

## Contingencies in EFL Writing Tutors' Third Turns: A Conversation Analytic Perspective

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Using conversation analysis (CA), this study examines the less explored language-teaching genre within an English as a foreign language (EFL) context: the writing center tutorials. Focusing the analysis specifically on tutor talk, this paper investigates the contingent production of third turns of second language (L2) tutors. Following the lead of Lee's (2007) study of teachers' third turns in classroom discourse, this study used CA to analyze audio-recorded tutoring sessions conducted in English. The analyses highlight five ways in which tutors make use of the third turn position in an IRF sequence to maneuver the tutorials, specifically contingent on the two types of student response in the second turn. Based on the analytic findings that illuminate the diverse functions of the tutors' third turns, this study concludes with pedagogical implications for English-mediated writing center tutorials in EFL contexts.

**Key words:** EFL writing center, tutorial discourse, third turns, conversation analysis, L2 talk

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As a main locus of language teaching and learning, language classrooms have drawn a lot of attention from research in second language acquisition (Ellis, 2008). A large number of studies on the organizations of institutional discourse have focused on the issues of teacher talk and recognizing the growing importance of teacher feedback and evaluation in the familiar three-turn, IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) sequence, in classroom talk. The basic IRF exchange structure – an initiation by a teacher, which elicits a response from a student, followed by an evaluative comment or feedback from the teacher – was first approached by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and then identified

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again or further developed by researchers such as Edwards and Mercer (1994) and Mehan (1979). The IRF structure is also well researched as a frequently occurring sequence in language classroom talk (Lee, 2007; Lee, 2016; Waring, 2008). The third turn position of this familiar three-turn sequence in institutional discourse is considered to play an important role in giving feedback on second turn answers produced by the students, and the structural features and criticisms of the third turn organizations in classroom discourse are well documented in previous literature (Cazden, 2001; Macbeth, 2003; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Wells, 1993). Some have noted that the three-turn sequences can be an effective functional means of "monitoring" and "guiding students' learning" (Mercer, 1992), thus achieving the final goal of education. Others considered them to be a major source of the teacher's power and control that might limit students' construction of knowledge by imposing the teacher's own (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Many educational researchers have also noted that the three-turn sequences assume more diverse roles than the polarity distinction of positive and negative role projects (Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Young, 1992a).

Based on Lee's (2007) paper on the contingencies of the teacher's third turn in classroom discourse, this study expands the domain of research into another area of institutional discourse and goes on to examine the contingencies in the third turns of tutors in an EFL writing tutorial discourse. Considering the third turns of the tutors to reflect the basic aspects of the tutor talk in general, this paper adopts the notion of third-turns within the domain of writing tutorials, another form of institutional discourse.

The tutoring sessions in the data set are all one-to-one interactions where the sequence of questioning, answering and giving feedback constitutes a major role in the interaction. As the tutorial is short and the issues to be discussed within that short period are set beforehand, the questions in the initiating positions mostly adhere to the guideline manual. In other words, the basic forms of questions are small in its range of choices. On the other hand, in the case of third turns, which constitute the feedback or evaluative production of the tutor in reaction to the students' second turn, there is more space for diverse productions of the tutors. By studying the third turns, (i.e., the feedback or evaluation that the tutors give the students), we can not only analyze the talk of the tutor but also examine the interactional shape between the tutor and the tutee. The study of the third turn is a small gateway leading to the holistic study of the interaction of tutor discourse.

In what follows, I will first outline the literary context in which the current study is situated within. Then, I will present the data and the core method – Conversation Analysis (CA) – of this study, before going on to the detailed analyses. Finally, I will close with the summary of analytical findings and pedagogical contributions of this study to research on tutor talk in EFL contexts.

