

# **Importing the Writing Center to a Japanese College: A Critical Investigation**

Submitted by Lindsay Mack to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education in TESOL, January 2014

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to enrich understandings of the major issues encountered when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese university. Specifically, the thesis examines how students and tutors perceive the challenges experienced in EFL tutoring and the various roles tutors adopt during EFL writing tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner-intermediate students. A mixed method approach is employed utilizing different methods that combine qualitative and quantitative data. Four data collection methods were utilized: pre and post-semester interviews with writing tutors: student questionnaires from a sample size of 24: 30 tutorial observations: and two tutor training workshops (quasi-focus group). Symbolic interactionism (SI) provided a framework for analyzing tutors' roles and their practices during EFL writing tutorials. This view assumes that roles emerge from, and are significantly shaped by, interactions in specific social settings. It was found that writing tutors adopt the following roles: proofreader, translator, coach, teacher, mediator, and timekeeper based on their interaction with the individual student. Each role was adopted as a reaction to a challenge but also created new problems. Many of the roles the tutors adopted in this study parallel the research on roles tutors adopt in the ESL writing center, however in EFL tutoring these roles are magnified. For example, in this study tutors play both the role of teacher and mediator to a much larger degree. The translator role however is unique to EFL tutoring. The roles put forth encompass a different way for tutors to think about effective tutoring in an EFL setting with beginner-intermediate students. This study contributes a deeper understanding as to how administrators and writing tutors can better conduct writing center tutorials with EFL students.

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## **Acronyms and abbreviations**

ALT:	Assistant Language Teacher
CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
EAP:	English for Academic Purposes
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
HOC:	Higher Order Concerns
IELTS:	International English Language Testing System
IU:	International University
JET:	Japanese Exchange and Teaching
IWCA:	International Writing Center Association
LOC:	Lower Order Concerns
L1:	First Language
L2:	Second Language
MEXT:	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
RQ:	Research Question
SALC:	Self-Access Learning Center
SI:	Symbolic Interactionism
TOEFL:	Test of English as a Foreign Language
WC:	Writing Center

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The inception of this thesis began with a simple email. A writing tutor, hired to help students with their essays wrote to me, as coordinator of the writing tutors, about the problems she encountered tutoring beginner-intermediate level Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL)<sup>1</sup> students. (Long winded) She wrote:

(When working with EFL students) I found it difficult to apply the approach like you trained us. I think the point is that students are from lower level English classes. For instance, I asked questions in order to help them first identify their own mistakes, and they couldn't realize what the mistakes were until I told them the answer. The problem is when it came to other similar mistakes in the same paper, they couldn't recognize those mistakes either. I had the feeling that they didn't even try much, whether because they were too shy or they just wanted me to correct everything for them.

This problem is not unique. In fact, other writing tutors working at the same center reported similar issues. These tutors have been trained to help Japanese EFL students employing a directive approach within a framework of collaboration. Originating in a North American context to use with English as a Second Language (ESL)<sup>2</sup> students, this approach advocates combining direct discussions of language and vocabulary throughout the tutoring session (Blau & Hall, 2002) while still collaborating with the student so that the student maintains ultimate authority over his or her own work. However, in reality, when the writing tutors sat down to tutor the students, they were having difficulties in realizing this approach. Moreover, there were problems due to miscommunication or due to the students' ability in English and different expectations of the role the tutee and tutor should play. Faced with the scenario above, the impetus for research that would investigate and explore these issues in greater detail was

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<sup>1</sup> I apply Brown's 2001's definition of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) to refer to English students in Japan where English is not a major language of commerce and education.

<sup>2</sup> I apply Brown's 2001's definition of ESL (English as a Second Language). In these studies, students live in an English speaking country, study academic content in English and use English outside of class to communicate with other students (Brown, 2001).

created. Therefore, this thesis will examine the challenges and issues encountered when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese university.

### **1.1 Writing centers in the international arena**

The writing center, first developed in the United States in the 1930s, is a space where students can take their writing assignments to work with a tutor in a one-to-one setting based on a peer tutoring model (Williams & Severino, 2004). Originally, this service was designed for native speakers of English. However, in the 1990s, these services expanded to meet the diverse needs of tutees as many ESL students began to use the writing center (WC). This influx of ESL writers spawned a prolific amount of research addressing the role of the WCs in helping these writers within an English speaking country and the interaction between the Native English speaker tutor and the ESL tutee (Blau & Hall, 2002; Linville, 2009; Minett, 2009; Powers, 1993; Thonus, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002; Williams, 2004; Williams, & Severino 2004). From this research came the accepted model of the directive approach within the framework of collaboration. However, this model is designed for advanced students who are immersed in an all English environment and take their content college courses in English.

Currently, writing center services are expanding to include help for ESL and EFL writers, not only in the United States or other English speaking contexts, but around the globe and the number of university writing centers has grown steadily in many parts of the world (Brauer, 2009). In Japan alone, there are now approximately 15 writing centers in universities across Japan. Unfortunately, there is little research on foreign language tutoring for EFL students especially dealing with beginner and

intermediate EFL students in these international contexts. Moreover, little research exists on how the approaches of typical North American writing centers are adapted or are able to adapt to fit Japanese contexts and needs. Without this research, the question remains as to what the appropriate approach is for writing tutors working with novice English learners within a Japanese environment.

In order to address this issue, this thesis will examine the challenges and issues encountered during writing tutoring with:

1. Japanese students
2. beginner-intermediate level EFL learners.

In this introductory chapter, I situate this small-scale exploratory study in the context of broader theoretical issues among the challenges of setting up a writing center in Japan. This study is locally bound and its findings cannot be generalized. However, its implications may be of interest to the growing field of international writing centers.

### **1.1.1 North American ESL writing tutorial model**

Up until the 1990s it was generally believed that the writing center tutor should follow the non-directive approach; the tutor, through collaboration with the tutee, facilitates the process of letting the student writer discover their own meaning (Shamoon & Burns, 2008). This philosophy emphasizes a Socratic approach to tutorials. The tutor is meant to avoid explicit teaching and only elicit suggestions for the tutee. Most tutors are trained to ask specific questions, prompt writer reflection, and most importantly ensure that the tutor does not appropriate the student's words, i.e. the student maintains ownership over his or her own work (Thonus, 2004).

However, as an increasing number of ESL students began using the writing center in the 1990s, researchers found that the tutorial style that was aimed at native speakers was not always appropriate for ESL learners who wanted a more directive approach (Powers, 1993; Severino, 1993; Thonus, 1993). L2 writers often have problems with the identification and fulfillment of Western essay expectations because ESL learners' linguistic, content, contextual, and rhetorical schemata differ (Reid, 1994). Some differences stem from different rhetoric styles in their first language, educational and academic backgrounds or simply their lack of knowledge of the English language. This carries a huge burden for ESL writers because they compose in their second language (L2). Many L2 writers come to WCs with the expectation that their tutor will teach them their grammatical and structural mistakes (Williams & Severino, 2004). Furthermore, tutors found that they could not elicit answers to questions that the students did not know the answer to. Nonnative speakers have more difficulty noticing their grammatical and lexical mistakes. Due to this, writing center research advocates that tutors establish a more directive and authoritative role during writing conferences with ESL tutees (Blau & Hall, 2002; Linville, 2009; Minett, 2009; Powers, 1993; Thonus, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002; Williams, 2004; Williams, & Severino 2004). As mentioned previously, this more directive approach advocates explicit instruction from the tutors on matters of language and vocabulary but still collaborating with the student so that the student ultimately maintains authority over his or her own work.

Currently, writing center literature continually warns tutors against acting as proofreaders or editors. Writing and language are seen as different aspects and are labeled higher-order concerns (HOC) and lower-order concerns (LOC) respectively.

HOC relate to cohesion, organization, and development while lower-order concerns are usually lexical or grammatical errors found in each individual sentence. Checking the LOC, or line by line editing, is characterized as proofreading which tutors are told to avoid, even with ESL students (Cogie et al., 1999). In the collaborative approach, tutors are taught to address higher-order concerns first during tutorial sessions because they impede the success of the whole essay.

However, L2 papers are different than native English speakers in relation to HOC and LOC. The L2 mistake in grammar is much more likely to affect meaning-making than simple typos found in L1 papers (Nakamaru, 2010a; Nakamaru, 2010b). Research on how the tutor should attend to sentence level issues is mixed. Staben and Nordhause (2004) urge against sentence level instruction because it robs both ESL students and their tutors of an important conversation about academic culture and expectations. *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring* (Gillespie & Lerner, 2008) and other writing center researchers, Carol Severino (1993), Muriel Harris and Tony Silva (1993), also encourage writers to continue to put higher order concerns first, even with L2 learners.

At present, the advice given to tutors about responding to language is scant. This advice revolves around grammar and explicit modeling. Tutors are advised to identify a pattern of error and teach the student how to correct the error by learning and applying those grammar rules (Linville, 2009). If tutors encounter a problem they cannot explain, then “it is best to look it up together in a grammar book” (Severino, 2009, p. 61). As mentioned earlier, advice about responding to language in tutorials is specifically aimed for dealing with ESL writers in an English speaking context.

## **1.2 Rationale for the study**

Researchers have been dealing with issues in U.S. writing centers for some thirty years, but they have a different impact when raised in a local context of a newly created writing center. Bergman, Brauer, Cedillo, De los Reyes, Gustafsson, Haviland, Spangenberg (2009) explored writing centers in a European context. They concluded that the “ answers and approaches that U.S. writing centers have developed cannot be simply imported and imposed elsewhere...we need to tread carefully when considering who, in short, might be appropriating whose culture and to what effect” (p. 205).

I agree with Bergman et al. in that we need to think carefully about how the WC model fits into the local context. Ronesi (2009) describes the development of a three credit training course for multilingual tutors in the United Arab Emirates. According to Ronesi (2009) “Peer tutor trainers are challenged to fashion training programs to suit the unique local needs, as training literature has yet to address contexts outside North America” (p. 75). Overall there is a lack of study on writing centers outside North America and there is yet to be any major study exploring writing centers within an Asian context, let alone Japan.

Writing centers based on the North American concept have served as a model for writing centers in Japan since 2004 (Johnston, 2009). However, in the current dialogue about approaches, little mention is given to the strategies tutors should use with beginner and intermediate EFL students in local contexts or specific strategies to employ with Japanese learners. At the moment, the ESL model is being imported into Japan, yet there is a debate as to whether this model based on North American writing

pedagogy is an appropriate one. There have been calls for employing a more directive approach rather than a collaborative one when working with Japanese EFL students. Yasuda (2006) advocates tutors to “be willing to relinquish the orthodoxy of collaborative frameworks and permit more realistic and appropriate contact zones for tutorials with Japanese EFL students” (p.5). However, her recommendations are not based on empirical research.

Alastair Pennycook (2001) writes in *Power and Inequality in Language Education*:

Thus as applied linguists and English language teachers we should become political actors engaged in a critical pedagogical project to use English to oppose dominant discourses of the west and to help articulation of counter discourses in English (p. 55).

I believe that the writing center model that is being exported to Asia is perhaps one of these dominant discourses. With the advent of international writing centers we need to re-conceptualize how the writing centers fit into local contexts. This research therefore explores Japanese students’ assumptions and expectations of a writing center tutorial.

### **1.3 Japanese EFL students**

The students using the writing peer tutorial service in this study are Japanese college students. Often Japanese students enter university with a passive understanding of English. They have studied it for five years as part of the national curriculum, yet they have trouble with the production element as their assessments throughout high school and junior high school have been only in the form of multiple choice testing. Nozaki, (cited in Wadden, 1993) calls Japanese students ‘false beginners’ because they have been trained to read and analyze sentences grammatically but have not had practice in developing speaking and writing skills.

#### **1.4 Personal commitment to this project**

As a Coordinator of writing tutors, I have an investment to improve the standard of writing tutorials. I want writing tutors to feel confident when working with tutees and for tutees to feel empowered. Students should leave the tutorial session feeling as though they benefited from the session in some way. At the moment there is an overarching anxiety felt by the tutors that if they comply with the students' wishes to focus on grammar and other surface errors they are only proofreading the paper, perpetuating the image of the writing help service as an 'editing or fixing service', but if they choose to ignore the students' request and focus on the whole text, the student is not happy and perhaps will not return to the writing help service. Grimm (2009) addresses this predicament. According to Grimm:

Within the framework of Global Englishes, a writing center needs to develop new ways of responding to requests from novice users of English who want help 'proofreading' their papers. The consequence of not proofreading is politically significant, and in the context of linguistic bigotry it is unfair to simply deny the request (2009, p. 18).

I affirm her ideas and feel it is imperative to think about new ways to respond to these novice students, perhaps through a new approach to writing center tutorials. I hope to address this dilemma through my research.

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

As mentioned previously, the major impetus for this study was the desire to improve writing tutorials in an Asian setting. Moreover, writing center theory and research predominantly come from only one perspective, a Western one designed for ESL students in English speaking countries. This exploratory investigation represents one of the first studies carried out on the writing center model in Japan. It provides a new perspective and explores whether the ESL writing tutorial model needs to be

expanded or revised to account for working with beginner-intermediate EFL students in a Japanese context. This study is significant as it investigates the challenges and issues writing centers face in their continual and increasing international proliferation of the writing center.

### **1.6 Research questions**

This study utilizes a mixed method approach aligned with the interpretive paradigm to investigate the challenges encountered with beginner-intermediate EFL students. My specific research questions focus on the issues tutors encounter when tutoring EFL students writing short essays and paragraphs. My primary aim is to investigate tutorials with EFL students in order to better understand the nature of the problems encountered in the tutorial. My four research questions are:

1. What do students perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?
2. What do writing tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?
3. What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?
4. What are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner-intermediate students?

RQ1 and 2 investigate the writing center from the tutors' and students' perspectives. Often tutees' interpretations are ignored in writing center research (Thonus, 2001). Therefore, analyzing their perspective will add a richness in detail that can inform theorizing about writing centers in Japanese and other Asian contexts. I hope that, by including their perceptions of the challenges in EFL tutoring, this thesis can offer a

better understanding of the context of writing center interaction in Asia. A survey was employed to answer RQ1 while tutor interviews and quasi-focus groups were employed to answer RQ2. The quasi-focus groups were actually tutor training sessions where the tutors met and discussed issues they encountered. Although it mirrored a focus group, it is termed quasi-focus group because its first objective was as a training session for the tutors.

RQ3 is intended to be a broader, more encompassing question to elicit the overall issues and problems encountered by tutors, tutees and the administration. Through this question, I intend to deepen an understanding of the pedagogical implications of an ESL model being utilized in a Japanese environment with beginning-intermediate English level Japanese students. The surveys and interviews triangulated with the additional methods, tutorial observations and quasi-focus group, were employed to answer this question.

