

Politeness Strategy Use and Dynamics of Dominance in College ESL Writing Tutorials: Building Social Relationships in the Non-Writing Discourse Frame

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This preliminary case study explores the dynamics in participation structure co-constructed by one female Korean Non-Native speaker (NNS) teacher and three female Chinese NNS students with the use of politeness strategies in non-writing tutorial interactions in a college English as a Second Language (ESL) writing classroom. 30-minute course-embedded individual writing tutorial interactions were audio-video recorded and transcribed for discourse analysis. The results revealed that the teacher and each student strategically used positive and negative politeness strategies to build social relationships through non-writing tutorial interactions. Compliments and common ground sharing were used as primary positive politeness strategies, while hedge, silence, and personal-point-of-view disclaimers were frequently used as negative politeness strategies. The reciprocal power equilibrium achieved by the dynamics of participation structure expectedly sheds a new light on the studies on L2 writing tutorials.

Keywords: dominance, face, politeness strategies, second language writing tutorials

1. Introduction

As an International Graduate Teaching Assistance (GTA) working as a teacher for English as a Second Language (ESL) composition program at a large American research university, the researcher was supposed to implement course-embedded writing tutorials without partic-

ular guidance from the program. Writing tutorial refers to individual teacher-student interactions about student writing to improve the student writing drafts in hand and promote students' learning to write. Besides normal pedagogical interactions related to student writing process, unexpected interactional patterns were recognized by the researcher in the actual practice of writing tutorials. The teacher researcher and individual students were found to substantially engage in non-writing interactions, topics of which are personal issues such as their daily life and their relationship with each other. The teacher researcher found the non-writing interactions in tutorials to be a valuable opportunity to build individual rapport with students, thus stimulating more effective teaching practice in classroom. This unexpectedly emerging social aspect of tutorials and their pedagogical impacts inspired the teacher researcher to examine the nature of non-writing interactions in writing tutorials. As Goldstein (2010) insightfully indicated, understandings of pedagogical practice derive from the classroom by learning from our own practice.

The research motivation of the present study described above corresponds to the perspective of *critical action research*, of which theoretical foundations have roots in critical theory and postmodernism (Mills 2000). According to Mills (2000), action research is "any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment, to gather information about the ways that their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (6). Due to its origin in critical theory, critical action research tends to emphasize the emancipatory power of those who are on the front line of educational practice featuring democratic, equitable, liberating, and enhancing perspectives (see Stringer 1993 for further discussion). Research on equity issues of minority students and teacher empowerment belongs to this approach. The motif of present study, however, more weighs on the postmodern aspect of critical action research that challenges taken-for-granted assumptions on educational practice illuminating its relative, situational, and unexpected nature. To be more specific, critical action research approach provides a relevant theoretical foundation on the value of 'not-taken-for-granted' social functions of writing tutorials that the teacher researcher identifies from her own pedagogical practice.

As writing tutorials have been widely adopted into both first lan-

guage (L1) and second language (L2) writing classrooms as a valuable instructional method under the influence of process writing pedagogy and collaborative learning approach, social aspect of the practice has been discussed primarily in terms of its effect on achieving instructional goals of improving students' writing abilities. According to Sperling (1990: 306), "conversational ends often merge with instructional ends" in the writing tutorial interactions as "the service of the student's learning to write." In this respect, the social function of writing tutorial interactions contributes to create an environment where the individual student needs and their authorities are respected to enhance instructional effects (Rose 1983). This cooperative environment has often been framed from sociocultural theory, more specifically, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky (see Wells 1994). Individual interactions in tutorials allow students to demonstrate the scale of their current knowledge and potential development, concomitantly enabling teachers to provide them with a 'tailored' assistance to fulfill the student potentials.

The cooperative nature of teacher-student interactions in writing tutorials gave rise to a special attention to their roles and social relationships with respect to the power distribution in interactions. The power distribution in writing tutorial interactions appears to be influenced by the type of implementation of the practice. To demarcate a relevant concept of writing tutorials for the present study, two representative types of tertiary level writing tutorials for L2 learners in the U.S. are introduced as follows. One is a *writing center tutorial*, more widely referred to as a *writing conference*, and the other is a *course-embedded writing tutorial*. A fundamental difference between the two is the tutors' authority in students' writing tasks and concomitantly in tutorial interactions as well. Students are supposed to receive 'secondary or additional' assistance from the writing center tutors who do not grade on their work in hand, while they receive the 'primary' assistance from the instructors who assess their work in course-embedded writing tutorials. In this sense, tutors in course-embedded writing tutorials are expected to have more authority over students as a primary evaluator of their work.

Most existing studies on teacher-student (or tutor-tutee) power distribution in writing tutorials have dealt with writing center tutorials in terms of native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) distinc-

tion, reflecting the longer history of writing center programs in L2 writing tutorial practice. Writing conferences in university writing centers are not delimited to NNS learner writers, originally targeting NS students. Unlike teachers' somewhat authoritative roles in traditional classroom interactions, NS tutors' roles in writing conference interactions with NS tutees are expected to be more cooperative and facilitative because most institutional curriculums in writing centers advocate cultivating and reinforcing tutees' roles as an expert writer (Jones, Garralda, Lee, & Lock 2006, Mackiewicz 1999). However, the cooperative and facilitative roles of NS tutors tend to proceed in a more authoritative pattern interacting with NNS tutees possibly derived from NNS tutees' low target language proficiency, demonstrating NS tutors' dominance over NNS tutees in the tutorial discourse frame (Thonus 1999). The tutor dominance over tutees is also found in tutorial interactions between NNS tutors and NNS tutees. YJ Kim (2007) compared NS tutor-NNS tutee interactions and NNS tutor-NNS tutee interactions and found tutor dominance in both cases. Meanwhile, NNS-NNS writing center tutorial interactions are found to be distinctive from NS-NNS interactions in the following aspects which demonstrate particular NNS tutor dominance over NNS tutees a) NNS tutees gave an explicit apology to NNS tutors for their refusal of taking the tutors' advice, b) NNS tutors used few mitigation while frequently using directives, and c) few opening phases and little small talk were observed in the tutorial interactions. The findings of the study (YJ Kim 2007) posit that NNS-NNS writing center tutorials are featured by asymmetrical tutor dominance interactional patterns similar to NS-NNS writing center tutorials although NNS-NNS tutorials involve their own distinctive features.

