2014

Tutoring ESL Students for Improvements in Language Skills

Hollie R. Craddock
craddoc5@marshall.edu

TUTORING ESL STUDENTS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN LANGUAGE SKILLS

A thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

by
Hollie R. Craddock

Approved by
Dr. Jun Zhao, Committee Chairperson
Dr. Robin Conley
Dr. Kateryna Shray

Marshall University
May 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first and biggest thank you goes to my advisor, Dr. Jun Zhao, whose maddening attention to detail drove me to finally learn to construct this important academic piece of work. Dr. Zhao has been an inspiration to me from Introduction to Linguistics through every aspect of thesis writing. Words cannot express my appreciation for the guidance she offered, and the vast amount of her personal time. Without her encouragement, dedication, and generosity, the completion of this paper would simply not have been possible.

I'd also like to thank Dr. Robin Conley, who opened my eyes to new ways of viewing language, and new perspective on my future students. In addition, her encouragement and interest in research helped stir my passion to continue researching when I felt research and I were not a suitable pair.

I'd also like to thank Dr. Kateryna Schray for her time and encouragement. Her thoughtfulness and insight were essential to the completion of this writing.

I'd like to say a thank you to Dr. Ben White, for offering advice, serving as a sounding board, and allowing me access to a supportive academic environment for my data collection.

I'd also like to thank Dr. Bob Hong for his infectious enthusiasm for linguistics and unceasing dedication to his students. His passion for grammar is, quite simply, unmatched.

I'd like to thank those who participated in my project for their willingness to be recorded and tolerance of all the paper-signing and incessant emailing.

The pervasive nature of thesis writing requires one to have a strong emotional support group. I'd like to thank my parents for providing an environment in which I could study, for driving my children to functions and to school and back, and helping to support me financially during this stressful time. I'd also like to thank Mike Wells for his patience and his unceasing efforts to boost my confidence when self-doubt was hindering the writing process.

I want to say a big thank you to my children, my smallest, loudest cheerleaders, who inspire me every day to try to "just be awesome."

In closing, I'd like to thank my dear thesis-writing compatriot, Audrey Hamoy, who shared with me brief lapses in sanity, tear-filled late nights, forty-hour thesis work-weeks, vain babblings, and innumerable vegan snacks. Without her support, humor, and commiseration, not only would this project not have reached completion, but my sanity surely would have been lost.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Much research has been conducted from the framework of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and on the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). SCT has a wide application in many fields, including Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

This study collected and analyzed audio-recordings of voluntary, one-on-one tutoring sessions that took place over a six-week period in an Intensive English Program at an American University. The participants included both faculty and peer tutors and English Language Learners (ELLs) in the IE program. The recordings were analyzed to determine if any patterns emerged regarding the target language features on which the tutoring sessions focused. The data showed that low proficiency level students focused more on grammar and surface-level issues in their tutoring sessions, while intermediate students focused on content, and high-intermediate students focused on structure in their writing.

By comparing the results of the data collected for low, intermediate, and high intermediate tutees, the study hopes to show how ELL tutoring programs could be improved to better assist ESL students' writing and other English skills.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Sociocultural Theory (SCT) was first posited by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the late 1920s as the Russian Empire was overtaking neighboring countries to form the USSR. Out of this Soviet social turmoil and his work in psychology and education was born Vygotsky's theory of child development (Christy, 2013). The main component that distinguishes SCT from other learning theories is its tenet that cognition is based on social interaction. The beliefs that the environment shapes the individual, and that individuals shape the environment, have greatly influenced many fields of study, including psychology, linguistics, and First and Second Language Acquisition (Christy, 2013).

Vygotsky's emphasis on language as the chief means of development naturally links SCT with the field of linguistics. Further, his assertion that language is the tool that man uses in order to both understand and create new meaning has many pedagogical applications. Collaborative learning activities, both inside and outside the classroom, peer-reviews, flipped classrooms, and tutoring can all find a theoretical basis in SCT (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Several scholars in the field of Second Language Acquisition adhere to the Vygotskian perspective with regard to teaching a new language to students. According to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposal, play is a major source of child development because play "creates a zone of proximal development of the child" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 109). The ZPD begins with the real ability of a student when the student is working independently. The student's future development is determined by his or her ability to use and internalize information resulting from mediation. Within the ZPD, at least one other participant is necessary to assist the learner in developing beyond his or her current learning level. The More Knowledgeable Other

(MKO) is the person or entity (possibly a computer or software, etc.) that has more knowledge about a subject than the student does. With a "boost" from the MKO, the student is able to achieve a new level of understanding, thus changing his ZPD for the next task. Furthermore, the MKO is responsible for 'scaffold-building'. A metaphor for the learning process, scaffolding is thought of as a set of successive steps upon which a student can climb through his or her own ZPD. Scaffolding is provided by the MKO to assist the learner in passing from what the learner cannot do alone to the next stage of development. At the point in which a particular feature is internalized via scaffolding, the scaffolding is removed and new scaffolding is set in place for the next target feature. An individualized scaffold is required for each learner, depending on proficiency, aptitude, target-language feature and other factors. Therefore, more effective scaffolding would likely be provided during one-on-one tutoring sessions or collaborative learning activities, the latter types of interactions having deep roots in SCT Theory (Smagorinsky, 2011), rather than the scaffolding provided by an instructor in a large classroom setting.

How are SCT, and particularly the ZPD and microgenesis instances found within scaffolding interactions, related to ESL or SLA tutoring? Although some research (Shehadeh 2011, Storch 2009, and Van Horne 2012) has been conducted regarding how to produce effective tutoring techniques for ESL students who visit writing centers, little research has been conducted in regard to tutoring English skills from an SCT perspective (Weigle and Nelson, 2004; Sharif, et al., 2012). Because of real or perceived language barriers between native-speaking tutors and non-native speaking ELL tutees, the less confusing and more streamlined the interactions can be, the better the result for the student.

The study undertaken herein was conducted over a one and a half month period of time in

an Intensive English Program at an American University in the Appalachia Region of the United States. The Intensive English Program was specific to International Students who were learning English as a Second Language. The students enrolled in this program varied in their English proficiency level, country of origin, and goal of learning English, such as general improvement in English skills, or improvements in English skills for acceptance into an English-speaking University.

Audio-recordings of tutoring sessions in which some of these international students voluntarily participated were collected. Because the tutoring sessions were not required as part of the program, the subject or focus of the sessions were determined by whatever each student felt he or she needed the most assistance with. After collection, the recordings were analyzed to determine the language features on which students of different proficiency levels focused. The data showed that low level students focused overwhelmingly on grammatical language features in their tutoring sessions, intermediate students focused on the feature of content in their writings, and high-intermediate students were more focused on structural elements of sentence and essay writing.

An additional aim of the study was to determine whether or not peer tutors relied on different types of interactions to facilitate internalization of *microgenesis instances* (MGIs) than non-peer tutors. This study also followed the model set forth by Gutierrez (2008), in which "affordances" represent scaffold-building talk in the *pre-microgenesis* stage of development within scaffold building interactions in the ZPD in an effort to determine what affordances were most successful in facilitating internalization of *microgenesis instance*s.

Findings of the study include overwhelming evidence that tutors do provide scaffolding

individualized to each tutee's needs within tutoring sessions. In particular, the peer tutors who participated in the sessions varied the affordance types they used during their interactions, while the faculty tutors who participated in the study were more likely to select an explicit, straightforward affordance type.

The tutees involved in peer tutoring dyads reported, via a post-study questionnaire, that they felt they were able to internalize scaffolding, and in particular were able to internalize MGIs because they were able to negotiate meaning with the tutors and felt comfortable enough to ask questions and repeat features until they were internalized. Additionally, especially for the low-level students, the opportunity to practice speaking English in natural conversation with their peer tutor during tutoring sessions not only improved their speaking and listening skills, but helped them understand the target language features upon which the tutoring session was focused. Although the tutees who were involved in faculty tutoring dyads reported that they also were able to internalize scaffolding events, they were less likely to recall *ah-ha* moments (MGIs) in their tutoring sessions. Additionally, these students reported that they internalized their scaffolding through memorization of the rules that their tutors gave them, but not necessarily through the interaction itself.

The data regarding target language focus could be important both for tutoring and classroom teaching. A significant number of tutoring sessions in which low proficiency level tutees were involved focused on grammatical features. The tutees generally requested assistance with workbook style homework or short sentence or paragraph writing assignments. Although outside the scope of this study, development and implementation of activities that allow low-level students to think beyond surface level grammar features might be more beneficial to the student over the course of his or her English studies.

Although there was not enough data collected from the faculty tutors who participated in this study to determine if the choice of explicit affordance type during non-peer tutoring sessions was an overarching pattern that could be applied to the field of ELL tutoring in general, the affordance choice patterns found within this data still possibly have implications for ELL tutoring programs. As none of the tutors who participated in the study received any formal tutor training, looking at the recorded data and the questionnaire responses from the tutees could provide information that would be valuable to ELL tutor training programs. Making available specific scaffolding instructions that explain different affordance types and how to execute those to tutors or potential tutors in their tutoring sessions might prove beneficial for tutors, and thus to tutees.

Chapter II Literature Review

Sociocultural Theory, the developmental framework from Vygotsky's body of works, is not exclusively a language development theory, but a theory of human development more broadly. The major component of Vygotsky's theory is the social dimension of cognition. His theoretical framework, and his belief that individual and environment share a mutual relationship, have led to more recent advances in cognitive theory (Christy 2013). Since the time of its introduction, his work has greatly influenced many fields, such as developmental psychology, linguistics, and pedagogy.

> We have seen that the individual's own experience is the only teacher capable of forming new reactions in the individual. Only those relations are real for an individual that are given to him in his personal experience. This is why the student's personal experience becomes the fundamental basis of pedagogical work. Strictly speaking, and from the scientific point of view, there is no other way of teaching. It is impossible to exert a direct influence on, to produce change in, another individual, one can only teach oneself, i.e., alter one's own innate reactions, through one's own experience. (Vygotsky, 1997)

In accordance with SCT, social interaction is the genesis of all learning. According to Vygotsky (1979, p. 30), "The social dimension of consciousness is primary in fact and in time. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary." He approached human development from the perspective of a symbiotic relationship between individual and society. Referring to this phenomena as 'genetic development,' Vygotsky based his proposal of child development on the notion that "[a]ny function of cultural development appears on the developmental stage twice, or on two planes, first the social, then the psychological, first between people as the intermental category, then within as an intramental category" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 105-106).

Vygotsky studied and wrote in great detail regarding human evolution, and what distinguishes homo sapiens from all other animals. According to Lantolf & Thorne, "Humans reside in two worlds: one comprised of signs and symbols, managed by language, and the other of material objects, controlled primarily through our hands and brains" (2006 p. 59). Vygotsky considered language one of the many tools human beings use to understand and relate to the world. In fact, he considered language a mediation tool exclusive to human beings (Lantolf 1994; Anton 1999), a symbolic tool which mediates human consciousness (Lantolf & Appel, 1994), and an indication that humans are more evolved than any other animal (Smagorinsky, 2013). Vygotsky maintained that humans use many tools for communicating with each other, language being one of those. Additionally, these tools reflect the social and cultural backgrounds of individual learners (Lantolf, 2000).

James Lantolf and his associates have made a concerted effort to apply Sociocultural Theory to Second Language Acquisition. SCT differs from other SLA schools-of-thought in "its focus on if and how learners develop the ability to use the new language to mediate (i.e. regulate or control) their mental and communicative activity. Mediation, either by self or peers, is paramount to increasing fluency and critical thinking in the second language" (Atkinson & Lantolf, 2011, p 24).

For Vygotsky and those who follow his philosophy, language is the principle motor for all development because the interpsychological and intrapsychological are tied together through both language development and language use. From the Vygotskian perspective, cognition and socialization cannot be separated, in the same way that the individual and his knowledge cannot be separated from the society in which he resides. The use of signs actually results in new development via language. Using signs, including the pointing gesture, takes an external action

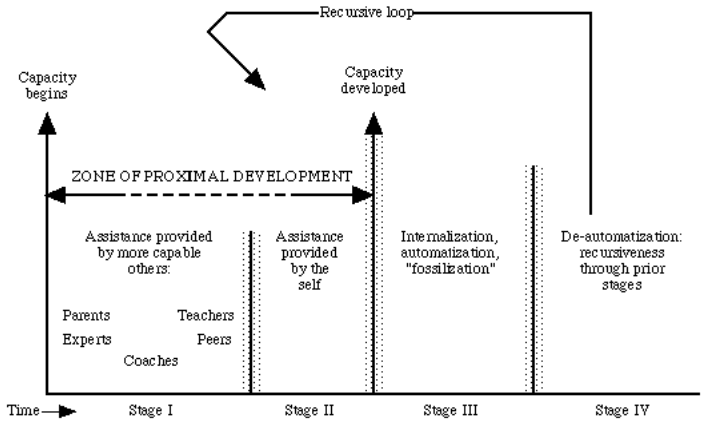
and internalizes it for meaning. According to Christy (2013, p. 203), the effective use of signs involves "understanding the perspective of another person (joint attention), as well as the referential nature of signs".

Children participate with the social environment through language, which is "the force that drives cognition" (Nahrakhalaji, 2010, p. 2). Both Piaget and Vygotsky agreed that the beginning stages of child development are characterized by "a complex organization of means and ends in sensorimotor activity" (Nahrkhalaji, 2010, p. 3). However, Piaget's perspectives on cognition have been far more documented than those of Vygotsky. Piaget posited that egocentric speech (which, according to Piaget, has nothing to do with cognition) falls out of use as the child matures. Vygotsky opined that a child's private speech (nonsocial utterances) actually illustrates verbal reasoning. To Vygotsky, private speech, which becomes inner speech during the development of the human, is key to cognitive development (Nahrkhalaji, 2010, p. 4). According to Christy (2013, p. 201), inner speech is "a major vehicle for thought".

Language is influenced by the people who use it, thus the social aspect of language. People must first be socially exposed to the language in order to learn it, but the language itself is socially constructed. In a 2013 article, Brook summarized German philosopher Immanuel Kant's theory as follows: 'the functions crucial for mental, knowledge-generating activity are spatio-temporal processing of, and application of concepts to, sensory inputs. Cognition requires concepts as well as precepts" (Brook, 2013). In other words, without input, there is nothing for the brain to process.

A. Zone of Proximal Development

From a pedagogical standpoint, Vygotsky is, perhaps, best known for his proposal of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD, which many link directly to collaborative learning, is perhaps the mostly commonly cited concept when using a Vygotskian theoretical framework, even though it is only mentioned in his vast volume of works on three occasions (Smagorinsky, 2011). In fact, several models of the ZPD have been implemented, including this 4-part ZPD suggested by Tharp and Gallimore (1988), which highlights a return to the ZPD via an infinite loop as learners move from one ZPD to another during the learning process. **(Figure 2.1. Four stages of the ZPD).**



(Figure 2.1. Four stages of the ZPD). (Tharp and Gallimore, p.35).

According to Vygotsky's ZPD proposal, play is a major source of child development because play "creates a zone of proximal development of the child" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the area in which instruction (i.e., socialization at home and formal teaching at school) and development "are interrelated from the child's very first day of life" (Atkinson & Lantolf, 2011, p. 84).

The ZPD is defined as "the distance between the actual development level as determined

by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). With aid from social interactions, a learner can achieve a higher level of learning at a quickened pace with the aid of input resulting from interaction with a person or entity who is more knowledgeable than the learner. The ZPD begins with the real ability of a student who is working independently, and the student's future development is determined by his or her ability to use and internalize information resulting from mediation. Because each learner develops at his or her own pace, and has his or her own strengths and ability limitations, students who are seemingly at the same developmental level may or may not develop in the same way or at the same pace in the future (Anton, 2009).

Within the ZPD, at least one other participant is necessary to assist the learner in developing beyond his or her current learning level. This More Knowledgeable Other is the person or entity (possibly a computer or software, etc.) that has more knowledge about a subject than the student does. One popular analogy for the role of MKO is that of a "ferry man," acting as a guide to assist the student from the level of what they already know, across the ZPD, to a level they could not reach alone. These MKOs are meant to act as "mediators [who] do things with rather than for children" and adult learners alike (Atkinson & Lantolf, 2011, p. 29). With a "boost" from the MKO, the student is able to achieve a new level of understanding, thus changing his ZPD for the next task.