RQ4 was not originally conceived when I began this thesis but developed after my initial analysis. I discovered that the writing tutors perform various roles during EFL tutorials, and some of these roles are new to writing center theory. Therefore, through answering my three original research questions I consequently answer a fourth research question: what are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner- intermediate students?

As mentioned in more detail in the methodology section, symbolic interactionism provides a framework for analyzing tutors and their practices during EFL writing tutorials. An original outcome anticipated from this research is the understanding of what is happening in writing centers in Asia. These insights can be shared with others in similar contexts globally.

## **1.7 Summary**

In this chapter I have sought to explain the rationale, focus and significance of this exploratory study of the writing center service in a Japanese university context. In Chapter Two, I describe the background and analyze the issues surrounding this study in the context of the Self Access Learning Center (SALC) and a Japanese University. In Chapter Three, I review the research literature concerning the writing tutorial theory, ESL tutorial model, characteristics of beginner-intermediate Japanese EFL students writing, and the adoption of writing centers in Asia. In Chapter Four, I describe the methodology, data collection and analysis methods. In Chapters Five, I will present the data and discuss the findings, while in Chapter Six I consider the conclusions and implications resulting from the findings and make recommendations for other writing center programs in Japan and for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONTEXT CHAPTER**

In this chapter, I outline the background of internationalization, writing centers, and English education in Japan. In doing so, I will explore the current discourse regarding these main issues which serve as an important backdrop to this study on writing tutorials. I will conclude with a detailed analysis of the specific context in which this study takes place, by providing details about the University, Self Access Learning Center (SALC) and the writing help service.

#### **2.1 Internationalization defined**

Since the 1980s, the term ‘internationalization’ has been commonly employed in higher education, however the meaning can be interpreted in different ways and varies greatly depending on the context within which it is used. It is often confused with globalization (Altbach, 2004). The current prevailing definition is that of Knight’s (2003) all-encompassing explanation of internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (p. 2). This definition is broad enough to include many different strategies and initiatives of higher education institutions both in developing and developed countries. However, it is important to note, internationalization is conceived differently depending on the country’s status. In developed countries, internationalization is more “commercially-driven by an entrepreneurial spirit...undertaking more profit oriented transnational programs” (Huang, 2007, p. 51). For developing countries, internationalization is influenced more by academic factors and often includes students and faculty studying abroad in order to enhance the quality of education and research activities in their home country

(Huang, 2007). For the context of this study, a small international university in Japan, internationalization refers to “accepting incoming international students, developing internationalized curricula, and integrating international dimensions into teaching, learning and research activities into home institutions” (Huang, 2007, p. 49). International dimensions can be anything ranging from the integration of international students to the creation of new degree programs taught in English. This definition fits the context of this study because it takes place on a bilingual campus with education in both English (for international students) and Japanese (for domestic students). The international dimensions are the integration of an English content course curriculum.

### **2.1.1 Internationalization and English**

English language programs have played an increasingly important role in the internationalization of curriculum in higher education. As mentioned, this study takes place at a dual language university where 50% of the courses are taught in English. One reason for the inclusion of English language programs is that they are able to attract incoming international students. Huang (2006) points out that English programs are also an “important way to internationalize the curricula in one’s own institution and upgrade quality and standards” (p. 537). Furthermore, at present, English language products and programs dominate the international academic marketplace (Altbach, 2004). It is worth noting that with the export of English language products and programs conducted in English, one must ask, whose culture and language are dominant in internationalization. As Jiang (2008) wrote “With the global spread of English and western ideology, we are running the risk of being Anglo-Saxonized, Anglo-Americanized or Westernized” (p. 351). One of the English language programs that is being exported is the writing center. They are now being established throughout different universities around the world and most follow a

structure similar to those in North America. An important question is whether this service is appropriate for the particular needs of EFL students and the challenges they face. This subject is discussed in more detail in the literature review section.

### **2.1.2 Japanese internationalization**

Internationalization in higher education in Japan started in the 1980s, specifically in 1983 with the launch of the 100,000 Plan which set the target to recruit 100,000 international students into Japan by the year 2000 (Huang, 2007). This plan did indeed increase the number of international students, however, the international reputation of Japanese higher education institutions did not develop as expected. In fact, according to Huang (2007), Japan's basic character of internationalization is mainly "a process of catching up with advanced countries and approaching the current centers of learning, mostly identified with the English-speaking countries in Europe and even more so the United States" (pp. 58-59). In addition, the main way Japan promotes internationalization of higher education is simply by attracting more international students. In order to increase the number of international students the government launched a new program, Global 30 in 2009 designed to enable 30 select universities to recruit 300,000 international students to Japan by 2020. The university where this study takes place was not one of the universities selected for the Global 30 program because it already has a large international student body, as will be discussed in 2.3 Institutional context.

One reason the Japanese government is launching these mass plans to recruit international students is to deal with the threat of the *shoshika* (the declining birth rate) and *koreika* (the aging population) (Rivers, 2010). Individual private institutions are aided and regulated by the central government in order to enhance the enrollment

of international students. The Japanese Government is aware that this problem of the declining birthrate will only increase over the next 40 years.

How does Japan attract international students? In the 90s, a great deal of money was put into higher education to develop programs specifically created for international students. These programs were usually taught in English and were both degree and non-degree programs. In addition to undergraduate programs, the number of graduate programs closely associated with an international orientation has also increased in some prestigious private universities. The context of this study takes place in one of the universities that has adopted an English medium degree program in order to attract international students.

## **2.2 Japanese education**

According to Walko (1995) the Japanese school system is designed to properly educate and socialize citizens to effectively function and work in Japan. Before entering college, the typical Japanese student has graduated from a three year senior high school (from ages 16-18). Nishino (2008) describes the Japanese secondary education context as large classes, teacher-centered lessons and limited discussion. A typical Japanese high school schedule is quite rigorous. The average high school student goes to school from April to March, six days a week, from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon (Walko, 1995). On top of their school hours most students go to 'juku' a private cram school to help prepare them for their college entrance exams (Walko, 1995). The examination system is deeply embedded into the secondary education system and Japanese society at large. Because of this, students feel a tremendous amount of pressure to pass their examination and their teachers feel pressure to prepare their students for the examination (Browne & Wada, 1998). There

seem to be both positive and negative aspects of the Japanese education system. For example, according to Bjork and Tsuneyoshi (2005), Japanese education is gaining recognition as a model education system because of the strong performance of Japanese school children in international tests and academic achievement. However, others such as Nozaki (1993) criticize the Japanese classes for being too teacher centered where students are not encouraged to speak up, volunteer answers or take initiative.

### **2.2.1 Japanese English education**

According to the Japanese government, the purpose of teaching English is to “enable Japanese people to communicate in international settings” since Japanese is not a major international language (Gottlieb, 2012, p. 65). Because of this goal, the Japanese government through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has spent a large amount of money on English teaching to promote higher achievement in English for communicative purposes, first on the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) program and then on the Strategic Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities program. Since 1987, the JET program has hired young native speakers as assistant language teachers (ALTs) to teach English in public schools. The other program, the Strategic Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities program (2003), introduced an oral communication component into the mandatory curriculum while also encouraging teachers to incorporate communicative language teaching (CLT) into the classroom (Nishino, 2008, p. 28). The most recent promotion of English education occurred in 2011 when English was introduced into all public elementary schools. Prior to this, English was not taught until Junior high school which students attend from ages 13-15.

Communicative language teaching is defined as teaching a second language for the ultimate goal of communication. This approach focuses on speaking and listening skills, writing for specific communicative purposes and reading authentic texts (Brown, 1994). It must be noted that, originally, CLT was developed for ESL purposes in Britain, North America and Australia. Here, teachers encourage communicative activities through a discovery oriented collaborative approach in small classes where students often work in pairs or groups (Holliday, 1994). The Japanese context, with big classrooms, teacher centered lessons and limited communicative needs among students, might not be compatible with CLT (Nishino, 2008, p. 29). Therefore, in reality, Japanese students are still being taught English in the traditional grammar translation method (*yakudoku*). This emphasis on the accuracy of English writing and translation has been promoted since the Meiji restoration period in the 1860s (Mckinley, 2010, p. 18). In this style, students mainly do word-by-word translation of English into Japanese. The teacher supplements this with a grammar explanation. Rarely do students vocalize English (Nishino, 2008, p. 30). Coupled with this tradition, the high-stakes entrance examinations have also hindered the reform of English education. The main purpose of the teacher in secondary school is to train students to pass the university entrance exams which mainly evaluate reading and grammatical knowledge. Teaching to the test is very important (Gorusch, 1998). Taguchi (2005) found that, because of these entrance exams, teachers often do not employ CLT in the oral communication classes but instead use choral repetition.

Unfortunately, this grammar translation method requires students to learn an abstract de-contextualized language (Gorusch, 1998). Typical English study in a Japanese public school consists of rote memorization of isolated vocabulary and grammar tests

which are based on items that conform to rules that the students do not understand (Myers, 2003, p. 53). By the end of junior high school they have studied English for over 300 hours and probably know 1,000 words. Then they continue to study in high school and, for the students continuing onto college, most have mastered what they were taught but their knowledge and especially their fluency is still very limited (Helgesen, 1987). So despite having studied for long periods of time, Japanese English learners are seen as ‘false beginners’ because they are students who have studied and attained language skills in some areas, such as vocabulary and grammar, but because this instruction was limited in focus function at a beginning level (Helgesen, 1987). Jack Richards referred to Japanese students as having ‘the eternal false beginner syndrome’ (Richards, 2011). He describes this as a cycle where Japanese students learn some English in primary school, and then they learn some more in junior high school and high school but cumulatively they really do not learn very much. Then they go to college and they have start all over again, usually with basic books (Richards, 2011).

These false beginners have acquired two strengths, a fair-sized vocabulary, and a passive understanding of basic grammar. However English is still very abstract to them. Japanese students have been taught to translate comprehension questions but not taught to speak, develop their listening skills or write in English. Instead, they translate words, phrases, sentences and passages from Japanese to English (Wachs, 1993, p. 73). English writing is assessed by looking at the accuracy of the language, not the fluency.

### **2.2.2 English writing**

Writing in English is not assessed in the University entrance exams. According to Hamp-Lyons (2007), this is because it is difficult to assess and requires knowledge the assessors do not have due to limited language proficiency. A study by Ueda (1999) found that writing activities in the CLT approach, such as free writing, have been mostly ignored by secondary teachers. In another study by Kobayakawa (2011), it was found that the majority of English text books used in Japanese secondary schools predominantly contain controlled writing practice such as gap fills or translations with very little free writing tasks. These free writing tasks would give students the opportunity to develop writing fluency and communication abilities.

### **2.3 Institutional context**

The following study is carried out in a small multicultural university in Japan, International University (IU) (a pseudonym) hosting over 5,000 students: 3,000 domestic students from Japan and 2,500 international students from 80 different countries. Although international students come from various cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, they are predominantly from Asian countries: China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia. Half of IU's faculty is also from outside Japan. IU is unique in that it offers a dual language curriculum delivered in both English and Japanese in which 80% of undergraduate classes are held in both Japanese and English. The students taking the content classes in Japanese while simultaneously taking intensive English language classes are called *Japanese basis students* and are predominantly Japanese domestic students but also some international students. *English basis students* (predominantly international students, i.e non-Japanese students) take content classes in English and intensive Japanese

language classes. According to IU's website, the goal for the students is not only to study these languages, but to acquire a high enough level to use them as a learning medium for their content classes. By their third year, students are required to take content classes in their second language.

IU is only 13 years old, opening in 2000. It is one of the schools highlighted in the internationalization section that is trying to capitalize on the promotion of internationalization of higher education. According to IU's website, the mission of the University is to create a place where young future leaders from all over the world will come together to study, live and understand each other's cultures and ways of life.

### **2.3.1 English program at the university**

The main goal of the English program is to prepare Japanese basis students for English for Academic purposes (EAP). A broad definition of EAP is "concerned with those communication skills in English which are required for study purposes in formal education systems" (Jordan, 1997, p. 1). The specific EAP goals are written in the English curriculum's official goals (see Appendix 1 and 2). Upon entering the university, students take a placement test to appropriately assign them to the correct level. At that point, they either enter the standard track or the advanced track. Only a small minority (around 5%) enter the advanced track. The majority of the students enter the standard track and are placed in the lowest level class, Elementary English, from where they take two years of English classes. Upon completion of this standard track, students can enroll in English content lecture classes. In the advanced track, students take either one semester or one year of English depending on their placement test. They are allowed to take English lecture classes while they study English. (For a more detailed list of goals for the standard track see Appendix 1 and 2.)

## **2.4 Writing centers in Japan**

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, writing centers (first created in North America) began to proliferate. Due to this international expansion, writing centers slowly came to Japan. The first three writing centers were created in 2004 from funding provided by the Ministry of Education as one of the GP (good practice) projects (McKinley, 2010). With no prescribed Japanese model of a writing center, most Japanese writing centers relied on information from North America, and the North American writing centers as a model (Johnston et al., 2008). However, the clientele in North America compared to Japan have very different needs. As I will explore in more detail in the literature review, the main difference is that North American Writing Centers serve students who are native speakers, ESL students or international students with advanced English language skills. The international students, often exchange students at the host university for a year, are the students most similar to Japanese students, usually coming from an English as a foreign language (EFL) environment. However, in order to be accepted to a college exchange program these exchange students' English ability must be quite high, usually above 550 on the paper based TOEFL, which is equivalent to a 6 or above on IELTS (University of Sheffield, 2012; ETS, 2005). Furthermore, these students are immersed into an English only environment and are taking all their course work in English.

In contrast, in Japan, the student clientele of writing centers are usually EFL learners, with a lower ability of English. For example, in the context of this study, the majority of incoming students score between 400-450 on the paper based TOEFL which is equivalent to a 3.0-3.5 IELTS score (English Language Teaching Centre at the University of Sheffield, 2012; ETS, 2005). Outside of the classroom the EFL students

are immersed in a Japanese language environment and do not have many opportunities to speak English. They need more support for their second language not only in writing, but also in grammar, speaking, listening, and reading. By 2008, it was reported that there were 11 writing centers in Japan (Johnston et al., 2008) and currently there are approximately 15 writing centers in Japan. According to Johnston et al. (2008), writing centers in Japan, in addition to relying on an American model for development, have also developed because of the perceived needs of the university, English department and students who attend that university. Many of these centers do not focus solely on writing help but also provide student services with practical support such as writing resumes, studying for TOEIC or TOEFL exams, and providing guidance in the writing of job or study abroad applications (Johnston et al., 2010, p. 24). Therefore, writing centers in Japan have adapted to take on these varied needs of Japanese EFL learners.

#### **2.4.1 The writing help service**

At present, at IU there are two services for writing tutoring, one at the Writing Center and the other at the Self Access Learning Center. The Writing Center's service is for English basis students taking English content classes focusing on academic writing and referencing. The clientele here are the international students whose English is proficient enough to be admitted to the English basis curriculum. Usually, these students have a score of 6 or above on IELTS.