## 2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

In his study of third turns in the three-turn sequences in classroom data, Lee (2007) posed the question of how the local contingencies that surround the teacher's third turn in such sequences can be taken into account analytically. He noticed that much of the prior literatures recognized the complexity of the third turn position (Hall, 1998; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Young, 1992a) but that most of such studies were based on the functional regularities of the third turn abstracted into formal categories. Finding that these pre-established functional categories do no justice to the multiple layers of interpretive work displayed in the third turn, Lee (2007) sought to find the contingent interpretive acts the third turn brings out and analyze what is accomplished in the process. Based on 46 hours of ESL classroom interaction data, Lee (2007) focused his analysis on teachers' third turns to demonstrate how these third turns carry out the contingent task of responding to and acting on the prior turns, while simultaneously moving the interaction forward. Consequently, he established that third turns were an extraordinary space within classroom talk in that it allowed identification of the practical and procedural details of teaching that teachers routinely and contingently display in the course of interaction. Through detailed analysis, Lee (2007) accounted for diverse instances in which the third turn represented situated accomplishment of pedagogical actions out of contingent circumstances encountered in the classrooms. He found that that predetermined categories suggested by prior studies (Hall, 1998; Nassaji & Well, 2000) do not allow access to these contingent contexts nor to the situated accomplishments does the teacher exhibit to the students in the evolving sequence of talk-in-interaction (Lee, 2007). By investigating classroom interaction in such detail, Lee (2007) demonstrated that the local exigencies that surround the third turn help us see that classroom interactions become orderly, reliable and thus stable, not in the regularities of conceptual categories, but through the competent work of understanding by the teachers and students who make sense of and act on each and every turn in the course of their interaction. In other words, this view enables us to trace back the participants' interpretive undertaking of their own discourse and thus to bring out their orientation, because the participants "furnish each other with instructions for discovering the sense and interactive implications of their talk" (Lee, 1991 p. 217).

Since, there have been various studies that have examined the IRF sequence in ESL and EFL classroom talk (Kääntä, 2012; Koole, 2012; J. Lee, 2016; Y. Lee, 2008; Waring, 2008, 2009, 2012). On the other hand, there is yet to be a more detailed investigation of another type of frequent discourse in ESL and EFL settings – one on one tutorials. Studies that do exist (Thonus, 1993, 2004; Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Williams, 2004; Young, 1992b) have focused illustrating the dominance of the native speaker (NS) tutors

over the non-native speaker (NNS) tutees, based on the general observations that “the expertise of tutors as NSs of English places the NNS tutee in a learner’s, not a collaborator’s, position (Thonus, 2004, p. 236).” In these studies, the tutors were all NS tutors, working with NNS tutees in their target language. The current study, however, examines data in which both the tutor and tutee are NNS of the language (English) in which they are interacting, thus inducing different interactional dynamics that is yet to be discussed. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the data in detail and identifying the specific characteristics of tutorials in EFL contexts.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The data used in this paper is from EFL writing tutorial sessions, conducted at a tertiary level program at a university in Seoul, Korea. The main aim of the writing center was to guide college freshmen in writing properly formed English paragraphs. The tutors were trained and given detailed guidelines to help students construct the basic structure of English paragraphs and essays. These tutorials were mandated to all students enrolled in the college English program at the intermediate level (i.e., TEPS<sup>1</sup> scores ranging from 551 to 750), and the result of the tutorials was to compose 5% of their final course grade. The students were required to upload a paragraph written with one of the topic choices provided by the center. Then, they would visit the center, where they were given the choice of conducting their tutorials in Korean or in English. After the tutorials, students were required to upload the revised paragraph to fulfill the requirement.

At the time of data collection, the tutors were all graduate students in the university, and the majority of them were Korean native speakers (i.e., L2 speakers of English). Of the dozen or so tutors, there were one or two bilingual speakers, but their tutorials are not included in this study. The tutors were recruited from the graduate programs in English Language & Literature and English Education departments. The selected tutors were trained through workshops organized by the writing center coordinator, where they were provided with manuals and guidelines to conduct the tutorials. Furthermore, the center mandated all tutors to attend weekly meetings with the coordinator throughout each semester, through which they were updated on various issues (e.g., incoming students’ needs, tutor assessment based on student evaluation, and so forth), and received continuous training on tutorial pedagogy. The recordings in this paper also come from one of the efforts to keep up the tutorial standard, as each tutor were required to record their sessions – with student’s consent allowing use of recordings for research

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<sup>1</sup> Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul National University

and training – that was shared amongst the tutors and center faculty for tutor training and research.

The data excerpts in this paper come from five of such audio-recorded tutoring sessions, all conducted in English. The data set was received from five different tutors, consisting of 20-30 minutes of tutorial interaction based on the student's pre-uploaded paragraph. The collected audio-recordings were then transcribed according to the Jeffersonian convention (Jefferson, 1984; ten Have, 1999). Conversation Analysis (CA) is the main methodology of this study – an approach to analyze the organization of everyday talk of language as is actually used in social interaction (Heritage, 1984; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby & Olsher, 2002). In the following section, I will introduce and analyze five excerpts using Conversation Analysis, in an effort to illuminate the interactional features and shapes of EFL tutorial discourse.