The individual learner is key to Vygotsky's theory of Child Development. Specifically, he investigated how each individual learner navigates through their social environment to learn and to make decisions on his or her own. According to Sociocultural Theory, higher-ordered thinking would not be possible without social interaction. An MKO (parent, teacher, tutor, older

sibling, etc.), is responsible for supporting the learner according to his or her individual needs so that he or she is able to transition from a developmental stage that has already been mastered to a stage that can be reached with assistance. Without the social interaction from the MKO, critical thinking (and development of skills), would not be possible either.

According to SCT, a student receives the most benefit when the MKO uses "scaffolding." A metaphor for the learning process, scaffolding is thought of as a set of successive steps upon which a student can climb through the ZPD, or as a way that learners and MKOs are able to "shore up" development. Additionally, it is important to note that each learner is likely to require different scaffolding, even if the learners are engaged in performing similar tasks or learning the same principles. Aljaafreh and Lantolf, in their 1994 study, found that "it is essential to know the degree to which each regulation, or mediation, impacts on the learner's production of particular forms" (p.480). Additionally, they found that proper scaffolding helps learners shift from explicit learning (MKO guided) to implicit learning (self-guided), allowing the learners to become more self-dependent during the learning process. According to Ajaafreh and Lantolf, this is an indication of micro-genetic development between the learner and the expert.

Proper scaffolding requires five main attributes. First, it is imperative that the MKO build interest and engage the learner in a particular activity. Once the student is interested in participating, the task should be broken down into smaller sub-tasks. The MKO then should keep the student focused on the main ideas of the task/assignment. The final step is for the MKO to model one way in which a task could be completed. The student/learner is expected to 'imitate' the MKO until the behavior is internalized.

Ideally, scaffolding ensures microgenetic development for the learner (Aljaafreh and

Lantolf, 1994). Microgenesis could be thought of as the moment-by-moment construction of language learning within a social discourse, in this case, the ZPD. Microgenesis within the ZPD is responsible for enhancements in language learning skills such as speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

B. Peer Tutoring

The belief that there MUST be an MKO present for development to take place is sometimes problematic in large classrooms, especially considering that each singular student may be best assisted through the ZPD via scaffolding that is individualized according to his or her needs. According to Lantolf, "research concerning the ZPD has directly addressed acquisition, but even there, development is understood not only in terms of target-like performance but also in terms of quality and quantity of external mediation required" (Atkinson & Lantolf, 2011, p. 24). Learner's requirements regarding how much scaffolding and how detailed the scaffolding needs to be varies from person to person.

Studies have shown that the presence of an MKO within the group aids in completion of the task or cognitive development in several ways. It has been noted that collaborative tasks are particularly beneficial when one student is more advanced than others within the group (Chapman & McBride, 1992; Tudge, Winterhoff, & Hogan, 1996). According to Lantolf and Appel (1994), participants with unequal knowledge support each other to increase comprehension and aid in internalization of knowledge. Smagorinsky assertsin his 2013 article that the success of the group depends upon the collaborators' ability to understand "the purpose and process of the task" (p.199). An MKO can not only help explain the task, but can also provide structure via scaffolding for the other student/students. So and Brush (2008, p. 326) found that the more ordered and structured collaborative tasks were, the more positively students

perceived both the task and the class in general. Vrasidads and McIssac (1999, p. 32) summarized the finding in their study as follows: "Requir[ing] students to engage in discussions and collaborate on projects increase[s] interaction in the course. Therefore, increased structure le[ads] to more dialogue and interaction".

One solution to the problem of having too few MKOs in the classroom is collaborative learning activities. According to Swain & Lapkin (2002), and Mitchell and Myles (2004), development of learners' cognition does not always require an interaction between teacher and learner, but it can be achieved via collaboration and/or learning assistance from peer to peer. Long, in his 2007 study, posits that changing a learner's learning environment or social setting does not change the acquired knowledge "as suggested, e.g., by comparisons of error types, developmental sequences, processing constraints, and other aspects of the acquisition process in and out of classrooms" (p. 145). In other words, learning can be done successfully both in and outside the classroom. Peer learning, group tasks, and the like, all have pedagogical footholds in the Vygotskian SCT theory.

In more recent years, with the growth of distance learning, collaborative task learning is on the rise. From a Vygotskian perspective, social interaction is essential to learning. Many online classes are implementing group tasks in order to provide "opportunities to experience multiple perspectives of other distance learners from different back-grounds, and to develop critical thinking skills through the process of judging, valuing, supporting, or opposing different viewpoints" (So & Brush, 2008, p. 320). According to Ellis (1998), a learning situation in which students are required to negotiate meaning from input and correct one another provides better potential for comprehension of the L2.

As aforementioned, each student's ZPD will be different than that of other learners.

"Different learners need different types of mediation (from explicit to implicit) for the same L2 features, and single learners often require different forms of mediation for different L2 features" (Atkinson & Lantolf, 2011, p. 31). According to Mitchell and Myles (2004, p. 200), "[a]pplication of ZPD to SLL assumes new language knowledge is jointly constructed through collaborative activity, which may or may not involve formal instruction and meta-talk, and is then appropriated by the learner, seen as an active agent in their own development".

Although essential, having a more competent partner is not enough to promote learning. Smagorinsky (2013, p. 194) postulates that "from a Vygotskian perspective, emotions are inseparable from thinking." Therefore, other factors must be considered when discerning whether or not a collaborative task will facilitate learning, including aptitude, motivation, emotion, previous knowledge of group members, social status and other socioeconomic factors. According to Shelly and Shelly (2009, p. 308), some members of the group will naturally make more contributions, receive more positive evaluations, or reject the influential attempts of others and are more likely to be evaluated as having higher social standing in the group. Likewise, other members will naturally make fewer contributions, receive negative evaluations or accept influence.

Another problem with collaborative tasks occurs when the MKO does not use or have knowledge of proper scaffolding. It is not enough just to pair a more advanced learner or other MKO with a lower level learner. Attention should be paid to ensuring that the MKO already knows how to successfully complete the task, and how to build the scaffolding. Further, according to Sweigel (2004), an MKO might find it difficult not to act in the traditional role of 'teacher' within the collaborative discourse, instead of as a supportive peer. Conversely, Thonus (1999) highlights that it may be impossible for the tutor to act as a peer, particularly since most

tutoring services for NNS on a college campus are in the writing center, where tutors are paid for their services, which automatically puts them in a power position. It also should be considered that a student's cultural background might influence the power play of the tutor/tutee relationship. For example, in some cultures, the teacher (or in this case, the tutor) holding the dominant role in the teacher/student relationship. In other cultures, the student holds the dominant position. Further, native cultural ideologies regarding gender roles and power positions might also influence the tutor/tutee relationship. Additionally, some students might have negative preconceptions about tutoring programs based on previous tutoring experiences. Because of the difficulty of balancing the tutor/tutee roles and because tutor roles vary with context, it is imperative that MKOs receive proper training before they begin to assist other students. If the MKO is another student within the same classroom, this training may be difficult to conduct. However, if the MKO is a tutor outside the classroom, this training could be more easily implemented.

C. SCT-L2

There is much debate among SCT scholars on several issues involving Vygotsky's work, particularly when discussing the ZPD. Some claim that the ZPD is an unfinished project, and as such, should not be relied upon (Chaiklin, 2003; van der Veer & Valsiner, 2003). Some SCT theorists question whether the ZPD should be viewed as a singular place in which development occurs or as a zone of activity with learning possibly occurring at many different points (Holzman, 2002).

However, despite these differing perspectives, the ZPD is an integral part of SCT as posited by Vygotsky. The ZPD has few limitations and applies to all learners and all knowledgable experts in some way, regardless of the stage of development or focus of the object

to be learned. When a learner takes the lead role in the interaction, the ZPD is multilevel, positively unpredictable, negotiative, and flexible (Kinginger, 2002). As such, it is an extremely beneficial pedagogical tool.

James Lantolf and his associates, sometimes referred to as 'New Vygotskians,' have made a concerted effort to apply Sociocultural Theory to Second Language Acquisition (SCT-L2). They theorize that SCT-L2 is "grounded in the psychological theory of human consciousness" (Lantolf, 2011). Further, Lantolf suggests that SCT-L2 distinguishes itself from other SLA approaches because SCT-L2 emphasis goes beyond the mechanical function of language and focuses on whether or not the learner reaches a developmental level in which they can use the new language to control their cognitive and communicative activity (Lantolf, 2011).

As stated above, the use of language as a tool to learn new language is essential for learning, which is characterized by internalization of the new knowledge. This naturally lends itself to the field of second language acquisition. As international populations of non-native speakers continue to rise on American collegiate campuses, having a better understanding of ELL tutoring becomes more pertinent. Although there has been research conducted regarding tutoring ELL students in writing centers, research dealing with tutoring other English language skills (i.e. speaking, listening, and reading) is lacking. Even further, research regarding ELL tutoring from a true Vygotskian perspective of the ZPD (one in which the learner leads and the session is flexible and dynamic), in which microgenetic (*ah ha*! point-by-point moments of learning) advancements in language use or understanding are made, is almost non-existent.

D. Previous studies

1. Tutoring

In 2004, Weigle and Nelson conducted a case study entitled *Novice tutors and their ELL*

tutees: Three case studies of tutor roles and percteptions of tutorial success. They noted that tutor training methods for NNS or ESL students is lacking, with 'little consideration given to the issue of native language in tutor training manual" (p. 204). The study involved three tutor/tutee dyads. The three tutors (one from the Czech Republic and two from the United States) were MATESOL candidates who were able to act more closely to peer-tutors because they were not paid for their services, but were tutoring as part of a classroom requirement. The tutees (one from Indonesia, one from China, and one from Korea) were ESL student volunteers from different departments within the university.

Weigle and Nelson collected data from online discussions, videotaped tutoring sessions, interviews and reflective papers in order to investigate the interactions between the tutors/tutees in a setting other than a writing center or within a specific ESL course. The international student tutees participated in tutoring sessions for ten weeks. During these tutoring sessions, the tutors offered 'affective support' (p. 222) and were sympathetic to difficulties such as culture shock and homesickness.

Throughout the course of the student, the tutors, who had not been given specific training on ESL tutoring, changed their ideas about what a tutor's role is, and thus changed the focus of their sessions. In one dyad in which the tutor was also a NNS, the tutor 'set the agenda' (p. 209) with a focus on correcting grammar at the sentence level and giving the tutee practice exercises. The tutee accepted this as he felt it would improve his writing, although the two often misunderstood each other. Over the course of their sessions, the tutor learned to use inductive and deductive correction and explanation methods, and to be more flexible and deal with issues beyond grammar, such as helping her tutee deal with frustrations, while still acting in a 'language informant' role (p. 212).

In the second dyad, the tutor focused on ‘meaning, revision, and feedback from multiple readers’ (p. 212) in writing, but did not have a clear idea about her beliefs about the role of a tutor. The tutor/tutee pair relied on self-revision for the tutee. The pair strove for ‘clarity’ in the tutee’s writing, as opposed to correctness, and both actively participated in the sessions. The tutor/tutee pair in this case also developed a personal relationship and the tutor allayed feelings of homesickness in the tutee. This dyad was the closest of the three pairs to reach a peer-peer tutoring relationship. As such, these interactions were more informal, the tutee was more comfortable with the tutor. Further, the two met outside of the tutoring session in a relationship similar to that of a friendship in which the role of the tutee as the dominant figure was lessened.

The third tutor/tutee pair was less successful than the second at reaching a peer-to-peer relationship and less successful in reaching the student’s learning goals according to the tutee report. In this pairing, the tutor was very process-oriented and the tutee admitted that he hated writing very early in their sessions. Additionally, the tutee wanted to focus only on GMAT essays, which was disappointing to the tutor, who had wanted to structure the sessions like a class. This tutor remained in control of the tutoring sessions, and the two relied a lot on communicating through writing because the tutee’s oral proficiency was low.

The study noted several factors that could affect a tutoring session, including language proficiency, background experience of the tutor, and whether or not a peer-like dyad was developed. It also showed that the tutor/tutees were able to navigate each situation in a different way to produce outcomes that were seen as positive by all six participants. Weigle and Nelson also caution against trying to define and adhere to “good tutoring” models, as each tutoring session and its participants will differ. This research is certainly pertinent to ESL tutoring, offering insight into tutoring sessions. However, the researchers’ focus was on the ‘satisfaction’

or comfort level of the students and overall improvements in writing, not on the possible micro-genetic development of English usage skills.

Thonus (2004) conducted a four-year study involving native (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) at the University of Indiana writing services center. The participants were audio-recorded during tutoring sessions in which they participated to better understand the interactions that occurred between the participants. As in the study conducted by Weigle and Nelson in 2004, Thonus suggests that tutors are generally underprepared to deal with the nuances of tutoring NNS students. Additionally, she notes that English speaking tutors might face difficulties because of cultural differences, i.e., for NSs, "indirectness is considered appropriate in potentially face-threatening situations" (p. 228) but might serve as a confusing barrier for NNSs.

She found that the tutor was dominant in tutor/tutee interactions (speaking at least 50% more than the tutee). She also noted less mitigation and fewer extended incidents of negotiation. Tutors were more likely to avoid giving specific advice to NNS, but at the same time are more direct. This seems to show that tutors are perhaps unsure of their roles when it comes to NNSs, or were trying to eliminate confusion. Although both NS and NNS were highly likely to accept the tutor's suggestions, when an NS speaker did reject the suggestions, they supported their rejection with a fact or account, whereas the NNS tutees simply rejected the suggestion. Thonus also found that in the tutoring sessions involving NNSs, the tutor was more likely to take time to explain HOW a tutoring session should work. The data also showed that NNSs are much less likely to respond verbally during tutoring session than are NSs. Because of these findings, Thonus' research suggests that tutors must create a different type of collaboration with a NNS than they would with a NS. It is important to note that the data showed that NNSs

overwhelmingly believe in the tutor's role as an authority on writing. This belief makes it difficult to have a true peer-to-peer tutoring session involving a native speaking tutor and a non-native speaking tutee. In fact, Thonus found that tutors are more likely to rely on the student's professor to explain problems in tutoring sessions involving NNSs.

Thonus further suggests that tutoring sessions should not be considered one-size-fits-all. Variability between participants such as setting and institutional practices will affect each tutoring situation. When considering tutor training in which the tutees are NNSs, Thonus suggests that tutors should be made aware of the findings of the study (differences in negotiation, turn-taking, rejecting corrections, etc.) and strategies to counteract these findings should be discussed and audio or video recordings of the tutoring sessions should be used to improve the tutoring interactions.

While Thonus focused on tutoring, the study implies that the NS tutors and the NNS tutees were not able to reach a level of a peer-peer interaction. While providing beneficial data regarding interactions between NS tutors and NNS tutees, Thonus's framework focused solely on the verbal interactional patterns, not on the ZPD or scaffold building.

Sharif et.al. (2012) reported on an ESL tutoring program at a Malaysian University. The program utilized higher level ESL students as peer tutors for lower level learners. The tutees performed reflexive activities based upon their life experiences. Two groups of two tutees attended eight weeks of peer tutoring sessions in which the tutees participated in eight activities that promoted 'maximum use of target language' (p. 445).

The study focused specifically on activities within the tutoring session, individual 'tutor factors' and language use. The researchers found that activities in which the learner's real life

experiences were highlighted were most successful. The same was found in the sessions in which the tutor/tutee were nearly the same age and shared the same first language. Those tutoring sessions that provided a friendly environment improved the speaking skills of all the participants. The tutees claimed that the tutors only corrected their major English mistakes, and that the tutees were comfortable sharing their personal problems with their tutors. The researchers stated that the benefits of peer tutoring go beyond the classroom to areas such as integration into an English speaking environment and increased marketability for future employment. Although important, this study did not address the relationship between native and non-native English speakers, nor does it address scaffold-building in the ZPD. Although no learning moments are addressed, the study is still beneficial here because it highlights the importance of and the difference between a true peer-to-peer tutoring relationship and standard tutoring.

