {we} take this out?" (line 51). Having distinguished partial china from plastic plates, but also having failed to affiliate the members with her (Stivers, 2008), Soc 2 gives an account similar to what Soc 3 started to give earlier (in lines 43-4), citing the ex-president's opinion (lines 52, 54 and 58). What Soc 3 and Soc 2 are attempting here can be seen as making their argument stronger by providing an opinion of the ex-president as an account. At the same time, this account is able to shift their burden of having made the decision by bringing in a third party who influenced them to make the decision.[10]

Another aspect worth noting here is that Soc 2 struggles throughout the sequence to articulate her reasoning since her turn is interdicted twice by Web in lines 53 and 55. Web's first interdiction is repeating his earlier assessment regarding the cost of the item, that "{it}'s expensive". The second one is with respect to the value of precedent presented by the Socials. As soon as the name of the ex-president is mentioned in line 54, Web interdicts to disapprove of offering the opinion of the ex-president as a valid account, and VP soon joins in with her disapproval (lines 55-7). Moreover, the laugh tokens in Web's utterance (line 56) and the demeaning tone more strongly illustrate the disapproval of the ex-president's opinion.

Surfacing of the precedent

As examined in the extracts above, the justification of the Socials for their decision was that their decision was based on the suggestion of the ex-president. Thus, though never explicitly stated, the Socials' argument in support of partial china implied precedent because it was what the ex-president and the other members, i.e., the previous generation, had agreed on. However, not all members, including VP, are aware that partial china was actually used in the previous year.

Excerpt (4) below builds from a context in which VP and Web collaborated to disapprove of the ex-president's suggestion. Disapproving of another's account is not sufficient to argue for one's position; justification is needed, and this is what VP tries to accomplish here. VP starts the search for good grounds on which to build her argument by asking a question, which clearly involves precedent from the previous year.

Excerpt 4 (Questioning in search of precedent)

61 VP: [>a: camman camman<, caknyen-ey kulem ikey eps-ess-cyo.
oh wait wait last.year-TEMP then this not.exist-PST-COMM:POL
>Oh: Wait, wait<, this wasn't there last year then.

((3 lines irrelevant to this sequence deleted))

64 Soc2: [caknyen-ey iss-ess-e. ((nodding))
last.year-TEMP exist-PST-IE
They were there last year. ((nodding))

65 (1.0)

66 VP: caknyen-ey?=
last.year-TEMP
last year?=

67 Soc3: =[caknyen-ey iss-ess-e.
last.year.TEMP exist-PST-IE
They were there last year.

68 Soc2: [caknyen-ey iss-ess-e.
last.year-TEMP exist-PST-IE
They were there last year.

69 Soc1: caknyen-ey iss-ess-[e
last.year-TEMP exist-PST-IE
They were there last year.

70 Soc2: [caknyen kke po-ko ike han ke-ya.
last.year thing see-and this do:ATTR thing-IE
{We} did this by looking at the last year's.

The sentence-ending suffix -cyo and falling intonation in VP's question (line 61) clearly prefers agreement or confirmation (Park, 2003; Sohn, 1999); the question is constructed to confirm what VP already believes to be factual, i.e., not having had the partial china. Thus, rather than seeking information, this yes-no question seeks confirmation from the recipient. VP's question displays her attempt to find a strong criterion on which she can ground her argument: the precedent. Note that while the opinion of the ex-president is disregarded as a valid account for the Socials to include partial china, what was actually decided upon to be included in the previous year's Orientation is regarded as not only an appropriate but a strong criterion. This is where the precedent that had been implicitly conveyed in the interaction all along comes to the surface.

However, the question, which VP had planned to use to build her argument, ironically gives an opportunity to the Socials to build their argument because partial china was used, as confirmed by all three Socials in lines 64, and 67-9. Soc 2 further states in line 70 that this menu is a revised version from the last year's, thus providing a stronger account for their position to have included partial china. Both VP's question in search of the precedent of not having partial china and all Socials' enthusiastic responses to confirm the precedent of having partial china demonstrate the power of precedent in decision-making in this group.[11] Moreover, the ratification of the multiple parties to a particular position displays that the position they are taking stands strong with more support (as displayed in the midst of the boys' storytelling in Goodwin, 1990).

Having failed to establish the grounds to justify her position not to spend money on partial china, VP searches more vigorously for the precedent on which to base her argument. Soon, VP makes her second attempt to find an occasion when partial china was not used.

Excerpt 5 (Second attempt)

78 VP: kulem ku taum-pwuthe-nun- wuli Pizza night [hal-ttay-nun-
then that next-from-TOP we Pizza night do-time-TOP
Then, from that next time- when we were doing Pizza Night.

79 Soc3: [an hay-ss-ci.
NEG do-PST-COMM
{We} didn't do {it}.

80 ku taum-pwuthe-nun an hay-ss[-ci.
that next-from-TOP NEG do-PST-COMM
From that next time {we} didn't do {it}.