Besides those more or less fixed framings of tutorial interactions in terms of the NS/NNS dichotomy and teachers' dominance over students, some studies highlighted more dynamic aspects of tutorial interactions and the concomitant complex teacher-student relationships emerging in each tutorial context (Belhajah 2009, Benwell & Stokoe 2002, Jones et al. 2006, Weigle & Nelson 2004). As King (1993) indicated, the fact that individual students build social relationships with a teacher being isolated from their peers allows more dynamic power distribution between the individual student and teacher. The dynamic aspects of tutorial interactions involve unsettled and unpredicted dis-

course patterns and researchers focus on the power equilibrium co-constructed by teacher and student interactants (e.g., Benwell & Stokoe 2002, Mackiewicz 1999, Thonus 1999). In the dynamics of tutorial interactions, typical teacher (tutor)-dominant discourse patterns are reconstructed into more equal power alignment by co-constructing social relationships between teachers and students.

Considering this pervasive notion of NS-NNS dichotomy and teacher-dominance in the previous studies on the writing center tutorials of NNS students, primarily with NS teachers, it is necessary to expand the research scope by examining whether the dynamics of tutorial interactions, particularly co-constructed power equilibrium, are also observed in non-writing interactions of course-embedded writing tutorials between NNS teachers and NNS students. Thus, the present preliminary case study aims to explore how dynamically the dominance in college ESL course-embedded writing tutorial interactions is co-constructed NNS by a NNS teacher and students. To be more specific, their use of politeness strategies in non-writing tutorial interactions is investigated to see how the NNS teacher and NNS students dynamically accommodate the hierarchical power alignment co-constructing their social relationships. This preliminary study is expected to contribute to overcome the extant fixed notion of interactional asymmetry in writing tutorials by embracing more diverse contextual variables with regard to the type of tutorial implementation (course-embedded writing tutorials), teacher-student relationships (NNS teacher-NNS student), and discourse frame (non-writing interactions).

2. Interactional Frames of Writing Tutorials Manifested by Politeness Strategies

2.1. Interactional Frames

The present study stands on the interactional sociolinguistics perspective of *social interactions as a linguistic process*, which was asserted by Bloome and Egan-Robertson (1993) based on the work of Bakhtin, Volosinov, Gumperz, and Hymes. The perspective postulates that people act and react to each other making meanings and taking social actions within a language system (Bloome, Carter, Christian, & Madrid

2009). For this reciprocal reaction, people in interactions need to interpret their interlocutors' (re)actions being interpreted by their interlocutors as well in order to construct appropriate meanings in the given context (Mayes 2003). In the process of interpreting and being interpreted in the interaction, people make certain assumptions necessitated for framing the interpretation and one of the frames is the relationship among the participants in the given interactions. The participant relationships are traditionally conceptualized as *participant roles*, which focus on the relationship between an individual participant and interactions. With its focus on the positions of each individual participant in the interaction, not the system of their interactive relationships, the concept is more or less static because it stands on the presupposition of constant participatory features of each individual. Compared to participant roles, the concept of *participation structure* encompasses the overall relationships between all participants and their social interactions (Mayes 2003). In the framework of participation structure, the conceptualization of participation in each interactional context can be more responsive to the dynamics of the system co-constructed by the moment-by-moment interactions of all participants. From the framework of participant roles, the existing studies on writing tutorial interactions tend to understand the dynamics of tutorial interactions in terms of the collision among different default participant roles. In other words, default participant roles premised in the writing tutorial participation system inevitably involve different participant roles that possibly conflict with each other. The premise derives from the belief that "the more conventionalized an interaction is, the more likely it is to be associated with specific default associations with default participant roles" (Mayes 2003: 64). However, the assumption of default participant roles does not seem to appropriately explicate the dynamics of tutorial interactions. For example, the prevalent tutor dominance in NS-NNS tutorial interactions in the literature of writing center tutorials, which does not correspond to the conventional facilitative tutor participant roles, is explained as the following. The institutionally imposed tutor roles in writing center tutorials are supposed to be rather facilitative than authoritative unlike traditional teacher roles. However, 'another' default dominant NS participant roles over NNS interlocutors in NS-NNS interactions appeared to surpass the institutionally imposed facilitative tutor roles, finally establishing NS tutor dominant

NS-NNS tutorial interactions (see Thonus 1998). One question of this explication is how different default participant roles interact with each other producing the dominance of particular default participant roles. The more complex the contexts of tutorial interactions become (e.g., cross-cultural NS-NNS or NNS-NNS tutorial interactions), the more likely it is difficult to answer the question. As participation structure more focuses on the ‘system’ of participatory relationships rather than individual relationships per se, it better captures the dynamics of co-constructed relational patterns among participants, which does not necessarily correspond to the presupposed default participant roles. Considering that the present study aims to tackle the dynamics of dominance in NNS-NNS teacher-student tutorial interactions, it would be more suitable to conceptualize the L2 writing tutorial interactions in terms of participation structure rather than traditional participant roles.

2.2. Politeness Strategy Use in Writing Tutorials

With respect to dominance patterns in interactional behaviors, theories of politeness have been widely adopted in the literature of writing tutorial interactions (e.g., Bell, Arnold, & Haddock 2009, Mackiewicz 1999, Thonus 1998). Conventionally, institutional discourse including writing tutorial discourse has been analyzed in terms of its interactional asymmetry derived from the inherent power asymmetry in participant relationships. In this aspect, the politeness theory provides a useful framework to analyze the interactional ‘realization’ of power alignment because the theory presupposes that interactants are supposed to save each other’s face (social identity) depending on the perceived power alignment among themselves. While there are different approaches to conceptualizing politeness, the work of Brown and Levinson (1987) is considered to “offer the most comprehensive and thorough treatment of the notion of politeness, besides offering a set of explicit strategies for categorizing manifestations of politeness” (Do an ay-Aktuna & Kami h 2001: 78). As Brown and Levinson (1987: 67) acknowledged, their framework of politeness presupposes that people participate in interactions with particular communicative intentions and these intentions are co-constructed as the interactants act and react to each other. Within their framework of politeness, the communi-

cative intentions of every rational human being are to maintain *face*, “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 58). Two different aspects of face are distinguished as follows *positive face* refers to the desire to be approved of positive consistent self-image, while *negative face*, the basic claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61). This distinction of face is the ground for the notions of *positive politeness* and *negative politeness*, which aim to serve the individual intentions to preserve positive face and negative face of interactants, respectively. Confronting Face Threatening Act (FTA) in interactions, people make a decision how to deal with FTAs to save their interlocutors’ face based on their assessment of the seriousness of FTAs. Criteria for the assessment primarily include the following three factors: social distance between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H), asymmetric power distribution between S and H, and absolute ranking of impositions of S and H in the particular culture.