#### **4. ANALYSIS**

A general analysis of the data collection indicated that majority of the interaction was composed of question and answer sequences, in which the tutors constructed questions to identify various components of the English paragraph written by the tutee. On highlighting the areas in which the tutors' third turns occurred, the data indicated that tutors' third turns were occasioned by the content of the tutees second position response (Lee, 2016). The data of the tutorial discourse show that the third turn of the tutor in a specific IRF sequence is not always in the physical "third place" in the interactional sequence. Hereby, I mean that in the EFL discourse, the "evaluative, responsive" turn of the tutor is not always directly situated after the tutee's second turn (which also could be or could not be the second position in the sequence). The reasons for this are that in many cases, there are several other turns within the sequence which is needed for the negotiation of meaning and sometimes, further explanations of the question or the response given by either the tutor or the tutee. Therefore, defining the third turn to contain the characteristics of the last part of the IRF sequence, if it is found to be the evaluative or connected turn of the initiating sequence, this study will acknowledge it to be the "third turn" of the current discussion. In other words, the term "third-turn" is used as an operational definition and not as a direct reference to the physical third turn in the sequences. The following analyses examine the tutors' third turns in two categories, according to whether the second turn (i.e., the tutee's response to the initial question), was able or not able to provide a relevant answer to the tutor's initial question. The

analysis of the data shows that these responsive feedbacks of the tutors were contingent on the relevancy of the tutees' second turn.

#### 4.1. Tutors' Third Turns to Relevant Productions of Second Turns

In the sequences of the tutorial discourse, the initial questions of the tutors have underlying intentions of carrying out a certain sequence. When the student produces a successful, intended response to the tutor's initial question, it is easier for the interaction to flow in the way intended by the tutor. While these successful sequences are rare in the EFL tutorial discourse data, there were some instances in which the students were able to produce a successful response to the tutor's initial question that consequently leads to a certain pattern of contingency in the tutor's third turn. The analysis of such sequence shows two distinctive characteristics. While the first characteristic is often manifested in instances in which the tutor accepts the relevant response of the student and closes it off with her third turn or add a simple compliment (Excerpt 1), the second characteristic is observed in cases in which the tutor uses the relevant responses of the student to expand the sequence with multiple questions which contributes to moving the sequence forward (Excerpt 2).

##### 4.1.1. Closing third

The first distinctive characteristic of the tutor's third turn is the closing third; where the tutor uses her third turn to simply accept and compliment the successful response of the student and closes off the sequence before moving onto the next agenda. The following excerpt is one of the few examples of an interaction where the successful response of the second turn results in a successful sequence.

**(1) Excerpt 1: Embarrassing Moment<sup>2</sup> (T: tutor, S: student)**

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 01 | T: | °okay° um- do you know- um how paragraph (.) is composed↑     |
| 02 | S: | (0.5) uh first um ((coughing sounds)) there is topic sentence |
| 03 | T: | uh huh  |
| 04 | S: | and (0.2) uh several detail sentence                          |

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<sup>2</sup> The tutees were given the choice of five different topics to choose from for their paragraphs (e.g., Tell me about the most embarrassing moment in your life. Describe your hometown. etc). The title of the selected excerpts display the topic choice that the tutee has chosen to write about, and consequently being discussed in the excerpt.

- 05 T: right  
06 S: and ((um)), last (.) conclusion sentence  
07 T: yeah- you are the only one who (raise-) responded to my-  
08 this question  
09 S: [((laughing sounds))  
10 T: [((laughing)) okay so:: (0.2) can you (.) specify me  
11 indicate me  
12 S: yeah?  
13 T: which one (.) is your topic sentence?

In this excerpt, the tutor initiates the sequence in line 1 by asking, "do you know um how paragraph (.) is composed?" To this question, the student starts to provide a response in line 2, to which the tutor interrupts with an acknowledgment token, "uh huh" (line 3). In the upcoming lines the student continues to expand the sequence by elaborating on what she knows about the composition of a paragraph (lines 4, 6). In the following turn, after the student finishes her response, the tutor first provides a positive confirmation token, "yeah-" before going on to add the compliment, "you are the only one who (raised) responded to my this question." (line 7). This excerpt is a clear example of simple and successful IRF sequence, in which the correct response of the student in the second turn, thus enabling the tutor close off the current sequence, and move on and initiate the next sequence based on the student's earlier response with, "which one (.) is your topic sentence?" (line 11).

While such 'closing thirds' depict the simple IRF sequence in tutorials, this does not happen very often in these tutorials, and rather, the third turns are used for diverse purposes other than providing feedback to the question within the sequence, as the excerpts to follow will illuminate.