81 VP: [ha-ci-ma::
do-NEG-IMPER
Don't do {it}:::

VP pursues her search by offering another precedent, the previous year's Pizza Night, which is a different kind of event they organize every quarter, and is less formal than Orientation. Kulem "then" in the beginning of VP's utterance shows that this is yet "another" continued try for a preferred answer. It is evident that VP is strategically organizing her question in order to fish for an answer that will provide grounds for her argument. Note that VP's effort here discounts the luxurious feel for the very first event of the year, the account the Socials have been giving in favor of partial china.

The bait is taken by Soc 3 (line 79), having been a member of last year's staff and knowing the answer to the question. However, Soc 3 soon repairs this turn by inserting part of the VP's question "from that next time" at the beginning (line 80). This is particularly significant since it shows Soc 3's efforts to preserve the specialness of Orientation, thus limiting her answer to the events organized "after" Orientation. This delicately distinguishes Pizza Night from Orientation.

However, not having used partial china for Pizza Night is sufficient to build an argument for VP. Having established the good grounds, VP is provided with a golden opportunity; VP immediately asserts her argument, explicitly for the first time, ha-ci-ma::: "don't do it".

Moving it forward: Building a case

Having built her precedent with Pizza Night, VP immediately departs from establishing the precedent and moves the sequence forward to build her case with paper plates. She begins this by assessing the consequences that will be involved by substituting partial china with paper plates, such as price.

Excerpt 6 (Moving the sequence forward)

83 VP: [kulem ku-ttay-nun (.)plate-ka eti-se naw-ass-e?
then that-time-TOP plate-NOM where-LOC come.out-PST-INTERR
Then, at that time (.) where did the plates come from?

84 Soc3: <congi> plate-lo [hayss-ci.
paper plate-with do:PST-COMM
{We} did it with <paper> plates.

85 VP: [kulenikkan kyayney-ka cwess-e?
I:mean they-NOM give:PST-INTERR
I mean, did they give {us the plates}?

86 animyen wuli-ka sikhyess-e?
or we-NOM order:PST-INTERR
Or did we order?

87 Soc3: siky-e. yeki-se.=
order-IE here-LOC
{We} order. here.

88 Soc2: =yeki-se siki-nunke-ya.
here-LOC order-nunke-IE
{It}'s something that {we} order here.

89 VP: ((towards P))°kulem congi-lo hay::.
then paper-with do:IMPER
((towards P)) °Then do {it} with paper::.

VP' pursuance begins with a wh-question in line 83; however, with an unsatisfying answer from Soc 3 in line 84, VP re-phrases her question with two candidate answers, thereby constraining the response options (line 85-6). The first option in the VP's question is whether the catering service provided the plates without charge, which, if answered "yes", would help strengthen her argument because this would lessen their spending. However, though not as fatal as the failure in Excerpt (4), VP's effort to build her case fails, as shown in Soc 2 and 3's answers, "{we} order here" and "{it}'s something that we order here" (lines 87-8). It should be noted that, right after Soc 3's first answer in line 87 and while Soc 2 responds in line 88, VP turns her head down to her paper for a moment. Then, when Soc 2's utterance is completed, VP turns her gaze to P and softly (marked as °) says "°then do {it} with paper::". This low-volume assertion preceded by a brief pause, which is different from the VP's first explicit assertion shown in (5), and the direction to P rather than to the Socials, indicate that VP had only partial success in obtaining the evidence she needs in order to more strongly build her case for paper plates. However, since VP had already established a solid ground for her opinion in Excerpt (5), she is able to still argue for her position to some extent. Moreover, by asking for confirmation from P, VP invokes P's role as the President and shows her understanding that P is the one who makes a final decision in the group.

However, others still do not provide any agreement tokens. The Socials, in particular, orient to their roles as Socials who are responsible for menu ordering while VP and Web continue their assertions, as observed below.

Excerpt 7 (Pushing it further)

90 Web: ku-ttay manhi nam-un ke ani-ya?
that-time many left.over-ATTR thing NEG-INTERR
Aren't {they} the ones that {we} had many leftovers then?

91 Soc2: wuli:-ka [extra-lo sikye-ss-ci? ((to Soc 1))
we-NOM extra-as order-PST-COMM:INTERR
We: ordered some extras, right? ((to Soc 1))

92 VP: [ike- ike wuli michy-ess-e.
this this we crazy-PST-IE
This- this- we're crazy.

93 Soc1: um. wuli extra-lo siky-ess-e. ike[(??) ha-ko:::]

yes we extra-as order-PST-IE this do-this
Mm hm. We ordered extras. this[do (??) and:::]

94 VP: [umsik- (??:::)]
food
food (??:::)

95 Web: kwusipi myeng-i-ya.
ninety.two CL-COP-IE
{It}'s ninety-two people.

96 Soc1: [ey::
yes:HON
Yes::

97 VP: [°umsik-
food
°food-

98 VP: ike-nun kephwum a[ni-ya? ((toward P))
this-TOP froth not.be-INTERR
Isn't this froth? ((toward P))

99 Web: [ike-man ppay-tela[to,
this-only exclude-if
Only if {we} exclude this,

100 VP: [e °ike ppay, ike.
yes this exclue:IMPER this
[Yeah °Take this out, this.

101 Soc2: sleeve of plastic paper plates siky-ess-e.
sleeve of plastic paper plates order-PST-IE
{We} ordered a sleeve of plastic paper plates.