This study focuses on the other service, writing help, provided at the Self Access Learning Center (SALC). The writing help service opened in 2007 as an ad hoc service in the SALC. The SALC, a physical space, was established to help students to continue developing their language skills outside the classroom. The four room space

is equipped with a wide range of reading materials including graded readers and English test prep materials. In the SALC students receive writing help. This service is for Japanese basis students taking English language courses. The focus of this service is to help students with basic writing skills, the construction of paragraphs and at the highest level, the five paragraph essay.

Basically, from its conception, the writing help service consisted of two or three untrained graduate students helping students with their writing. There were no formal procedures or clear guidelines tutors should follow. Since then the service has changed drastically. Today, it employs eight trained writing tutors to conduct one-on-one tutoring with students in writing and speaking. These tutors, international students at the University, go through a careful recruitment and training process which I explain in further detail below. The writing service is called 'writing help' while the speaking service is called 'talk time.' These services are only available for students taking English courses. English language students are encouraged to sign up for a 30 minute slot with a writing help tutor. The SALC offers 24 writing help slots per week.

Tutors are well-versed in the North American writing center philosophy that they should "make better writers not better texts," first coined by Stephen North (1984, p. 441), meaning the goal of the tutorial is not to fix the writer's individual writing assignment but to improve the writer's overall writing strategies. The writing help service is not a 'fix it all' clinic where tutors partake in error correction only, but instead a place where the writer discusses and receives advice on writing (Haswell, 2008). Tutors are instructed to provide direct instruction and advice when needed but

within a framework that promotes student negotiation of meaning so that, ultimately, the student maintains authority over their work.

The overall aim for the writing help service is three-fold:

1. to provide undergraduates with one-to-one support for all English writing assignments in the English department;
2. to help students develop a critical awareness of their writing;
3. to help students develop an understanding of the writing process.

### **2.5 IU's English writing program**

Tutors are prepared to help all English language students in the standard track, starting from Elementary English to Upper Intermediate English. As mentioned previously, the context of the study is that of an international dual language university. Therefore, all Japanese basis students must take English classes to help prepare them for English content classes. The English program uses a standard curriculum to teach writing, in which all the assignments and rubrics that the teachers use are the same. This EAP curriculum uses a mixture of the process approach and the genre based approach to teach English writing. The process approach stresses that writing is a nonlinear process of discovery that involves several identifiable steps such as; prewriting, outlining, first draft, peer feedback, second draft, editing and the final draft (Meriweather, 1997; Zamel, 1987). The genre based approach focuses on the teaching and learning of the production of selected types of texts. Through understanding different genres as a whole, students gain an understanding of the communicative purposes and linguistic features of the texts they are required to write

(Swales, 1990). As mentioned, the university's writing program, which I will describe in the next section, uses a mixture of both of these pedagogies.

### **2.5.1 Writing instruction**

Typically, students are introduced to the specific genre of the paragraph or essay, usually expository, as this is an EAP program, through a Power Point presentation and shown the various linguistic features and communicative purposes that accompany that genre. Other genres of essays assigned include descriptive, argumentative, narrative and procedural. The students read a model paragraph or essay for homework and then individually construct the writing assignment through a process approach. In this approach, the student writes many drafts, revising based on teacher and peer feedback. The type of writing assigned depends on the level of the student. By way of illustration, in Elementary English, the prompts are more descriptive and expressive asking students to write about themselves. An example of a prompt is, "Describe your home town" or "What kind of party would you like to organize for your birthday?" However, in Intermediate English, students are asked to critically analyze a topic. An example of a prompt at this level would be; "Does Violence on TV and in video games cause children to be violent?" or "Should downloading music from the internet for free be legal?"

It should be noted however that, although the process writing approach informs IU's English writing curriculum, in practice, this approach is not fully achieved. Part of the process approach involves students participating in peer reviews and having opportunities to renegotiate their own writing with redrafts. Contrary to this, in this context, most teachers comment on every draft. Even though many classes conduct peer review, the students usually only follow the teacher's feedback since they view

the teacher as the expert. This leaves the student with little opportunity to practice revising on their own (Muncie, 2000).

In addition, it should be noted that at IU, the individual teacher largely determines how writing is taught. Although the procedure I described is advised by each course's level coordinator, it is up to the teacher to decide the exact procedures by which students will learn to write. In relation to teachers, it should be mentioned that the majority of them (35 out of 40) are native English speakers. Only 3 of out of those 40 are native Japanese speakers.

For this study, I am interested in researching students who are just beginning to write in English, composing paragraphs and essays for the first time. Therefore, the focus of this study will be on students in the three lowest levels, Elementary English (ELE), Pre-Intermediate English (PIE) and Intermediate English (IE). There is however one more level in the standard track, titled Upper Intermediate, (UIE). As these students are more advanced and are writing academic essays I chose to exclude them from this study. At the Pre-intermediate level, students are learning simple paragraph writing, while at the Intermediate level students focus on the basic five paragraph essays. Table one shows the three types of students I am examining in this study, their writing course's objective and the assignments these students typically bring to a writing help session.

**Table 1: Different types of students who participate in writing help sessions**

<b>Students</b>	<b>Elementary English (ELE) Domestic Japanese EFL</b>	<b>Pre-Intermediate English (PIE) Domestic Japanese EFL</b>	<b>Intermediate English (IE) Domestic Japanese EFL</b>
Average Paper Based TOEFL Score	425-below (IELTS 3.5 and below)	425-450 (IELTS 3.5)	450 (IELTS 4)
Course Objective for Writing	1. Write well-structured sentences 2. Write responses to short texts 3. Write for accuracy 4. Write an organized paragraph	1. Write well-structure, grammatically accurate sentences. 2. Write an organized paragraph with topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences. 3. Know the process of writing: outline, first draft, review, second draft, proofread	1. Write a well-organized 5-paragraph essay. 2. Write paragraphs that summarize and reflect on and critically respond to various topics. 3. Know the process of writing outline: first draft, review, second draft, proofread
Typical Assignments	1. Writing short responses such as: procedure “how to make my favorite food”, information report, “My Hometown”	1. Narrative paragraph 2. Descriptive paragraph 3. Expository paragraph	1. Five paragraph argumentative essay

In order to better understand each level and the type of writing students produce, a sample of student writing for each level has been added (see Appendices 3, 4 & 5).

### 2.5.2 Writing help procedures

Procedures and guidelines for writing help have been developed based on the literature for ESL and EFL writing tutoring. The literature on EFL writing tutoring and writing centers in Japan is scant. The procedures that have been developed are mainly in line with an American writing center book designed for working with ESL writers titled, *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009). The book is also used for two other purposes: a) as required readings for the tutors that are discussed at the training sessions and b) as a reference for the tutors to learn about different tutoring strategies.

*ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* is comprised of 15 different chapters on writing theory and the practice of tutoring for students whose English is a second language. At the moment, it is the only book addressing specifically writing center strategies for L2 learners. It combines practical tutoring advice with more theoretical ideas about writing in a second language. It is divided into three sections, “Becoming Oriented to Second Language Learners”, “The ESL Tutoring Session,” and “A Broader View”. The first section examines the linguistic backgrounds of most ESL students. The second section, which is used most often by the tutors in the context of this study, focuses on helpful tips, new perspectives and strategies likely to be effective with nonnative speakers. This section gives practical advice for tutors; such as chapter 9, “The Article about Articles,” which explains to tutors why ESL learners have problems using articles correctly and how tutors can help them. Finally the third section, “A Broader View”, demonstrates how writing centers in Europe operate.

The obvious weakness of this collection of essays is that it is written for ESL not EFL writers. The writers define ESL as “anyone whose native language is not English,

who is visiting the United States from another country to study at a college or university, and who is in the process of learning to write (and speak) in English” (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009, xiii). However, the context of this study is Japan, not America where English is the language of communication. There are no books on tutoring in Japan or even EFL tutoring.

Tutors also read Myers’ (2003) “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’: ESL Tutoring and Writing Instruction” where the author makes a case against tutoring students to become proficient self-editors advocating instead a more directive approach and helping students reformulate their sentences. This article, which I summarize in greater detail in Chapter Three, has greatly influenced my own philosophy towards writing tutoring, which in turn has influenced the writing help policies since I am the Coordinator of the writing tutors.

Both Bruce and Rafoth (2009) and Myers’ (2003) article were the main sources referenced to create the different procedures writing tutors should use when conducting tutorials (see Appendix 6). From the procedures recommended within the literature, I also added some additional points that seemed pertinent to our context. For example, tutors are instructed to speak Japanese when they think it will help the student and also let the student speak Japanese when the student wants to. Another point I added was to be direct by explicitly telling the students what is wrong with their writing. Overall, the procedures emphasize that non-directive tutoring practiced in the North American context is not likely to work with Japanese students who, because of their background, expect the writing tutor to be an expert and tell them exactly what is wrong with their paper (Yasuda, 2006). Therefore, the approach I

recommend is a more directive approach within a framework that promotes student negotiation of meaning in order to maintain student ownership over his or her text. I expand on the reasoning behind these procedures in Chapter Three.

I also created a tutor role sheet that clearly describes the responsibility the tutor will take when helping the students in the various levels. For example, in the Elementary level, students focus on a specific grammar point, therefore the tutor can help the student notice the specific grammar point in his/her paper. Also, tutors are advised to take a more directive approach with the students in the beginning stages of writing. However at the higher level, the writing tutor is focusing more on structure and overall clarity and may adopt a more facilitative approach to encourage individual student voice (see Appendix 7). When students first come to the writing help session, the tutors and the tutees fill out a writing help record sheet. Students circle the letter that corresponds with the issue they want to work on. The writing tutor is instructed to work on what the students choose but also other issues that the writing tutor thinks are important (see Appendix 8).

When the writing help service was first created many students were confused about the role of the writing tutor. They thought the writing help service was a proofreading service and that the tutor would fix their essay making it into an A+ paper. In order to clarify the role of the writing help service, the administrators decided to make a disclaimer that clearly states the role of the tutor and what he/she will do and will not do. This disclaimer makes it clear to the students that the writing tutor will not take any responsibility for the students' grades, will not correct all the grammatical mistakes, and will not read, write or think on behalf of the student. The disclaimer

emphasizes that the student is expected to work together with the tutor to correct mistakes in the assignment (see Appendix 9).

### **2.5.3 Training**

The writing tutors have two training sessions throughout the 16 week semester, one at the beginning and one in the middle. The training sessions are usually two to three hours where both new writing tutors and experienced writing tutors work together with teachers to role play different writing tutorial scenarios. Prior to this training session, the writing tutors have read the “Writing Help Procedures” (see Appendix 6) and various chapters in *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009). The experienced writing tutors are usually well versed in the strategies they should apply to the tutorial and provide models for the new writing tutors. After the role plays, writing tutors discuss the various issues encountered in the tutorial session such as how to handle miscommunication, grammar errors, lexical errors and structural issues.

## **2.6 Types of students accessing writing help**

How does this information about the Japanese English education relate to this study’s context? Although the typical student in this University has studied English for many years in secondary school he/she did not write essays or practice conversation. Therefore, students tend to know a lot of vocabulary and the grammar rules of English but find it difficult to compose a sentence by themselves. Many of the students in this study are at slightly lower English level ability than the average Japanese student. As mentioned before, due to the population crisis, the University is having difficulty recruiting students because Japanese high school graduates are decreasing year by year. However, the University is focused on admitting the same number of students in order to receive their tuition payment. In order to maintain student numbers, the

University is now admitting many students from non-traditional high schools such as technical schools and commercial schools where academic study is not the main focus. Thus the English level of the current student, compared to the English level of the prior student, has decreased while the number of students has remained the same. So the typical student partaking in the writing help service has an even lower English language ability than the average Japanese ‘false beginner.’ In addition to lacking English communication skills, many are also lacking basic study skills and metacognitive skills.

## **2.7 Summary**

To sum up, issues such as ‘false beginner syndrome’ and the ineffectual Japanese English education reported affect the writing tutorials in the research context in three ways. First, since students do not have practice listening and speaking in English, miscommunication is likely to be an important issue, one that hinders the success of a writing tutorial. The average Japanese college freshmen does not understand what the foreign teacher is saying. Therefore, if the students are new to the University, and the tutor chooses to speak in English, the Japanese student is unlikely to understand the tutor. Another issue that affects the Japanese students’ abilities in writing tutorials is their attitude towards learning. As mentioned before, Japanese students’ educational background comes from a teacher centered classroom. Students often learn passively and silently. Active participation, which the writing tutorials operate under, is not valued. Finally, on a more practical level, if the average Japanese student does not have experience writing English, except through direct translation, writing an essay or even a paragraph is a very cognitively demanding task. Coupled with this, many students do not have a good foundation in writing in their first language making writing in English even more difficult (Tan, 2011).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In 1984, writing center theorist Stephen North wrote, “there is not a single published study of what happens in the writing center tutorials” (p. 433). Since then, writing center scholars addressing this issue have produced a plethora of research. There are now numerous writing center guides, many writing center scholars and two journals, *The Writing Center Journal* and *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, dedicated to writing center theory. Much of this scholarship includes studies on ESL students. Unfortunately, few studies have been conducted on EFL students in international contexts. This literature review will provide the reader with a contemporary background on the topic of L2 students in the writing center, focusing on five primary areas of writing center scholarship related to this study’s research questions.

#### 3.1 Background:

##### 3.1.2 The writing center philosophy

##### 3.1.3 International expansion

#### 3.2 Overall issues in ESL and EFL writing tutoring:

##### 3.2.1 The L2 writer

##### 3.2.2 The suggested model for writing tutorials with ESL students

##### 3.2.3 Error correction during tutorials

##### 3.2.4 Miscommunication

#### 3.3 Students’ perceptions of the challenges experienced during a tutorial with a L2 writer

#### 3.4 Tutors’ Perceptions of challenges experienced during a tutorial with a L2 writer

#### 3.5 Roles in writing center literature

The literature review does not follow the same order that the research questions were originally presented. It seems preferable to first explore the research related to research question three about the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University, to give the reader an overall big picture of the issues relating to tutorials with L2 students before analyzing the more specific literature on tutors' and students' perceptions and the roles tutors adopt.

### **3.1 Background**

Throughout writing center literature, it is difficult to find a precise definition of a writing center (WC). This is because, according to the International Writing Center Association (IWCA), each WC is defined by its students' needs; however the IWCA does suggest that writing centers share the same approaches. Those approaches include: communicating one-on-one, facilitating as opposed to teaching, and addressing students' individual needs (Johnston, Cornwell & Yoshida, 2010, p. 4). This definition does not mention the specific type of help the tutor is involved in because that is defined by each specific context. Interestingly, this definition does not mention the tutor. One definition that does mention the tutor, Clark (1992), defines the writing center as a "facility where writers of all kinds, from a first semester freshmen to a faculty member, can come for an individualized writing conference with a knowledgeable, well trained tutor" (p. 3). The well trained tutor could be a peer, a writing instructor or a faculty member although peer tutoring is the most popular model. Peer tutoring is defined as, "a system of instruction in which learners help each other and learn by teaching" (Goodlad & Hirst, 1990, p. 1). A peer is defined as someone belonging to the same group in society where membership is defined by

status, the status is that of being a fellow-learner and not a professional tutor (Goodlad & Hirst, 1990, p. 1).