#### 4.1.2. Sequence expansions with multiple questions

The second type of third turns in response to relevant second turns of the students are those in which the tutors accept the response and then use their third turns to display a string of multiple questions which expands the sequence further to move forward towards a certain pedagogical point. Whereas the previous excerpt showed an instance of the tutor using the third turn place to first finish off the ongoing sequence and then moving on in the next turn, in the case of the upcoming excerpt, the tutor uses the third turn place to jump right on move along the sequence, resembling one of Lee's (2007) categorization, steering the sequence. Through his analyses, Lee (2007) displayed the

teacher's use of the third turn place to steer the ongoing interaction towards a certain pedagogical goal. Similarly, the excerpt below displays how tutors make use of multiple questions to carry the sequence towards a pedagogical point.

**(2) Excerpt 2: My hometown (T: tutor, S: student)**

- 01 T: okay. hehe (.) um (.) what were the most (.) hard  
 02 thing when you wrote this essay?  
 03 (2.2)  
 04 T: what was the most difficult thing you- (.) felt?  
 05 S: (0.5) umm:: (2.0) the organization of ( ) is very  
 06 Diffi(hh)c(h)ult hehehe .hhh  
 07 → T: this-do you have any, es- (.) especially where? Any-  
 08 Is- Was the topic sentence hard for you or the  
 09 conclusion or (0.7) is this- sentence have any  
 10 organizations?  
 11 (0.5)  
 12 T: do you- thought about um (0.5)  
 13 this, did you follow this guideline? we gave you?

This excerpt not only shows the pedagogical method of moving the sequence forward with multiple questions but also holds some distinctive characteristics of L2 interaction in the tutorial discourse. Starting from the initiating question, the tutor rephrases herself. The 2.2 second pause (line 3) in between the two questions may also indicate that perhaps the second question was induced by the lack of the student's second turn, but the quietness towards the first question also may indicate that the tutor did not sound quite finished and the student was yet waiting for the tutor to finish her question. Moreover, there is a string-lining of the multiple questions, which appears in the tutor's third turn. The student gives her response to the tutor's initial question (lines 1-2, 4) in lines 5-6, which is not particularly acknowledged by the tutor in her next turn. After the student gives her response in her second turn, the tutor asks a string of questions (lines 7-13) which takes the student five more sequential turns to give an answer for each of the questions<sup>3</sup>. We can analyze this type of third turn in two different aspects. One is the perspective already partially mentioned above. Accepting the student's response provided in lines 5-6, the tutor uses her third turn to expand the sequence further with the multiple questions, going from the issue of organization to the issue of topic sentences.

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<sup>3</sup> Tutees' consecutive lines omitted here due to space limitation.

As much as they come directly after one another and is still forming a string line of multiple questions, the questions in lines 7-13 show signs of turn increment in which the tutor steers the sequence towards a more accessible question for the student by slightly adjusting her questions, "did you think about some organizations? Did you follow this guideline? we gave you?" Especially, the last part, "we gave you" indicates a certain turn increment on the part of the tutor who is trying to produce a question that is more likely to induce a response from the student. In other words, the tutor uses the multiple of her questions in her third turn to narrow down the broader, initial question in line 4, "what was the most difficult thing you uh felt?" to a smaller, answerable question for the student. And in this way, the multiple questions that the tutor produced in her third turn are being used to direct the interaction towards the issue of paragraph organization and topic sentence as the tutor has intended. Consequently, such expansions using multiple questions are being used as pedagogical expansions towards the certain matter of writing that the tutor intends to deliver to the student.

On the other hand, the second sequence of the tutor's third turn after the brief silence (line 11) shows a somewhat different pattern. This is the second aspect in which we can analyze this excerpt. The string line of multiple questions in lines 7-10 and lines 12-13 may be attributed in part, to lack of certainty of the productions on the part of the tutor. There are only short, micro-pauses (lines 7, 9, 12) between many questions, which show that the tutor was not really expecting an answer from the student within those short pauses. Also, the cut-offs in the middle of the questions in line 7, "do you have any es- (.) °Is- Was the topic sentence hard for you (.) the conclusion or (.) is the sentence have any organizations?" may be analyzed from an aspect that the tutor is not fully confident of the formulation of her question sequences in this turn.

While the two excerpts in this section have displayed tutors third turns in response to the tutees' successful responses to the tutors earlier questions, the excerpts in the next section display a somewhat different interactional shape.