102 Soc1: um:
yes
Yeah:

103 VP: ike ppay, ike. chi- partial china.
this exclude:IMPER this
Take this out, this. Chi- partial china.

The VP's assertion, "then do {it} with paper::" directed to P in line 89 fails to obtain acceptance from P. VP further provides an extreme assessment of the price as "crazy" at line 92 as she looks down at her paper. Moreover, VP's utterance (line 98) addressed to P, "isn't this froth?" is a negative interrogative that asserts

her stance (Heritage, 2002). Here, VP again discounts "the luxury" by converting it to "froth." The justification given earlier by the Socials, "luxurious feeling," is being directly attacked here. However, VP fails to achieve mutual gaze with P in line 98 and again fails to receive a response from P. Immediately, VP explicitly asserts her position once more in line 100 and repeats it in line 103.

The VP's further assertions do not receive agreement or disagreement from either the Socials or P. Instead of accepting or rejecting the proposal, Soc 1 and 2 confirm each other's statements that they have already included "a sleeve of plastic/paper plates" in the menu, showing that they are being responsive to VP's proposal to "do {it} with paper::" and orienting to their roles as Event Organizers. Also, through publicly confirming that they did add extra paper plates in the menu, Socials defend their position that the VP and Web's argument, i.e., replacement of "partial china" with "paper plates", is irrelevant.

VP and Web's assertions have become more intensified as the sequence has developed. However, VP now decides to take a more judicious approach to build her argument by presenting and weighing the options, thereby pushing to finalize the decision.

Excerpt 8 (Vice President's judicious recommendation)

103 VP: ike <u>ppay,</u> ike. chi- partial china. ((addressed to P))
this exclude:IMPER this
<u>Take</u> this out, this. Chi- partial china. ((addressed to P))

104 Soc3: paper- [plastic plates te manhi [sikhi-ko::,((to Soc1and2))
paper plastic plates more many order-and
Order more paper- plastic plates and::, ((to Soc 1 and 2))

105 Web: [nay-ka po-nikkan ppayl-key ike-p [akkey eps-e.
I-NOM see-after exclude-thing this-only not.exist-IE
After I looked through, {I figure} this is the only thing {we} can exclude.

106 Soc2: ((to Soc 3)) [kuke-l te manhi ha-ko¿
that-ACC more many do-and
((to Soc 3)) Order that some more¿

107 VP: umsik-un: mos ppay-telato, ((turning to P)) ike ppayp-si-ta¿
food-NOM NEG exclude-even.if this take.out-HON-DECL
Even though {we} can't take any food out, let's take this out¿

After VP's additional strong assertion addressed to P in line 103, it is observable that Soc 3, at this point, understands that the decision has been made and gives in by instructing the other two Socials to "order more paper- plastic plates", which Soc 2 accepts by repeating the order (line 106) and writing it down on her menu.

However, verbal acceptance from P is considered necessary by VP and Web. In lines 105 and 107, both Web and VP co-build their argument in a more measured mood in the hope of ending the discussion with the final validation from P. This is shown by their language choices. Web's account in line 105 is summative in that it shows that his decision to exclude the "partial china" is only after careful examination of the menu and that "partial china" is the only item unnecessary. VP also makes a formal recommendation in line 107, thus taking a big step to move the sequence forward. The first component of her utterance, "even though {we} can't take any food out", considers "food" as necessary, and at the same time downgrades partial china as unnecessary, thereby contrasting and weighing the two options. Not only is VP's formulation of a request more judicious, but also the sentence type she chooses is very powerful, making her recommendation more formal. The modality of the suffixes in the latter clause, -si-ta, is "propositive" or "requestive" in sentence-type and "blunt" in speech level (Sohn, 1999). This form makes VP's utterance official, especially because it is not the kind of speech level that is normally used by young female speakers such as VP. Thus, this makes her assertion sound more serious and coercive, constructing her as an authoritative member of the group. After all, she is Vice President of the group as well as the one who manages the budget. VP's turn is constructed as a proposal and therefore strongly requires a response. The utterance is directly addressed to P by VP's gaze (see Figure 2), thereby making P responsible for giving a response. Moreover, her partially rising pitch at the end of the sentence displays that VP is monitoring the recipient to elicit a response.