### **3.1.1 Philosophy of the writing center**

Conceptually, most writing centers in North America operate as places where students work collaboratively with tutors to revise their own writing, known as the collaborative peer tutoring model. First pioneered by Bruffee (1984), this model emphasizes communication and deep conversation as the main way to improve one's writing. This approach is student-centered using a non-directive method to encourage the writer to take the responsibility to change his or her work. The tutor is instructed to only prompt the student by asking questions and encouraging analysis without offering any direct suggestions on how to change their paper (Shamoon & Burns, 2008). The distinction is very clear that the writing center is not an editing service or proofreading service. Moreover, many WCs operate under Stephen North's (1984) famous mantra, the writing center's purpose "is to produce better writers, not better writing" (p.438). In other words, the writing center should be a space where metacognitive learning is promoted and tutors aid in facilitating students to become self-sufficient writers, not only improve their essay assignment. The writing center therefore operates in line with the process writing philosophy in a student-centered pedagogy.

Two seminal articles, Bruffee's (1984) "Peer Tutoring and the Conversation of Mankind" and Brooks' (1991) "Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student do all the Work," have greatly influenced writing center theory and literature. Both articles advocate the use of a non-directive approach in a student-centered environment as the writing center tutorial model. As mentioned previously, this approach promotes

communication and conversation as the main way to improve one's writing. Bruffee writes, "our task must involve engaging students in the conversation at as many points in the writing process as possible" (1984, p. 210). Using a process approach, the tutors serve as an audience for the tutees and help familiarize them with writing conventions. In this model, tutors are instructed not to provide writers with the answers but instead use leading questions to help the writers formulate their own revised sentences. Tutors are also instructed to focus on HOC (Higher Order Concerns) first and deflect requests to help the students with grammar (Brooks, 1991). Brooks states, "the less we do to the paper, the better. Our primary object in the writing center session is not the paper but the student" (p. 224). Both authors criticize directive approaches specifically because it positions the writer as a novice, not as an owner of the paper.

In the 1990s, critiques began to be made about the process approach. Delpit and Inghilleri (as cited in Atkinson, 2003) showed that this pedagogy was problematic for ESL and African American students because the "indirect, inductive approach, taken by process-oriented teachers, seemed to assume forms of socialization these students had neither in their home environments nor were likely to get in the classroom" (pp. 8-9). These critiques of the process approach influenced writing center theory. Therefore, collaborative tutoring began to be criticized especially as an appropriate model to use when working with L2 students.

One of the first criticisms of the non-directive approach came from "A Critique of Pure Tutoring" by Shamon and Burns (2008). According to them, this approach is part of an "orthodoxy" of assumed values rather than researched findings that have

been handed down through writing center theory. They question the non-directive style that diminishes the tutor's more knowledgeable voice. According to Shamon and Burns, directive tutoring is beneficial because it makes the "literate disciplinary practice plain enough to be imitated, practiced, mastered and questioned" (p. 237). They advocate more directive approaches, as used outside the writing center, to be applied to writing center tutorials.

Since the 1990s writing center theorists have advocated a more directive approach as being more appropriate when working with L2 students. According to Reid (1994) "because their linguistic, content, contextual and rhetorical schemata differ, they often have problems with the identification and fulfillment of U.S. audience expectations" (p. 282). L2 writers have different needs than L1 writers. Obviously, fluency, vocabulary and different rhetoric styles affect L2 writing (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990). Due to cultural differences, L2 writers also have different expectations than L1 writers. For example, students from Asian cultures view the peer as a teacher rather than a peer which impedes tutors from employing the collaborative or non-directive approach (Blau & Hall, 2002). In order to address this need, in the 90s, a large amount of scholarly articles were produced on topics including:

1. cross-cultural differences in practices and expectations (Harris, 1997, Powers, 1993; Ronesi, 1995),
2. typical L2 error profiles and how tutors should address these (Harris & Silva, 1993),
3. tutors adopting a more directive approach when assisting L2 writers (Cogie, Strain & Lorinkas, 1999; Thonus; 1993; Thonus, 1999a; Thonus, 1999b)

4. contrastive rhetoric, including how different approaches to writing might affect student's approaches to texts ( Severino, 1993).

### **3.1.2 The writing center's international expansion**

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, university WCs have expanded internationally, with the number steadily increasing each year (Brauer, 2009). Tan's (2011) research on the differences between North American and Non-North American WCs, notes that every WC is quite different throughout Asia and Europe and therefore it is difficult to find a representative model of a WC. She gathered this data from looking at WC's online pages from their university's website. At present her research is the most up-to-date and thorough comparison of North American WCs to Asian and European WCs. There are some differences between the writing centers, the biggest being that WCs in North America, although serving L2 students, are monolingual with the tutoring conducted in English. The WCs in Asia or Europe are bilingual or multilingual where tutoring is conducted in both the students' L1 or L2. In addition, WCs in Asia primarily serve English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners. WCs in North America serve predominantly L1 speakers of English and ESL speakers and help them with their content papers.

WCs in Europe and Asia serve EFL students and therefore usually support students not only in their writing but also in speaking, grammar, listening and oral presentations. Because of this need, many writing centers have adopted a broader role in supporting students with a variety of activities, such as oral presentations and other English tasks (Johnston, Cornwell, Yoshida, 2008, p. 182). Another difference is that most North American WCs use peer tutors while many in Asia or Europe use teachers. As a case in point, Hanyang University and the Seoul National University, both in

Korea, decided not to employ a peer tutoring model for their WC because there is no tradition of organized peer tutoring or peer counseling in Korean universities (Turner, 2006). It was decided that the non-directive collaborative approach was inappropriate for the students' needs and instead the University hired teachers to serve as writing tutors. International WCs, in Asia and Europe, do share similar approaches and core values to North American WCs. For example, they both have a 'no proofreading' guideline (Tan, 2011, p. 405) and focus mainly on academic writing. Other similarities include face-to-face writing tutorials with tutors and offering themed workshops.

One problem is that there is very little literature "regarding the history, development, utility patterns, problems and challenges of these (EFL) writing support initiatives outside North America" (Tan, 2011, p. 413). Therefore, many writing centers relied mainly on WCs developed in North America to conceptualize their own WC framework. However, these writing centers outside of North America have begun to mold themselves to fit the institutions as well as the culture of the country they are located in (Johnston et al, 2008). The practices of typical North American writing centers are often adapted to fit international contexts and needs (Turner, 2006). Nakamaru (2010a) urges writing center professionals in local contexts to begin producing more local studies in order to share new knowledge in the local contexts which can contribute to writing center literature.

### **3.1.2.1 Writing centers in Japan**

As mentioned in Chapter Two, in 2008, it was reported that there were at least 11 writing centers in Japan (Johnston et al.) and there are currently around 15. With no prescribed Japanese model of a writing center, most Japanese WCs relied on

information from North America employing the North American Writing Centers as a model (Johnston et al., 2008). Specifically, if there emerges a prescribed Japanese model it is yet to be determined. Only a few scholars have put forth an opinion. Yasuda (2006) recommends that Japanese “writing center(s) need to follow the EFL writing course syllabus, and tutors should search for adequate frameworks for tutorials with Japanese EFL student...(tutors) should be willing to relinquish orthodoxy of collaborative frameworks and permit more realistic and appropriate contact zones for tutorials with Japanese EFL students” (p. 5). Then, the Japanese writing center model would be that tutors adopt a directive teacher role and reject the collaborative role. Furthermore, she suggests that writing centers take a key role in making campus-wide writing curriculum work and should act as a liaison not only between writing instructors and subject teachers but also between teachers and students (p. 6). She also urges subject teachers to be involved in the creation of an active writing center. Her arguments are supported by her own experiences and knowledge of the Japanese educational system, not with empirical evidence. Such an empirical study does not exist.

### **3.1.3 Peer tutoring**

The university in this study employs peer tutors to conduct writing tutoring. Peer tutoring is a cost effective means of providing academic support to students (Beasley, 1997, p. 1). Peer tutoring is defined as a “system whereby learners help each other and learn by teaching. The most common approach is when experienced students assist one or more learners (tutees) out of class time in content or strategy training” (Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2006, p. 13). It involves hiring and training those experienced students to act as experts and mentors to those less experienced. The theory of cooperative learning supports the benefits of peer tutoring. Influenced by

Vygotsky's theories, cooperative learning is an instructional method whereby students in small groups collaborate to maximize one another's learning and to achieve mutual goals (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998). Within this group, such as a peer tutorial, different learning styles can be catered for and students can "develop their own in conjunction with their peers" (Barwood, 2000, p. 39). This results in the student's cognitive development and intellectual growth (Johnson et al., 1998).

Besides aiding in student learning, other benefits of peer tutoring include: enhancing leadership skills, making friends, developing self-esteem and confidence, and encouraging team working skills (Beasley 1997; Kalkowski, 1995). Studies have also shown the benefits peer tutoring provides to the tutors. To give an example, in the study by Mynard and Almarzouqi, (2006) in which they interviewed and surveyed 11 tutors and tutees in a language peer tutoring program at a big university in United Arab Emirates, it was found that English tutors in the United Arab Emirates felt their English skills had improved as well as their meta-awareness of how one learns English. They also felt they were doing something worthwhile and that they were becoming more responsible (p. 17).

However, there are issues with peer tutoring. One issue is working with shy students, inexperienced tutors sometimes lack knowledge of how to encourage the students to participate in the tutorial. Furthermore, many tutors express anxiety when dealing with a student who needs a lot of guidance in a short period of time (Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2006). For the nonnative English speaker, it might be especially stressful when they do not know the language point the tutee wants advice on. However, there are some strengths nonnative English tutors can provide. Firstly, they possess a

deeper understanding of what it means to write in a second language, a greater empathy (Shin, 2006). They may also have greater knowledge of grammatical structures while native speakers only have intuitive knowledge. Despite this, many L2 writers prefer to work with native English speakers. In a study by Shin (2006) in which she examined 12 pre-service ESL teachers' tutoring sessions with university ESL writers in a university setting, it was found that students actively reject nonnative English speaking tutors because they question their ability in English. Certainly this hinders the peer tutoring relationship.

### **3.2 Overall issues in ESL and EFL writing tutoring**

#### **3.2.1 L2 writers**

As mentioned earlier, the influx of international students and ESL students into North American universities in the 1990s forced writing centers to re-think the collaborative approach and adopt a more appropriate methodology for L2 writers. The studies conducted on L2 writers in writing centers focus on three different types of students:

1. EFL writers who were educated in their mother tongue (L1) and are learning English as their L2 (often referred to as foreign or international students)
2. ESL writers who are recent immigrants to the United States, often with educational backgrounds in their L1
3. Generation 1.5 writers who are long-term U.S. residents and English learners fluent in spoken English (Thonus, 2003, p. 17).

L2 writers in English are very different to L1 writers. For instance, they have often failed to internalize the grammar rules, English writing style or academic English discourse. Moreover, their linguistic and rhetorical schemata differ leading to problems with fulfillment of U.S. academic essay writing (Reid, 1994). Research has shown that L2 writers “plan less, write with more difficulty due to lack of lexical resources, reread what they have written less and exhibit less facility in revising by

ear” (Harris & Silva, 1993, p. 529). Furthermore, during tutorials they need more time to talk, listen, write and read (Raimes as cited in Cogie, 2006).

Research has shown the development of academic skills in first languages transfers to second languages. Simply put Cummins’ interdependence hypothesis (1981) states that skills in one language, such as literacy skills, concepts, learning strategies and writing skills cross over to become skills in the person’s L2. Interestingly enough, this can be seen in languages that are very different, such as “American sign language to English, Spanish to Basque, or even Japanese to English” (Cummins, 2009, p. 167).

According to Cummins, there are five different types of cross-linguistic transfer that are possible:

1. Transfer of conceptual elements (e.g., understanding the concept of photosynthesis);
2. Transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies (e.g., strategies of visualizing, use of signals or graphic organizers, mnemonic devices, vocabulary acquisition strategies, etc.);
3. Transfer of pragmatic aspects of language use (willingness to take risks in communication through L2, ability to use paralinguistic features such as gestures to aid communication, etc.)
4. Transfer of specific elements (e.g., knowledge of the meaning of photo in photosynthesis);
5. Transfer of phonological awareness- the knowledge that words are composed of distinct sounds (as cited in Cummins, 2009, p. 167).

Number three, transfer of pragmatic aspects of language use, has significant implications for academic writing because the knowledge students have acquired through academic writing in an L1 context is transferable to their L2 writing. Therefore students who have learned academic writing skills such as structure, referencing, and coherence will be able to gain a better understanding of these skills

in their L2 (Yasuda, 2006). Hence, it is essential to understand the characteristics of Japanese L1 writing.

### **3.2.1.1 Text based analysis of Japanese L1 writing**

One main difference between written texts in Asian languages to those in English is that much Asian writing contains an ‘indirect-centrifugal’ organization. According to Kaplan (2001), this kind of writing shows the subject from a variety of tangential views but the subject is never examined directly. In other words, the subject is developed in terms of things it is not, instead of in terms of things it is. Hinds (1987) expounds that in Japanese writing, sometimes the secondary point of the essay is not directly connected to the main point. An English reader might consider this type of writing as unnecessarily indirect (p. 17).

Another alleged characteristic of Japanese texts is that the reader is responsible for understanding the essay’s purpose and message. The reader must deduce the meaning which is implicit in the text (Minnett, 2009; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996). Because of this, Silva (1993) found that Asian students use less cohesive devices such as introductory statements and transitions. Thus, connectors that guide the reader explicitly through logic are often excluded from Japanese texts or are more subtle requiring an active role for the reader. In fact, it is considered insulting if the message is made too explicit (Thonus, 2002, p. 21). Hinds (1987) writes that Japanese authors like to “give dark hints and to leave them behind nuances” letting the reader, “anticipate with pleasure the opportunities that such writing offers them to savor the kinds of mystification of language” (cited in Minnett, 2009, p. 68). Thus Hinds (1987) characterizes Japanese writing as a “reader responsible rhetoric” and English writing as “writer responsible rhetoric.” Therefore, according to Hinds, many Japanese

writers usually write only one draft and present it as a final version although this statement is not supported with empirical evidence. Another supposed difference is that Japanese writers express objectivity in their writing. The idea of presenting a strong voice or personal opinion is more relevant in English writing (Carson, 1992).