The assessment of FTAs in hand lead people to choose different strategies of politeness to maintain their interactants’ face; *positive politeness* to express solidarity, *negative politeness* to express restraints, and *off-record* to avoid unequivocal imposition (Brown & Levinson 1987: 2). Positive politeness is basically approach-based as S approaches to H by indicating that S shares H’s wants or H’s wants are acknowledged or favored by S. On the other hand, negative politeness is inherently avoidance-based as S tries to protect or respect H’s basic needs or wants. Due to this different nature of positive and negative face, Brown and Levinson (1987: 64) indicated that positive politeness strategies are more restricted than negative politeness strategies because the assumption of shared wants between S and H in positive politeness can be “extremely vulnerable” possibly causing “affront” to H. Unlike off-record, positive politeness and negative politeness strategies are linguistically manifested in interactions. Strategies of positive politeness include diverse solidarity markers such as the use of the third person plural, ‘we’, complimentary words, and any remarks to build common ground with interactants. Negative politeness strategies involve the followings: being conventionally indirect, hedging, showing pessimism, minimizing imposition, using modals, and apologizing (Bell et al. 2009: 40).

In the previous studies on the dynamics of writing tutorials, the no-

tion of politeness strategies has provided appropriate theoretical framework to demonstrate the power equilibrium achieved via building solidarity and enhancing acquaintanceship between tutors and tutees, which disrupts conventional tutor-dominance interactional asymmetry derived from their inherent or imposed asymmetrical power and ranking (Benwell & Stokoe 2002, Mackiewicz 1999, Thonus 2008). These studies, however, highlight unidirectional power equilibrium from more dominant interactants (tutors) to less dominant interactants (tutees). In other words, their focal interest is to demonstrate tutors' effort to maintain tutees' positive and negative face so that the participants eschew hierarchical participant structure of tutor-tutee interactions. To expand the scope of existing research, it is essential to illuminate more reciprocal power equilibrium process co-constructed by both teachers and students.

2.3. Research Questions

Based on the existing studies on L2 writing tutorials and the needs of the field, the present study aims to conduct a preliminary case study as to how teachers and students use politeness strategies in their non-writing tutorial interactions to achieve power equilibrium in their participant structure. The basic assumption of the study is that the use of politeness strategies by teachers and students to save their interlocutor's face is the evidence of their intentions of achieving power equilibrium in tutorial interactions. Specific research questions of the present study are the followings:

- a. How do a teacher and a student use positive politeness strategies in their non-writing tutorial interactions?
- b. How do a teacher and a student use negative politeness strategies in their non-writing tutorial interactions?

3. Methods

3.1. Site of Study

The research site of the present study is an intermediate level undergraduate ESL composition class at a large American research uni-

versity for which the researcher works as an instructor. All incoming international undergraduate students at the school are supposed to take the ESL composition placement exam or to submit the scores of standardized English tests (e.g., TOEFL) as a proof of their high English writing proficiency to be exempted from this post-admission ESL program, which the students are recommended to complete within their first academic year. In addition to the placement exam, a diagnostic test on the first session of the class also enables high-performing students to move up to the upper level class and even to get an exemption of ESL programs. Considering that most incoming students start their academic year in Autumn quarter, a majority of students in the given research site, that is a course in Winter 2010, either completed the beginning level course in Autumn quarter or failed to move up to the advanced level course rather than being assigned to this Winter quarter session as a result of their placement test performance. Total 20 students were allocated in this class consisting of 12 students from main land China, 7 students from South Korea, and one student from Hong Kong. Most of them are freshmen or sophomores from various disciplines, but many of them are majored in Business Administration or Electrical Engineering. The class is five credit hours meeting three days a week, which consists of two-hour regular class sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays and one hour lab session on Fridays.

According to the official course description, the goal of this course is to “increase awareness and mastery of the organizational and grammatical patterns of successful academic writing” by “giving the students practical experience with summarizing, documentation, and analytical academic writing.” Tutorials are the part of course work particularly for the writing assignments about those three different academic rhetorical genres and students’ attendance at tutorials is mandatory being counted to the overall attendance points. Although there is no specific guideline about any prescribed activities or the roles of students and teachers in individual tutorials, the tutorial sessions are considered to be a valuable opportunity for students to “receive individual attention.” Teacher roles about four out-of-class writing assignments are more explicitly indicated teachers are expected to “work with” students on the entire composition process for each assignment. This role of teachers as a “collaborator” or “facilitator” in the process approach to writing instruction corresponds to the collaborative tutor role prescribed by

most academic programs in the U.S. Accordingly, students are expected to get individual assistance or guidance from their teacher while doing writing assignments and participating in the individual writing tutorials as well. However, specific requirements or restrictions for tutorials are not manifestly imposed by the program, and teachers are allowed to be flexible about what to be dealt with in tutorials depending on the needs of each student.

Total four 30-minute tutorial sessions for four writing assignments are required for individual students. First two assignments are to write summaries of fiction and non-fiction and the following two assignments are to write critical reviews of fiction and non-fiction, respectively. Non-fiction materials are the scripts of two well-known commencement speeches at prestigious universities in the U.S. and a fiction material is a short mysterious story. Reading materials are covered during regular class sessions with the lecture from the teacher and related group work. Students are supposed to write at least three drafts including the final one for each writing assignment with teacher's written feedback on the first drafts and individual tutorials on the second drafts.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Three female Chinese students were recruited for this preliminary study with their consent for participation. One of them (S1) is majoring in Engineering and the others (S2 and S3) are majoring in Business Administration. Total four tutorial sessions for each participant were audio and video recorded by the teacher-researcher.

The audio and video recorded discourse data were transcribed following the transcription rules of Bloom et al. (2009) (See Appendix). The transcription symbols were adopted because it is comprehensive enough to entail verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are necessary for identifying the evidence of using politeness strategies. Before transcribing, the researcher identified *non-writing discourse frame*, the target tutorial interactions, from each tutorial session. Most existing studies on tutorial interactions have focused on writing discourse frames. Indeed, tutorial interactions seem to be tacitly conceptualized as the discourse 'exclusively' about student writing. The structure of writing tutorial interactions is typically identified with regard to the content of commu-