#### 4.2. Tutors' Third Turns Following Delayed Second Turn Responses

As can be expected in any L2 interaction, many times in the tutorial data were the students unable to produce an immediate second turn response. The data and analysis in this section resembles Waring's (2007) discussion of "third-position accounts" in analyzing the multi-functionality of giving accounts in advice-giving proposes that the third-position accounts can avoid attributing any "fault" (Waring, 2007) to the client's work, exhibiting an enhanced level of sensitivity towards the possibly threatened face of the recipients. Also, by treating the responses of the client's as insufficient, third-position accounts serve to display the consultants' orientation towards 'understanding'

as an important goal of the institutional encounter (Waring, 2007). Keeping in mind that the writing tutorial at hand is an institutional setting of advice-giving, few aspects of Waring's analysis of the third-position accounts can also account for if not all, much part of the analysis on the tutors' third turns following an "insufficient" (Waring, 2007) response for the "client" (i.e., the student receiving the tutorial).

The excerpts in this section displays the actions in tutors' third turns in situations where second turn responses are delayed as such. Each of the three excerpts in this section examine how the tutor uses the third turn to: (a) reformulates their initial turn (Excerpt 3); (b) repeat and expand the less successful second turn (Excerpt 4); and (c) provide the response to the initial question (Excerpt 5).

#### 4.2.1. Reformulation of the first turn

In this collection of tutorial data, the question and answer sequences between the tutor and tutee make up the majority of the short interaction between the two participants. And most times, the sequence is initiated by the tutor with a question, as shown in all excerpts in this paper. Whereas the previous excerpts showed instances in which students produced a response in the second turn, the excerpts in this section display a different sequential shape, in that the student's second turn is delayed or outside the scope of the tutor's expectation. Excerpt (3) below displays an instance in which the tutor uses the third turn to reformulate their initial question after a rather unsuccessful second turn.

##### **(3) Excerpt 3: My hometown (T: tutor, S: student)**

- 01        T:    how about here? did you, you HAD many friends here?  
 02        S:    no- uh (0.5) this place (0.3) uh::: (.)  
 03    →    T:    (or) maybe other places in other places, did you have  
 04                    many memories with your friends?  
 05        S:    (0.3) u::m (0.3) in other places (.) I had some friends  
 06                    but- uh:: (0.5) u:::m (0.7) I had many friends in Ganghwa  
 07                    island most=  
 08        T:    =u::m so, I think that's (0.3) that's what you wanted to  
 09                    focus on here

In the excerpt above, the tutor and the student are in the middle of an interaction where they are trying to find the topic of the paragraph that the student has brought in. Finding out in the earlier interaction that the student had wanted to write about a particular place that reminded her of her friends, the tutor initiates this sequence trying to find this certain place that the student wants to place as the main topic of her paragraph.

In line 1, the tutor initiates the sequence by first pointing to the place name written by the tutee, "how about here?" followed by another question, "did you, you HAD many friends here?" (line 1). In line 2, the student provides an immediate response, "no" to the second part of the tutor's initial question. But then, the student displays difficulty in further elaborating "this place (.3) uh::: (.)" (line 2), while also indicating that she understands the type of information that the tutor is requesting (e.g., using the word "place") in her initial question. Following this, the tutor uses her third turn in lines 3-4 to reformulate her first question in referring to a different "place" related to the topic of "friends" which the tutor has noticed prior to this interaction as the main topic of the students' writing. In other words, the tutor uses the third turn position to *redo* the action of *asking a question*, with a reformulated version. Here, we can see that instead of providing immediate feedback or evaluation of the student's delayed and hesitated response, the tutor makes use of this opportunity to further elaborate on her initial question. In his classroom data, Lee (2007) categorized a similar interactional shape between the teacher and student as "parsing" of the questions, which is exactly to reformulate parts of the initial question. The tutor's action in this excerpt is similar in that the tutor reformulates the first question for the sake of restating, changing the form of the initial question, or cutting the first big question into smaller, answerable questions in order to induce the intended answer from the student. In other words, the redoing of the first question is not simply a repetition of the initial question in reaction to the student's rather unsuccessful response, but can also be seen as a pedagogical action of using different forms of the initial question in order to intimate responses (Lee, 2007) from the students. This action allows the student, who previously displayed difficulty in providing an elaborated response (line 2), a chance to formulate an answer (lines 5-7) that is accepted as successful by the tutor (lines 8-9), and from here the tutor takes the sequence forward towards their pedagogical goal of finding the focal topic of the paragraph.

The next section displays an example where the third turn is used to recapitulate the student's second turn response as opposed to the tutor's own first turn as in this section.