Figure 2. VP's intense gaze at President in line 107

VP's direct proposal succeeds in not only obtaining P's response, but an acceptance, as shown in Excerpt (9). VP, while asserting her argument, had been using the intimate level of speech in imperative all along, but none of the assertions had been accepted or answered. It should then be noted that the approach that VP takes in line 107 in terms of language, sequential position in the interaction and reasoning was much more successful in getting a response. Indeed, VP's utterance so strongly requires a second pair part that everyone in line 108 looks at P for a pause of (1.5).

Excerpt 9 (Sequence closure: Acceptance from President)

107 VP: umsik-un: mos ppay-telato, ((towards P)) ike ppayp-si-ta¿
food-NOM NEG exclude-even.if this take.out-HON-DECL
Even though {we} can't take any food out, let's take this out¿

108 (1.5) ((everyone looking at P))

109 P: ((nodding)) .hhh okhay.

110 (0.5) ((everyone looking down at their papers))

Though P accepts the request (line 109), it is more of acquiescence than an enthusiastic acceptance, as can be observed with a pause of (1.5) and big in-breath before "okhay." This is when President, who has not been contributing much to the decision-making, begins "doing being President."

Retracting: Doing being President

For a group practicing democracy, meetings are no longer an option, but a necessary component (Tracy & Dimock, 2004). Accordingly, the role of a group leader in a meeting is not to impose his/her opinion on other members, but to coordinate interaction with them. Thus, good group leaders are expected to act as arbitrators or facilitators, managing discussion and displaying neutrality by stepping out of the decision-making, but validating the final decision. When leaders take advantage of their power to influence decision-making, this often leads to riots and rebellions.[12]

Having committed himself to a position and made a decision to exclude "partial china" in line 109, P is now faced with a dilemma: whether to finalize the decision feeling that some of the members may have been pressured to follow the decision, or to try to achieve a consensus by explicitly asking whether everyone agrees with the decision. P takes the latter step, doing being a democratic leader. In doing so, he displays his understanding that the decision was made between him and VP only.

Excerpt 10 (Retracting the decision for consensus building)

113 P: [<a, tatul ettehkey sayngkak-hay-yo,
oh everybody how thought-do-INTERR:POL
[<Oh, what do you think everybody,

114 ttan salam-tul-un? ((gazing at Soc1 and 2))
different person-PL-NOM
the rest of you? ((gazing at Soc 1 and 2))

115 (0.1)

116 Soc3: cohun idea-n ke °kath-ay-yo.
good idea- thing seem-IE-POL
{It} seems like a good idea.

117 VP: e: [: e e: ((nodding))
yes:[: yes yes:

118 P: [ppay-nun ke kwaynchanh-un ke kath-ay-yo?=
take.out-ATTR thing okay-ATTR thing seem-INTERR-POL
[***Taking {it} out is okay, it seems?=***

P, in lines 113-4, retracts the decision previously made in order to achieve consensus, although this means moving the sequence backward. He specifically reaches out to the Socials by gazing at them and selecting them as next speakers by specifying "the rest of you" (line 114). This displays that he has been aware of the conflict between the Socials and VP/Web and that the Socials may be the ones who are not content with the decision. At the same time, P displays his stance that the Socials are the members responsible for event organizing, invoking their institutional roles in the group. When Soc 3 responds in agreement, VP, not missing this opportunity, provides enthusiastic agreement tokens in line 117, with "yes:: yes yes:" while P once again confirms whether Socials are okay with the decision (line 118). When P hears one of the Socials' explicit agreement, he validates and finalizes the decision by saying kulay-yo "okay" in line 120.

Mopping up: Evaluating the outcome of the decision

Now that the decision is made to take out partial china, P takes on his role as President by trying to assess the outcome of their collaborative decision.

Excerpt 11 (Mopping up)

120 P: =[kulay-yo. ku taysiney ku <u>cong</u>i-lo hal kyengwu-eynun
okay-IE:HON that instead that paper-with do:ATTR case-if
Okay. Instead, in case {we} do it with paper,

121 piyong-i an tul-e-yo?
price-NOM NEG cost-CONN-POL
there is no cost?

122 Soc3:ani ccokum [tul-cyo. ccwul-=
No little cost-COMM:HON decrease
No, {it} costs {us} little. decrea-

123 Soc2: [ccokum >tu-nun-key ani-la< <u>hwak</u> ccwul-e-yo:.
little cost-ATTR-thing NEG-but drastically decrease-CONN-POL
>{It} doesn't cost little< but {it} decreases <u>drastically</u>:.

124 Soc3:=[han sip pwul. °<u>payk</u> kay-ey sam-pwul osip.]

about ten dollar hundred CL-per three-dollar fifty
About ten dollars. °Per hundred {plates}, three dollars fifty.

125 Soc2: [ikey han payk kay:-ey payk kay-ka set-intey]sam pwul osip i-ey-yo.
this about hundred CL-per hundred CL-NOM set-CIRCUM three dollar fifty
CP-CONN-POL
[This, about per hundred, hundred is a set and {it}'s three dollars fifty.