2. ZPD and Scaffolding

In her 2005 meta-study regarding the ZPD, Ohta suggested ways in which the ZPD can be used for improvements in pragmatic development and in teaching pragmatics to L2 students. She argued that helping students notice pragmatic forms through collaborative group activities and giving students access to resources both inside and outside the classroom will aid in their pragmatic development. She also suggested that moving toward a "holistic" and "process oriented" view will better help the L2 students understand how context affects meaning within the English language. Ohta, however, did not investigate peer-tutoring. Instead, she only analyzed collaborative classroom activities.

Van Lier (2000) conducted a meta-study connecting the work of Vygotsky and Bakhtin. He suggested that "cognition and learning rely on both representational (schematic, historical,

cultural, and soon) and ecological (perceptual, emergent, action-based) processes and systems" (p. 247). Therefore, the input-output model should be replaced with a concept of "affordance" – relationship between the environment and the learner. He drew a clear connection between cognitive and social processes. Van Lier further noted that, although moments of learning do occur in the classroom, creative language use, such as conversing, telling jokes, and collaborative projects provide greater opportunity for second language development. Here, peer tutoring, particularly, could be beneficial for L2 learners to aid in the social aspect of learning.

In their 2011 study, Baradaran & Sarfarazi investigated whether or not scaffolding had any impact on foreign language development among undergraduate TEFL students. The study focused on using 'productive' writing methods/techniques, as opposed to 'process' writing. Participants were divided into an experimental and a control group, with 30 participants in each group. All the participants performed a pretest for English proficiency and writing skills and a post-test afterward. Both groups met with a teacher for seven weekly two-hour sessions that focused on TOEFL writing topics. The teacher emphasized grammar, spelling, and other surface level edits for the students.

In the control group, the teacher used two textbooks in a 'traditional way' (p. 4) in which the teacher explained the lesson and provided a list of topics. The students chose a topic and wrote for a set amount of time. The students sat as if taking an exam, but they could ask questions individually and one-on-one with the teacher. The students then read aloud their essays and were instructed to take the essays home and work on them to hand in at the next session. The teacher did not provide any scaffolding.

However, in the experimental group, the tutors were given specific scaffolding instructions and were allowed to write collaboratively. The specific scaffolding provided

instructed the students on the macrostructure of 5 paragraph argumentative essay, with explicit instruction of what information should be included in each paragraph. Instead of surface level issues, the teacher emphasized whether or not the student's purpose had been fulfilled in their writing. The students in the experimental group had also been permitted to write collaboratively and ask questions of each other in a natural conversation fashion. The teacher answered questions, re-explained, reviewed material, and in these ways was responsible for adding, moving, and removing the scaffolding as was appropriate in each student's ZPD.

The experimental group scored significantly higher on a post-tutoring writing test than did the control group in which no scaffolding instructions had been provided. The experimental group scored a mean of 75.40 (SD 11.07), and the control group's mean score was 65.47 (SD 10.88) on a rated five-paragraph essay. Here the importance of proper scaffolding was highlighted. The students who received more individualized scaffolding were much more proficient at completing the writing task. The study confirms the importance of scaffolding to learners. However, this study was conducted in a classroom setting, and did not implement peer or non-peer tutoring.

In 2008, Adela Ganem-Gutierrez studied intermediate undergraduate Spanish-as-a-foreign-language students to look for specific and brief discoursive episodes that lead to learning moments for the students. Drawing from the Vygotskian notion of microgenetic growth (the moment-by-moment, dynamic activity that results in learning a new vocabulary, sound, or grammatical feature), Gutierrez outlined the phases of microgenesis by analyzing collaborative pair interactional patterns.

The study was conducted in an intermediate Spanish as a foreign language classroom in which eighteen undergraduate university students participated. Although none of the grammar

material was new to the participants, a pre-test showed that the participants did not use the features correctly. Data was collected from task performance. The participants were paired together, and half completed a CALL task and the other half a written task. The participants were asked to alternate method of completion (computer or paper) throughout three tasks, which included 1) personal pronouns, 2) personal pronouns and infinitive and radical changing verbs, 3) writing down familiar words heard in an audio clip (p. 7).

The data showed that there were "few microgenesis instances in relation to the number of language related tasks" (p. 8). Guiterrez noted a pattern of activity leading up to, during, and just after a microgenetic moment (Pre-microgenesis activity, Awareness/Consciousness, Microgenesis Affordance, Linguistic modification and/or acknowledgement, Consolidation, and Closure) (p. 10). Guiterrez noted that microgenesis instances were sometimes marked with a discourse marker, and sometimes were only marked by a change or correction. The Affordance Stage was typified by three types of assistance: "straightforward reply, paraphrase followed by reply, and co-constructed assistance" (p. 16). Guiterrez also noted collaborative instances of corrective feedback in which no request had been solicited by the tutee.

Guiterrez demonstrated that the students were effectively using language as a tool to internalize the L2 through mediation. Because the collaborative task provided more opportunity for speech, the students were able to create more learning opportunities and construct meaning by negotiating in the new language. From the data Gutierrez also suggested that each instance of microgenesis is unique to the participants involved. Although Gutierrrez's study offers evidence of micro-genetic development through collaborative learning, the study was not specific to tutoring or, even more specifically, peer-tutoring sessions.

E. Aim of the Current Study

Although large quantities of research have been conducted investigating innumerable angles of SCT and ZPD and scaffolding, most of this research focuses on scaffolding in the classroom setting either with teacher-class interactions, or collaborative peer activities in the classroom. Likewise, volumes of research have been conducted in the areas of tutoring, peer-tutoring, and writing centers; this research, however, is not usually conducted under the framework of ZPD and scaffolding, especially in regard to L2 learners.

Because of the moment-by-moment nature of microgenetic growth, interactions within a tutoring session are perfect locations to find these incidents. Therefore, the data proved by Gutierrez's 2008 study is useful in highlighting the correlation between speech and growth. Guiterrez's study, however, was based on classroom collaboration and classroom collaborative scaffolding during prepared activities. The current study intends to build upon Gutierrez's findings and extend that research into the setting of peer-tutoring sessions in which the activities are not pre-set and the interactions are, perhaps, more varied in nature as far as focus, e.g., grammar, spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure, homework activities, etc. In addition, this study will investigate incidents of microgenesis within the framework of scaffolding, and provide a closer investigation of whether or not observable microgenesis incidents seem to become internalized by the learner.

Chapter III The Study

The current study investigates interactions between tutors and ELL students seeking tutoring assistance to recognize and highlight if and when occurrences of microgenesis in English language development take place.

A. Research Questions

Although the pedagogical use of "peer review" activities from an SCT framework has been studied in some depth within the field of Second Language Acquisition, research regarding the use of peer tutors, either within the classroom or in other pedagogical settings, to aid in teaching English to ELL students has been neglected (Shehadeh, 2011; Storch, 2009; and Van Horne, 2012). What, if any, SCT scaffolding is provided by peer tutors during tutoring sessions? What types of scaffolding seem most effective in allowing the tutees to internalize knowledge of particular English language features?

The research questions of this study are:

1. What is discussed in ESL tutoring sessions, target language features or interactions of other types?
2. When the topic is language, what is focused on during tutoring sessions in an effort to help students improve their English skills, e.g., grammar, structure, content, or others?
3. What, if any, patterns of interactions are seen in the tutoring sessions during scaffold building?
4. Are there any differences in the scaffolding provided by non-peer tutors than peer tutors?
5. Is there any evidence that microgenesis incidents result in internalization of the knowledge by the student?

B. Participants

1. Tutees

The student tutees who participated in the study were already involved in regular tutoring sessions as part of their English Language studies through an Intensive English learning program at an American University. The students, who had been attending tutoring for several weeks on a voluntary basis, agreed to have their tutoring sessions audio-recorded for purposes of this study. In addition, the students were informed that they would be provided with a questionnaire to answer after collection of the tutoring session data. Eleven tutees participated in the study via audio-recordings of their tutoring sessions and post-study questionnaires.

The tutees were all students enrolled in the university program described above, and all were non-native English speakers. Their countries of origin and native languages include Saudi Arabia, Arabic (seven); Brazil, Portuguese (two); Vietnam, Vietnamese (one); and Russia, Russian (one). Two of the native Arabic speaking students were male; five, female. The oldest Arabic speaker was a twenty-eight year old male; the youngest, a female eighteen years old. The remaining four native Arabic students were all in their mid-twenties. The youngest Saudi student had a very low English proficiency level, two were low-intermediate student, and three were high-intermediate students based on the results of placement examinations by the Intensive English Program.

One male and one female student from Brazil, both in their early twenties, participated in the study. Additionally a female Russian student in her early twenties and a female student in her late teens from Vietnam also received tutoring and had their tutoring sessions recorded as part of the study.

Six of the students had lived in the Unites States for at least one year prior to the study. All of those students had previously studied in an intensive English program. Of these six, four were enrolled in Academic English courses (two intermediate; one low intermediate; one low), while two had a fairly high English proficiency level to be enrolled simultaneously in graduate courses at the University and the Intensive English Program.

Five students had not previously lived in the United States, and arrived in the United States approximately one month prior to the study. Three of these students tested at a proficiency level of intermediate. Two students, a native Arabic speaker and a native speaker of Portuguese, were beginners who had very limited English Language skills.

Although all of the tutees participated in voluntary tutoring sessions, four of the tutees came in to the Learning Resource Center only one time, while others (four students) visited occasionally (three or fewer times) and three students visited the LRC more frequently (more than four times each).

2. Tutors

Six tutors (all female) participated in the study. Five of the tutors were native American-English speakers, while one tutor was a trilingual speaker: L1, Arabic; L2, French; L3, English. Although none of the tutors received formal tutor training, three of the tutors were part-time faculty members of the intensive English program who worked in the Learning Resource Center and also taught classes. Each of these faculty members holds a Master's Degree in English with TESOL as her area of interest.

Further, two of the tutors were employed as Graduate Assistants in the Learning Resource Center to work specifically as tutors. The Graduate Assistants were both second year MA English students with certain training in TESOL program in which they were enrolled, and

also received training and worked in the University's Writing Center, assisting both native and non-native English speakers with writing tasks. The Graduate Assistants, who were simultaneously enrolled fulltime in their own coursework, were both of similar age to that of the student tutees.

The remaining tutor, also in her early twenties, was an Undergraduate in the College of Education who volunteered her time in the Intensive English Program for the benefit of employment experience. She was enrolled as a fulltime student within her program and volunteered approximately four hours per week as a tutor in the Learning Resource Center at the Intensive English Program.

C. Procedure

1. Research Setting

The Intensive English Program in which the data collection for this study took place is both part of and separate from the University. This particular IEP was newly established, and had not accepted students prior to the semester in which the study took place. The University, however, previously had a Learning English for Academic Purposes program that was absorbed into the newly founded IEP. Students from the former program gained automatic acceptance into the latter.

There are several learning tracks for students within the programs, including General English for students who seek overall improvement in their English skills; Academic English for students who are endeavoring to enter an English-as-first-language-University; and a Pathway track, either at the Undergraduate or Graduate Level, which allows students to take University courses while simultaneously enrolled in Intensive English courses.

All of the tutoring sessions were held in the Learning Resource Center within the Intensive English Program at the aforementioned University. The Learning Resource Center is a large room with bright lighting and an open floor plan. The room is located in the center of a single building which houses all of the Intensive English courses on campus. The walls of the LRC are made of clear glass and also act as one wall of the building's corridors. The room contains twenty laptops for student and tutor use, as well as White Boards and teaching resources including texts and workbooks, movies, and works of fiction written in English. Three tables were housed in the center of the room where tutors, tutees, and students could work and/or collaborate. There was also a high counter around the outer edge of the room for the same purpose. Because of the nature of the room, tutoring sessions, while generally one-on-one, were not private, with approximately half of the tutoring sessions taking place simultaneously. The 30 minute tutoring sessions always took place within the LRC, which was centrally located and easy to find.

2. Data Collection Method

Data were collected throughout a one and a half month period from the beginning of November to mid-December at the aforementioned University. Both tutors and tutees were introduced to the Informed Consent Form during their regularly scheduled tutoring sessions. The study was explained in detail to all the participants, and those who provided signatures on the Informed Consent Form agreed to contribute all forms of requested data for the completion of the study. That data consisted of several aspects, including audio-recordings of tutoring sessions; and a post-study questionnaires for both the tutors and ELL students

Three digital audio-recorders (DARs) were provided for the tutors, and were placed in the Learning Resource Center for the tutors to use during tutoring sessions. Each tutor was responsible for recording her own sessions with students. Tutors either turned the DARs on and off between successive tutoring sessions, or allowed the DAR to run continuously throughout all of her sessions for a particular day. Tutors also had discretion as to whether or not a session should or would be recorded. However, the tutors were unable to delete any recordings they made with a DAR.

The DARs were removed from the LRC every Friday and returned on Monday morning. Over the weekend, the audio-recordings were extracted from the DARs and transferred to a hard drive, and saved in duplicate on a USB flash drive. Next, the DARs were wiped of any information contained thereon, and were fully charged before being returned to the LRC. The tutors reported no technical issues that might have prevented them from recording any of their sessions, although they did report that they often forgot to record the tutoring sessions.

Once the audio-recordings were transferred to the hard drive, the recordings were reviewed for several purposes. First, audio clips in which the recording last more than 30 minutes were reviewed in order to break apart each individual tutoring session. Next, a determination was made regarding which tutor and student tutee(s) were present during each recorded session. Each recording was then categorized per its participants based upon a letter code in which each individual tutor and student tutee received his or her respective letter. This was done in order to facilitate data analysis and to provide anonymity to the participants. Further, each session was coded as to the nature of the session: assistance with homework, reading, writing, spelling, and speaking.

After the sessions were titled, each was reviewed again in an effort to locate particular interactions concerning microgenetic instances (MGIs) as coined by Gutierrez (2008). If a potential "ah-ha" moment was found on the audio-recording, the interaction was transcribed for analysis, and the length of time for that interaction was recorded. The specific times used to scaffold each of five different subject types (grammar, structure, content, vocabulary, and spelling) were calculated, and the time period for each interaction was recorded for later analysis.

After the collection and review of the audio-recordings, a brief questionnaire was conducted via electronic mail for all participants including tutors and tutees regarding their experiences with the tutoring sessions.

D. Data Analysis

A total of twenty-eight sessions were digitally recorded, resulting in a total of seventeen hours, two minutes, thirty-three seconds (17:02:33) of audio-recordings. Of the twenty-eight sessions, twenty-two were scheduled by native Arabic speakers. The remaining six sessions were scheduled by native Portuguese (two), native Vietnamese (one), and native Russian (one) speaking students, and two sessions in which two tutees, a female native Arabic speaker and a male native Portuguese speaker, were tutored simultaneously. A large portion of the overall number of sessions belonged to one female native Arabic speaker who participated in ten of the tutoring sessions.

Although each tutoring session was initially scheduled for thirty minutes, twenty-two sessions lasted significantly longer than the thirty minute time limit, suggesting that the tutee participant used two (in nine cases) or more (in five cases where the tutoring session lasted longer than one hour for a single session) consecutive session time slots.

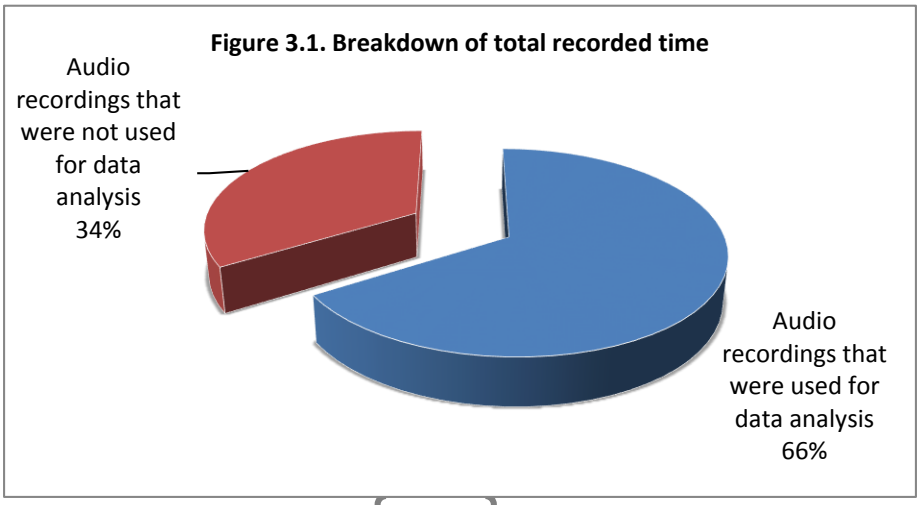
Only approximately sixty-four percent (64%) of the recorded sessions resulted in a written transcription for that session. Of the twenty-eight total sessions, only eighteen contained interactions that were transcribed for analysis. The ten recordings that were not used for analysis either had large portions that were inaudible due to background noise or low voice volume of the participants, or did not contain interactions that were relevant to this study, such as conversation-partner pair interactions and read-aloud practice sessions.