nication. Mackiewicz (1999: 81) classified writing tutorial interaction frames into two categories: *procedural* and *writing-discussion*. In the procedural tutorial discourse frame, the topic of interactions is primarily related to the procedures of the immediate tutorial sessions, immediate or future writing tasks, or classroom activities. Meanwhile, the writing-discussion discourse frame directly deals with the student writing-drafts in hand by discussing the forms and contents of the drafts. Although the procedural discourse frame is not directly related to the student writing drafts, the primary function of the frame is still to promote students' learning to write. As an inherently conceptualized as institutional discourse (Benwell & Stokoe 2002, Thonus 1999), writing tutorial interactions have been primarily investigated with regard to the writing-discussion discourse frame which directly serves the instructional function of the interactions. Reflecting the emphasis on the writing-discussion discourse frame, extensive analyses on the frame have been conducted in the literature. For example, Thonus (1999: 233) introduced a four-step sequence of the directive phase of writing tutorials: (1) Tutor evaluation of global or specific problems, (2) student acceptance or rejection of the evaluation (verbal or tacit), (3) tutor suggestion (occasionally substituted or augmented by student suggestion), and (4) student acceptance (or rejection) of the suggestion. In addition, Ewert (2009) identified discourse structures in the tutorial interactions of two different teachers, which consist of the interactions about student writing drafts and revisions as a major discourse frame surrounded by opening and closing interactions. The opening and closing interactions as a non-major discourse frame in this classification seem to correspond to the procedural discourse frame in that the major purposes of those interactions are to prepare the student for participating in the major writing tutorial discourse and to address the plans for subsequent revisions, respectively. These classifications of writing tutorial discourse framework were also found to be applicable to the present data as can be seen in a short extract below from a closing interaction (T: Teacher, S: Student).

T: OK. I (pause 2 sec.) think we still have time but you finished.

You can leave.

S: Oh (laugh out)

T: (laugh)

- S: OK
T: Because your time is until three.
S: What time?
T: Uhm it's uhm four to forty six or seven.
S: Forty six or seven↓ (whispering) I'll go and revise.
T: Yeah
S: Ah, do we have any other homework due by tomorrow?
T: Due by tomorrow? No, actually the due date for the final version is Friday, not Thursday. I extended it because some people just missed the tutorial and
S: Oh I see
T: Everybody is yeah (laugh) cannot find this room so
S: (laugh) Yes, it's pretty hard.

In the extract above, the student initiated the interactional units about the due date of subsequent drafts at the closing phase of the tutorial session, which can be classified as a procedural discourse frame.

However, the existing discourse framework of writing tutorial interactions does not appropriately tackle the target discourse frame in the present study. The tutorial interactions that originally inspired the researcher to conduct the present study are not explained enough with the discourse framework introduced above. As illustrated in the short extract below, students often brought a topic not related to any of the course work including their writing drafts.

- T: Alright. How are you today?
S: (pause 3 sec.) Ah good↓
T: Good↑
S: I think
T: You think↑ or you hope↓ (laugh)
S: Yeah I hope
T: (laugh) You hope yeah
S: I have CSE lab today and
T: Oh CS CSO↑ or CSE↑
S: CSE
T: CSE. That's notorious. Everybody hates it
S: (laugh)
T: It's like a ten credit hour course although it's just five credit hour

- S: And and I didn't finish my prelab.
T: Oh my god. So what should you do?
S: It's so hard.
T: So hard ↑ **Oh
S: I don't know how to do that
T: No ↓ is there anybody who can help you?
S: I'm sorry?
T: Is there anybody who can help you?
S: Yeah (pause 3 sec.) a lot of my classmates

In this extract, the student invited the teacher into to the dialogue about her other coursework sharing her challenging academic experiences. The teacher seemed to be familiar with the course as can be seen in her comments that the course is notorious being hated by everybody. Indeed, many students told the teacher researcher about the CSE course in tutorials indicating that they were struggling to manage the heavy workload of the course. The target tutorial interactions, the topics of which are related to neither writing-discussion nor the procedures of writing tasks or the immediate course work, are believed to be distinguished from the extant tutorial discourse frames because the primary function of those interactions is not related to improving students' writing skills or managing writing instructions. Thus, these tutorial interactions with 'non-writing' topics were categorized into the non-writing discourse frame as opposed to the writing discourse frame.

It is not clear whether the tutorial interactions in previous studies did not involve any non-writing discourse or the researchers simply excluded non-writing discourse interactions from data analysis considering them not to be eligible for the analysis. In any event, such writing-discourse-oriented approach to writing tutorial research does not comprehensively tackle the nature of the interactions because non-writing tutorial interactions do emerge in writing tutorials as can be seen in the present study. Even if the existence of non-writing interactions in the given tutorial data might be highly situational, it is still worth investigating them to see whether non-writing tutorial interactions are also observed in other cases and how such a context-specific discourse frame emerges. One might also question the rationale of including non-writing tutorial interactions into the object of writing tutorial re-

search, if the interactions only took a minor part of the overall writing tutorial interactions not necessarily serving the intended pedagogical functions. However, every educational practice in our classrooms is eligible for further research in that educational practice in reality is inherently situational, relative, and unexpected as indicated in the introduction. To appropriately explore the unexpected nature of educational practice, thorough description of the actual practice and investigation of its potential pedagogical implications need to precede the decision about its relevance as an object of inquiry. Thus, the present study considers such non-writing interactions as a legitimate writing tutorial discourse frame for a preliminary description of authentic writing tutorial practices.

As the writing and non-writing discourse frames are distinguished from each other depending upon the topics of tutorial interactions, data analysis started from classifying the transcribed tutorial interactions into separate episodes with distinctive topics. The unit of episode analysis was a single turn exchange, which consists of one turn from the teacher and one turn from the student regardless of the order of initiation of the exchange. Thus, one episode can involve multiple turn exchanges under one overarching interactional topic. The topics identified at this initial stage of analysis included tutorial/coursework schedules, language/grammar issues in writing drafts, content/rhetoric issues in writing drafts, reading material comprehension, personal academic issues not related to the current coursework, personal non-academic issues, stories about home countries or family, etc. Then, the episodes with the topics not related to student writing drafts or the current coursework (e.g., personal academic issues) were identified as the non-writing discourse frame for extensive analyses. Non-writing tutorial interactions were often located at the end of the writing-discussion frame, which is quite understandable. Tutorials were scheduled in a row and the teacher had to finish the immediate tutorial in time for the subsequent tutorials, which led the teacher to delay non-writing discourse until writing discourse was completed. Nonetheless, some non-writing interactions were observed at the beginning of the tutorials. Such sporadic occurrences of non-writing interactions in the collected data correspond to those of small talk sequences in the study of YJ Kim (2007) observed in the opening, middle, and the ending phase of tutorial interactions.

After the identification of the non-writing discourse frame as opposed to the writing discourse frame, the evidence of using politeness strategies in each turn of each episode was identified consulting the linguistic manifestation of positive and negative politeness strategies exemplified by Brown and Levinson (1987). The evidence of politeness strategies in each turn was examined in an inductive manner by selecting the most germane strategies for the present data (Person, Kreuz, Zwaan, & Graesser 1995). As the present preliminary study primarily aims to illustrate how politeness strategies are used in the non-writing tutorial discourse frame, the use of strategies are described in detail with several samples of non-writing tutorial interactions, rather than quantified with regard to its occurrences across the whole tutorial interactions.