How much influence does the social context of first language writing have on L2 writing? Mohan and Lo (1985) argue that writing problems in L2 writing are not because of L1 influence but rather due to lack of experience and language ability. However, according to Leki (1991) this stance has two weaknesses. Firstly, that writing for most children, “is nearly always school sponsored and inevitably, therefore, reflects the culture of the school system and reproduces culturally preferred discourse styles.”(p. 124). Secondly, one cannot assume that L1 strategies are not transferred to L2 writing. Although it is not known to what degree they are transferred, research as mentioned previously has shown that different writing strategies do indeed transfer (Cummins, 2009).

However, whether reader responsibility and indirect centrifugal organization are actual characteristics of Japanese writing is a contested idea. In a study by Cahill (2003), in which he analyzes Japanese and Chinese scholarship on ‘circular rhetorical patterns’, it was found that circularity is not digression as commonly assumed but rather “serves as the occasion to develop an essay further by alternative means” (p. 170). In other words, although a Western audience might consider the writing circular, the Asian writer is actually including a new idea to introduce an opposing perspective, or a counter argument to provide an element of surprise. Furthermore, he asserts that

this idea of indirectness or circularity is based on “comforting illusions and stereotypes about Eastern thought, psychology, culture and writing” (p. 187).

In addition, these text based approaches about Japanese rhetoric have their limitations because they primarily view language as static in which the writer has no agency or autonomy. Instead, the writer is viewed as a machine that creates the text “by reproducing the pattern provided by his or her linguistic, cultural or linguistic background” (Matsuda, 1997, p. 49). Leki (1991) writes that this view of contrastive rhetoric tends to “essentialize cultures, partly through its static representation of their written products and its implication that L2 writers too are little more than products of their static culture” (p.103). She warns against using the writing of a culture to draw conclusions about the temperament of the culture because this approach leads to “stereotyping and over generalizing.” (p. 127). In fact, Kubota and Lehner (2004) argue against the traditional contrastive rhetoric studies, such as some of the studies listed above: Hinds (1987), Hinds (2001) and Kaplan (2001) because these differentiate Asian writing as circular and illogical. Instead they favor a new kind of approach, a critical contrastive rhetoric which seeks “to critically understand politics of cultural difference and explore situated pedagogy that challenges essentialism” (p. 7). They criticize many contrastive rhetoric studies for creating static, homogenous and apolitical generalizations of the rhetorical patterns of various written languages. According to them, contrastive rhetoric must seek to understand the dynamic nature of language related to linguistic and cultural influence. Through critical contrastive rhetoric, the authors hope to “create new space for divergent ways of understanding writers and texts in cross-cultural contexts” (p. 23). This stance is important to this study because writing tutors need to remember not to generalize about Japanese

student writing. Furthermore, when tutors respond to students' texts, they need to question whether they are encouraging students to challenge "essentialist, normative, cultural knowledge to seek rhetorical pluralism or whether they are imposing yet another hegemonic knowledge" (Kubota & Lehner, 2004, p. 23).

### **3.2.1.2 L1 influence on L2 writing in Japanese**

If language is dynamic rather than static then not only do pragmatic aspects influence L2 writing, but also the social context of the particular purpose of writing. Thus, because writing is a social process, it needs to be understood from various social perspectives (Kobayashi, 2002). Therefore, the social context in which writing takes place is very important to appreciate in order to understand Japanese L1 writing.

Obviously, schools are the most dominant influence on Japanese student writing, but many scholars argue that Japanese students are not taught explicitly how to write (Mok, 1993; Ochie & Davies, 1999; Sasaki 2001). The average Japanese college first year student does not have much experience writing in their L1. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2002) interviewed 21 Japanese college students about their public high school writing experience. It was found that because writing-related activities are not prioritized in Japanese language classes, many students lack exposure to L1 writing. Kobayashi (2002) reports that in Japanese education, more emphasis is put on developing Japanese reading ability than on writing ability. Hinds (1987) also reports that Japanese children only study writing up until the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Based on a large number of comparative surveys administered to teachers and students in American and Japanese high schools (389 from Japanese public and private high schools and 132 from American public and private high schools), Kobayashi (2002) reports that Japanese students spend less time than American students on formulating personal

opinions and evaluating other people's opinions. Therefore, when Japanese writers are asked to write an English task they are unclear how to present a strong individualized voice (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996).

With that said, according to Kobayashi (2002) "against the commonly held view that Japanese students have not learned to write in high school, it appears that an increasing number of students experience intensive L1 writing training (e.g., Kotou, 1999), in which they reportedly learn how to express opinions clearly and logically in L1 writing." (p. 24). According to both studies (Kobayashi, 2002; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2002) it was found that Japanese students undertake expressive writing in Japanese schools. Leibman (1992) also found that Japanese students have many opportunities to write expressively which is defined as "intended to explore the writer's own feelings or opinions and ordinarily may not be understood out of context" (p. 89). Diary writing is an example of expressive writing. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2002) also found that many Japanese students do intensive writing practice outside of the classroom in order to prepare for entrance exam essays. These essays ask them to form opinions and expound on different ideas.

Moreover, simply examining only writing instruction in Japanese schools does not mean that students do not have exposure to writing in their L1. Carson (1992) examined three aspects of literacy development in Chinese and Japanese elementary and secondary school students specifically looking at a) the social context of schooling; b) the cognitive considerations of the written code; and (c) the pedagogical practices most often used in teaching reading and writing. He concluded the manner in which reading and writing are taught in Japanese schools is very complex and

imprinted in cultures so one cannot make generalizations from only examining the writing instruction. He reports, “writing development must be viewed from an understanding of the total picture of literacy acquisition” (p. 38). Moreover, Japanese teachers and students look at L1 writing as inextricably linked to reading.

Some more controversial research has argued that because Japanese high school students rarely write essays they lack critical thinking skills. For example, Onoda (1997) has reported Japanese students lack the ability to write logical texts when entering college. In addition, according to Yasuda (2006) Japanese college students are also unable to find research from outside sources and incorporate this research into their arguments (Yasuda, 2006, p. 4). However, Leki (1991) warns against deducing how writers from a certain culture write or think. As mentioned previously, Matsuda (1997) also warns against making generalizations without looking at the individual’s writing experience. Even if students come from the same educational background, their experiences vary greatly and so will their ability to write and critically think. The student’s writing experience is situated within the “multiple realities of a myriad of students writing in English for numerous purposes” (Lehner as cited in Kubota & Lehner, 2004, p. 22).

### **3.2.1.3 L2 errors**

Besides L1 rhetoric and social context, another crucial issue affecting L2 students writing is the number of errors they make in their papers. An error is defined as “an incorrect usage that occurs when learners do not know the correct form; errors relate to a failure in competence, having the wrong knowledge or lack of knowledge” (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009, p. 230). It should be noted that errors are defined differently than mistakes. Mistakes are when the learner does know the correct form but does not

use it, such as due to a typo or a failure in performance (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009). In terms of grammar, research suggests that L2 writers most commonly make the following errors:

**1. Verbs:**

Inflectional morphology (agreement with nouns in person, number, etc.)

Verbal forms (participles, infinitives, gerunds)

Verb complementation (the types of clauses or constructions that must follow a particular verb)

**2. Nouns:**

Inflection (especially in terms of singular/plural and count/mass distinctions)

Derivation (deriving nouns from other parts of speech), e.g., quick-quickness, which often seems quite arbitrary to nonnative speakers)

**3. Articles:** (related to problems in classifying nouns)

Use of wrong article

Missing article

Use of an article when none is necessary or appropriate

**4. Prepositions:** (primarily a result of limited lexical resources)

Knowing which one goes with a particular noun, verb, adjective, or adverb (Harris and Silva, 1993, p.534).

However, Linville (2009) reports that the six most frequent error types in college compositions by L2 writers are: subject-verb agreement, verb tense, verb form, singular/plural endings, word form, and sentence structure. Linville asserts that these are also the most treatable error types. Note that Linville's list does not include errors in articles or prepositions. The fact that Linville did not include prepositions and articles is an oversight as research has shown these are very common problems for L2 writers (Staben & Nordhaus, 2004). Perhaps she was too focused on treatable errors. Furthermore, her report does not include how this list was determined; rather it is meant to be a guide for tutors working with ESL students in the writing center, as opposed to a research article.

Indeed, articles are a problem for many L2 writers. Articles are particularly problematic for Japanese speakers because Japanese communicates definiteness and

indefiniteness without articles (Staben & Nordhaus, 2004). Although article use can improve gradually with exposure to English, it is not realistic to expect that an L2 writer will ever use articles entirely correctly. Chuang (2005) argues that articles are very problematic for Asian learners and are often a neglected problem as teachers usually focus on other grammar areas that they perceive to be more communicatively important. Even though article use rarely impedes meaning, correct article usage is still very important in English writing because it “mark(s) them as inadequate users of the language” (Ferris, 2002, p. 9). Furthermore it affects the reader’s evaluation of the writing often unfavorably. Ferris has argued in a series of articles (1999, 2002) that typical L2 errors such as article use stigmatize readers and negatively affect the grading of their work.

In Harris’s and Silva’s (1993) article, in which a Writing Center Director at a large Midwestern university and a coordinator of the ESL writing classes summarized their discussion on how to help ESL writers, they discuss the lack of clear procedure as to how L2 writers can improve their use of articles. Moreover, they encourage L2 writers to “do the best they can and then get a native speaker to proofread their work if proofreading is absolutely necessary” (p. 535). This is ironic, considering, as mentioned before, WCs in North America operate under the specific ‘no proofreading’ guideline which will be discussed in the next section. Who is the L2 writer supposed to ask to proofread his/her paper?

In Nakamaru’s (2010b), small-scale study of four ESL students at a large urban university in which she examined whether these students exhibited different lexical strengths and needs during writing center tutorials, she found that the most common

issue expressed by L2 writers is a lack of lexical facility or expressive ability in English. Overall, L2 students have greater difficulty expressing themselves, partly because they have less productive language abilities which is frustrating to them when they compare their ability in their native language to their ability in English, their L2 (Nakamaru, 2010b, p. 106). Later, I will discuss lexical errors in section 3.7.2 and how to attend to them.

As stated before, most of the research on L2 writers in the writing center deals with advanced ESL learners or international students with higher English proficiencies taking content classes at North American universities. However, there is some research on L2 students with lower English proficiencies. They seem to exhibit more problems with sentence, clause and phrase structure (Harris & Silva, 1993, p. 534). In some cases students with a very low level of proficiency will not be able to produce any kind of coherent prose. Harris and Silva (1993) recommend basic language instruction for these students (p. 529). More will be discussed later in this chapter about the different approaches tutors should employ when helping L2 writers with English grammar and lexical errors.

### **3.2.2 The suggested model for writing tutorials with ESL students**

As detailed above, tutoring L2 writers requires a more flexible approach than when tutoring a native English speaker. Therefore various approaches, which share an advocacy for a more direct approach, have been suggested for tutoring L2 writers. Within this approach, proponents advocate explicit error correction and helping students reformulate their sentences. Although this approach seems to be in direct opposition to the collaborative non-directive approach championed by Bruffee (1984) and Brooks (1991), these two approaches should not be seen as being in opposition.

The literature often presents the approaches 'directive' and 'non-directive' as an either/or dichotomy but in reality "the concept should be considered a continuum, directiveness being a matter of degree, and to some extent, perception" (Clark, 2001, p. 5).

What exactly does it mean to be directive? The term itself is nebulous and cannot be constructed in absolute terms. Although the 'directive approach' lacks a specific definition it is usually defined by particular characteristics, "specifically through speaking, contributing ideas, making corrections, and influencing what was discussed during the conference" (Clark, 2001, p. 35). Another characteristic of a directive style is that tutors adopt more appropriate contact zones. Contact zones are defined as "zones where different cultures meet, often cultures with language barriers" (Wolf, 2000, p. 44). In Thonus's (2004) research at Indiana University's Writing Center, it was found that tutors are still searching for the appropriate contact zones to employ with L2 writers. Through her conversational analysis of 25 tutorials with native English speaker tutors and 19 tutorials with nonnative speakers, it was found that when working with nonnative speaker tutees, tutors were less consistent with their interactions and also would opt out of advice giving. In other words they would deflect the nonnative speakers' writing problems. Moreover, tutors were more hesitant and demonstrated uncertainty in their tutorials with nonnative English speakers. According to Thonus, tutees may perceive this as inconsistent and confusing. Therefore, she concludes that tutors would benefit from being more directive and need to give up being collaborative (Thonus, 2004, p. 240).

Besides Thonus, there are many other critics of the collaborative non-directive approach and proponents of a more directive approach. In relation to “contact zones” Yasuda (2006) argues that Vygotsky’s theory of the zone of proximal development should be applied to tutorial sessions where the learning should be scaffolded. She states, “learning evolves from the verbal interaction with a more knowledgeable person, and the tutor has a central role in structuring this development” (p. 5). Because of the specific needs and expectations of nonnative English speakers (in her case Japanese EFL learners), it is very important at the beginning of a learning cycle for the tutor to adopt a highly directive stance. For example, if there is clearly something wrong with the paper, and the tutor sees that, then they should direct the tutee to change it. However, these directions should be accompanied by explanation. According to Yasuda, these clear directions will help the student notice the gap between their writing and the norm.

In Matsuda’s (1997) study, in which he proposes an alternative model of L2 writing for contrastive rhetoric, he asserts that because ESL students do not share basic assumptions about Western discourse, they need explicit instruction in order to meet the standards of such discourse. In conjunction with this, Vallejo (2004) followed six nonnative English speakers participating in writing center conferences throughout one semester at a big Midwestern University. His study showed that, although the tutors used a combination of strategies within the collaborative approach, these strategies were largely inefficient in engaging L2 writers in writing center conferencing.

### **3.2.2.1 Genre theory approach**

Three alternative approaches to the collaborative non-directive approach are commonly discussed: the genre theory approach, the cultural informant approach and

the language informant approach. As previously mentioned, all three are similar because they advocate a more directive approach where the tutor engages in more explicit teaching and where the tutor does not diminish his/her own knowledge. The genre based approach focuses on the teaching and learning of the production of selected genres of texts. Basically, by understanding different genres as a whole, students gain an understanding of the communicative purposes and linguistic features of texts they are required to write (Swales, 1990). According to Harbord (2003) “reformulating tutoring within the theoretical framework of genre theory makes it possible to re-vision it as a tool perhaps more appropriate for the more specialized writing needs of the European and graduate context” (para. 20).

With this approach, tutoring should be teaching in miniature, tailored to the individual, but according to the principles of sound language pedagogy. The tutor becomes a facilitator and will have the role of:

1. listening and finding out about a learner’s needs
2. creating a learning environment and learning opportunities
3. monitoring learning and when necessary showing the learner that learning has taken place
4. helping the learner to set and achieve goals
5. lightly guiding the learner’s discovery and thinking processes
6. encouraging learners to think for themselves and foster learner independence
7. possessing the knowledge so as to be able to do the above effectively (Harbord, 2003, para. 7).