1. Data Used for Analysis

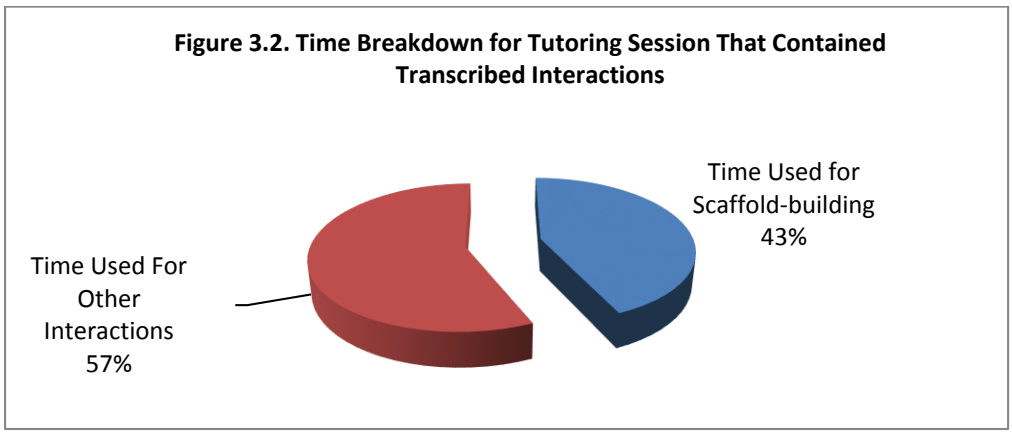
    a. Research Question One: *What is discussed in ESL tutoring sessions, target language features or interactions of other topics?*

Within the eighteen tutoring sessions that resulted in a transcription, the portions of data that were not transcribed included tutor/tutee greetings, interactions between two or more tutors that were not specific to the tutoring session in which they occurred, and interactions between the dyads that did not relate to scaffold-building. The total time for the recordings that were analyzed for purposes of this study was eleven hours, sixteen minutes, thirty-three seconds (11:16:33).

(Figure 3.1. Breakdown of total recorded time).



Although the total time of the tutoring sessions that contained portions that were transcribed for analysis was (11:16:30), not all portions of those sessions were transcribed. Small talk, tutor cross-talk, talk about culture, homesickness, greetings, setting appointments, interactions unrelated to scaffold building, conversation-partner pairs, reading aloud, etc., were not included in the transcriptions because these interactions fell outside the scope of this research. The total amount of time that resulted in a specific scaffold building interactions was four hours fifty-eight minutes thirty-three minutes (4:58:33), approximately forty-six percent (43%.) (**Figure3.2. Time Breakdown for Tutoring Sessions That Contained Transcribed Interactions.)**

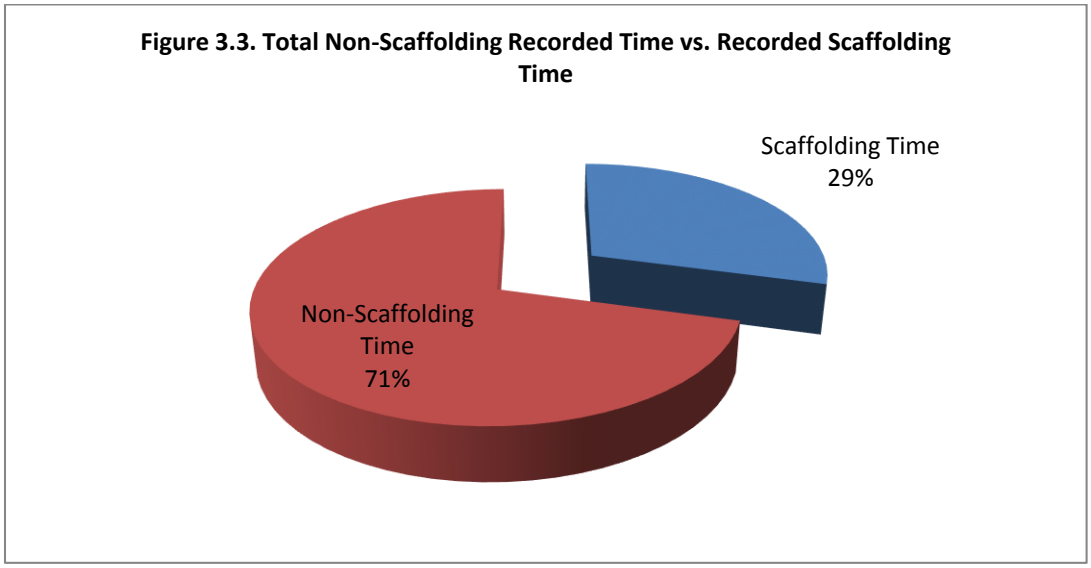


Of the eighteen sessions in which portions were transcribed, twelve (66.6 %) were scheduled by female native Arabic speakers, two (11%) by male native Arabic speakers, one (5.6%) by a female native Russian speaker, one (5.6%) female native Vietnamese speaker, one session by a male native speaker of Portuguese (5.6%), and one (5.6%) sessions shared by a male native-speaker of Portuguese and a female native Arabic speaker. **(Table 3.1. Tutee Participants and Tutoring Session Lengths).**

Table 3.1. Tutee Participants and Tutoring Session Lengths				
Tutee Participants	Time per session		Tutee Participants	Time per session
Native Arabic – female	7:45		Native Arabic – male	16:18
	11:34			1:15:35
	19:09			
	21:05		Native Portuguese – male Native Arabic-female	1:22:14
	29:06			
	33:00		Native Vietnamese – female	45:06
	35:52			
	36:37		Native Russian – female	10:27
	37:39			
	53:04		Native Portuguese – male	44:17
	55:30			
	1:02:12			

Ten student tutees participated in sessions that resulted in a transcription of a potential microgenetic learning moment. These moments were identified either through the use of an audible marker from the tutee, such as "*Ah ha!"* or "*Now I see"* or by a sudden change or correction made by the student to his or her writing after he or she had received additional information from the tutor. Six were Academic English students: three low-level, two intermediate, and one high-intermediate. Four students were from a Pathway program, and were simultaneously enrolled in University courses. One of these students was an intermediate student, and three were high intermediate.

When compared to the total recorded time (17:02:33) for all twenty-eight tutoring sessions, the amount of time that accounts for the scaffold-building type interactions (4:58:33) is quite small (29%). **(Figure 3.3. Total Non-Scaffolding Recorded Time vs. Recorded Scaffolding Time.)**



The data indicate that the majority of the time of tutoring was devoted to interactions other than scaffold building. The discrepancy between the time used specifically for scaffold-building, language feature interactions, and the total time recorded could be due in part to the setting of the tutoring sessions. The research setting, the Library Resource Center, was centrally located and intended to serve as a 'hub' of activity for students. The area has an open-door-policy in which students could enter and exit freely to borrow books, movies, and CDs from the center's library. The center also housed laptops that are available for students to use to complete assignments and access language development software. These factors lead to more cross-talk among tutors and tutees, as well as more frequent interruptions during the session. These interruptions and the cross-talk, however, will likely lead to a more conversational, less pressured interactions. It could be argued that, especially for lower-level students, because of the open-door setting of the tutoring sessions, an environment in which English-only conversational

interactions was necessitated might have improved the students' speaking and listening skills as they would be participating in and negotiating natural conversations.

b. Research Question Two: *When the topic is on language, what is focused on during tutoring sessions in an effort to help students improve their English skills, i.e. grammar, structure, content, or others?*

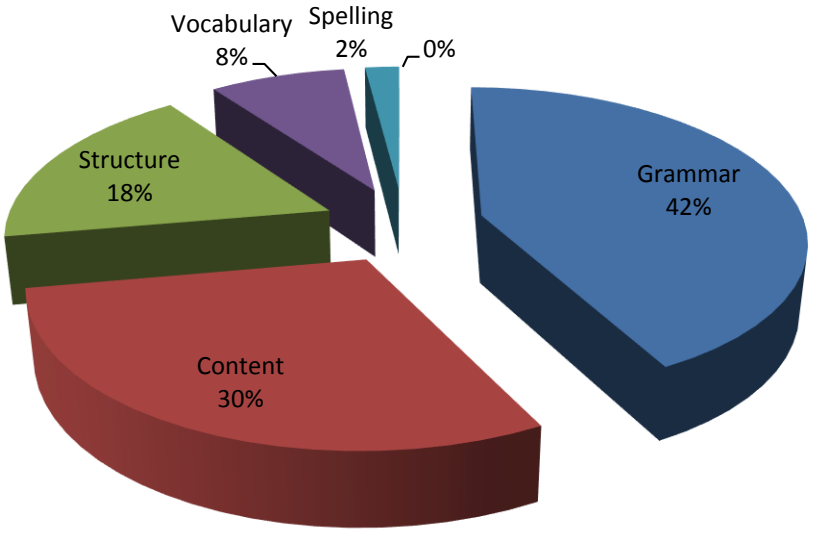
In total, three low-level, three intermediate-level, and four high-intermediate-level students were involved in scaffolding interactions during their tutoring sessions. Scaffolding interactions were identified for purposes of this study by interactions in which the tutor provided modeling or instruction to the tutee in an effort to produce a correct response or teach a new English skill to the student. Scaffolding interactions were found in nine (50%) of the eighteen tutoring sessions in which scaffolding interactions were found involved the three low-level students. The intermediate students participated in four of the sessions, and the high-intermediate students participated in five of the sessions. Additionally, the total time spent on scaffolding interactions was divided by English language skill level. During their nine appointments, the three low-level students spent a total of two hours, twenty-one minutes and forty-two seconds (2:21:42) in scaffolding-type interactions with their tutors. The four intermediate students spent fifty-five minutes, forty-one seconds (55:41) in these types of interactions. The five high-intermediate students: one hour, forty-one minutes, ten seconds (1:41:10). **(Table 3.2. Combined Tutee Proficiency Levels.)**

Table 3.2. Combined Tutee Levels			
	Low	Intermediate	High-Intermediate
Participants	Arabic female	Arabic female	Arabic female
	Arabic female	Arabic female	Vietnamese female
	Portuguese male	Arabic male	Arabic male
			Russian female
Total Number of sessions	9	4	5
Total Scaffolding time	2:21:42	55:41	1:41:10

The amount of time attributed to scaffold building interactions (four hours, fifty-eight minutes, thirty-three seconds - 4:58:33) was further broken-down into five topical subcategories. These subcategories were as follows: grammar, spelling, vocabulary, structure, and content. The 'structural' category used herein referred to the micro-structure or order of a student's paper, or, to a lesser degree, the specific syntactic structure at the sentence level. The 'content' category herein was determined by what was contained in the writing or assignment the students were undertaking. Content referred to the fleshing-out of sentences with descriptors, ideas, and examples. The subject categories on which the dyads spent the most amount of time were grammar (two hours, six minutes, twenty-four second - 2:06:24) and content (one hour, twenty-nine minutes, sixteen second - 1:29:16). A lesser, but still significant amount of time was spent scaffolding the remaining three subjects: structure, (fifty-three minutes, two seconds - 53:02), vocabulary (twenty-three minutes, fifty-one seconds - 23:51), and spelling (six minutes - 6:00).

(Figure 3.4. Breakdown of Scaffolding Time According to Subject.)

Figure 3.4. Breakdown of Scaffolding Time According to Subject



The twenty-nine (29) grammar interactions were as follows: low-level, thirteen; intermediate, seven; and high-intermediate, nine. The twenty-five (25) interactions regarding structure: low, six (6); intermediate, nine (9); and high-intermediate, ten (10). Further, the twenty-four content-type interactions: low, four (4); intermediate, seven (7); high-intermediate, twelve (12). Although a lesser number, still of some importance are the sixteen (16) interactions that were dedicated to vocabulary issues or word choice. Those break-down as follows: low-level, six (6); intermediate, four (4); and high-intermediate, six (6). The least implemented subject-type of scaffolding interactions was, by far, spelling. Only three (3) spelling interactions were found, and all three (3) of these interactions were participated in by low-level students. **(Table 3.3. Scaffolding Interactions by Subject and Level).**

The target language feature category that involved the most scaffolding time (two hours, six minutes, twenty-four seconds - 2:06:24) and the largest number on affordance interactions was grammar (twenty-nine). Overwhelmingly, the low-level students spent most of their total scaffolding time (two hours, twenty-one minutes, forty-two seconds - 2:21:42) focused on

grammatical issues (one hour, thirty-six minutes, fifty-five seconds - 1:36:55). This amount of time far surpasses that of the intermediate students (who only spent seven minutes, forty-seven seconds - 7:47)), and the high-intermediate students (twenty-one minutes, forty-two seconds - 21:42). The low-level students participated in thirteen (44.8%) of these scaffolding interactions (one hour, twenty-nine minutes, sixteen seconds - 1:29:16); intermediate level, seven (24.1%) (thirty-five minutes, twenty-seven - 35:27); and high-intermediate, nine (31.1%) (forty-one minutes, twenty-seven seconds - 41:27). **(Table 3.3. Scaffolding Interactions by Subject and Level).**

A second target language feature category on which the scaffolding interactions focused was the area of 'content'. There were twenty-four of these interactions. Although there were twenty-five transcribed interactions that pertained to structural elements, more time was spent on the content interactions. There were four (16.7%) (twelve minutes, twenty-two seconds - 12:22) low-level student interactions involving content issues, seven (29.2%) intermediate level (thirty-five minutes, twenty-seven seconds -35:27), and thirteen (54.1%) (forty-one minutes, twenty-seven seconds - 41:27) for the high-intermediate students. **(Table 3.3. Scaffolding Interactions By Subject and Level).**

Twenty-five scaffolding interactions that focused on the structure of the students' writings were transcribed for purposes of this analysis. Six (24%) of these interactions (fourteen minutes, eighteen seconds - 14:18) involved low-level students, nine (36%) (six minutes, forty seconds -6:40) for intermediate students, and ten (40%) (thirty-two minutes, four seconds - 32:04) for high-intermediate students. **(Table 3.3. Scaffolding Interactions by Subject and Level).**

Sixteen scaffolding transcriptions (language feature interactions) focused on the skill of vocabulary building. These sixteen sessions accounted for a total of twenty-three minutes, fifty-

one seconds (23:51) of time. Six of these interactions (37.5%) were between tutors and low-level students (twelve minutes, seven seconds -12:07), four (25%) for the intermediate level (six minutes, forty seconds -6:40), and six (37.5%) for high-intermediate students (five minutes, fifty-seven seconds- 5:57). **(Table 3.3. Scaffolding Interactions by Subject and Level).**

Table 3.3. Scaffolding Interactions by Subject and Level				
Subject		Low Level	Intermediate Level	High-Intermediate
Grammar	No. of interactions	13	7	9
	Time	1:36:55	7:47	21:42
Structure	No. of interactions	6	9	10
	Time	14:18	6:40	32:04
Content	No. of interactions	4	7	12
	Time	12:22	35:27	41:27
Vocabulary	No. of interactions	6	4	6
	Time	12:07	6:40	5:57
Spelling	No. of interactions	3	0	0
	Time	6:00	0	0

A total of six (6) minutes was spent scaffolding spelling skills. These six minutes occurred over three different interactions. All of these interactions occurred between one peer-tutor and one low-level student, while no spelling interactions occurred for any of other low-level, intermediate, or high intermediate students.

Several factors should be taken into consideration when analyzing this aspect of the data. It is possible that lower-level students require more attention to grammatical issues because they have not had as much scaffolding of proper 'grammar rules' as their intermediate or high-intermediate counterparts. Additionally, low-level students likely need to focus more on surface-level corrections because they are easier to understand and seem more easily corrected.