4. Results

The use of politeness strategies by an individual teacher and student is classified into that of positive politeness and negative politeness, and positive politeness strategies are discussed in terms of using compliments and building common grounds between a teacher and a student.

4.1. Positive Politeness Strategies

The first observation of using positive politeness strategies was the teacher's compliment behavior toward the student (S1) at the beginning of the session by using typical compliment formula, *I (really) like/love NP* (Herbert 1990).

Extract 1 (T: Teacher, S1: Student1)

1. T: two XXX midterms?
2. S1: Aha ↑
3. T: *Ah I like your boots.
4. S1: (laugh)
5. T: You have many boots. You have hunters↑ So, XXXX several hunters.
6. S1: Yeah, I have several hunters.
7. T: Yeah

8. S1: Yeah.
9. T: Wow, it's a flower one.
10. S1: [(laugh)
11. T: [(laugh)
12. S1: I bought these | last quarter.
13. T: Last quarter? (looking at the tutee)
14. It's kind of cu ++ te. (looking at the boots)
15. S1: (laughing, looking down the boots) Thank you.
16. T: Yeah, because | yeah, we need flowers in winter
17. S1: [(laugh)
18. T: [(laugh)
19. T & S1: (pause)
20. S1: Ah | XXXX my midterms
21. T: Ah↑ What? || This is from your mommy? your mom?
22. S1: No.
23. T: No, what? | What did you say?
24. S1: Midterms ↑
25. T: Midterms ↑
26. Ah ↑ What is it? What about it? What is it about?
27. S1: CSE
28. T: CSE↑ ▲ Oh ++
29. S1: Sucks forever.

Extract 1 was observed at the beginning of the tutorial, and the teacher complimented S1 by providing positive evaluation of the student's possession, boots, at line 3. The previous interaction seemed to be related to midterm exam, but the teacher switched topic into S1's boots. In response to the teacher compliment, S1 laughed at line 4, which does not explicitly correspond to the 12 types of complimentary responses proposed by Herbert (1990: 208-209). Considering that the compliment speech event is generally structured with a two-unit turn, i.e., a compliment and a response/acknowledgement, the laughter of S1 is believed to have a certain speech function. As laughter itself does not inherently contain any particular speech functions and this *single-party laughter* has known to be much more complex to interpret than *coordinated laughter* (Thonus 2008), it would be appropriate to reserve any specific interpretation of S1's laughter at line 4 at this point. Meanwhile, S1 and the teacher agreed with each other at line 7 and 8,

and they shared the laughter at line 10 and 11 with regard to the teacher's second comments on the student's boots at line 9. Although the teacher's utterance at line 9 was not an explicit compliment, S1's response at line 12 is considered as "comment history," one type of 12 compliment responses suggested by Herbert (1990), demonstrating more manifest reaction to the compliment than the mere laughter at line 4. Considering that both complimenting and responding to compliments serve the function of negotiating solidarity (Herbert 1990: 202), S1's more accepting compliment response at line 12 with the prior somewhat vague compliment response at line 4 indicates the development of solidarity through the use of teacher-initiated positive politeness strategy.

In response to the teacher's effort to establish solidarity by using compliments, S1 confirmed solidarity with the teacher at line 15 by verbally accepting the teacher's another compliment at line 14. This enhanced solidarity led S1 to bring up the common ground at line 20 after the pause between the teacher and S1. In the circumstance where neither the teacher nor S1 took the floor, S1 initiated a new interactional unit with a shared topic, taking CSE courses. The course is one of the requirements for undergraduate students and a lot of students complained about its heavy workload in the tutorials and classroom. Teacher's familiarity with the topic is revealed in her increased volume expressing strong emotion with elongated "Oh" at line 28. With an assumption of the teacher's familiarity with the topic, S1 added her very personal negative opinion about the topic at line 29 without any elaboration or additional explanation. This sharing of negative opinion between the teacher and S1 shows how the teacher's use of compliment gradually enhanced solidarity with S1. Considering that the less-dominant interactants are more involved in laughter (Thonus 2008) and the complimented speaker has a higher status (Herbert 1990), the teacher is thought to pursue power equilibrium in her interaction with S1 by 'democratizing' a traditionally hierarchical teacher-student participation structure (Bewell & Stokoe 2002).

This democratization of participation structure by establishing solidarity is also initiated by a student by using a similar positive politeness strategy of compliments. In Extract 2, the student (S2) complimented the teacher's fragrance at line 7 by using the similar typical compliment formula, *I (really) like/love NP* (Herbert 1990).

Extract 2 (T: Teacher, S2: Student 2)

1. T: I'm not good.
2. S2: What happened? (laugh)
3. T: (laugh)
4. S2: You got cold ↑
5. T: ▲ No. I'm tired
6. S2: ▼ Oh, you're tired.
7. ▲ I like your perfume.
8. T: Perfume ↑ Really? ↑
9. S2: Yes.
10. T: Yeah *it's Chanel.
11. S2: *Ah
12. T: (laugh)
13. S2: That's why ↓
14. T: No no no, not every Chanel | perfume is good.

In response to S2's somewhat abrupt compliment, the teacher tried to confirm positive evaluation at line 8 and accepted the complimentary force offering a relevant comment on the appreciated topic at line 10 (Herbert 1990). The teacher's single-party laughter at line 12 is worth exploring because it is not obvious which part in the interaction is laughable to the teacher. This solidarity negotiation process of complimenting and responding to complimenting between the teacher and S2 proceeded in the following interactions about the fragrance in Extract 3. The topic shifted to the male-preferred women fragrance; the fragrance of baby lotion. The Extract 3 shows S2's initiation of new topic about the fragrance of shampoo with regard to the topic of fragrance.

Extract 3 (T: Teacher, S2: Student 2)

15. S2: I think that | guys like shampoo smell (laugh)
16. T: ▲ Yeah, shampoo smell, shampoo smell, yeah, yeah.
17. S2: They like | I some | because my hair is not that good (touching hair).
18. T: Well not, (touching the tutee's hair) it's good.
19. S2: Like I dyed it so many times.
20. T: Oh ↑
21. S2: So | and then | the shampoo smell won't last long time.