126 P: okay, kulemyenun: keuy payko[sip pwul=
okay then almost hundred.fifty dollar

127 VP: [sam pwul? ((towards Soc2))
three dollars
[Three dollars?

128 P: =cengto save-ka [toy-nun kel-lo pwa-ya toy-]yo.
about save-NOM become-ATTR thing-as see-should become-POL
Okay, then: {we} should see it as saving almost a hundred fifty dollars.

P's question in lines 120-1 is an attempt to identify the precise outcome of their alternative solution, thus moving the sequence forward to end the discussion of partial china. By doing so, he maintains his neutral position and displays himself as someone who controls the trajectory of discussion. Socials respond to P's question in lines 122-5. Although the decision was made in favor of VP and Web, once the decision is reached, the Socials collaborate in the discussion of the cost. In other words, they are brought back into the collective decision-making process at this point in interaction. Subsequently, P summarizes the outcome of their decision in lines 126 and 128 by saying "okay, then {we} should see it as saving almost a hundred ten dollars." This utterance is a sequence closing third (Schegloff, 2007, p. 118-142), which closes the sequence that began in line 37, where Web first proposed to exclude partial china.[13] This demonstrates one practice P makes use of when managing the discussion, i.e., closing a sequence by providing a confirmation ("okay") and assessing or summarizing the outcome of the decision.

Discussion

Appealing with precedent

The sequence analyzed in this paper reveals different aspects of how this student group constructs itself as a decision-making group whose members embody different social roles (e.g., president, vice president, socials), and ultimately as "an institution," the Korean Graduate Student Association.

First, it is evident that the members, while arguing for a position, appeal to precedent rather than personal preference or opinion.[14] The analysis has further demonstrated how the members treat precedent as a legitimate basis in their making of a decision (cf. Heritage et al., 2001). Precedent is not just an event that occurred

in the past, but something upon which the previous generation of group members agreed. Since it was done and agreed to be done before, it can be a very powerful tool in consensus building in a group. Thus, it is not surprising that precedent is invoked as a resource for building an agreement in the student group analyzed here when they are working within the boundary of institution.

For the Socials, precedent is a crucial point in defending a position. In answering VP's question whether partial china was used last year for Orientation in line 61, every one of the Socials enters with a full-fledged answer repeatedly in lines 64 and 67-7, defending their judgment on the basis of the past decision that has once been made and agreed to; it gives a strong legitimacy to their position to appeal. At the same time, VP is also able to build an alternative position by establishing the precedent that partial china was not used for Pizza Night (even though this event is less formal than Orientation). Thus, precedent provides an escape from making a decision on personal opinion or preference.

Furthermore, in addition to utilizing precedent, the members oftentimes argue for their position with a successfully or unsuccessfully implemented precedent. Many instances during the eight hours of meetings demonstrate that the members make a case by quoting what was (un)successful in earlier events. Below are two short examples that clearly illustrate this. Excerpt (12) is from the same meeting as the primary case and shows that an unsuccessful precedent is used to support P's argument to purchase three bottles of wine instead of five. Prior to the extract, the members have been discussing how many bottles of wine should be purchased, and P has just mentioned that three should be enough.

Excerpt 12

01 P: kunikkan ku isang philyo-nun eps-ul-ke-so
that over necessary-TOP not:exist-ATTR-thing
So more than that {I} don't think {we} need-

02 >waynyahamyen< <u>hang:sang</u> namkye kal ttay pothong,
because always leave:CONN go:ATTR when usually
>because< always when {we} had leftovers, usually,

03 han pyeng(.)[-eyse han pyeng pan-ul namkye kass-e-yo.
about bottle-from one bottle half-OBJ leave go-IE-POL
{we} were left with one bottle (.) or one bottle and a half.

Excerpt (13), which is from another meeting in which the members are also organizing an event, more succinctly shows how both successful and unsuccessful precedents are used as a basis for Communication Director's opinion about sandwich and pizza ordering.

Excerpt 13[15]

[KGSA 0506 (2)(3)_00:07:00]

01 Comm:ipen-ey-n sandwich-lang ppang-un aye ppay-cyo?
this-TEMP-TOP sandwich-and bread-OBJ all:together exclude-SUGG:POL
Why don't {we} take out sandwich and bread altogether this time?

02 sandwich-nun aye an mek-ess-ten-ke kath-ko.
sandwish-TOP at:all NEG eat-ANT-either-thing seem-and
{It} seemed that people didn't eat sandwich at all.

03 Trsr: pizza-nun?
pizza-TOP
{How about} pizza?

4 Comm: pizza-nun ka-ya-cyo.
pizza-TOP go-must-COMM:POL
Pizza should be in.

5 Pizza-nun cohahay-ss-ten-ke kath-ay-yo.
pizza-TOP like-ATTR-either-thing seem-IE-POL
{It} seems that {people} liked pizza.