#### 4.2.2. Recapitulation of the second turn

With the double goal of striving to achieve a certain level of intersubjectivity concerning the topic and format of the English paragraph at hand, as well as having to communicate in English (L2 for both interlocutors) makes for a natural need for constant confirmation and negotiation within the interaction. The excerpts display ongoing confirmation and negotiation between the tutor and student on various issues, starting from the meaning of words, phrases or sentences, all the way to the context in which these paragraphs were written. While the previous excerpt examined the case in which the tutor reformulated their own question in the

third turn, the excerpt below examines the case in which the tutor uses her third turn to repeat and expand (i.e., recap) the student's second turn. The analysis of the data indicates that the tutor does not simply repeat the second turn response of the student identically but recapitulates the response in a different way that might assist the student in producing a more pedagogically successful response.

**(4) Excerpt 4: Public Embarrassment (T: tutor, S: student)**

- 01 T: this is a narration so you wrote about you::r u::m  
 02 episo:de and  
 03 (1.5)  
 04 but what I- I'm curious about is  
 05 (1.0)  
 06 ah::: have you thought about to↓↑pic sentence?  
 07 S: (2.0) °u:h°  
 08 (7.0) ((sounds of door closing))  
 09 ah::: (3.0) not pretty  
 10 (1.0) topic sentence is not- pretty  
 11 T: (.) uh huh?  
 12 S: bu:t I think (0.5) this-  
 13 (0.3) this paragraph's  
 14 (1.3)  
 15 T: °uh huh°=  
 16 S: =topic sentence is  
 17 T: °mmhmm°  
 18 S: (3.0) under.sta:nding (0.3) of my sex  
 19 T: MMHMM=  
 20 S: =MISunderstanding  
 21 → T: misunderstand- ok, so THIS is a- the story about  
 22 misunderstanding of u::h (.) the sex of you, right?  
 23 S: °mmm°  
 24 T: your se(x)- but, ah ah, well, I think uh we first define  
 25 what a topic sentence is and why it is important  
 26 (0.5) ok, so- have you heard about (.) what topic what a  
 27 TOpic sentence is?  
 28 S: (4.0) °topic sentence° ((writing noise))  
 29 T: in Korea we say *jujaemun*

In this rather long sequence, the tutor initiates the sequence by asking the student whether she has "thought about topic sentences" (line 6). This rather obscure question surprisingly gets a response from the student where she tries to give the definition of the "topic sentence" across numerous turns (lines 9-10, 12-13, 16 and 18). In line 21, the tutor partially repeats what the student has said and recapitulates the topic of the paragraph, which the student had been giving an effort to say in her initial response. It seems that the tutor is wrapping up this sequence on the issue of topic sentence. In her following turn, however, the tutor continues the sequence by first giving her feedback on the student's response by saying, "but, ah, ah, I think uh we first define what a topic sentence is and why it is important" (lines 24-25) and then redoing her very first question in a slightly different form, "so have you heard about (.) what ei topic sentence is?" (lines 26-27). This again is repeated by the student instead of a response and in reaction to this, the tutor opts to give the Korean definition of the topic sentence in line 29, "in Korea we say *jujaemun*." In the case of this excerpt, the redoing of the initial question is resulted by the tutor's rather obscure question, which, surprisingly enough, is still able to induce a response from the student. Yet the tutor is not satisfied with the response, as she was expecting a definition of 'topic sentence,' as opposed to the topic or 'topic sentence' of the tutee's paragraph. This we can confirm by the fact that the tutor asks the same question again in a different form despite the fact that the student did try giving a response. Thus, we can see through this excerpt, that the tutor uses the third turn as a way of acknowledging the tutee's response through the action of recapping the gist of tutee's response, while also using the turn space to steer the sequence in a certain direction.

Interactionally, one could argue that the student initially provided an adequate response to her understanding of the question, which could, on the other hand, problematize the tutor's constant emphasis on the more general understanding of the concept "topic sentence." However, it should be noted, that being one of the most important factors in writing an English paragraph, along with the fact that the tutors are trained to make sure that the students have a clear understanding of the concept of 'topic sentence,' this type of sequence is found in most tutoring sessions. Many times, the students are unable to give an appropriate second turn, which prompts the tutors to redo their initial questions and carry on the sequence until the concept of the 'topic sentence' is conveyed to the students. This can again be related back to Waring's (2007) analysis of how the third-position accounts of the consultants, tutors, in the case of the current data, orientation towards tutee's "understanding" of not only what's going on in the interaction but also the "important goal" of the current institutional encounter, in which for this case, is being able to have a solid conceptualization of the structure of the paragraph starting from the notion of "topic sentences."

## 4.2.3. Provision of the second turn response

Another categorization of contingencies in the third turns of the tutors in response to delayed second turns of the students is the case where the tutor provides the second turn response instead of the student, or at least steer the student towards a certain response by indirectly referring to the writings that the student had brought in. The following excerpt is an example.