Additionally, the low-level students come to the tutoring center requesting assistance with homework and small class assignments. According to self-reports of the low-level students, their teachers encouraged them to make appointments in the LRC in order to improve upon and practice their English language skills. Tutors reported, and the records from the Learning Resource Center indicate, that the low-level students simply made and kept more tutoring appointments than the intermediate or high intermediate students.

Once these students established an appointment time and a routine, they came for tutoring repeatedly before, during, and after collection of this data. Beyond their scheduled tutoring sessions, the tutors reported that the low-level students involved in the repeated tutoring sessions would often come to the LRC to 'hang out' at times other than their scheduled appointment times. According to Sharif, et al (2012), an environment in which the tutee feels comfortable leads to improved speaking skills. Although this is outside the scope of this research, over the course of the sessions, the low-level students reported that they felt that their conversation skills did improve over time. The low-level students shared personal problems, talked about their home countries and families, and shared gifts with the graduate students who frequently acted as their peer-tutors. They did not share the same types of interactions with the faculty members that acted as tutors.

The intermediate and high-intermediate students were more likely to make single appointments in which they requested that their tutor "check" or "help edit" portions of papers, portions of assignments, and papers that had already been graded and marked by their teachers and returned for revision. In one tutoring session, an intermediate student requested that the tutor help her write an advertisement to sublease her apartment on the internet. Possibly due to infrequency of tutoring sessions, the intermediate and high-intermediate students did not form a

bond with any of the tutors; therefore, true peer-tutoring was not reached in these cases. This could also, in part, account for the lesser amount of time spent tutoring the intermediate and high-intermediate students. They did not feel as compelled to attend tutoring sessions either because they felt that they did not require as much assistance, or they were not as dependent on the LRC as a place of comfort. This might also explain the higher percentage of grammar focus found in this study since most of the tutees are low-level learners who worry more about their grammar.

In a post-study questionnaire that was distributed to all the tutees, seven total questionnaires, four from low-level students, one from an intermediate student, and two from high-intermediate students, were submitted to the researcher and added as part of the data for this project. The questionnaire asked the same five questions to each student:

1) *How have your tutoring sessions helped your English?*
2) *What particular idea/suggestion from the tutor has helped you? Why do you think so?*
3) *What particular strategies used by the tutor or their language made you feel comfortable, or clarified the confusion you may have had?*
4) *Why did you decide to accept or to reject the suggestions provided by the tutor?*
5) *How has your writing changed after the tutoring sessions? In what ways?*

All seven reported that the sessions helped their English. However, reported ways in which the students felt their English had been helped varied. Pertinent to this research question was questionnaire item number five: *How has your writing changed after the tutoring sessions? In what ways?* The two questionnaires received from the high-intermediate students both remarked that they had seen improvements in structural elements of their writing, with one reporting changes in 'grammar, structure, and vocabularies' and one reporting 'I used to write informally. Now I write formal English with the appropriate transition words. Also, I use different types of sentences, which make my writing more understandable." The intermediate

student reported that she felt her writing had changed "as improved grammar." The low-level students reported improvements in grammar, spelling and vocabulary.

Although the questionnaire alone might be lacking in evidentiary power, combined with the data showing the target feature focus for each level, it could be said that the dyads were able to reach the intended student goals for improvements in writing. At least, the tutees perceive improvements in the areas on which they focused most during their tutoring sessions.

c. Research Question 3: *What, if any, patterns of interactions are seen in the tutoring sessions during scaffold building?*

According to Gutierrez (2008), there are three phases that lead to a microgenesis instance (MGI). The *pre-microgenesis stage* consists of a pre-microgenesis activity in which the learner usually talks about the task-at-hand (meta-talk), or during an interaction between the learner and MKO that results in a co-constructed decision regarding the focus of, in the case of this research, the tutoring session. This stage is followed by what Gutierrez calls an *awareness/consciousness stage,* which occurs after the collaboration between the participants in the *pre-microgenesis stage*. This second stage is characterized by the recognition that a correction or modification needs to be made. Gutierrez refers to the last stage as the *microgenesis affordance* stage, which immediately precedes the *microgenesis instance*. **(Figure 3.5. Phases of Microgenesis.)**

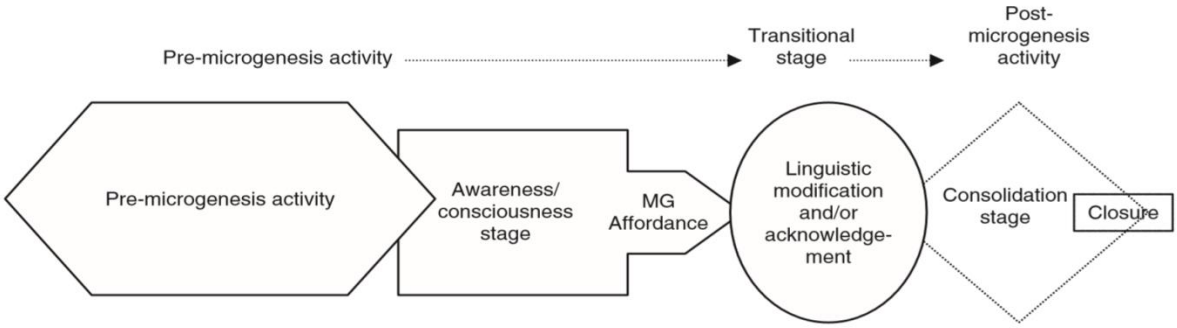


Figure 3.5. Phases of Microgenesis. (Guiterrez 2008, p. 10)

Microgenesis affordance is the stage on which the following analysis will focus. Within the eighteen tutoring sessions that were used for this analysis, numerous scaffolding interactions were recorded. A closer investigation of these recordings discovered ninety-seven (97) separate affordance interactions that exhibited scaffolding. Twenty-nine (29) of these fell into the category of grammar; twenty-five (25), structure; twenty-four (24), content; sixteen (16), vocabulary; and three (3), spelling. These were further broken-down by English learner levels.

Based on Gutierrez's 2008 model, the scaffolding interactions (language related tasks) (Guiterrez, 2008) were further divided into categories according to interaction type. Requested assistance, including implicit interactions, were often exemplified by negotiated interactions in which the tutor and student together determined a correct word choice or correct response to a particular problem. Explicit interactions were sometimes ones in which the tutor verbally gave the student the correct response, straight-forward reply, with little or no other scaffolding; paraphrase and reply; or co-construction, in which the tutor began a word or phrase and the student finished the feature on his or her own. In a few instances, the tutor chose to use gestures to help the student produce the correct response. Although this could be considered an explicit correction, it did require the student to produce the correct word, idea, or definition according to the body language scaffolded by the tutor. In several cases, the tutor provided a correction for an issue upon which the student was not currently focused.

i. Grammar

The low-level students participated in twenty-five separate interaction types during their thirteen (13) scaffolding interactions which focused on grammar. Of these interactions, six (24%) were implicit negotiations; four (16%) were implicit questions posed by the tutor in an

attempt to elicit a response from the tutee; eight (32%) were explicit statements; four explicit questions (16%) initiated by the tutor; one (4%) explicit question initiated by the student; and two (8%) interactions in which it was necessary for the tutor to refocus the interaction back to a grammatical issue. In the following interaction, the tutor asked an explicit question, and the student was able to answer the question in her own words and add information for which the tutor had not yet asked. **(Table 3.4. Grammar Affordance Types.)**

> T: Do you understand passive voice?
>
> S: Yes. Like someone doing something, but you don't have to say something. Like The mouse ate cheese. The cheese was eaten by mouse. Like that. *(Student defines passive voice in her own words.)*
>
> T: Okay.
>
> S: Have more things. And in future you use will. And in the past. And in the future you need using will. *(Student adds information.)*
>
> T: Yes. Will.
>
> S: And using going to be.
>
> T: Yes.

Here, the student is able to correctly add explicit information without any assistance from the tutor in this interaction. This could be seen as evidence that a previous microgenesis instance was internalized by the student.

The intermediate level students did not spend as much time focused on grammar as the lower-level students, nor where there as many affordance interactions focusing on grammar among this group. There were seven scaffolding transcriptions and seven affordance interaction types. One (14.3%) was an implicit negotiation, two (28.5%) were explicit straightforward statements initiated by the tutor, and four (57.2%) were explicit straightforward statements initiated by the student. **(Table 3.4. Grammar Affordance Types.)**

Likewise, there were nine total scaffolding transcriptions for the high-intermediate level that focused on grammatical issues. During these nine transcriptions, fifteen affordance interactional types were noted. Of these, four (26.7%) were implicit negotiations, four (26.7%) were implicit questions, four (26.7%) were explicit straightforward statements, two (13.3%) were explicit questions initiated by the student, and one (6.6%) explicit question that was initiated by the tutor. (**Table 3.4. Grammar Affordance Types.)**

The following excerpt, which occurred during an 'editing' session with a student who had already written a first draft in which mistakes had been highlighted by her teacher was an explicit question initiated by the tutor:

> T: And here…the story impact or the story impacts? *(Tutor draws attention to a grammatical mistake by asking a question.)*
>
> S: Umm….(*Student is unable to determine a proper response.)*
>
> T: So it impact or it impacts? *(Tutor asks again, more specifically asking about the verb form.)*
>
> S: Oh. Impacts. *(Student produces correct response.)*
>
> T: Good. *(Tutor confirms.)*

At first, the student was unable to produce an answer to the question, but since the student produces the correct answer after a simple repetition of the question by the tutor, it could be assumed that she did not hear what the tutor said or had not been prepared for the tutor to speak. Whatever the case, she is easily able to make the correct choice when the tutor draws her attention to the mistake. This could be evidence that a previous microgenesis instance focusing on this grammar issue had been internalized by the student.

In the following excerpt, a student is editing a first draft that had already been 'corrected' by her teacher. The student asked an explicit question to the tutor, seeking advice regarding a previously-made correction from a suggestion her teacher gave while editing the student's paper.

S: Okay. And here she said comma splice. And I put 'and.' Is that correct? *(Student asks for confirmation of a grammatical correction she has made.)*

> T: You can do comma- and. Or you can do a period. Period-they. *(Tutor confirms the response, and models another example of how to correct the error.)*
>
> S: It doesn't affect the…
>
> T: No. Not in these sentences.
>
> S: So this is correct? *(Student uses her own correction instead of one that the tutor has produced.)*
>
> T: Yes. *(Tutor confirms.)*

In this excerpt, it was clear that the student understood both the term 'comma splice' and had already internalized at least one correction to this grammatical issue. It was unclear as to why the student was not able to write the correct grammatical form in her original draft. Although the tutor modeled another way to correct the issue, the student was confident enough in her correction to reject the model the tutor suggested. This seems to indicate more evidence that this grammatical feature was previously internalized by the student, possibly through a microgenesis instance.

Table 3.4. Grammar Affordance Types.			
	Low-Level	Intermediate	High-Intermediate
Implicit Negotiation	6	1	4
Implicit Question	4	0	4
Explicit Straightforward Statement	8	T:2/ S:4	4
Explicit Question	T:4/ S:1	0	T:1/ S:2
Gesture	0	0	0
Unrequested affordance	2	0	0

The affordance types selected by the tutor for low-level students when dealing with grammatical features were dominantly (55.5%) explicit, either straightforward statements of instruction or a direct question. It could be said that this indicates the power positions within the dyads, with the tutor acting in a dominant role, providing language 'commands' and establishing rules. However, it could also indicate that the tutors endeavored to streamline the conversation, cutting out metatalk or other language items not pertinent to learning a particular language feature in an effort to make internalization of the information easier for the lower level student.

Although the tutors still largely selected explicit affordance types for the intermediate and high-intermediate students, the tutors selected a broader range of affordance types in the higher level dyads. This is likely attributed to the fact that higher level students do not face the same language barriers as lower level students (Weigle and Nelson, 2004), and therefore are better able to negotiate and participate in co- constructed affordances.

ii. Structure

Two types of affordance interactions were most notable with the low-level students in interactions that focused on structure. In three of the six interactions (50%), the tutor elected to use implicit negotiation in which the student and tutor used discussion in order to reach a co-constructed correct answer through what Gutierrez calls *mapping knowledge*, such as in the following interaction in which a student is attempting to implement 'however' as a textual structural feature in a paragraph she is writing (**Table 3.5. Structural Affordance Types.)**:

> S: Like using however here, you can say…like…. "It is difficult. However, if you follow the steps you can do it." *(Student makes a second correct attempt to use the feature.)*
>
> T: Yes. Like…It is very cold outside. However, if you wear a coat, it isn't so bad. *(Tutor confirms correct response and models an example.)*
>
> S: AH! Ok. Ah…Now I get it. So, like…*(Student confirms her understanding of the concept.)*
>
> T: You could say writing a good paragraph is not easy. However, if you follow a few steps, it won't be too hard. *(Tutor models another example of how the student could use the textual feature in her paper.)*
>
> S: Ok. Like However, there are some steps for doing it. *(Student makes another attempt to use the feature correctly.)*
>
> T: Yes.
>
> S: AH, ok. Ok. Now I got it. Thank you. DO you know in the past, I am thinking however means something different? I'm thinking however means like 'do it.' But now that makes more sense. *(Student admits she previously had an incorrect definition of the word however.)*

In this interaction, the tutor used modeling, which is noted as one of the responsibilities of an MKO in the ZPD, and can be seen as a key in scaffold building. The remaining three (50%) interactions were explicit straightforward replies in which the tutor gave the student the correction and the student accepted it with little scaffolding or discussion.

The intermediate student affordance interactions were somewhat different. First, there were many more interactions that were specific to the structure of the students' writings. There were seventeen of these interactions, whereas with the low level students, there were only six. The intermediate level interactions were further broken down into eighteen affordance interaction types in the following way: there were three (16.6%) implicit negotiations; five (27.7%) explicit questions; eight (44.4%) explicit straightforward statements, seven of which were initiated by the tutor, and one by the tutee; and two (11.3%) unrequested affordances in which the tutor attempted to direct the session's interaction to structural elements of the students' writings. (**Table 3.5. Structural Affordance Types.)** In the following 'implicit question' interaction, the tutor drew attention to the structure of the student's paper and confirmed the student's work by asking her questions about the structure of her paper:

> T: So this is your support? Okay. Good. So you have the part that opposes your thesis as the dependent clause, and your thesis statement as the independent clause. That's good. One thing I might suggest…here, this is like a positive reason for gun use, I guess? And this one is negative. *(Tutor points out positives in the structure the student has used and asks a question about paper structure.)*
>
> S: Right because I have to have other's viewpoints and mine. *(Student confirms.)*
>
> T: Right. And this one is negative, too. And then another positive? *(Tutor asks another question about structure.)*
>
> S: Yes. *(Student confirms.)*
>
> T: Okay, so did you want to set it up like that? *(Tutor asks student again about the structure of the paper.)*
>
> S: Mmmm hmmm. Yeah. *(Student indicates the layout of the paper was planned.)*
>
> T: Okay. *(Student confirms.)*
>
> S: Because I have a model to do that. Negative, positive, negative, positive. Like that. *(Student shows the tutor a model she is using for structure.)*
>
> T: Good. So, when I write…if I were to write this paper, that is what I would do, too. *(Tutor confirms the student's structural pattern.)*

S: Mmm hmm…

By allowing the student to explain her own thinking and verbalize her use of a model, the tutor assisted the student in internalizing the pattern the student was using for her paper. The tutor also offered encouragement to the student for a correct choice of structural pattern.

Although there were not as many interactions that focused on structural issues for the high-intermediate students as for the intermediate students, eleven separate interactions were noted within the eleven scaffolding interactions that were transcribed. One (9%) interaction was an implicit questions; two (18%) were implicit negotiations; four (36%) were explicit questions; and four (36%) were explicit straightforward statements, two that were initiated by the tutor and two by the student. **(Table 3.5. Structural Affordance Types.)**

In the following example of explicit co-construction in which the student was editing a paper she has already written, the tutor began a statement as a suggested model and the student is able to complete the sentence of her own.