In order to achieve genre based tutoring, Harbord (2003) urges better training for tutors. Specifically, they need to be trained in facilitating learning and fostering autonomy. Although this is a more directive approach, in the context of finding more appropriate contact zones for beginner Asian writers, this approach is not appropriate. This approach was developed as being more appropriate for the more specialized writing needs of the European and graduate student context. For example, Harbord

does not include any reference to grammatical and lexical errors, both common issues for beginner writers. Therefore, this approach is more appropriate for advanced level students that need guidance in specialized writing and not for the students in the context of this study.

### **3.2.2.2 Cultural informant approach**

Another approach to tutoring that advocates a more directive style is the integrationist approach, otherwise known as the cultural informant approach. Here, the tutor takes the role of a cultural informant by providing the L2 student with the tools they need to integrate into target society or to absorb the cultural referents they need to connect to an English audience (Vallejo, 2004, p. 183). This approach helps students adjust to the process model of writing instruction, and aids them in understating the culturally based rhetorical conventions of the English language. It is culturally based because the meaning of concepts such as ‘voice’ and ‘audience’ depend on each society’s values. According to Vallejo, this approach “will allow tutors to explore tutees’ background knowledge, but it will also require tutors to inform tutees about the implication of writing for an English audience, e.g. why is it logical to assert a strong critical voice in English” (2004, p. 183). Another proponent of this approach, Judith Powers (1993), asserts that the cultural informant role gives writing center tutors the ability to be more directive while specifically meeting the needs of the L2 writers. In her paper, she presents the problems encountered tutoring ESL students at the University of Wyoming and the solutions she found to these issues. According to her, the cultural informant then is to share insights about the rhetorical conventions of English, ones that the L2 students have no way of knowing. Although this style is more directive, however it does not mention how to deal with grammatical and lexical

errors. Furthermore, it is proposed for use in an ESL context where students are trying to assimilate to the target language and culture and not to an EFL context.

### **3.6.3 Language informant approach**

The most appropriate approach for the context of this study is the language informant approach championed by Myers (2003). Myers' article was written as response to Cogie, Strain & Lorinkas's (1999) article "Avoiding the Proofreading Trap: The Value of the Error Correction Process" in which they advocate for tutors to conduct error correction with the overall goal of teaching them to become independent self-editors. Her article advocates that ESL students need help with the linguistic component (vocabulary and syntax) as well as help with the rhetorical component. In her article she successfully bridges the need to be a cultural informant with that of giving students help with lexical and grammatical issues. L2 learners need to understand the complex way a language is structured, but this should not be divorced from the role of peer tutors as cultural informants. According to her, "errors in vocabulary and syntax occur within the structural constraints of a language and constitute 'culture' just as much as every other feature of language below (phonetic) or above (rhetorical) the sentence level" (Myers, 2003, p. 56). So the cultural informant actually becomes a language informant. The language informant helps the L2 writer express themselves in a new language.

In this approach the tutor should adopt the role of "foreign/second language teachers" as well as writing instructors. Given the context of this study the language informant seems to be the most feasible in the context of working with beginner level Asian students. According to Myers (2003), "the central insight in foreign language pedagogy in the last thirty years is that, in fact, language acquisition emerges from

learners wrestling with meaning in acts of communicating or trying to communicate” (p. 64). Therefore, instead of the writing tutor dissecting everything the nonnative English speaker tutee has written, the tutor should offer more language choices in order to help the tutee establish links from the language they have acquired to the language they need. In other words, the tutor facilitates learning by providing additional correct language input instead of concentrating on incorrect language output. She suggests various methods to achieve this. One way is for the tutors to provide alternative language for the tutee to choose from. In addition, she recommends acquainting students with academic written discourse from corpora (at both the sentence level and global level) and showing model essays to help the tutees better understand academic writing. Finally, she suggests teaching and employing consciousness raising exercises for example, in how to use reported verbs which is common in academic writing.

Within this language informant approach, it is hard to determine the optimal balance for tutors to elicit answers from the student or to provide explicit instruction. Moreover, the question remains, when and how often should the tutor elicit answers and prompt students and, in addition, when and how often should the tutor simply provide the information the student is lacking through directive instruction? In their literature review on second language writers in the writing center, Williams and Severino (2004) suggest that pushing learners to access forms that are part of their L2 knowledge base by asking questions instead of simply telling them the answer helps students build L2 fluency. However, they warn that this will only succeed if the learner has at least partial mastery over form. Moreover, the tutor cannot elicit what the writer does not know. They also suggest that the tutor needs to find a balance

between providing L2 writers with the explicit instruction they need, whilst accepting the collaborative writing center framework, where writers should maintain ownership of their text (Williams & Severino, 2004, p. 166). This balance will be further explored in the next section.

### **3.2.3 Error correction**

One of the most pressing issues for writing tutors working with second language writers are the errors in their papers. When L2 students come to the writing center, tutors report feeling overwhelmed by the number of errors in the students' writing because they do not know how or where to start giving feedback (Shin, 2006). Moreover, the L2 writers' errors in grammar or lexis often affect the sentence's meaning (Nakamaru, 2010a).

Writing center literature continually warns tutors against acting as proofreaders or editors and providing in complete error correction. Error correction is defined as tutor's identifying and correcting the incorrect English usage in their responses to drafts of student's composition (Cumming & So, 1996). In fact, this 'no proofread guideline' is the one core value that most North American WCs share universally. Elements of writing and language are labeled higher-order concerns (HOCs) and lower-order concerns (LOCs). HOCs relate to organization, structure, cohesion and development that make up the whole essay. LOCs are lexical or grammatical errors found in each sentence. Checking LOCs is considered proofreading which tutors are told to avoid (Cogie et al., 1999). In the collaborative non-directive approach, tutors are taught to address HOCs first during tutorial sessions because they impede the success of the whole essay. According to Nakamaru (2010b), this is probably because writing centers were originally designed for native English speakers who write in

their fully developed language (pp. 97-98). By attending to sentence level corrections with native speakers, the writing center tutor is indeed editing or proofreading. It is believed that if WCs focus exclusively on grammar and other conventions, this reinforces the L2s writer's obsession with surface level detail (Staben & Nordhaus, 2004).

However, L2 students often come to the writing center with the expectation that the tutor will correct their errors. Initially when the L2 tutee arrives, peer tutors are trained to first create the agenda of the writing tutorial with the student. This creates an issue when the L2 student wants to focus on surface features such as grammar and syntax, but the tutor has been trained to help the student with HOC first instead of LOC. Another problem is when the L2 student insists that tutors should correct all grammatical errors in the paper as tutors often do not know how to respond. For many tutors, giving the student the correct grammar and fixing their errors violates the integrity of the writing center service and the autonomy of the writer.

So what should tutors do when L2 writers' papers contain numerous grammar, lexis and syntax errors? Tutors need to know how to respond to those issues. Many L2 writing specialists agree that error correction should focus on the most frequent, serious, and treatable errors (Harris & Silva, 1993; Ferris, 1995; Linville, 2009). Frequent errors are defined as the most common errors in L2 paper. Serious errors are defined by Linville (2009) as errors that "interfere with the clear communication of meaning" (p. 118). Finally, treatable errors are defined as "related to a linguistic structure that occurs in a rule-governed way. It is treatable because the student writer

can be pointed to a grammar book or set of rules to resolve the problem” (Ferris, 2002, p. 23).

### **3.2.3.1 Error correction with the goal of teaching students to be independent self-editors**

Confusing the issue is that research on how writing tutors should attend to these sentence level errors is not consistent. There are basically two sides to this debate. Researchers who believe that writing tutors should help students with error correction through a directive approach (Cumming & So, 1996; Grimm, 2009; Myers, 2003; Nakamaru, 2010a; Reid, 1994; Severino, 2009) and those who believe writing tutors should help L2 writers through a less directive approach (Cogie, Strain & Lorinskas, 1999; Harris & Silva, 1993; Linville, 2009; Staben & Nordhaus, 2004). As aforementioned, being ‘directive’ is not an either/or dichotomy. The latter researchers, advocating a less directive approach, believe the main goal of writing tutorials is to teach students how to become independent self-editors.

Instead of simply proofreading, the ‘independent self-editor’ theory advocates helping students notice their errors so that they improve their writing skills towards the goal of making them autonomous writers in the future (Linville, 2009). Harris and Silva (1993) recommend tutors to tell L2 writers that it is unrealistic for them to expect to be able to write like native speakers of English. They continue that ESL students “need to know that tutors are expected to help them with strategies that will make them effective, independent writers” (Harris & Silva, 1993, p. 531). Cogie et al. (1999) recommend that tutors and their trainers develop a collection of practical strategies for developing ESL students’ error awareness so that they can eventually self-edit. In line with this belief Linville (2009) asserts that teaching students to

become effective self-editors is absolutely necessary in order to remain in line with the overarching purpose of the writing center which is “to intervene in and ultimately alter the composing process of the writer” (North as cited in Linville, 2009, p. 118). According to Linville, the “alternatives are unacceptable: providing a proofreading service which creates the kind of unhealthy dependency...or not providing a service at all” (2009, p. 117). Harris and Silva continue this line of thought by stating that these proofreading services are not a learning experience except for the editor (Harris & Silva, 1993, p. 531).

At the moment the advice given to tutors about how to actually support L2 writers to become independent self-editors is scant. This advice revolves around teaching grammar and explicit modeling. Tutors are advised to identify a pattern of error and teach the student how to correct the error by learning and applying grammar rules (Linville, 2009). The goals for the tutor are:

1. Teach the student how to become a proficient self-editor
2. Learn how to diagnose frequent patterns of error
3. Learn how to correct (and teach students how to correct) six major error types
4. Learn when to refer students elsewhere for more instruction (p. 118).

Through Linville’s method, tutors are encouraged to only check the line where there is a problem and prompt the student to resolve the error themselves. Linville asserts that, although this process is slow, “by refusing to give corrections, (the tutor) affirms (the tutee’s) ownership of the paper, encouraging him to become a proficient self-editor” (p. 122). If the tutor cannot explain the error, Linville suggests they look it up together in a grammar book.

I am skeptical of Linville's assertion about the successfulness of her proposed method to help tutees spot the most frequent errors. According to her, this method is successful in teaching students to be independent self-editors. Students will become aware of their frequent patterns of errors, learn the rules to correct them and ultimately become proficient at self-correcting (Linville, 2009). Linville underestimated the difficulties in this process. By way of illustration, the student might not be developmentally ready to self-correct some of her errors. She is only arguably developmentally ready if she has enough background knowledge about the meaning and the use of language form (Minett, 2009). For novice English learners this is not possible. This process works best for advanced L2 writers. Furthermore, Linville implies that teaching error correction is simple because tutors are able to apply a single systematic rule to the error and that through learning this particular rule students will be able to edit themselves. However, this is not always the case. As I will discuss later, many lexical issues are not amenable to error correction (Nakamaru, 2010b). Finally, as stated previously, Linville's essay is only a guide lacking any empirical data to show how her conclusions were determined. The reader does not know if this recommendation comes from her own anecdotal experience or from rigorous research.

Research has shown that it is time consuming to prompt students to spot their error and self-correct. Although Linville did acknowledge this as well, other researchers have found that there are more efficient ways of conducting error correction, such as in Cumming and So (1996). They conducted a study which consisted of analysis of transcripts of 20 tutorials with adult intermediate-advanced level ESL students enrolled in a 6 week program of intensive ESL studies at a Canadian University. Their

study's purpose was to examine the differences between tutoring intended explicitly to provide error correction or to provide procedural facilitation, and the differences between tutoring in the students' second language (English) or their mother tongue (Cantonese, Japanese or Mandarin). They found that there were many cases when tutors' attempts to explain and prompt students to resolve their errors in their L2 produced unfruitful discourse. According to them, quick grammar corrections would have been less time consuming and more efficient. They use the example of discourse between a tutor and a tutee about the use of 's' after population. According to Cumming and So (1996), the duration of the conversation was five pages of written transcript and at the end they were not certain whether the tutee actually understood the grammar point. From their research, the authors asserted that it was an example where the learner was not developmentally ready to learn this English usage. It seems that too much time was allotted for 'error correction' and therefore it limited the potential to learn other aspects of English writing. Williams (2004) also found that non-directive tutoring approaches led to a long guessing game where the tutee was probably wondering what the tutor was trying to tell her.

Based on their experience tutoring at a writing center at a large university, Cogie et al. (1999) argue for teaching students self-editing strategies that they believe can serve as the more "mechanical rule-based proofreading strategies" (p. 9). They recommend four ways to help ESL students with 'sentence level' problems, encouraging them to become competent self-editors. Those are the usage of: a learner's dictionary, minimal marking, error logs, and self-editing checklists. Learner's dictionaries are dictionaries especially designed for L2 students providing additional grammatical and syntactic information. While a native speaker's dictionary provides examples of word

usage, a learner's dictionary provides more complete and easy examples. Minimal marking refers to only marking some of the errors so as not to overwhelm the student. When marking, tutors should only write a check next to line where the error is, not address what kind of error it is. According to Cogie et al. tutors should only mark errors that are frequent and obscure in meaning. Other errors such as article misuse or singular, plural noun form mistakes should be the lowest priority of the errors addressed because they do not impede meaning. They advocate that, once the L2 writer has identified the frequent and serious errors through usage of a learner's dictionary and minimal marking, the tutee should record his/her errors in the error log in order to encourage metacognitive awareness of the correct English usage. According to Cogie et al. (1999), error logs are personalized dictionaries of the student's most frequent or serious errors, created and maintained by the student with guidance from the tutor (p. 18). Finally, the last tool they advocate is the self-edit check list, hand-outs given to students to check for their frequent errors and to check all verbs for subject-verb agreement, modals, tenses, and voice.

Myers (2003) critiques these four strategies recommended by Cogie et al. (1999) based on her experience at the University of Wyoming's Writing Center. She criticizes each suggestion with the exception of the use a learner's dictionary. She reports that minimal marking only teaches the student that there is an error in the line. However, in order to help L2 writers, tutors need to identify what type of error has been made because the line could be checked for any number of problems including: lexical choice, verb and subject agreement, pronouns, or word order. As mentioned previously, Cumming and So (1996) suggested it is frequently more productive to tell the student the error and move on instead of prompting the student. Furthermore, it is

not always easy to identify how many errors are in the sentence if the sentence is incomprehensible, as many L2 writers' texts are.

In addition, Myers (2003) suggests that error logs are not beneficial because the cost outweighs the benefit. It takes a tremendous amount of effort for the L2 writer to log their errors from every paper, and many of these errors are because the student lacks the language in the first place and not because they made a simple mistake. Therefore, time could be better allocated on learning languages (meaning of words and lexical phrases) than on the study of errors (Myers, 2003). Myers explains that "sometimes it is more economical to point out an error and supply the correction or an alternative way to express something" (p. 60). Finally, she questions self-editing checklists for the same reason she questions error logs. Checking for subject-verb agreement, modals, tenses, and voice is an extremely complicated process. Self-editing checklists only work with very advanced students and require a huge effort on behalf of the student. Instead, Myers suggests that these checklists might be useful but only for certain problems such as the comma splice.