Comm's argument for excluding sandwich and bread from the menu is based on the fact that people did not eat sandwiches at all (hence leaving many leftovers) in the last event while his argument for including pizza is supported by its popularity in the last event. Both extracts show that the members do not defer to their personal preference or opinion, but become accountable members working within the boundaries of the institution by basing their argument on the history. Thus, it is found that precedent, whether plain precedent (i.e., simply having done it in the past), or (un)successful precedent (i.e., whether it worked or not), serves as a crucial basis under which this group makes decisions.

Departing the preference structure of ordinary conversation

The sequence has also demonstrated that breaching the conversational norms is a way of exercising power in interaction. The members constantly carry out dispreferred actions without the features that commonly occur with such actions. For example, the studies (Pomerantz, 1984b; Schegloff, 2007, p. 63-78) have shown, in ordinary conversations, dispreferred second pair parts (SPPs), such as disagreeing or rejecting, frequently display features that delay the SPP turn, such as turn-initial pauses or hedges. Dispreferred SPPs are often mitigated or followed by anticipatory accounts or elaboration. First pair parts (FPPs) also have a preference structure, in which requests are commonly dispreferred actions and display similar features such as occurring late, and followed by accounts, mitigations, or excuses (Schegloff, 2007, p. 83).

However, the sequence in this study shows that the members, while engaged in decision-making, immediately provide disagreement or rejection and sometimes even interdict recipients' turns to disagree with and reject their defense. For

example, Web and VP interdict the Socials five times (in lines 45, 53, 55, 81, and 92) to reject the Socials' account and argue for their position. Moreover, there are neither turn-initial delays nor softening of their assertions as clearly shown in VP's repeated imperatives (to exclude partial china) in lines 81, 89, 100, and 103, which are relatively uncommon practices in ordinary conversations. On the one hand, VP, having the legitimate authority of the group's budget, exerts her power by doing being Vice President. On the other hand, Web, though he may not have such authority, keeps the consistent argument to exclude partial china by repeatedly mentioning its expensiveness throughout the sequence. By his explicit assertions, which are neither softened nor delayed, Web successfully gathers power over others. However, VP and Web's assertiveness about cost-cutting should be understood within the budgetary constraint present for the group. The existence of budgetary constraint allows or even mandates this particular behavior by VP and Web who are the cost-cutters in the group.

Much research in ordinary conversations among children (Goodwin, 1990, 2002, 2006) and adults (Antaki, 1994; Dersley & Wootton, 2000, 2001; Gruber, 1998) have commented on and illustrated the departure from the preference structure in argumentative talk. However, the sequence analyzed in the present article never develops into a full-fledged argument for the following reasons: First, VP and Web's departure from the preference structure is shown not in disagreeing with another member (e.g., the Socials) necessarily, but with the menu item and in further arguing for their position. Second, the Socials never explicitly oppose with or provide a counter-accusation to VP and Web's disagreement, but rather defend themselves understanding that they may be held responsible to give an account for the inclusion of partial china. Moreover, it is important to note that the members' goal in the meeting is to reach a consensus within a budgetary limit. Although there certainly could be dispute in reaching one decision, the interaction in this sequence does not exhibit the characteristics usually present in argumentative talk, namely two sides opposing each other, in which both sides are actively arguing against each other. Thus, the departure from the preference structure exhibited in this sequence should be understood within the framework of institution.

A further look at Vice President and President's conduct

Departing from the preference structure not only enables VP and Web to exert power, but is also linked to how the members' roles are enacted in the interaction. It is found that the members' age or previous relationship to each other, which is considered crucial in Korean society, does not figure in how the interaction is shaped during this decision-making process. Though not explicitly mentioning her position in the group (e.g., speaking as Vice President), it is apparent that VP, the youngest, is orienting to and enacting her role as Vice President, showing her legitimate authority of budget throughout the decision-making process. VP's display of her role is shown by her choice of verb ("spend" in line 18), a surprise token with a negative assessment of the total cost the Socials put forth (line 35),

searching for precedent to ground her argument (lines 61 and 78), and explicitly requesting to exclude unnecessary items (i.e., reduce spending) (lines 81, 89, 100, 103, and 107). More interestingly, although VP is the youngest in the group, she often uses the intimate speech level (e.g., ppay exclude:IMPER, hay do:IMPER), usually reserved for recipients who are the same age or younger than the speaker (Sohn, 1999), to older members without any mitigation. Through these features in the interaction, VP constructs herself as someone who has authority on budget, thus orienting to her role as Vice President (for constructing hierarchy in girls' pretend play, see Griswold, 2008). However, despite her insistence to exclude partial china, she still defers the final decision to P, displaying that P has more authority than her in the group.