**(5) Excerpt 5: Public Embarrassment (T: tutor, S: student)**

- 01 T: ok- (0.2) I TH<sub>I</sub>:nk in- in your paragraph topic would be  
 02 an episode (.) happening that you experience u::h::  
 03 in high school, (0.2) right?  
 04 S: Yeah  
 05 T: so THEN WHA:T (.) is a controlling idea? WHAT was your  
 06 impression? What was your opinion or what was your  
 07 impre::ssion about that happening?  
 08 S: (0.3) m:::mhm (2.0) fee↑ling?=  
 09 → T: =feeling, (.) yeah. Embarrassing feeling, right?  
 10 S: °yeah°  
 11 T: so that is controlling idea. So (.) ah with topic and its  
 12 controlling idea, we made topic sentence. So but we have to  
 13 avoid (.) two things tch- when we made topic sentence  
 14 S: ((writing sounds))

In this excerpt, the tutor starts by providing her understanding of the tutee's specific paragraph topic, to which the student provides agreement (line 4). Following this agreement, the tutor continues with a multitude of questions in an attempt to determine a more specific aspect within the topic sentence, *controlling idea* (lines 5-7). In the next turn, the student struggles in giving an immediate response with a pause, elongated continuer, "m:::mhm" and a longer pause (line 8). But then, produces the word, "fee↑ling," displaying their understanding and confirming the tutor's question, "what was your impre::ssion about that happening?" (lines 6-7). In response to this rather unsuccessful second turn of the student, the tutor first confirms the student's understanding with, "feeling (.) yeah" (line 9). But then in continuation of her talk, the tutor proffers (Schegloff, 2007) the more specific "feeling" that holds the topic of the student's paragraph, "embarrassing feeling," directly followed by the confirmation token, "right?" (line 9). In doing so, the tutor provides the response to her initial question in the third turn position, which is confirmed by the student with, "yeah," (line 10), which the

tutor then further expands to be the controlling idea of the tutee's paragraph (lines 11-13). Thus, in this excerpt, we can see that the tutor's third turn is used as a place to provide a response that the tutee was not able to fully and immediately provide in the second turn response. In other words, while the IRF sequence in itself was not violated sequentially – as the student was indeed able to produce a response – the data shows that instead of providing a feedback and closing off the sequence, the tutor uses the third turn to provide a further specified response that fits the agenda of the talk at hand: locating the topic sentence and controlling idea.

Again, in this excerpt, it is noticeable how the tutor keeps to her goal of delivering the core goal of these tutorials: the concept of the topic sentence. While the three-turn sequence seemingly comes to an end by the tutor's provision of the response "embarrassing feeling," (line 9), the sequence continues on to pedagogical talk on topic sentences. Instead of pursuing the topic of the student's writing – established through the previous IRF sequence – the tutor turns to the more general issue of "a topic sentence" and what's to be avoided in writing a topic sentence. In a much later part of the data that is not shown here, the tutor does go back to the student's topic sentence and negotiates a better topic sentence for the student's writing, but this is only after a long elaborated explanation about the concept and general aspects of a topic sentence and supporting details that conform the structure of a paragraph. This highlights the specific characteristics of these tutorials that follow a certain guideline rather than rely on the contingency of the ongoing interaction. In other words, examination of the sequential direction displays the tutor's understanding and actions (i.e., ensuring that students know and understand the formal structure of a paragraph in an English essay), within the current institutional talk in situ.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper examined the interaction between the tutor and student, both L2 speakers of English, engaged in an English-mediated writing tutorial. Of the several aspects of this comparatively new form of L2 discourse, this study focused on the production of the third-turn of the tutors that follows a question and answer sequence. Compared to the rather manual productions of question forms, it was noted that the third-turn of the tutors reflected the diverse contingent forms of evaluation and feedback to the responses of the students in the second turn which aligns with Lee's (2007) findings in her study of NS classroom teacher talk. Based on these analytic findings, I will conclude by discussing the implications concerning the tutors' competence in leading a tutorial despite the

linguistic and pedagogic limitations of being an L2 speaker and a graduate student still in training, along with some limitations of this study.