> T: Okay. You could start here by…something **like** "There have been many times in history when…umm…privacy issues have been a problem. One of those cases…" *(Tutor models an example of how the structure of her paper could reflect the content.)*
>
> S: AH. Like 'there are many **inaudible** one of those cases is…was Henrietta Lacks.' *(Student is able to complete the statement on her own.)*
>
> T: Yes! Like that. There are many…. *(Tutor confirms.)* And one of those….I don't know…**involves**…Henrietta Lacks. *(Tutor models an example sentence.)*

In this interaction, the tutor made a suggestion as to how the student could complete the sentence and the student was able to extrapolate a proper response from the model. The tutor then provided encouragement for the student's appropriate response.

Another interesting exchange occurs between a tutor and a high-intermediate student who was writing a paper about culture shock. In this exchange, the tutor was trying to get the student to focus on a structural issue in her paper, but the student was focused on the content of the paper. After several efforts to focus the interaction on structure, the tutor confirmed that she understood the content of the student's paper. Then the student was able to focus her attention on the structure.

> T: Okay. Okay, we want to make this one idea. How can we do that? So you are saying students are facing other problems…You say students have often faced problems? *(Tutor asks student to explain the structure of her paper.)*
>
> S: Okay, like, for example the foreign students have always faced the problems umm…when they come to this country. So I am trying to say about the negative effects. *(Student attempts to explain the content of her paper.)*
>
> T: Okay. So you are saying…are you saying not ONLY culture shock can lead to negative effects, but culture shock and…*(Tutor redirects back to the structure of the paper.)*
>
> S: I'm not sure how to say. *(Student is unable to respond to the tutor's suggestion to work on the structure of the paper.)*
>
> T: So you want it to be basically about culture shock. *(Tutor switches the focus to content.)*
>
> S: Yes. *(Student confirms the content of her paper.)*
>
> T: Okay. So the way you'd always want to set up your paper is to talk about the big problems first, and then narrow it to a smaller topic. Like you have here that students have culture shock and they have many other problems, but that seems a little odd. How could we change it? *(Tutor refocuses on the structure of the paper.)*

Table 3.5. Structural Affordance Types.			
	Low-Level	Intermediate	High-Intermediate
Implicit Negotiation	3	3	2
Implicit Question	0	0	1
Explicit Straightforward Statement	3	T: 7/ S:1	4
Explicit Question	0	5	T:2/ S:2
Gesture	0	0	0
Unrequested correction	0	2	0

In these interactions, the tutors for the lower-level students chose to use implicit negotiation and explicit statements in order to provide scaffolding for the students. However, it is most interesting to note, perhaps, that the students in the intermediate and high-intermediate tutoring sessions were able to initiate their own explicit statement corrections, as well as ask explicit questions that indicated that they already recognized that there may be structural issues with their papers and the locations of these issues, but were unable to pinpoint these exact issues on their own.

iii. Content

The four low-level student scaffolding transcriptions with the target language feature of content resulted in five affordance interaction types and were broken-down as follows: two (40%) interactions were implicit negotiations, one (20%) explicit straightforward statement, one (20%) explicit question, and one (20%) unrequested correction. (**Table 3.7 Content Affordance Types.)**

In the following interaction, the tutor attempted to negotiate with the student about the content of the paragraph she has written. After several exchanges, it became clear to the tutor that the student was unable, for an undetermined reason, to consider the content issue, so the tutor redirected the focus of the interaction to a structural issue.

> S: I think, to use however. However, for make good paragraph you need long time for learning. How I can say that? For learning paragraph you need long time for learning. *(Student asks a question which seems to focus on the structure of her paper, but is actually about the content for her paper. She mentions a textual feature that she wishes to incorporate.)*
>
> T: So you are saying…. *(Tutor is unsure of the student's meaning.)*
>
> S: Don't take care for long time of learning to make a paragraph. Like However, there are a lot of steps. *(Student makes a second attempt to explain the content of her paper,.)*
>
> T: Okay, so you already said the steps. This, this, this, this….So you are still talking about…if you follow these steps, it is still going to take a long time. *(Tutor attempts to reframe what the student has said.)*
>
> S: Yes, you will do the steps. But even more time than just the steps. I mean, when you take the steps, that doesn't take all that long. But it takes more time than just short steps. *(Student is still trying to explain her concept of the content of her paper.)*
>
> T: Okay. *(Tutor is still unclear about the content of the student's paper.)*
>
> *Content talk that is not related to scaffolding
>
> S: You tell me. *(Student requests that the tutor supply her the answer.)*
>
> T: No, it's your paper. I'm just trying to make sure I understand what you are trying to say. If you want to say however, you have to have a point, then however, and then a different point. However means that you are going to say something different, or show a different thought than what you already said. *(Tutor changes the focus of the interaction to the textual structure of the paper.)*

The seven intermediate level scaffolding transcriptions were broken-down into eleven affordance interaction types. There was one (9%) implicit negotiation, three (27.3%) implicit questions, four (36.4%) explicit straightforward statements and three (27.3%) explicit questions.

(Table 3.7 Content Affordance Types).

In one tutoring session in which a faculty member acted as tutor, the tutor relied exclusively on explicit instructions, as seen in the following interaction:

> T: Okay. So type your outline. Type your three paraphrases. You could use this one. And maybe another one from the Amendments. You only need three pages, so it won't be so hard. This one talks about how guns were meant to protect people from the government. *(Tutor gives explicit instructions on structure and content.)*
>
> S: I really dread it. *(Student does not accept the instructions. Student is unsure what to do.)*
>
> T: You will change it to the other model, and it won't be bad at all. Just the other viewpoint, your viewpoint, and back and forth. Model 3. It's okay. You type it and I will look at it again. Your outline is already done from what you have, you just have to switch the order of some things. You can do it. *(Tutor offers explicit instructions on structure.)*
>
> S: Okay. *(Student accepts instructions.)*

In this exchange, although the tutor provided explicit instructions, the student lacked confidence to successfully complete the writing task. The tutor repeated the explicit instructions in an attempt to boost the student's confidence, but it remained unclear as to whether or not this is an effective method of scaffolding in this particular interaction. Although it has been noted that the tutor in this interaction was a faculty member, and not a peer tutor, this may or may not have had an influence on the interaction type she chose to use. There was not enough data collected for this particular tutor to determine whether she would have chosen the same affordance interactional pattern in a different session or not.

Both the greatest number of content interactions and the longest amount of time in the 'content interactions' category came from the thirteen scaffolding transcriptions involving the high-intermediate students. Twenty affordance interactions were noted for the high-intermediate students. Five (25%) of these interactions were implicit negotiation; three (15%) implicit

questions; four (20%) explicit statements; five (25%) explicit questions in which the questions were initiated by the tutor, and two (10%) in which the questions were initiated by the student; and in one (5%) case, an unrequested affordance. (**Table 3.6. Content Affordance Types.)**

In the following excerpt, which began as an explicit question and became an implicit negotiation, the tutor was attempting to assist the student in highlighting the main idea of her paper. The tutor and student were able to discuss the question until an answer to the question was reached.

> T: What is the…What is your…What's the main point of your paper? *(Tutor asks a specific question about the content of the paper.)*
>
> S: Umm…It's about…uhhh….It's an informative paper. It's about a woman named Henrietta Lacks. Her cells made a big impact on medicine and science, and they took it. They took them. And…ummm…her family, they keep fighting to find the existence of that. Because when they took it, the scientists, they didn't know that they did that. *(Student tries to explain the content, but is unable to correctly identify her main idea.)*
>
> T: Okay.
>
> S: Okay, so I don't know what I need. It's clear or not? I don't know what I need for the abstract and everything.
>
> T: So, do you want to sort of…just to tell her story, or do you want to… *(Tutor asks questions in order to try to get the student to identify her main point.)*
>
> S: To me it is a lot about the Lacks family and privacy. That I want to be the controlling idea. *(Student is able to identify her main point.)*
>
> T: Okay. Good. *(Tutor confirms.)*

Table 3.6. Content Affordance Types.			
	Low Level	Intermediate	High-Intermediate
Implicit Negotiation	2	1	5
Implicit Question	0	3	3
Explicit Straightforward Statement	1	4	4
Explicit Question	1	3	T:4/ S: 2
Gesture	0	0	0
Unrequested Correction	0	0	1

It may be interesting to note that the high-intermediate students were able to initiate their own corrections regarding content, just as they were when focused on structure. In this way, it could be said that students were able to recognize their mistakes more easily because of previous scaffolding that might have occurred for them at lower English skill levels. Also notable is the variability in the range of time spent scaffolding content in the low-level interactions versus the high-intermediate interactions. The low-level students spent far less time (twelve minutes, twenty-two seconds - 12:22) focused on content than did the high-intermediate students (forty-one minutes, twenty-seven seconds - 41:27).

iv. Vocabulary

For the six low-level student interactions, four affordance interactions (66.7%) were explicit statements (straightforward reply) in which the tutor gave the student the correct word. One interaction (16.6%), in which the student was writing a short essay for homework for a class, was a negotiation of meaning between the tutor and the student:

T1 But this is a different definition. This is like your thoughts, your thinking. – *(Negotiation with the student trying to figure out the accurate meaning of the word, collaborative work between the tutor and the student.)*

S1 Like about confused, right? My mind. Ha – (*Student selects the most appropriate definition.)*

T1 haha. Ok, right. So thinking. That's probably the best one.

Another affordance interaction, in which the student was practicing the grammatical feature synonym, involved an explicit body gesture made by the tutor that conveyed the meaning of a word to the student. (**Table 3.7. Vocabulary Affordance Types.)**

T: Yes. Okay, try 'She is not thin.' *(Tutor initiates practice of the grammatical feature*)

S: Wait, thin. What's thin? *(Vocabulary.)*

T: Like this. *(Tutor is silent while demonstrating thin with her hands in the air)*

S: She is fat. Oh that doesn't seem nice. Haha.

Additionally, pre-microgenesis affordance interactions of the intermediate level students provided data as follows: one (25%) implicit negation, one (25%) explicit interaction, one (25%) explicit body gesture, and one (25%) instance, in which the tutee has asked the tutor to assist her with writing an advertisement in order to sublease her apartment, of unrequested assistance (Guiterrez, 2008), that occurred while the student was focused on the structure of her writing.

S: Where should I put it? Walk from 8 minutes? *(Student asks about structure.)*

T: Walking distance. *(Tutor corrects the vocabulary first.)*

S: Oh, here? *(Student focuses again on structure.)*

T: Yes, put it with close to campus. Within walking distance. *(Tutor repeats the word choice correction.)*

The affordance interactions of the high-intermediate students that focused on vocabulary included three (43%) explicit corrections and four (57%) implicit negotiations. It should be noted that one scaffolding transcription contained more than one type of scaffolding interaction, i.e. seven interactions in six transcriptions. **(Table 3.7. Vocabulary Affordance Types).**

In one of the explicit corrections, a co-construction in which the tutor was assisting the tutee with editing a paper she has already written, the tutor modeled the beginning of the correction and the student was able to create a correction of her own.

> T: So the 'science must also trust the public' part…so, "in this way, scientists should be more…" *(Tutor models a correction.)*
>
> S: Scientist should be more honest about the experiments that they want to do? *(Student completes the correction)*
>
> T: Umm hmmm. *(Tutor confirms the choice.)*

Explicit corrections were also exhibited as similar to the following, in which the tutor models a correction and asks the student whether or not she accepts the correction.

> S: Stories…no. *(Student chooses an inappropriate word.)*
>
> T: Privacy…issues? What do you think? *(Tutor models a more appropriate word choice.)*
>
> S: Yeah. Okay. *(Student confirms that word choice.)*

Table 3.7. Vocabulary Affordance Types.			
	Low-Level	Intermediate	High-Intermediate
Implicit Negotiation	1	1	4
Implicit Question	0	0	0
Explicit Straightforward Reply	4	0	2
Explicit Question	0	1	2
Gesture	1	1	0
Unrequested Correction	0	1	0

From the affordance interactions that focused on vocabulary, first it could be implied that vocabulary or word choice is an English skill that continues to require attention as the student progresses. However, it would appear that the ways in which tutors chose to scaffold these interactions change as the student's English ability increases. The tutors did not rely on explicit gestures to illustrate vocabulary, and relied more on negotiations that allowed students to make the final word-choice in their writings in the intermediate and high-intermediate tutoring sessions. The data could also show that tutors replied more upon explicit instruction with the lower level students, and implicit negotiation with high-intermediate students who might be better able to internalize scaffolding through discussion-type interactions. However, it should also be taken into consideration that low level students might not be able to participate in negotiations regarding vocabulary as readily as higher level students because the input they have received is less.

v. Spelling

Three total affordance interactions occurred during the tutoring sessions. All of these sessions involved one low-level student and one tutor, but occurred during differ tutoring sessions. In two of these interactions, the tutor simply provided the student with a correct spelling for a word the student has written incorrectly with no scaffolding (explicit straightforward reply). (**Table 3.8. Spelling Affordance Types).** However, during the third interaction in which the student was writing a paragraph as homework, the tutor focused the student's attention on the spelling skill by telling the student a story, or providing a 'trick,' which aids in the internalization of the spelling by the student, for the correct spelling of the word 'friend' as seen here :

> T: I was happy to see my friend?
>
> S: I can't spell it. F-R-E-N-D? F-R-A-N-D? *(Student asks for specific help with spelling.)*
>
> T: Friend. F R I E N D. Do you know that word? 'End'?
>
> S: Yeah, sure.
>
> T: Okay. We are friends to the end. That's how I teach my kids to spell it. You have to have 'end' at the end of F-R-I. *(Tutor provides student with a spelling trick.)*
>
> S: Seriously?! Good. That is very good for me to learn to spell that! F-R-I-E-N-D. You should tell me all of the spelling tricks. Haha. *(Student confirms the correct spelling.)*
>
> T: I'm afraid I don't know very many more.
>
> S: We are friends to the end…nice.

Table 3.8. Spelling Affordance Types.			
	Low-Level	Intermediate	High-Intermediate
Implicit Negotiation	0	0	0
Implicit Question	0	0	0
Explicit Straightforward Reply	3	0	0
Explicit Question	0	0	0
Gesture	0	0	0
Unrequested Correction	0	0	0

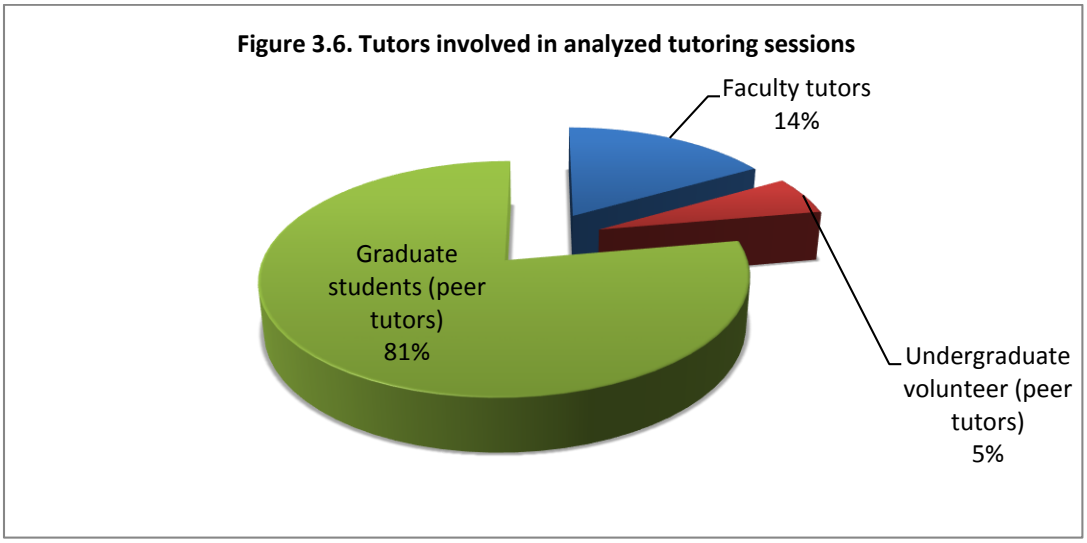
Although all of these interactions were explicit in which the tutor provides the correct answer to the student, at the end of the third interaction, the student is clearly able to spell the word on her own. However, it is unclear as to whether or not the student will be able to correctly spell the words that the tutor only provided the correct spelling with no other scaffolding. The data also suggest, perhaps, that spelling is more of an issue with lower- level students.