Contrary to VP, P neither puts forward his own opinion nor pushes any members to abide by a certain decision, taking a facilitative rather than authoritative approach. The construction of P's role as a facilitator can be explained by the type of group he leads. As mentioned earlier, KGSA is a voluntary student group whose members have other relationships outside the group. As a consequence, the members involved expect the meetings to be enjoyable rather than stressful and expect to feel a sense of connection and belonging through these meetings. As a leader, P is the main contributor in creating this atmosphere for the group, allowing enough freedom for all members to argue for their positions and being careful about making any decisions for them. Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) state that it is the members involved (or specific situations) that oftentimes determine a leader's chairing style. The facilitator role that P exhibits in their meetings seems to be a consequence of the unique circumstances under which this group is constituted. In this way, P successfully constructs himself as a democratic leader, which Holmes et al. (2007) identify as "an empowering leader," without having to take an authoritative stand.

In a similar vein, although P is the oldest in the group and uses the non-deferential speech form to all three Socials and VP outside the meeting, he primarily uses the polite or even deferential (which is politer than the polite speech level) speech level to other members in the meeting. Thus, P's use of the polite/deferential speech level clearly shows that he is invoking his role within the group. More interestingly, it should be noted that P's use of honorifics appears to be a strategic move since he alternates between deferential/polite and intimate level of speech as he shifts in and out of the institutional role he enacts. For example, P uses honorifics in lines 47, 113, 118, 120-1 and 126-8, utterances in which he is doing being objective and neutral (thus, "doing being president"), but switches to the non-deferential speech level in lines 63, 134 and 136-7 when he offers his decision as one of the members in the group instead of being an arbitrator. This, however, is an observation from one decision-making sequence, and thus needs further investigation.

There are other means by which P "does leadership" in the interaction. By retracting the decision that had been made between VP/Web and him, P selects

the Socials to seek their agreement (lines 113-4), making sure that a consensus has been reached. By doing so, P invokes their role as Social Organizers who have authority of the event organizing and makes himself visible as a member who is orienting to the role "President" whose function is to approve the final decision and controls the trajectory of the meeting. What is more prominent is that P consistently presents himself to be the chairperson of the meeting by ratifying, retracting, and summarizing the decision. Similarly, other members, especially VP, also construct P as a chairperson by asking a ratification for the decision and understanding that the decision has not been reached until P has confirmed it as "a decision made."

Conclusion

This article has described the practices of talk in decision-making in a small Korean student group meeting by examining primarily one decision-making sequence in detail and how the members construct themselves as an institution at the moment of interaction while the decision is being negotiated and achieved. I showed the members' practices of grounding their argument on and appealing to precedent. However unimportant their decision may seem, it is evident that the members carefully organize their talk to search for accountability and build their argument, using the resources of the interaction as well as their own history. The complex relationships between the members as well as the Korean language, which exhibits the politeness level by sentence-ending suffixes, provide clear evidence of how the members orient to their roles in the group in the unfolding course of the interaction moment by moment. With data from a quasi-institutional site and a relatively less-examined language, this study contributes to an understanding of how dynamic and fluid an institution can be. What makes an institution is more than physical space or assigned roles; it is the interaction in which members co-participate and orientations which they bring to the interaction that construct them an institution.

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Notes

[1] Earlier versions of this paper were presented in the UCLA-SNU Conference on Korean Studies in Los Angeles in 2007 and the Western States Communication Association annual meeting in Denver in 2008.

[2] Decision-making in other institutional contexts (e.g., telephone business negotiation, medicine) has been examined by Firth (1995a, 1995b, 1995c), Collins et al. (2005), and Heritage et al. (2001).

[3] Drew and Heritage (1992, p. 3) define "institutional interaction" as "talk-in-interaction [that] is the principal means through which lay persons pursue various practical goals and the central medium through which the daily working activities of many professionals and organizational representatives are conducted."

[4] Most works have centered around "formal" institutional settings such as 911 emergency calls (e.g., Tracy 1997; Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman, 1992), medical interactions (e.g., Heath, 1992; Heritage & Maynard, 2006; Perakyla, 1998), news interviews (e.g., Clayman & Heritage, 2002), and courtrooms (e.g., Atkinson, 1992; Drew, 1992).

[5] Decision-making process and the members' participation differ for different kinds of groups: while some groups may use secret balloting, other make decisions based on one or a few members' opinion (Tracy & Dimock, 2004, p. 136-139; Zemel, 2002, p. 4-5). Some shortcomings of consensus decision-making include 1) taking too long to reach a decision, 2) resulting in emotion-filled meetings, and 3) the meetings running into trouble because equality can never exist (as described in Tracy & Dimock 2004). However, this way of decision-making is crucial especially for voluntary groups like KGSA because the members need to feel the sense of community and connection within the group.

[6] A recipient who is older than the speaker will always be addressed with an address term such as senpay ("senior") oppa ("older brother") and enni ("older sister") to name a few, instead of a name alone. Furthermore, use of honorifics is required for such a recipient unless there has been an agreement between speakers to use the intimate speech level. Honorific expressions are manifested with a wide range of lexical, grammatical, morphological elements (Sohn, 1986, 1999).

[7] A set of partial china includes a china plate, fork, and knife. An alternative to partial china is paper plates and plastic forks and knives, as will be shown later.