22. T: Em (nodding)
23. S2: Only last a little bit time so
24. T: You can put hair mist (gesturing putting mist)
25. S2: Oh | hair mist ↑
26. T: Yeah hair mist.
27. S2: (silence)
28. T: But usually || well sometimes I I put I wear perfume on my hair (hand gesture)
29. S2: ▲ Oh, yeah.
30. T: Yeah, because it lasts long.
31. S2: Yeah, yeah.
32. T: But | well
33. S2: Is it good for hair?
34. T: No, not that good (frowning and shaking head).
35. S2: Oh.
36. T: But for hair mist (hand gesture)
37. S2: Ok, ok.
38. T: it's good.
39. If you have | some kind of troubles in your hair like you have,
40. do you know the *Silk* (grabbing a pen and paper) essence ↑ (writing it down)
41. S2: (put forwarding and look at the paper)
42. T: You can buy it ↑
43. S2: Oh
44. T: hair essence (writing it down) the *silk*
45. S2: Ok
46. I used the | I told you, right? (laughing)
47. T: Oh, ▲ yeah tha+t one. Tha++t's good.
48. S2: It works (laughing)

With regard to this new topic of hair in Extract 3, S2 deprecated herself at line 17 and the teacher showed strong solidarity by disagreeing with S2's self-deprecation and complimenting S2's hair at line 18. These verbal solidarity markers were accompanied by intimate physical attachment, the teacher's touching the student hair, which is extremely rare in normal interactions between teachers and adult students. The established solidarity led the teacher to actively make a suggestion for

S2's hair issue at line 24, but S2 indicated her lack of interest in the suggestion by silencing at line 27. According to Benwell and Stokoe (2002: 438), "silence or dispreferred responses signal resistance" and "a shift in interactional dynamics." In this sense, the student silence at line 27 made a powerful impact on the participation structure, which expectedly caused the teacher to return to the fragrance topic at line 28, reacting to S2's dispreferred response. S2 appeared to show more interest in the previous student-initiated topic with the increased volume in her response at line 29. The teacher indicated the long-lasting perfume scent at line 30 in order to satisfy the student preference to the given topic. However, the teacher still tried to bring up the new topic of hair indicating some concern about S2's hair condition and her previous suggestion about using hair mist at line 32 by repeating the negative conjunction, 'but', which was previously used for the trial of topic shift at line 28. Responding to the teacher's consistent appeal to the new topic, S2 asked a question about perfume's influence on hair condition at line 33. S2's question made a ground for the teacher to develop her previous suggestion of using hair mist in the following interactions, which serves the teacher's needs. This reciprocal effort to serve each other achieved a stronger solidarity at line 46 as S2 brought up the common ground with the teacher. Referring to her previous utterances about hair product in the classroom, S2 set the common ground in the given interaction with the initiation of laughter, which results in strong establishment of solidarity. The teacher appeared to co-construct a stronger solidarity by giving positive comments on the student utterance with increased volume and elongated vowel sound at line 47.

As can be seen, the teacher and each student appeared to actively engage in using a compliment strategy and bringing shared topics to save each other's positive face. Under the traditional hierarchical teacher-student relationship, the students are expected to more actively initiate using positive politeness strategies. However, the teacher was found to redress her interactive behaviors to maintain the student positive face and the students even reserved to accept the teacher's effort (e.g., silencing as a response to the teacher's initiation of a new topic). It effectively demonstrates both the teacher and the students put reciprocal efforts to intensify their solidarity and concomitantly equilibrate their participant structure in tutorial interactions.

4.2. Negative Politeness Strategies

Misunderstandings in interactions were identified as particular FTAs concerning the participants' use of negative politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987: 18) indicated that negative politeness is "specific for the particular FTA in hand" unlike positive politeness which is "relevant to all aspects of person's positive face". In Extract 4, the teacher and the student (S3) were observed to be hesitant to disagree with each other facing misunderstanding during the tutorial interactions. They appeared to have decided to agree with each other first in order to maintain negative face although they brought up the issue later again to resolve the misunderstanding.

Extract 4 (T: Teacher, S3: Student 3)

1. T: Because some students missed the tutorial ↑ (leaning backward)
2. S3: Oh
3. T: and ||
4. S3: (laugh)
5. T: I know its' it's too hectic too busy because of the ▲ holiday (hand gesture)
6. S3: Oh, holidays ↑ .
7. T: Em (nodding)
8. S3: (laugh) Yeah (nodding)
9. T: We have holiday on Monday.
10. S3: Yeah, Monday, so | they don't come ↑
11. T: (shaking head) Yeah.
12. ▲ You didn't come either (touching the tutee)
13. S3: Oh, yeah
Because
14. T: (laugh)
15. S3: I | I write it today ↑
16. T: (silence)
17. S3: So ▲ Wednesday
18. T: Oh, yeah (nodding)
19. S3: Do I need to come to | in Monday?
20. T: *No no no
21. S3: (laugh)

22. T: No no no no (hand gesture and laugh)
23. S3: (laugh) I am sorry.
24. T: No no no no yeah [it's holiday.
25. S3: (laugh) I need to
26. T: Ok, yeah
27. S3: Ok, bye.
28. T: You should | not be absent.
29. S3: Yeah (laugh)
30. T: You've already
31. S3: Yes, I am very concerned about
32. T: [this problem.
Yeah, you've already missed five hours.
33. S3: (laugh) five hours.
I can't be late. I can't be absent.
34. T: Right.
35. S3: (laugh) OK.
36. T: And you are supposed to graduate?
37. S3: (.02) Graduate ↑
38. T: What year are you in?
39. S3: (.03) I mean | I can't be late for
40. T: Oh ↓ (nodding)
41. S3: every class.
42. T: Oh, oh (nodding) yeah.
43. S3: XXX one O seven (laugh)
44. T: Yeah, yeah (nodding and smiling) OK.
45. And | I remember that ah || on email you said that you have to take this course this quarter (hand gesture) | for graduation.
46. S3: (.02) Oh, no *because I should take one o seven one o eight
47. T: Oh (Nodding)
48. S3: and the
49. T: One ten
50. S3: One ten, yeah.
51. T: Yeah (nodding).