The data collected during this research indicated that the tutors predominantly (57.8%) selected an explicit affordance type for low-level students. Perhaps the tutors selected explicit affordance types in order to eliminate confusion for the tutee. Likewise, explicit affordance types were selected twenty-seven out of thirty-nine (69.2%) times for intermediate students, and thirty of fifty-three times (56.6%) of the time for interactions with high-intermediate students. As aforementioned, this could be due, in part, to a real or perceived language barrier for low-level students. If that were the case, it could be assumed that the data would show less explicit type affordance interactions as the students' proficiency levels increased. Instead, it seems more likely that some of the tutors might have been more likely to rely upon explicit affordance types

because of perceived tutor power roles. Additionally, because none of the tutors received specific ELL tutor training, the tutors relied upon interactions with which they were more accustomed.

d. Research Question Four: *Are there any differences in the scaffolding provided by non-peer tutors than peer tutors?*

The total number of participants whose interactions were transcribed was sixteen, including ten tutees, seven females and three males, and all six female tutors**.** Eighteen sessions contained scaffolding interactions that resulted in transcriptions. Of these, fifteen of the sessions were conducted by the three 'peer tutors' (two graduate assistants and the student volunteer). The IEP part-time faculty members served as tutors in the remaining three sessions. (**Figure 3.6. Tutors involved in analyzed tutoring sessions.)**



When comparing the three student tutor (two graduate students and one undergraduate)affordance type data to that of the three faculty members, a pattern quickly emerges. The student tutors were able to reach the level of true peer-tutor with their tutees. The faculty members acting as tutors did not seem to meet this pattern as outlined by Weigle and

Nelson, 2004. The dyads involving the peer tutors were more conversational in style, and often contained interactions that were not specifically related to language features. Additionally, the conversational style of these tutoring sessions perhaps lent themselves more easily to implicit affordance types and negotiation between the tutors and tutees.

In the five-question post-study questionnaire that was distributed to all of the tutee participants, the tutees were asked about their perceptions of the tutoring sessions, and more specifically about tutoring strategies they found most helpful. The tutees were also asked why they chose to accept or reject a tutor's suggestion and how they felt their writing changed after tutoring. All three of the tutees who participated in tutoring sessions with a faculty member tutor returned their completed questionnaires to the researcher. However, only four of the tutees involved in the tutoring appointments with peer tutors submitted this data to the researcher.

Despite the seeming lack of data, some patterns still emerged. Interestingly, all of the students who participated in tutoring sessions with faculty members reported that they accepted the corrections of the tutor because they perceived the tutor as an expert. The tutees who participated in peer tutoring reported that they decided to accept the suggestions of their tutor because they trusted the tutor, and that the tutor explained each language feature in a way that made the tutee feel comfortable and satisfied with the suggestion.

In the three tutoring sessions involving faculty members as tutors, the tutors overwhelmingly (85.7%) selected explicit straightforward statements or explicit questions as the affordance type regardless of tutee language level or language feature focus, selecting explicit affordance in six out of seven affordance interactions. Only one of three faculty tutoring sessions contained language interactions that were not focused on language features. Therefore,

it might have been difficult for the dyads to engage in negotiations and co-construction because the conversation style was limited.

Because none of the tutors received specific tutor training, it could be possible that the faculty tutors relied more heavily on typical classroom power roles to create their affordance interactions. However, because there was an overall lack of faculty tutoring sessions and recordings, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not this is a pattern that would apply in other situations.

By contrast, the peer-tutors implemented several different affordance types across all tutee language skill levels and language feature items. In six cases, the peer tutors offered unrequested affordances, while the faculty tutors did not provide any. Additionally, the peer tutors selected a body gesture as an explicit affordance type with lower-level and intermediate level students. The selection of body language as the affordance type could be an indication that the peer tutors were more casually engaged with their tutees. Another possibility could be either that the tutor felt more comfortable explaining an idea through a gesture instead of words, or that the tutor felt it would be easier for the student to understand the language feature without being confused by meta-talk. As noted in Weigle and Nelson (2004), tutors often take on roles other than that of purveyor-of-knowledge, including motivator, co-constructor, and in the case of peer tutor dyads, confidante and friend. These types of relationship building interactions are certainly of importance, especially in that in this data, these interactions took up a majority of the tutoring time.

e. Research Question 5: *Is there any evidence that microgenesis incidents result in internalization of the knowledge by the student?*

In the post-study questionnaire, students were asked: *What particular strategies used by the tutor or their language made you feel comfortable, or clarified the confusion you may have had?* One student that participated in a faculty tutoring dyad commented that the tutor used clear language and offered "the suggestions [that] were simple enough to be memorized and applied on my later writings." Here, the student's use of the word 'memorized' could indicate that he was able to internalize the recommendations made by the tutor for future use in his writings, which would seem to indicate, at least by his self-report, that his MGIs were internalized by practice outside of the tutoring session.

Additionally, twelve of the total affordance interactions between peer tutors and their tutees were explicit questions or explicit statements that were initiated by the tutees regarding mistakes they perceived in their own writing, or mistakes that had been highlighted but not corrected by their teachers. No such interactions were seen in the faculty tutor dyads. It is important to note that in all of these cases, the students were able to provide corrections on their own either by noticing that a language feature was incorrect independently, or by focusing on the areas in which the teacher highlighted. The ability to perceive and correct their own mistakes is evidence of past scaffolding interactions for that particular language features and could be evidence of the internalization of past MGIs. Additionally, tutees might have been less likely to feel embarrassed if their suggestions were incorrect.

The data selected for analysis for this research project were unclear as to whether or not the MGIs were internalized. Although evidence indicated a possibility that some MGIs had been internalized prior to tutoring sessions in some cases, and during tutoring sessions in other cases,

the data collected herein was not sufficient to show a definite pattern with regard to internalization.

2. Summary of the Analysis

The data collected for this research indicate that tutoring sessions are dynamic and multifaceted. Many variables must be taken into account when analyzing the data collected during this research. Chief in significance were the duration of scaffolding events, the number of MGIs and the types of affordance that lead up to the MGIs.

First, the overall tutoring time compared to actual scaffolding time should be noted. The total recorded time of all the tutoring sessions was seventeen hours, two minutes, and thirty-three seconds (17:02:33). The amount of time that accounts for actual scaffold-building target language feature interactions was four hours, fifty-eight minutes, thirty three seconds (4:58:33), or twenty-nine percent (29%) of the total recorded time. This data could be attributed, in part, to the open-door setting of the study. Sessions were often interrupted by other faculty members, cross-talk among tutors and tutees, requests for laptops from other students, and other similar interruptions. The time discrepancy could also be due, in part, to the setting of the tutoring sessions, and whether or not the dyads had established a true peer tutoring relationship. Those dyads in which the tutor/tutees had reached the peer-tutoring level spent more time on small-talk, cross-talk, culture-talk, and issues of health and homesickness. However, it should also be noted that there were several low-level tutoring sessions in which the entire session was dedicated to conversation and reading aloud which did not contain any clear scaffolding interactions. These sessions were not analyzed because they fell outside the scope of this study.

In regard to scaffold building interactions, the tutees who participated in this research spent more time focused on grammatical features, especially in the lower-level. As the largest number of sessions involved lower-level students, the nature of the types of interactions in which the students were involved likely had an effect on the time spent scaffolding grammar for the low-level students.

The intermediate level students and the high-intermediate students spent the largest amount of time in their sessions focused on the content included in the papers they were writing. The data seem to indicate that, although they still required some assistance with grammar in their writing, they were also able to move beyond surface level issues such as vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. A focus on a deeper level feature of writing could indicate that they were relying on knowledge that was previously scaffolded and internalized. The low-level students spent far less time in interactions that scaffolded for the target language feature of content, likely because of their need for grammar scaffolding.

The low and intermediate dyads spent less time focused on the structure of their writings, assignments, and papers than did the high-intermediate students. This could be an indication that these low and intermediate students were not at a point in their language learning where they could focus on scaffolding for structural elements because the majority of their scaffolding interactions were focused on grammar (low-level) and content (intermediate level). It also might be worth noting that it appears the intermediate students were able to rely on previously internalized scaffolding for surface level grammar, but were not ready to move to scaffolding for structural elements.

Another factor to consider would be the types of tutoring sessions requested by the students. In all but one of the intermediate and all of the high-intermediate level tutoring sessions, the students were focusing on second drafts of papers they had already written. In one session in which a high-intermediate level student participated, her paper had already been 'corrected' by her teacher. It could be assumed, then, that most of the grammatical issues the intermediate and high-intermediate students might have had would have been corrected previous to their arrival at their tutoring sessions. This allowed these students to focus more intensely on the structure and content of their drafts. Alternatively, the lower-level students, in most cases, were working on homework assignments and first drafts of short paragraph writing. These types of tutoring sessions would likely necessitate a greater focus on grammatical issues.

The data also showed that the tutors dominantly selected explicit affordance interaction types across all three language proficiency levels. However, some differences between the proficiency levels were notable. With low level students, the tutors implemented the use of explicit gestures to confer vocabulary meaning. This was not found in the other two levels. Also with the low-level students, it was necessary for the tutor to redirect/refocus the session on four occasions. Refocusing was only seen two times with the intermediate students and was not used at all in the high-intermediate dyad. This could have been because lower level students have more difficulty focusing on the target language features because of language barriers, or because these students had developed, in most cases, a friendship bond with their tutors that allowed for more natural, off-topic discussions between moments of scaffolding.

It is also important to note that there were several instances in which students were able to initiate their own learning moments by noticing their own mistakes in conversation or writing. In the low-level, one student was able to recognize that her verbal answer was not correct during

a scaffolding interaction with the target language focus of grammar. Likewise, the intermediate students were able to initiate their own scaffolding interactions in the target language feature areas of grammar (four interactions) and structure (one interaction). The high-intermediate students were able to initiate their own scaffolding in the target language feature areas of grammar (two), content (two), and structure (two).

A closer investigation of the language feature interactions indicates that the dyads who had reached the peer-tutoring paradigm used many different affordance types in the *pre-microgenesis phase* of microgenesis, including gestures, unrequested corrections, and implicit negotiations. These types of affordances were likely used because the dyads had reached a comfort level in which natural conversation was their *modus operandi*.

The dyads that had not reached the relationship level of peer-tutor almost exclusively used explicit interactions, such as explicit questions and explicit straightforward statements as their methods of affordance. As none of the tutors received tutor training, it is likely that the tutors in these dyads, who were all faculty members at the institute of data collection, depended on typical classroom interactions to select the affordance types for their interactions.

Although some interactional patterns emerged from the data, whether or not moments of microgenesis are internalized remained unclear. The twelve interactions that were initiated by the students was evidence that scaffolding had led to internalization of the target language feature. It is unclear whether this is the case, but previous scaffolding may have contained microgenesis instances. In a post-study questionnaire, a student reported that he was able to internalize moments of microgenesis for use in his future writings, but indicated that he did so through memorization of rules that were explicitly given to him by his tutor during affordance

interactions. Therefore, from the data collected for this research, it cannot be stated with certainty that MGIs do or do not result in internalization by the learner.

Chapter 4 Discussion/Conclusion

A. Discussion

As a theory of learning, Sociocultural Theory has had wide influence on many fields, including psychology and education. Although SCT can be applied broadly, SCT's influence on the pedagogy of Second Language Learning and ELL tutoring was taken into consideration in the current study. Linguists and educators have drawn from the SCT tenet that learning happens within social interactions. Thus, they have proposed collaborative learning tasks, such as small group activities and peer-review, for pedagogical implementation.

Without input, there can be no learner output; as Gibbons (2002) stated, "interaction [is at] the heart of the learning process" (p. 15).This social learning environment begins to influence learners at the earliest stage of development (infancy) and continues throughout all stages of life (Vygotsky, 1978). When learning in a more formal setting (school), learners draw from the school environment and learn from MKOs. In a classroom setting, the MKO is generally the teacher or instructor. As tutoring sessions have been scarcely studied, the research presented here focused on how tutors assist language learners in the one-on-one session in the IEP program of an American University. As Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman (2011) stated, "not only teacher-student, but student-student scaffolding can be powerful" (p. 26). Therefore, the interactions that occur during one-on-one peer tutoring sessions are obviously of great value. "Group work" (Gibbons, 2002) offers several benefits for second language learners (p. 17). These benefits include, but are not limited to: allowing the learner more opportunities to hear language (receive input); negotiate with other group members verbally (output); and learn and understand

appropriate language use in a variety of contexts. Small group, and in particular peer tutoring activities, allowed students to ask specific questions, control the pace of the interaction, and become more familiar and comfortable with using the new language without pressure to perform perfectly (p. 18).

Because of these benefits, one-on-one tutoring is a useful pedagogical tool. Tutoring sessions are ideal to allow the kinds of verbal exchanges needed to increase both input and output of ELL learners. In the current study, one-on-one tutoring sessions were audio-recorded to analyze whether or not individualized scaffolding was provided during the sessions; what target language features were focused on during the tutoring sessions; what kinds of interactions occurred during the tutoring sessions; if there was a difference in the scaffolding provided by peer and non-peer tutors; and whether or not any evidence of internalization of the microgenesis (moment-by-moment) incidents of learning emerged from the data.

Of note in the data collected was the percentage of time spent on target language feature talk (4:58:33 – 29%) as opposed to other kinds of interactions (17:02:33 – 71%). The overwhelming majority of the total recorded time of the tutoring sessions was spent on interactions that did not pertain to scaffold building. However, according to Gibbons (2002), for English Language Learners "both [learn] a new language and [learn] other things through the medium of the language" (p. 8) during L2 acquisition (Ochs and Schiefflin, 1994).

According to Gibbons (2002), "It is often easier to talk to people we know well and with whom we are at ease than to converse more formally with a stranger" (p. 1). Likewise, Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman (2011) stated that students involved in collaborative peer work are more likely to gain knowledge through 'talk[ing] it through' (p. 43) to reach a consensus. This could be one reason why the data showed that tutors chose a wide variety of interactional types,

including negotiated, jointly-constructed interactions during scaffold building, and could account for the large percentage of time that was not spent specifically on scaffold building interactions. Additionally, the interactions that were not transcribed, although not within the scope of this study, still provided input and output exchanges for the ELLs, which likely led to improvements in the students' English skills, particularly Speaking and Listening.

During the tutoring sessions that were included in these data, a pattern emerged regarding the focus of English writing skills that were scaffolded during interactions between the tutor and tutee. Low-level students focused predominantly on surface level features, mainly grammar (thirteen interactions – 1:36:55), and, to a lesser degree vocabulary (six interactions – 12:07), and spelling (three interactions – 6:00). Intermediate students spent the majority of their tutoring time on content issues (seven interactions – 35:27) while high-intermediate sessions contained more interactions that focused on content (twelve interactions – 41:27) and structure (ten interactions – 32:04) of writing. When the high-intermediate students did focus on grammatical issues (nine interactions – 21:42), the interactional patterns were different from those of the low-level students in that the high-intermediate students were often able to initiate the interaction that led to a scaffolding event. In this way, it could be said that the MKOs (tutors) both provided and removed scaffolding for the tutees necessary for the benefit of each student (Swain, et al, 2011, p. 26).

However, similar to Ohta's (2000) findings that peer collaboration generally focused on moment-by-moment interactions, and not usually on the larger picture of learning, it could also be said that the tutors seemed focused on the task-at-hand, and did not attempt to push the tutees to a higher, or more intricate, level of thinking. Additionally, according to Smagarinsky (2011), scaffolding should be led by the students. In other words, the tutor, to a certain extent, should

follow the lead of the tutee. Further, Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman (2011) stated that collaborative interactions are used to solve problems and build knowledge in peer interactions. Because the students came in with specific target language skill requests and assignments, the interactions were necessarily built upon those requests (homework or writing assignments), which dictated which target language features would be focused on during that tutoring session.