[8] Transcription conventions are those commonly used in CA developed by Jefferson (see Appendix A). To show unique characteristics of the Korean language (e.g., sentence-ending suffixes) relevant to the analysis and where overlaps occur, I provide three-line transcription. The first line is Yale romanization of Korean alphabets, and the second line is morpheme-by-morpheme gloss. The third line is the closest translation to English. Transcription conventions are used in the translation as needed in order to approximate "the feel" of how it is spoken in Korean. { } in the third line denotes unsaid but necessary words for smooth translation.

[9] Projecting a dispreferred action (rejection, in this case) from the recipients, Webmaster justifies his proposal. Studies have shown that dispreferred actions usually entail accounts (e.g. Heritage, 1988).

[10] Goodwin (1990) shows a similar practice in children's disputes, in which an accuser uses reported speech and brings in a third party. By doing so, he/she provides a warrant for the change and also makes the third party responsible for the utterance having been produced.

[11] In fact, precedent is considered such a crucial factor in medical care that the research on insurance companies' decision-making to finance surgery (Heritage et al., 2001) has shown that the history of surgery, i.e., the precedent, could and usually does subvert the required criteria for surgery.

[12] The studies of mediators's practices (Atkinson, 1992; Garcia, 1997; Lee, 2005) show that mediators often display their neutrality by not committing themselves to one position. When mediators do take a position, they often need to repair the damage so that they ensure staying neutral.

[13] Note that the sequence I examine in this paper started in line 37 with Web's assertion to exclude "partial china" (base FPP). When the decision is made in line 109 with the President's consent, the sequence closes temporarily. However, as P retracts the decision, he launches into a post-expansion sequence from lines 113-4. The confirmation and assessment of the decision in lines 126 and 128 serve as a sequence closing third, thereby closing the whole sequence.

[14] The relationship of precedent, tradition, and preference is all intertwined; precedent is someone's preference at one point in the history; however, when used more than once, it becomes precedent. Moreover, it is perceived as tradition when repeated over a longer period of time (Heritage, personal communication, May 5th 2007).

[15] In this meeting held in Spring 2006, four members are present. There was no separate position that is dedicated to social organizing, and thus all members collaborated to make decisions to organize an event. In the transcript, Comm refers to Communications Director, and Trsr to Treasurer.

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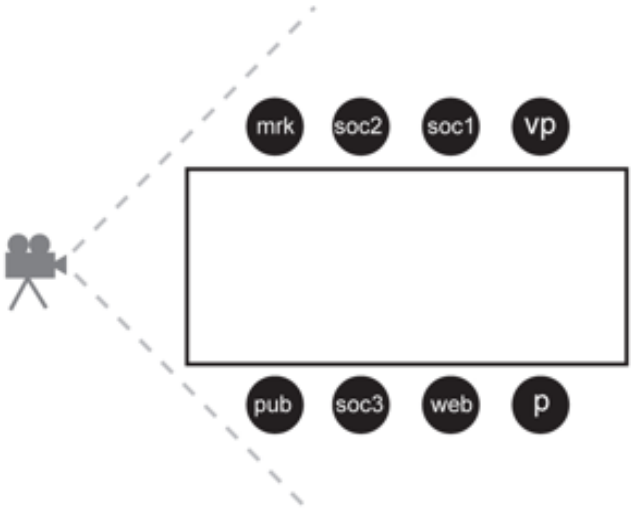
APPENDIX A: Transcription Conventions (Jefferson, 2004)

[ ]	overlapping or simultaneous talk	–	mark sharper rises or falls in pitch
=	contiguous utterances (with no break or gap)	°	the following talk is markedly quiet or soft
(0.5)	length of silence between utterances in tenths of seconds	:::	prolongation or stretching of the preceding sound
(.)	micro-pause	hhh	Laughter
?	rising intonation, not necessarily a question	(hh)	laughter inside the boundaries of a word
,	continuing intonation	.hh	Inhalation
.	downward, period intonation	-	a cut-off or self-interruption
¿	a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark	___	(underline) stress and emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch
<	the immediately following talk is "jump-started," i.e., sounds as if it starts with a rush	(( ))	transcriber's description of event
> <	the talk between them is compressed or rushed.	( )	uncertainty on the transcriber's part

APPENDIX B: Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative	IE	Informal Ending
ADD	Additive	INTERR	Interrogative
ADJ	Adjective	LOC	Locative
ATTR	Attributive	NEG	Negative
CIRCUM	Circumstantial	NOM	Nominative
COMM	Committal	NOML	Nominalizer
CONN	Connective	PL	Plural suffix
COP (CP)	Copula	POL	Polite suffix
CL	Classifier	PST	Past
DECL	Declarative	QUOT (QT)	Quotative
DM	Discourse Marker	IMPER	Imperative
GEN	Genetive	TEMP	Temporal location
HON	Honorific		
TOP	Topic Marker		

APPENDIX C: Seating configuration in the meeting



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