There appeared two misunderstanding events in Extract 4 regarding

the holiday break at line 12-18 and S3's attendance at line 36-46. Each misunderstanding is marked by silence and hedging between the teacher and S3. The teacher tried to set some distance from students in general in order to maintain students' negative face at line 5 by attributing their absence in tutorials to the holiday. The use of personal-point-of view disclaimers, 'I know', at the beginning of the line 5 indicated the teacher's hedge in criticizing the students who missed the tutorials. The misunderstanding between the teacher and S3 started at line 12 when the teacher referred to the holiday for S3's absence in class but S3 interpreted the absence as the one in tutorials. This misunderstanding derived from line 10 when S3 assumed that those absent students missed their tutorials on holiday. Responding to S3's detachment herself from the other students with regard to the absence in class on holiday at line 10, the teacher reminded S3 of her own absence in class on holiday just like the other students at line 12. Teacher's use of 'you' to refer to S3, which is contrastive to 'they' in S3's remarks, and 'either' indicated the teacher's disagreement with S3's previous talk. In response to this disagreement, S3 defended herself by saying that she signed up for tutorial today at line 15 as a rationale for her absence on holiday. The teacher confronted the miscommunication at line 16 and stayed silent for a while being hesitant to react to S3's previous talk. In response to the teacher's hesitance to maintain S3's negative face, S3 provided additional information to confirm her intent by increasing the volume at line 17. The teacher indicated her agreement by verbal ('Oh, yeah') and nonverbal (with nodding) signals at the following turn. With the teacher's agreement, S3 tried to save teacher's negative face by asking a rhetorical question to confirm the class schedule at line 19 and even explicitly apologized to the teacher at line 23. The reason for the extensive interactions about S3's attendance issue is revealed at line 28-33; S3 missed the first week of the quarter due to her loss of passport, which made her already reach the five-hour absence limit for the course. That is why the teacher and S3 agreed with the fact that S3 should not be absent or late for the class any more in the interaction.

In addition to the previous misunderstanding about S3's attendance issues, another misunderstanding emerges at line 36 when the teacher shifted the topic into S3's graduation schedule, which the teacher believed is related to her attendance issue. However, S3 did not catch up

this topic shift and asked a question after silence at line 37. At line 38, the teacher added a question about S3's graduation schedule in order to take over S3's burden of her figuring out the new topic shift, but the S3 did not answer the question and brought up the previous topic of her attendance issue at line 39. S3's refusal of answering the teacher's question is manifested in her silence at line 39, but S3 tried to preserve the teacher's negative face by using personal-point-of-view disclaimer, "I mean", in her topic shift to the previous one. In response to S3's refusal of taking a new topic and returning to the prior topic along with the use of negative politeness strategies, the teacher respected S3's reaction with a nonverbal agreement of nodding at line 40 and finally expressed a verbal agreement, "Yeah, OK", at line 44. The teacher's smiling at line 44 showed her uptake of S3's invitation of laughter at line 43, but the teacher did not laugh out but smiled instead, which causes weak sequential laughter. This might be because the teacher did not want to disapprove S3's refusal to take the new topic at line 39 although she herself still did not satisfy her own communicative goal of embarking a topic shift. In these interactions, the teacher seemed to comply herself with S3 resulting in more equal relations with S3.

However, the teacher tried to re-initiate the declined topic at line 45 by starting her talk with a conjunction "and", treating the topic as something 'additional' that had not been proposed before. This move also had a function of preserving S3's negative face in that the teacher tried not to remind S3 of S3's declining her suggestion of topic shift before. Also, the teacher showed two pauses in her talk and used personal-point-of-view disclaimer, "I remember", to mitigate any potential FTA towards S3. In response to the teacher's effort, S3 showed pauses at line 46 and finally acknowledged the suggested topic by explaining the email that the teacher indicated. S3's changing voice in referring to the conjunction for the explanation, "because", indicated her effort to satisfy the teacher's wants to discuss the given topic. Although the teacher applied several negative politeness strategies as discussed above, she still adopted a powerful move at line 45 for her own communicative goal. The S3's following elaborated explanation seemed to be a part of effort to serve the teacher's communicative goal, and the effort led the teacher to actively support S3's talk by adding the appropriate information for S3 at line 49 as well as the nonverbal agreement by

nodding at line 47.

In this extract, the teacher and S3 applied diverse negative politeness strategies to maintain the interlocutor's negative face and to serve their own and the interlocutor's communicative goals. The analyses above illustrate how strategically the teacher and S3 used negative politeness strategies, still trying to put forward their own communicative goals. In such complex process, their participation structure did undergo dynamic shifts, not staying in any particular dominant structure of participation in tutorial interactions. Besides the dynamic aspect of interactions, this strategy usage seemed to contribute to mitigate pre-existing asymmetry in their interaction, if any, although the present study does not assume any pre-fixed dominance participation structure between the teacher and students unlike traditional institutional discourse assuming the inherent entitlement of authority to the teachers.

5. Discussion

The present study explored the use of politeness strategies and the concomitant dynamics of dominance in the participation structure of non-writing tutorial interactions. In the non-writing tutorial discourse frame, the primary communicative goals of the students and the teacher appeared to build or consolidate their social relationships, rather than to achieve the default educational objectives of improving students' L2 writing skills. This relationship building tutorial interactions can be considered to be related to the "individual attention" that the institution proposed to emphasize on this individual practice as indicated in the course description. Due to the lack of obvious guidelines about tutorial practice from the program, it is not clear whether such individual attention encompasses 'social' or 'relational' attention as well as the primary 'educational' attention to improve L2 students' writing skills. The consequent flexibility of interpreting and conducting the practice based on such 'elastic' guidelines presumably makes it possible for the teacher and students to actively co-construct non-writing tutorial interactions as authoritative agents of the discourse events. The attention to non-writing tutorial interactions in this study expands the scope of research on writing tutorials by including the aspect of building social relationships between teachers and students through tu-

torial interactions. Relatively more equal dominance participation structure observed in non-writing tutorials is partly accounted for the “relation-oriented” communicative goals in this discourse frame, distinguished from the traditional “instruction-oriented” tutorial discourse frame such as ‘writing-discussion’ or ‘procedural’ frames (Mackiewicz, 1999).

With regard to using compliments and sharing common grounds as primary positive politeness strategies, it is worth discussing the gender-specific solidarity. According to Herbert (1990), the *I (really) like/love NP* formula found in Extract 1 and 2 is a strikingly frequent form of compliments in women’s speech. This formula reflects women’s emphasis on personal perspectives with respect to complimentary words. Sharing common grounds in tutorial interactions are achieved by bringing up women-favored topics such as appearance, more specifically beauty items such as shoes and perfumes, and male preferences, one of the most catchy topics for women talks. Using compliments during writing tutorials is discussed in the literature (e.g., Bell & Youmans 2006), but those praise statements are mostly text-based as a preparatory interactional movement toward the critique of student drafts. In this sense, those writing-interaction triggering compliments need to be distinguished from the compliments for solidarity building. Considering that a primary function of preserving positive face is to build and consolidate solidarity (Brown & Levinson 1987), these particular politeness strategies are arguably used to establish gender-specific solidarity. This gender-specific solidarity is not achieved in a unidirectional way, i.e., from the teacher to the student or vice versa. Instead, both the teacher and students actively engaged in intensifying their female-solidarity and achieved power equilibrium in their participation structure, acting and reacting to the interlocutor’s use of positive politeness strategies.