### **3.2.3.2 Advocates for more explicit error correction**

As mentioned previously, there are two sides to the debate as to how to handle second language errors during writing tutoring. Like Myers (2003), as reported above, many other researchers disagree with the idea that WCs should teach L2 writers how to self-edit and not provide proofreading type services (Cumming & So, 1996; Grimm, 2009; Nakamaru, 2010a; Reid, 1994; Severino, 2009). Myers (2003) writes, "Students are often painfully aware of their errors, but are not sure or simply do not know how to fix them. I don't think tutors need to spend a lot of time to develop strategies to increase the students' (already sometimes paralyzing) awareness of their errors, or

that doing so necessarily enables students to self-edit” (p. 58). Another issue involving the proofreading dilemma is that many errors are not grammatical but in fact lexical and syntactical (Myers, 2003). For native English speakers, lexical awareness is intuitively learned by constant exposure to English. In order for an L2 student to write well they need a great deal of lexis and syntax. They also need experience in both comprehension and production in order to attain a level where their writing is comprehensible (Myers, 2003, p. 55). Unfortunately, simple error correction that focuses on finding and correcting errors does not teach L2 writers the appropriate lexical phrase because these expressive needs rarely fall into a discernible, rule-based pattern (Nakamaru, 2010b). From her small-scale case study of four ESL students at the Writing Center she concludes that L2 students need help with collocation usage, especially correct preposition use, for which there is no rule and only more exposure to the language will aid. Moreover, “lack of lexical facility, flexibility and intuition affect students’ ability to create meaningful effective texts” (Nakamaru, 2010b, p. 110).

Scholars advocate that tutors need new ways of responding to novice users of English who want help proofreading their papers. Grimm (2009) asserts that this is especially important within the framework of Global Englishes. She urges WCs to embrace multilingualism and different varieties of English. According to her, LOCs are usually “persistent markers of racial and class identity, neighborhoods, cultures, and languages other than English” and that by only focusing on HOCs you are diminishing and disempowering those students who need help with LOCs (p. 13). Furthermore, she asserts that “Americans have a linguistic culture based on folk beliefs, stereotypes, and faulty assumptions that allow us to use language to make

judgments about an individual's suitability for employment as well as an individual's intelligence, habits, and values while we claim to be using neutral criteria" (p. 17). In other words, people are judged on their use of English and until that changes, and people begin to accept more non-idiomatic English, tutors must help tutees correct their errors. Moreover, this "linguistic bigotry" makes it unfair to simply deny the request of tutees who want to receive proofreading (Grimm, 2009, p. 18). Unfortunately, she does not suggest how WC tutors should respond to this request. In fact, just as research is scant on how tutors should teach L2 writers to become independent self-editors, so is research on how to help students correct these grammatical and lexical errors.

What do the few studies on this topic show? Reid's (1994) paper reviews the history of the appropriation issue in the ESL classroom focusing on the reasons for the development of "myths of appropriation"; the exclusion of the social context in writing and the tendency of writing center researchers not to differentiate intervention from appropriation. She suggests that teachers should embrace their role as writing experts and cultural informants in order to empower their students in their writing. She explains that when tutors respond to a student's text it is important to discuss the linguistic and rhetorical choices the L2 student has made and offer alternatives. Reformulation, correcting and revising L2 writing, making it more idiomatic and native sounding, is seen as an optional strategy to help revise students' lexical problems (Severino, 2009, p. 52). This can help the tutors provide the much needed input the student will need to make particular vocabulary structures available for spontaneous production at a later date (Myers, 2003, p. 56). Myers (2003) suggests that rather than just pointing out the error, tutors can provide explicit alternative

language by saying to the tutee “‘Another way to say that is’, ‘One way of putting it is’ and ‘Some other phrases you can use are’” (Myers, 2003, p. 65).

In Minett’ s guide (2009) to help writers clarify their intended meaning based on a case study with Vlado, a Bulgarian ESL student, she urges writing tutors and L2 writers to work together to negotiate the intended meaning. However, she and Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) recommend only offering help as long as it is needed. Alaaafreh and Lantolf observed the development potentials of a group of adult English as second language learners for eight weeks, in one-to-one writing lessons. Based on their work they assert that the writing tutor should withdraw help as soon as the writer is showing signs of self-control and the ability to do it on their own. Minett uses Vlado to illustrate this strategy. She first advises him to underline his own errors by himself. Together they read through his passage and if he did not spot an error that impedes clarity of the sentence she would first point it out and ask him what is wrong. If he still did not understand, she would “give the correct answer and explain the grammar rule, or we will look it up together” (p. 73). She recommends providing help in an explicit and more directive explanation.

Nakamaru (2010a) has five suggestions for a successful tutorial session with L2 writers in terms of responding to grammatical issues. These are based on her case studies of seven multilingual student writers at a large urban university. They are:

1. It is okay to talk about grammar. The tutor should think of it as language instruction rather than “proofreading.” This is a legitimate concern of L2 writers that deserves a response.
2. Explain directly if necessary, rather than engaging in trying to prompting information the student does not have.
3. Understand that there are cultural differences in writing and rhetorical conventions, which include intellectual ownership.

4. If you don't know the rules of English grammar, learn them. Learn the rules so you can better help your tutees with an explanation of why something is incorrect or correct.
5. Many problems with 'grammar' are actually problems with vocabulary.  
(p. 105).

This raises the question of how tutors should respond to lexical errors. Lexical errors remain a serious problem for tutors and tutees. For example, research by Nakamaru (2010b) shows that, although many tutors address L2 students' lexical needs, they characterize their own feedback in terms of "content" and "grammar." She deduces that this is because of the fear tutors have of appropriating the students' texts, or writing the paper for them. However, perhaps tutors should be taught not to fear appropriation. Reid states that when working with L2 students who have unclear sentences she first discusses with them the linguistic and rhetorical choices they have made and offers alternative language that is more appropriate. She asserts in response to appropriation issues, "If this is appropriation, I am guilty. However, I see my intervention as a direct result of student needs" (1994, p. 284).

One reason tutors tend to focus on content first instead of lexical and grammatical errors is because frequently the tutor does not know what to do when faced with L2 texts with confusing syntactic and lexical sentences (Myers, 2003 p. 51). One way to respond to line by line errors is to do some sort of formative assessment activity with the L2 student. Firstly, the tutor can ask the student to explain the reason they chose the certain phrase, or constructed the sentence in that way. Secondly, the tutor can give the student several correct and incorrect versions of the misused sentence and encourage the student to assess which sentence is correct and which one is not (Leki, 1992, p. 131).

Nakamaru asserts that tutors should not abandon their strategies to find patterns of error, but that they need to know how to include and start discussions about lexical issues. According to Nakamaru, one strategy could be “scaffolding in expressing what they want to say in the first place, e.g., by providing appropriate vocabulary or modeling the use of idiomatic lexical chunks and sentence patterns” (Nakamaru, 2010b, p. 110). She also suggests that tutors need more training about how lexical strengths and needs affect students’ writing, and how to feel empowered to talk about them during tutorial sessions (p. 109). Nakamaru urges researchers to study this phenomenon to help tutors respond to students’ lexical needs.

### **3.2.3.3 IU’s policy toward error correction**

As mentioned before, IU tutors are instructed to employ a more directive approach within a framework that promotes student negotiation of meaning (which will be discussed further in the next section). Tutors are encouraged to combine direct discussions of language and vocabulary throughout the tutoring session while still collaborating with the student so that ultimately the student maintains authority over his/her own work. As mentioned in Chapter Two, tutors are required to read *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009). This book contains the essays mentioned previously by Linville and Nordhouse & Staben advocating that tutors help L2 writers become sufficient self-editors. However, this same book also contains an essay by Minett (2009) who suggests that tutors help students reformulate sentences. Tutors also read Myers (2003) who, as detailed above, is a strong opponent against teaching L2 writers how to become sufficient self-editors.

Under the umbrella term of a more ‘directive’ approach, tutors are taught a variety of strategies to employ during writing tutoring sessions (see appendix 6). As mentioned

in Chapter Two, this list was created based on guidelines recommended in *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009). One of these guidelines recommends for tutors to look at HOCs such as thesis statement and organization first. It also warns tutors to avoid appropriation by not changing sentences for the writer and instead to always work with the student to reformulate sentences. The guidelines also state that tutors can correct some of the student's errors (for the specific list of guidelines please see Appendix 6).

Basically, the guidelines advocate a more directive approach within a framework of student-centered tutorials. Tutors are given autonomy to decide which strategy is the most appropriate for each individual student and are encouraged to find their own tutoring style that works for them. As I will explain in Chapter Five, some tutors did indeed have their own style; some were more explicit and directive while other tutors used more questions and implicit suggestions during tutoring. The effectiveness and ethics of each approach will be discussed in Chapter Five.

### **3.2.4 Miscommunication**

Obviously, miscommunication impedes negotiation and the active participation of the tutee during the tutorial. It is also a common issue found during tutorials with L2 writers. One reason for miscommunication is the language of the tutorial. It is suggested that tutors, if capable, should conduct the tutorial in the L2 writer's native language. However, some scholars warn against using the student's mother tongue, explaining that, although increasing communication, this reduces or eliminates the potential for the student to negotiate the problem solving in his/her second language (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990). On the other hand, other researchers believe the student's mother tongue should be used for identifying, assessing, explaining or

consolidating the tutor's decisions regarding the student's essays. Utilizing the student's mother tongue can provide tutors a precise helpful way of guiding text revision (Cummings & So, p. 220).

Another reason for miscommunication is that tutors are not trained in how to listen to L2 writers. Bokser (2005) suggests that tutors need to be encouraged to be more cognizant and sensitive listeners and speakers. In her report on her own experience teaching a credit-bearing tutor training class at two institutions, she outlines her ideas about belonging through a rhetoric of listening. Her experiences are not to serve as a model but to "generate an extended consideration of what is involved in making such encounters beneficial moments of cultural exchange" (p. 44). Bokser found that listening is especially important with resistant tutees because the tutor needs to listen for what the tutees are not saying and then when they do speak, the tutor needs to listen for what they are excited about. That one thing that the student is excited about might be the key to getting the student more engaged in the session (Bokser, 2005, p. 54). Overall, Bokser encourages tutors to engage in a more focused tutorial session that considers how people listen, why they listen and how this affects what is being said. In order to do this, tutors need to practice reflecting on and discussing tutor-tutee interaction. She concludes that tutor training should, "prepare tutors to work with cultural differences by encouraging an understanding of listening as a rhetorical activity" (p. 59).

Other studies on miscommunication in tutorial sessions include those of Heather (2004) and Bell and Youmans (2006). Heather's (2004) case study of the co-construction of miscommunication during a writing center tutorial with a Hebrew

speaking ESL student demonstrated that “semantic, paralinguistic, and non-verbal factors combine in complex and unpredictable ways to produce miscommunication between nonnative English speaking students and native-speaking writing center consultants” (p. 17). She showed that miscommunication happened during discussions of a use or meaning of a word. She recommends increasing the tutor’s awareness of the miscommunication by videotaping the tutorial.

Another interesting study by Bell and Youmans (2006) examined how tutors used positive politeness in tutorial sessions by analyzing sixteen thirty-minute sessions (480 minutes: 240 with L1 students and 360 with L2 students) in a writing center at a public Southeastern University in America. Positive politeness is defined as serving to make the hearer feel liked or approved (Bell & Youmans, 2006, p. 34). Their research on praise and politeness shows that it is often misinterpreted by ESL students. Two reasons are: first the ESL student might “reject the praise as a rapport-building collaborative technique because of their embedded cultural understandings of the function of educational spaces; second, these second-language students may misunderstand the role of politeness as a component of an Americanized genre of response” (Bell & Youmans, 2006, p. 33). Although they do argue that praise statements do create some rapport with the tutee, they can also lead to confusion when tutors praise one part of the essay and then include, ‘although,’ or ‘but.’ For example, if the tutor says “the thesis is very clear, but it doesn’t contain an argument.” The ESL student might only focus on the first part of the sentence, that the thesis is clear and then be more confused when the tutor tries to help her change it, since she thought it was good (Bell & Youmans, 2006).

It should be noted, as with negotiation, all of this research was conducted with native English speakers as tutors with L2 writers in a North American context. None of the studies focus on miscommunication between L2 tutors and EFL writers. According to Thonus (2004), one interpretation of this data is that tutors are still searching for adequate frames for tutorials with nonnative speakers. I agree and argue, moreover, that at this point in time researchers are still searching for the appropriate contact zone when working with beginner EFL students.

### **3.3 Students' perceptions of the challenges experienced during a tutorial with an L2 Writer**

Overall, there is little research about the challenges L2 writers perceive during writing tutorials. With that said, one aspect that has been sufficiently researched is L2 writers' expectations during writing tutorials. Tutors and tutees have different cultural expectations of the tutoring session which leads to problems during the tutorial. L2 writers may find collaborative tutorials uncomfortable, especially if they come from educational systems where the teachers are expected to pass knowledge on to the students (Harris & Silva, 1993). Although native English speakers usually view writing center tutors as 'peers,' L2 writers usually characterize the tutor as an 'authority figure.' According to Barwood (2000), the tutor is the "knowledgeable other" with direct influence over the student's writing. In this sense, the relationship starts as unequal because the tutor has authority over the students' writing. Moreover, interactions are one-way with the tutor advising and directing the student. The tutor becomes the judge rather than the student's peer. This is one of the strongest themes found in Thonus's work. Even the tutor's constant appeal to the collaborative framework does not shake L2 writers from this belief (Thonus, 2004, p. 236).

Studies by Vallejo and Harris confirm the L2 student's expectation for the tutor to act as a teacher. Vallejo's (2004) study on tutoring approaches and strategies, conducted at a large Midwestern University, interviewed six ESL students about their experiences at the writing center. The students in his study perceived the tutors as authority figures whose goal was to impart knowledge. Moreover, they wanted the tutors to enact the teacher role, because according to the students the tutors, "know the English language" (p.127). These findings are in line with Harris's (1997) research, where she surveyed and interviewed a group of international students to discover their assumptions, preferences, and expectations when they came for tutorials at the Writing Center (Harris 1997). In her research it was found that tutees expect tutors to take on an authoritative role, but tutees do not see them as authoritative as teachers and instead perceived tutors to be "immediately more helpful, more approachable, more practical and more personal than teachers." (p. 223).