The current data, in which both interlocutors are native speakers of Korean, was conducted in English to adhere to the English-only policy within the college English program. While the root of this policy lies within the well-meaning intention that language is best learned using it, along with attempts to provide a learning environment similar to that of the English as a Second Language (ESL) context, the above analyses highlights some issues this intention brings along with it. One of the most prominent issues is the matter of whether the focus of the Writing Center is on encouraging enhancement of the task of writing a paragraph or an essay in English, or whether it is on providing the opportunity to communicate in English in spite of the fact that much of the important factors in English writing may not be conveyed as well as it would have been if done in the native language of the tutor and the tutee. The tutorial is primarily offered in Korean, but the English data used here are from the tutorial sessions of those students who chose to be tutored in English. Although the tutors are comparatively highly proficient in their competence of English, English being a foreign language to them, the data shows various moments in which their attempts to communicate in English acts as a barrier more than anything else. On the other hand, in the aspects of guiding the students to write a good paragraph in English, the tutors are trained beforehand, the tactics of which they have shown to use relatively well in their tutoring sessions in Korean<sup>4</sup>. The English tutorial data that were used for this study shows that the tutors have the extra hurdle – of successful communication in their L2 – to jump through in order to achieve the goal of conveying to the students the various conventions that are vital to paragraph writing in English. They show to be competent in what they are doing, and in the end succeed in accomplishing the goal of delivering the concept of “topic sentence” at some point within the tutorial (this is not all shown through the data provided in this paper), but it does seem to take longer, with extra sequences used for clarifying and confirming linguistic understanding (e.g., excerpts 2 and 4). In other words, it is important to figure out whether the main goal of these tutorial sessions are to be focused on the issue of “teaching writing,” or on the issue of “providing an opportunity to communicate in English,” which perhaps should be more clearly separated to achieve the institutional goal. However, in order to do this, a more thorough examination of the tutorial data and a comparative study on the Korean and English data -a limitation of the current study- is

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<sup>4</sup> For a more accurate comparison, it is vital that the data of the tutorial session in Korean should also be transcribed and adapted. Furthermore, the consequential aspects of both types of tutorials should also be examined. This matter is left for future research.

necessary to provide a more accurate analysis on the tutors' performance from an evaluative perspective.

Moreover, the analysis shows that despite the apparent language barriers, the L2 tutors are quite able, as well as quite adamant, in delivering the main content of "English paragraph writing" in the tutorials, as they have been trained. The five categorizations of the contingencies in tutors' third turns – limited as they are – not only indicated that the tutors were able to aptly react to the various situations surfaced by the student's turns, but also displayed a certain competence that stems from a shared understanding between the tutor and student as L2 users of the target language. I believe this has an important implications for English language education in Korea, where further investigation of other groups of L2 teachers and their competence displayed in interaction will further instigate the need for blurring the current strict divide between NS and NNS teachers in our classrooms (Jung, 2015).

To this end, this study makes a contribution to this area of study by examining the third-turn of the L2 tutor talk in an EFL environment. The study on the third turns shed light on the various methods tutors apply in guiding the students in a certain direction using their third turns in a question and answer sequence. In this aspect, the study on the interaction between the tutor and tutee interacting in English shows that there is need for a forward point within the discourse that indicates the pedagogical direction of the interaction. This consequently calls for the need of certain strategic manual or protocol for the tutors to follow in order to induce the appropriate, intended responses from the students even when tutoring in English. Moreover, the application of the CA findings to the program at hand also allowed well-informed interventions to the writing center curriculum enabling improvements and changes according to the problems and needs enlightened by the in-depth analysis (see Antaki, 2011 for more on applied CA).

There is, however, a limitation to the current study in that only the English data of the Writing Center tutorials were examined. Considering the fact that more than 80 percent of the tutorials are conducted in Korean, this factor cannot be overseen. Recently, there have been studies specifically on the question sequences in EFL writing center tutorials (Park, 2008), but further investigation would allow a more in-depth knowledge and implications of such tutorials, which will also go on to reinforce the grounds on which the current study stands.

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## APPENDIX A

### Conversation Analysis Transcription Conventions

#### Regular CA Conventions

,	continuing intonation
.	final intonation
?	rising intonation
ˊ	slightly rising intonation
↓	word abruptly falling intonation
↑	word abruptly rising intonation
wo:rd	lengthening of the previous sound
=	latching (no space between sound before and after)
[	overlap
0.7	pause timed in tenths of seconds
(.)	micropause, shorter than 0.2 seconds
°word°	speech which is quieter than the surrounding talk
WORD	speech which is louder than the surrounding talk
<u>Underlining</u>	Signals vocal emphasis
(xxx)	Cannot be guessed
hhh	Aspiration (out-breaths)
.hhh	Inspiration (in-breaths)
>he said<	Quicker than surrounding talk
<he said>	Slower than surrounding talk
=	Latching
heh heh	Voiced laughter
sto(h)p	Laughter within speech
£ £	Laughing voice
(( ))	Other details

Applicable levels: Tertiary

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