The use of negative politeness strategies was observed in the situations when the interactants’ face could be possibly impeded due to miscommunication or self-deprecation. Facing these FTAs, the teacher and students appeared to avoid direct disagreement or disapproval for the miscommunication by showing temporal agreement or hedges towards the interlocutors. However, they tend to maintain their communicative goals by “politely” declining the uptake or by readdressing the declined topics. Such complex balancing between preserving the inter-

locutor's negative face and pursuing their own communicative goals contributed to the dynamics of dominance in participation structure between the interactants. This dynamics of participation structure towards power equilibrium between the teacher and the student suggest more complex nature of non-writing tutorial interactions.

This power equilibrium achieved by the use of politeness strategies in non-writing NNS-NNS tutorial interactions proposes more complex dynamics of the interactions and related caveats in interpreting the present study results. First of all, the expected teacher dominant participation structure in the course-embedded writing tutorial turned out to be not the case. Compared to writing center tutorials, course-embedded writing tutorials are known to impose more authority upon the teacher as discussed above. However, the teacher's active use of positive and negative politeness strategies suggests that the teacher attempts to balance power in the interaction. The teacher's attempts could have been drawn from her need of maintaining more intense relationships with the students during the 10-week quarter, while writing center tutors do not usually need to maintain such a long and close relationship with their tutees. Secondly, the tutor dominant NNS-NNS tutorial participation structure (YJ Kim 2007) also does not appear to be applied into the present NNS-NNS tutorial interactions. However, contextual differences between the present study and the study of YJ Kim (2007) need to be taken into account for the different results. Despite the similar exclusion of gender differences in both studies, the contexts of both studies are significantly different from each other. For example, the present study was situated in ESL context, while YJ Kim's study in EFL context. Furthermore, the present study has the NNS teacher who is older than the students with a different nationality and first language background, while the study of YJ Kim recruits the NNS tutor who is younger than the tutees with a similar nationality and first language background. Even under the same overarching NNS-NNS tutorial interaction type, the differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds between NNS teachers and NNS students are expected to substantially influence the power alignment of participation structures. As Mackiewicz (1999: 81) insightfully indicated, "the power a tutor projects is determined by the discourse activity being co-constructed at the moment". In this sense, it is essential to further study how different contextual variables interact with the moment-by-moment tutorial

discourse events establishing 'situational' participation structures. Thirdly, the distinctive tutorial discourse frame in the present study, i.e., non-writing tutorial interactions, also needs to be considered. As the content of interactions frames distinctive discourse activities, the topics of tutorial interactions determine "how and whether politeness forms are used" (Mackiewicz 1999: 81). Thus, the power equilibrium observed in the present study might be attributed to the non-writing topics of target tutorial interactions. With more instructional writing-discussion topics, more hierarchical power alignment is possibly constructed by interactants.

Despite some caveats discussed above, the present preliminary study still provides a meaningful pedagogical implication for course-embedded L2 writing tutorials. As Taylor (1993: 25) indicated, most breakdowns in writing tutorials are attributed to teachers' "lack of interpersonal skills, his or her inability to share the responsibility for the conference with the student and to adapt the pace of the instruction to the student's ability to absorb it" rather than teacher's lack of writing skills. As writers of second language, L2 students are believed to face more complex challenges which require more tailored individual attention. Considering the primary interactional function of building social relationships in the non-writing tutorial discourse frame suggested by the present study, further studies on the potential pedagogical utility of the non-writing tutorial interactions need to be conducted. Successful establishment of social relationships during individual course-embedded tutorial sessions possibly makes a contribution to create more 'collaborative' and 'counseling' atmosphere for L2 writing instruction by enhancing the rapport between teachers and students.

One limitation of the present study is related to the assumed "universality" of the notion of 'face' across languages and cultural backgrounds in the theoretical framework of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Although they acknowledged the fact that this universal notion is "subject to cultural specifications of many sorts," they articulated their stance by saying that "notions of face naturally link up to some of the most fundamental cultural ideas" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 13) legitimating the universality of the notion. Their assertion about universality of face has been criticized for its "culturally specific conceptualization of the term" (Bayraktarogly & Sifianou 2001: 4), which delimits potentially different conceptualizations of face in different culture and languages into the cultural-specific, particularly

Western, notion of the term. As the participants in the present research are from different Asian cultural backgrounds (South Korea and China) in spite of the shared NNS identity participating in the intercultural communication in L2 (English), their interactions involve diverse linguistic and cultural aspects. In this respect, their conceptions of politeness and FTAs would be possibly different from those of Brown and Levinson. As Doğançay-Aktuna and Kamişh (2001) insightfully indicated, interactants' perception of face and politeness substantially relies on particular contexts in which their interactions are embedded and particular communication goals that they co-construct under the given contexts. The present study decided not to consider this issue in adopting the notion of face and politeness strategies as the analytical framework of the collected data, but the arguably cultural-specific conceptualization of face and politeness strategies was found to be applicable to the given contexts of NNS-NNS interactions that involve multiple linguistic and cultural aspects. Although the successful application of the concepts in the present study would not be sufficient evidence of the legitimacy of universality of the notions, it can be a part of meaningful evidence for the applicability of the notions particularly into Asian cultural contexts. Further research on the applicability of the notions to more various intercultural interactions is needed to examine whether the notion can “naturally link up to some of the most fundamental cultural ideas” as Brown and Levinson asserted. It is also essential to further study interactants' actual conceptualization of face and politeness strategy use across different contexts. The present preliminary study on NNS female teacher-NNS female student interactions could serve as a base-line study for those larger-scale studies involving diverse linguistic and contextual variables. Those further studies on writing tutorial interactions are expected to expand and extend the existing understanding of writing tutorial interactions and the notion of face and politeness strategies as well.

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Appendix

Transcription symbols (Bloome et al. 2009, p. 75, modified)

<p>↑ = rising intonation at end of utterance ↓ = falling intonation XXXX = undecipherable</p> <p><u>stress</u> “reading from written text” ▼ = less volume ▲ = more volume ▲▲ = greatly increased volume</p> <p><u>Uttered with increase speed</u> = short pause = long pause = interrupted by the next line</p>	<p>- = uncompleted word</p> <p>┌ = line 1 = overlap └ = line 2</p> <p>vowel+ = elongated vowel * = voice, pitch, or style change *words* = boundaries of voice, pitch, or style change</p> <p>Nonverbal behavior or transcriber comments for clarification purpose within parentheses</p>
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