'Affordance interactions' is a term defined as 'opportunities' by Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman (2011, p. 7) and borrowed from Gutierrez (2008). Affordance interactions during the scaffolding moments that were transcribed for this study were examined to determine what types of interactional patterns were used by the participants during moments that lead up to *microgenesis instances* (Gutierrez, 2008) during tutoring interactions. In general, the affordance interaction types present in this data set showed that the dyads relied on explicit interactions during scaffold building that lead up to MGIs. However, in alignment with the findings of de Guerrero and Villamil's (2000) study, the peer tutors generally relied on a variety of interactional types during scaffolding-building, including bodily gestures and joint-construction interactions in which the dyads relied on implicit negotiation in an effort to assist the learner in traversing his or her ZPD.

The final research question posed in this study dealt with internalization, "the process by which symbolic systems take on psychological status" (Swain, et al., 2011. p.8) of MGIs. During twelve interactions, students were able to initiate their own scaffold building to lead to MGIs. It could be said that these were cases when the tutee recalled a particular scaffolded moment that had previously been internalized. However, it was unclear as to whether or not these previously scaffolded events included MGIs (by Gutierrez's (2008), the moment-by-moment, dynamic, *ah-ha!* instances of learning).

Further, one of the tutees, a high-intermediate student who had participated in a tutoring session with a faculty tutor, reported that he was able to internalize his MGIs by memorizing the 'rules' provided for them as part of his scaffolding interactions. Another student (low-level) reported that she was able to remember what she and her peer tutor had jointly-negotiated during her scaffolding experience, and was therefore able to remember (or internalize) her MGI. Because these were self-reports, and in alignment with Ohta's (2000) findings, it was impossible to ascertain whether or not the tutees were able to **use** those supposed internalized language features or MGIs correctly in their subsequent use of English.

B. Limitations/Further Study

In general, the research found herein is limited because of the small size of the data set collected. Although some interesting tutor/tutee interactional patterns emerged from these data, further investigation in which more data are collected for a longer period of time would be needed in order to determine whether or not any patterns found herein are applicable in broader terms.

Although tutors generally selected explicit types of affordance interactions during the *pre-microgenesis* stage of the microgenesis instance (MGI) as the mode of scaffold building during these interactions, one of the high-intermediate students indicated that he was able to internalize these explicit 'rules' by memorizing them outside of the tutoring session. It could be questioned whether the scaffolding or the memorization led to MGI internalization. However, a low-level student reported that she was able to internalize MGIs because the tutor used a negotiated method of interaction. Further research and a larger data set might better answer this question.

The research intended to include data drawn from first and second drafts from the students that participated in a first draft-tutoring session-second draft sequence. This sequence would have been analyzed in an effort to determine whether or not any evidence showing that those moments of microgenesis found in the tutoring sessions were internalized, and therefore used by the tutee in the second draft of his or her writing. However, the participants did not provide the first and second drafts of their writing in a manner timely enough for that data to be included in this research for analysis. Subsequent draft data could not be obtained from several of the students because they transferred out of the program during the duration of the study. As their data could not be included, the matching data from students who remained in the program were not analyzed.

Additionally, because of the short period of time in which the data were collected, the data necessary to ascertain whether or not MGIs were internalized was missing from the total data set. Therefore, further research could be conducted in this area. A longitudinal study involving students who enter the tutoring program at a low proficiency level and remain in the program voluntarily as their proficiency increases would be ideal. Drafts of their writings could be collected throughout the course of the study and compared with audio or video recordings of their tutoring sessions to see whether or not evidence of internalization of MGIs from early tutoring sessions appears in the students' writing. Further research regarding what types of affordance interactions were most useful in helping students internalize MGIs might prove valuable not only for ELL tutoring programs, but also for teachers who are using collaborative activities in their classrooms.

C. Implications

Collaborative learning activities such as peer review and other small group activities are commonly used in classrooms today. According to SCT, it is during these and other types of social interactions that learning occurs. Although some research has been conducted in the area of interactional patterns used in collaborative classroom activities (Chapman & McBride, 1992; Tudge, Winterhoff, & Hogan, 1996), research on ESL peer tutoring and ESL peer tutoring interactions is somewhat lacking. The data collected during this research, including the scaffolding interaction types selected by tutors during one-on-one tutoring sessions, might hold some insight for ELL peer tutor training programs. As Gibbons stated, "we should reflect on the nature of the *scaffolding* that is being provided for learners to carry out that task" (p. 10). Implementing instruction specific to scaffolding techniques, with the secondary emphasis of training regarding different affordance interaction types, might also prove beneficial to help the tutors negotiate with the students, and it give tutors a larger tool-kit for providing assistance to tutees during tutoring interactions.

Additionally, although there were different language feature focuses across all three proficiency levels in these data, grammar was overwhelmingly the most focused-upon feature, particularly in the sessions in which low-level students were the tutees. It could be said that lower-level students need to focus on surface-level features because of limited language abilities. However, perhaps students would be well served to be pushed beyond the surface level of English, even at a low-level. By emphasizing the benefit of learning language not only for correctness, but also for meaning/understandability, perhaps ELLs might be able to begin thinking critically in English sooner. Tutors could help students think beyond simple grammar issues at low-levels by having low-level students come to tutoring for reasons other than

finishing a homework assignment in the textbook. If students could be pushed to focus on the content of their writing or the overall meaning/main ideas of their work, instead of on sentence-by-sentence correction of grammar, their overall writing might improve.

To help ELL students produce better writing, the ideas of a step-by-step process in which writing can be "stretch[ed] out" proposed by Harris and Silva (1993) might be beneficial to tutoring sessions. Harris and Silva (1993) suggest:

> [...] those who deal with ESL writers might find it helpful to stretch out the composing process: (1) to include more work on planning to generate ideas, text structure, and language so as to make the actual writing more manageable; (2) to have their ESL students write in stages, e.g., focusing on content and organization in one draft and focusing on linguistic concerns in another subsequent draft; and (3) to separate their treatments of revising (rhetorical) and editing (linguistic) and provide realistic strategies for each, strategies that do not rely on intuitions ESL writers may not have. (p. 529)

Encouraging students to attend multiple tutoring appointments from the beginning of the writing process through each subsequent step, students would be able to correct grammatical issues along the way. Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman (2011) outlined the fact that providing students with moments of collaborative interactions allowed them to 'talk it through' (p. 43) – 'it' being the target language feature or 'the problem'. This is of great benefit to students in helping them internalize scaffolded knowledge. Allowing students classroom and/or private tutoring time to talk and think through a problem should be implemented as part of the curriculum. Additionally, if students are encouraged to 'brainstorm' and discuss specific content of their writing with their tutors, this would likely facilitate their moving forward beyond just grammatical feature corrections, even at a low-level.

Finally, by encouraging all ELL students to participate in tutoring sessions, instructors could promote quicker and more in-depth learning in their students. Students feel more

comfortable with one of their peers, and are not as ashamed to make mistakes in their speech. With less pressure to perform to perfection, students could likely increase language skills simply by receiving more verbal/auditory input and producing more output. Additionally, tutors should be trained to *listen* to the tutees to determine where exactly the student's ZPD is and what scaffolding is appropriate for that student. Scaffold building on a small scale during tutoring sessions would naturally lead to more effective, individualized scaffolding, thus allowing the student to navigate through his or her own ZPD at a quicker pace. Further, the individualized scaffolding might help students and instructors tune-in to an individual learner's problems or deficiencies. ELL tutoring is certainly worth a deeper investigation in an effort to gain understanding of how scaffolding can be and is built through peer tutoring interactions and to determine whether or not these interactions lead to internalization.

References

Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. *Modern Language Journal*, 465-483.

Anton, M. (1999). The discourse of a learner-centered classroom: Sociocultural perspective on Teacher-Learner Interaction in the second-language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal, 83*(3), 302-318.

Anton, M. (2009). Dynamic assessment of advanced second language learners. *Foreign Language Annals, 42*, 576-452.

Baradaran, A., & Sarfarazi, B. (2011). The Impact of Scaffolding on the Iranian EFL Learners' English Academic Writing. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 5*(12), 2265-2273.

Birjandi, P., & Ebadi, S. (2012). Microgensis in dynamic assessment of L2 learners' sociocognitive development via Web 2.0. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 32*, 34-39.

Brook, A. (2013, January 22). *Kant's View of Mind and Consciousness of Self*. Retrieved from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-mind

Chaiklin, S. (2003). The zone of proximal development in Vygotsky's analysis of learning and instruction. In A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. Ageyev, & S. Miller, *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context* (pp. 39-64). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapman, M., & McBride, M. (1992). Beyond competence and performance: Children's class inclusion strategies, superordinate class cues, and verbal justifications. *Developmental Psychology, 28*, 319-327.

Christy, T. C. (2013). Vygotsky, Cognitive Development and Language: New perspectives on the nature of grammticalization. *Historiographia Linguistica*(40), 199-227.

Cummings, A., & So, S. (1996). Tutoring second language text revision: Does the approach to instruction or the language of comminication make a difference? *Journal of Second Language Writing, 5*(3), 197-226.

Ellis, A. (1998). *Second Language Acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning.* Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Gutierrez, G. (2008). Microgenesis, method and object: A study of collaborative activity in a Spanish as a foreign language classroom. *Applied Linguisitics*(29), 120-148.

Hogan, D., & Tudge, J. (1999). Implications of Vygotsky's Theory for Peer Learning. In A. O'Donnell, & A. King, *Cognitive Perspectives on Peer Learning* (pp. 36-65). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Holzman, L. (2002). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development: The Human Activity Zone. *Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association.* Lois.

Kinginger, C. (2002). Defining the sone of proximal develpoment in US foreign language education. *Applied Linguistics, 23*(3), 240-261.

Lantolf, J. (2006). Sociocultural theory and second language learning: State of the art. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*(28), 67-109.

Lantolf, J. (2011). Chapter 1: The Sociocultural Appraoch to Second Language Acquisition. In D. Atkinson, *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition* (pp. 24-45). London and New York: Routledge.

Lantolf, J. (2011). The Sociocultural Approach to Second Language Acquistion: Sociocultural theory, second langague acquisition, and artifical L2 development. In D. Atkinson, *Alternative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 24-47). Abingdon: Routledge.

Lantolf, J., & Appel, G. (1994). *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Research.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Lantolf, J., & Thorne, S. (2008). *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Long, M. (1983). Linguistic and conversational adjustments to nonnative speakers. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*(5), 177-194.

Long, M. (2007). *Problems in SLA.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Mackey, A. (1995). *Stepping up the pace: Input, interaction and interlanguage development: An empirical study of questions in ESL.* Sydney: Sydney University.

Meerbote, R. (1989). Kant's Functionalism. In J. Smith, *Historical Foundations of Cognitive Science.* Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel.

Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second Language Learning Theories* (2nd ed.). London: Hodder Education.

Nahrkhalaji. (2012). Langauge Acquistion and Cognition. Isfahan, Iran: English Department, School of Humanitites, Islamic Azad University.

Nassaji, H., & Cummings, A. (2000). What's in a ZPD? A case study of a young ESL student and teacher interacting through dialogue journals. *Language Teaching Research, 4*(2), 95-121.

Ochs, Elinor, & Schieffelin, Bambi, (1996). The impact of socialization on grammatical development. In P. Fletcher & B. MacWhinney. *The Handbook of Child Language* (p. 73-94). Blackwell.

Ohta, A. S. (2001). *Second Language Acquistion Processes in the classroom: Learning japanese.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ohta, S. (2005). Interlanguage pragmatics in the zone of proximal development. *Science Direct*(33), 503-517.

Sharif, N., Zakaria, M., Mansor, W., Fong, N., & Mustafa, H. (2012). Peer-tutoring and Tertiary ESL Learners. *Social and Behavioral Science*(66), 441-447.

Shin, S. (2006). Learning to teach writing through tutoring and journal writing. *Teachers adn Teaching: Theory and Practice, 12*(3), 325-345.

Smagorinsky, P. (2011). *Vygotsky and literacy research: A methodological framework.* Boston, MA: Sense.

Smagorinsky, P. (2013). What does Vygotsky provide for the 21st century language arts teacher? *Language Arts, 90*(3), 192-204.

So, H., & Brush, T. (2008). Student perceptions of collaborative learning, social presences and satisfaction in a blended learning environment: Relationships and critical factors. *Computers & Education, 51*, 318-336.

Storch, N. (2009). The impact of studying in a second language (L2) medium university on the development of L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 18*(2), 103-118.

Swain, M. (2000). The ouptut hypothesis and beyond. In J. Lantolf, *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* (pp. 97-114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swain, M., & Deters, P. (2007). "New" mainstream SLA theory: Expanded and enriched. *Modern Language Journal, 91*(5), 820-836.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2002). talking it through: Two French immersion learners' response to reformulation. *International Journal of Educational Research*(37), 285-304.

Swain, M., Brooks, L., & Tocalli-Beller, A. (2002). Peer-peer dialogue as a means of second language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 22*, 171-185.

Swain, M., Kinnear, P., & and Steinman, L. (2011). *Socialcultural Theory in Second Language Education.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Swain, M., Kinnear, P., & Steinman, L. (2011). *Sociocultural Theory in Second Language Education: An Introduction Through Narratives.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Sweigel, S. &. (2004). Novice tutors and their ESL tutees: Three case studies of tutor roles and perceptions of tutorial success. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*.

Tharp, R., & Gallimore, R. (1988). *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in social context.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thonus, T. (. (2004). What are the differences? Tutor interactions with first- and second-language writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*(13), 227-242.

Toth, P. (2004). When grammar instruction undermines cohensionin L2 Spanish classroom discourse. *Modern Language Journal*(88), 14-30.

Tudge, J., Winteroff, P., & Hogan, D. (1999). The cognitive consequences of collaboration and feedback. *Child Development, 67*, 2892-2902.

van der Veer, R., & Valsiner, J. (2003). *Understanding Vygotsky: A quest for synthesis.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Van Horne, S. (2012). Characterizing Successful 'Intervention' in the Writing Center Conference. *Praxi: A Writing Center Journal, 10*(1).

van Lier, L. (2000). From input to affordance. In J. P. Lantolf, *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* (pp. 245-260). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vrasidas, C., & McIsaac, M. (1999). Factors influencing interaction in an online course. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 13*(3), 22-36.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society.* Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and Language.* Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1997). *Educational Psychology.* Florida: St. Lucie Press.

Weigle, S., & Nelson, G. (2004). Novice tutors and their ESL tutees: Three case studies of tutor roles and percteptions of tutorial success. *Journal of Second Language Writing*(13), 203-225.

Young, R., & Miller, E. (2004). Learning as Changing Participation: Discourse Roles in ESL Writing Conferences. *The Modern Language Journal, 88*(iv), 519-535.

Appendix

A. Tutoring ESL Students for Improvements in Language Skills for Tutees

B. Tutoring ESL Students for Improvements in Language Skills for Tutors

C. IRBNet ID# 528042-1

Appendix A

Tutoring ESL Students for Improvements in Language Skills
for Tutees

Post data collection Interview questions for tutees:

1) How have your tutoring sessions helped your English?
2) What particular idea/suggestion from the tutor has helped you? Why do you think so?
3) What particular strategies used by the tutor or their language made you feel comfortable, or clarified the confusion you may have had?
4) Why did you decide to accept or to reject the suggestions provided by the tutor?
5) How has your writing changed after the tutoring sessions? In what ways?

Appendix B

Tutoring ESL Students for Improvements in Language Skills
for Tutors

Post data collection interview questions for tutors

1) Were there times that you felt your tutee really understood the point you were making? If so, how, in your opinion, could you tell the difference between whether they really understood or only claimed to understand?
2) What, in your opinion, is the most difficult aspect of tutoring an ESL student?
3) What tutoring strategies do you think are most effective? Why?
4) What, if anything, did you learn about the English language while trying to explain particular points to ESL students?

Appendix C

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
www.marshall.edu

Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
401 11th St., Suite 1300
Huntington, WV 25701

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205
IRB2 #00003206

October 29, 2013

Jun Zhao, PhD
English Department

RE: IRBNet ID# 528042-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Zhao:

Protocol Title:	[528042-1] Tutoring ESL Students for Improvements in Language Skills	
Expiration Date:	October 29, 2014	
Site Location:	MU	
Submission Type:	New Project	APPROVED
Review Type:	Expedited Review	

In accordance with 45CFR46.110(a)(6)&(7), the above study and informed consents were granted Expedited approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Chair for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire October 29, 2014. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Hollie Craddock.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.