Exactly what kind of feedback do ESL students expect? In Vallejo's (2004) study mentioned above, the participants expressed a preference for explicit directive feedback strategies concerning grammar. This was the tutees' reported major writing concern. Tutees expressed their preference for tutors to correct and indicate if the sentence is appropriate or inappropriate. It was concluded that the students in his study liked explanations, in other words, not only did they want grammar corrections but they also wanted to understand and learn so they would be able to successfully identify the local errors in their own writing. However, they did not report that they wanted an explanation about global concerns, such as structure, argument or evidence.

In a slightly different context to writing center tutorials, Nelson and Carson's (1998) study on peer response groups in the classroom found the opposite of Vallejo's study.

Nelson's and Carson's study examined Spanish and Chinese speaking students' perceptions of their interactions in written peer response group in an ESL composition class. Through an ethnographic study consisting of video tapes, in depth interviews and observations, it was concluded that all five participants preferred their peers not to comment on local problems but rather preferred comments on global issues. According to Nelson and Carson, "The writers lamented that many of the problems their peers pointed out were on the word or sentence level and were not very helpful in terms of helping them say what they wanted to say in their papers" (p. 128). However, it must be noted that this was in the context of the classroom working with peers, not trained writing tutors. Therefore perhaps the participants did not appreciate their peers pointing out their mistakes. It was also found that these writers appreciated negative comments because this allowed them to fix what was wrong with the paper and thus improve it.

### **3.4 Tutors' perceptions of the challenges experienced during a tutorial with a L2 writer**

Overall, just as there are not many studies from the tutee's perspective, there are also not many studies from the tutor's perspective about the challenges experienced during L2 students' writing tutorials. One of the most relevant studies on this topic was conducted by myself, at the same university as this study is conducted, a small international university in Japan; however, it involved different participants (students and tutors), and utilized a different method to obtain data, tutors' reflective journals (Mack, 2012). I examined the different types of problems encountered during EFL writing tutoring as perceived by the tutors through analyzing their reflective journals over a two month period, 40 in total, eight per tutor. The journals were coded for

specific common themes that related to various issues tutors encountered during the tutorials. Five themes emerged: communication issues, timing of the intervention, where to start? global or local concerns, didactic role and lack of tutor knowledge about the assignment.

All five tutors felt communication during tutorials was sometimes challenging and therefore resorted to the student's mother tongue, Japanese, in order to facilitate the tutorial. Another issue, frustrating to the tutors, was the timing of the intervention (when the student came to the writing center). According to the tutors, many students brought in their assignment the day before it was due and expected the tutor to "fix it." Moreover, the tutors were frustrated with having to deal with the students' lack of pre-planning which led to lack of organization in their essay. Another issue was the tutors were confused about how to differentiate between local and global concerns. Tutors reported an overall lack of clarity in the students' essays, making it hard to recognize if the lack of clarity was a global level issue, local level issue, or both (p. 173).

Connected to this issue was how to respond to the student's errors in general. All the tutors in this study reported giving grammar instruction and helping with lexical issues. They faced dilemmas on the most appropriate approach and felt guilty if they provided too much direct instruction. Similar to these findings, Weigle and Nelson (2004) found in three case studies with tutors and tutees, that the tutors were challenged when trying to use the inductive method when dealing with errors in the tutee's paper. The tutor reported, "being deductively instructed myself in my earlier years, I have found inductive structure a challenge" (p.210).

In these two studies, (Mack, 2012; Weigle & Nelson, 2004) it was also found that tutors have a difficult time adopting a more didactic role. In Mack (2012) acting as a teacher was difficult for the tutors, many of whom were the same age as the tutees and had little or no experience teaching. For example, they wondered how to teach students about their grammar and English mechanics. Similarly, Weigle and Nelson (2004) found that the tutors were aware of their own lack of English knowledge as nonnative speakers of English and were uncomfortable when they could not explain the grammar point or answer questions in the tutoring session. In contrast to this, two of the tutors in Thonus's 2001 ethnographic study of seven tutors and seven tutees, were comfortable in the instructor role and in fact called their role the "instructor surrogate role" (p. 67). However, these tutors had experience teaching classes and did not identify as the students' peers.

On the other hand, other tutors in Thonus's study complained about this role because they found the writing assignment sheets "difficult to decipher" or "not tutor-friendly" (p. 68). Hence they had a harder time clarifying the assignment to the tutee. This finding is in line with Mack (2012), where the tutor's lack of knowledge about the tutee's assignment was reported by the tutors as a major problem. The tutors felt nervous about giving advice about an assignment they were not familiar with. They reported that they did not want to disappoint the student. It was recommended for EFL tutors "to be well versed on each assignment since EFL writing is much more likely to have specific formulaic requirements" (p. 179).

### 3.5 Roles in writing center literature

Theorizing concerning the different roles tutors enact is not new to writing center literature. Harris (1995) discusses the various roles writing tutors perform in her guide for writing tutors as “changing hats mid-sentence.” In other words, the tutors change roles constantly in order to accommodate the tutee. According to Harris (1995), there are only three roles a tutor plays: a coach (the encouraging helper who tells students what they need to know in order to help them become more skilled and improve their writing); a commentator (the person who explains, illustrates, evaluates, and draws a larger picture of what is happening in the student’s writing); and a counselor (the caregiver who offers advice, personal attention and positive reinforcement to the student). Although her discussion of roles is interesting, the qualitative or quantitative evidence for how these roles were theorized is lacking. Moreover, she does not adequately discuss how context supports and enhances, constricts or even prevents the fulfillment of these roles.

Many tutoring guides also theorize the roles that tutors play during tutorial sessions. In Gillespie and Lerner’s *Guide to Peer Tutoring* (2008) they define the role a tutor ought to play by contrasting it to that of an editor. According to Gillespie and Lerner (2008), a tutor is different from an editor in that they focus on the writer’s development while an editor focuses on the text, taking ownership of it. Moreover, editors are more direct and tell the student how to improve while tutors are more implicit and ask more questions. Although this definition is useful for suggesting the role a tutor ought to play, characterizing the role of the tutor by what the tutor should not do creates a negative, imprecise and de-contextualized definition (Thonus, 2001).

Another guide that defined the roles tutors play is *The Bedford Tutoring Guide* (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2009). According to Ryan and Zimmerelli, a tutor's role varies from session to session; however, the tutor will always fill one of these six roles: ally, coach, commentator, collaborator, writing expert and counselor (2009). Under these six roles the guide specifies that the tutor is the student's peer (ally) and that he/she must never do the work for the student. Instead he/she must do it from the sidelines (like a coach) and through collaboration (the collaborator). The guide fulfills the same role as Harris (1995) mentioned above as commentator and counselor. Finally, the guide suggests that the tutor is the expert, more knowledgeable about writing than the student.

*A Tutor's Guide* (Rafoth, 2000) also defines the roles tutors play in writing tutorials. Rafoth sees the role of the tutor as slightly more authoritative and critical. He argues that tutors should take the roles of constructive critics rather than cheerleaders, which is in opposition to *The Bedford Tutoring Guide* that views the role of the tutor as a coach and ally. With that said, he still views the role of the tutor as the student's peer, something very different than that of a teacher.

What is consistent throughout these tutoring guides is that tutors are viewed as supportive peers rather than authoritative teachers. Moreover, these guides suggest that the tutees also see the tutors as their peers. Plummer and Thonus (1999) use the term "methodology as mythology of tutoring" to describe the myth that these tutoring guides propagate that a tutor's role as a peer is distinct and different from a teacher's role. The methodology of tutoring is teaching tutors not to be 'teachers' or 'directive'

when in fact tutors regularly fill teacherly roles (as cited in Thonus, 2001). More will be discussed on the teacherly roles tutors fill under the teacher heading.

In line with my own views on roles, Hemmeter (1994), who analyzed tape recorded narratives from tutors about their tutorial experiences, describes the roles that a writing center tutor enacts as being a “performance” and advocates that the tutor adjust his/her performance based on the role students want the tutors to play. He writes, “playing a variety of narrative roles, writing center tutors find themselves involved in a dynamic performance in which rules and roles shift” (1994, p. 38). He suggests that by viewing the tutorial as a narrative “performance,” tutors learn how to react flexibly to each student’s individual needs. For effective tutor training he recommends that tutors share their narratives in order for tutors to see that there are multiple ways for them to interact with their audience and multiple identities that they can take on.

### **3.5.1 Roles in Writing Feedback**

Other research that discusses roles in writing is research on feedback. In a study on proofreading based on interviews with 16 university proofreaders about their experiences, beliefs and practices Harwood, Liz Austin and Rowena Macaulay (2012) found that proofreaders conceptualize their roles as the following metaphors: helper, cleaner, leveler, mediator or teacher. As a helper the informants perceive their role as assisting struggling writers and providing a service to them; and as a cleaner they conceptualize their role as cleaning up the text and providing error correction. The leveler is a unique role, one not discussed previously in Writing Center literature. Here the participants view their role as “compensating for shortcomings of the university system. Proofreading helps lessen the disadvantage experienced by non-

natives and writers from less privileged backgrounds” (p. 575). In other words, they view their work as ethical because it levels the playing field making the university grading system fairer. The mediator role is conceptualized as a bridge between the writer and the writer’s supervisor. Finally, as teacher, some of the participants define their role as didactic and formative. However, other proofreaders disagreed with this idea because they believed students spend very little time reflecting on the proofreaders’ amendments, hence the students are not learning. Overall, it was found that the proofreaders can play one or more roles, sometimes simultaneously and that “different informants place greater or lesser priority on these various roles” (p. 581).

Work by Woodward-Kron (2007) and Woodward-Kron and Jamieson (2007) also found the role of the tutor to be formative. They investigated the roles tutors play in individual writing consultations with language advisers and graduate students. Through discourse analysis, it was found that these tutorials show the interaction to be dynamic focusing on making suggestions and negotiating changes (Woodward-Kron & Jamieson, 2007). They also found that writing center consultations are formative because the tutor asks the tutee to clarify points about his or her writing. This leads the tutee to notice issues in his/her clarity and cohesiveness. The writing advisers in this study provided two roles, first, advice on the language choices and structure of the papers. Second, because students were unfamiliar with the writing requirements, expectations and academic culture of the discipline, they advised on those points.

### **3.6 Summary**

In this literature review, drawing on existing writing center literature, I have summarized five main areas of writing center scholarship and writing rhetoric related to this study’s research questions:

- 3.1 Background:
  - 3.1.1 The writing center philosophy
  - 3.1.2 International expansion
- 3.2 Overall issues in ESL and EFL writing tutoring:
  - 3.2.1 The L2 writer
  - 3.2.2 The suggested model for writing tutorials with ESL students
  - 3.2.3 Error correction during tutorials
  - 3.2.4 Miscommunication
- 3.3 Students' perceptions of the challenges experienced during a tutorial with a L2 writer
- 3.4 Tutors' perceptions of challenges experienced during a tutorial with a L2 writer
- 3.5 Roles in writing center literature

In particular, I have argued that tutors should take a more directive approach when tutoring EFL students in an international context. I have also argued that tutors and administrators in international contexts need to re-think whether tutors can help tutees proofread. Although this review of literature is helpful as a starting point for understanding EFL tutoring it also highlights the lack of studies on EFL writing tutoring, especially concerning EFL students' and tutors' perspectives. It is this lack of research that motivated me to examine new issues and challenges faced in EFL writing tutoring with beginner/intermediate Japanese students.

## **CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY**

In the previous chapter, the relevant writing center literature was reviewed providing the conceptual foundations for this study. In this chapter, the interpretive methodological framework employed to explore the challenges of EFL writing tutoring is described. This research stance led to the adoption of symbolic interactionism as the framework for analyzing tutor and student interactions. Next, the reader is reminded of the research context and participants. A detailed account of the research procedure implemented is described comprising of: data collection, ethical issues and data analysis. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion on validation and credibility of qualitative research and the limitations of this study.

### **4.1 Philosophical underpinnings**

There are a variety of methodological approaches employed to conduct educational research and each one is informed by a different set of philosophical, both ontological and epistemological, assumptions (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). The researcher's intentions, goals and philosophical assumptions are arguably inextricably linked with the research they conduct. Grix (2004) warns researchers of the necessity of understanding the philosophical underpinnings that inform their choice of research questions, methodology, methods and intentions. Therefore, how one views the constructs of social reality and knowledge affects how he/she investigates the relationships among phenomena and social behavior.

I align myself with other authors (Grix, 2004; Hay, 2002) in stressing that research is best conducted by identifying one's ontological and epistemological assumptions first.

Hay (2002) points out that the relationship between these concepts is directional, “ontology logically precedes epistemology which logically precedes methodology” (2002, p. 63). In other words, one’s ontological assumptions informs his/her epistemological assumptions which informs his/her methodology and these all give rise to the methods employed to collect data. My ontological and epistemological assumptions are informed by the interpretivist view of reality and knowledge. In the next section, this theoretical perspective will be further explored.

#### **4.1.1 Interpretivist perspective**

The interpretivist theoretical perspective can be also called the ‘anti-positivist’ paradigm because it was developed as a reaction to the scientific approach of positivism which was seen as too mechanistic (Burns, 1999). It is also sometimes referred to as constructivism because it emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning (Crotty, 1998). In this paradigm, researchers seek to understand rather than explain. From this perspective, reality is seen as multilayered and complex because people interpret events differently leaving multiple perspectives and interpretations of a single incident or situation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Therefore reality is pluralistic, “reflecting the multiple perspectives of different social actors, with their different biographies, and the different contexts within which they operate, there are many different truths, or multiple ways of knowing” (Rich, 2011. p. 91). Knowledge arises from particular situations and is not reducible to simplistic interpretation (Crotty, 1998). The social world can never be objectively observed from the outside; instead researchers need an alternative frame of reference, one that involves understanding the research process from the inside through the eyes of participants rather than the researcher’s (Burns, 1999).

## **4.2 Theoretical Framework**

The research in this study is aligned with the interpretivist approach. The aim of interpretivist research “is to develop a deeper understanding of phenomena, actions and perspectives and through ‘emic’ accounts to reveal the multiple perspectives which can complicate and unsettle but also yield new insights” (Rich, 2011, p. 91). Given that this research study’s aim is to understand the challenges of conducting a writing tutorial with Japanese EFL students from the perspective of the tutors and students, it is closely aligned with the interpretivist theoretical perspective. Another important feature of the interpretivist perspective is the emphasis on context specific variables. Research from this perspective treats the context as it occurs naturally and does not attempt to control these contextual variables, as they may be the very sources of unexpected or unforeseen interpretations (Burns, 1999). This study recognizes the potential of contextual variables to reveal unexpected insights and interpretations (Burns, 1999). My goal is to gather rich data that provides a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the context and the EFL tutorials from which themes and new understandings can be inferred.

### **4.2.1 Symbolic interactionism**

Symbolic interactionism (SI) provides the framework employed in this study for analyzing tutors and their practices during EFL writing tutorials. This view assumes that roles emerge from and are significantly shaped by interactions in specific social settings (Rees, Knight & Wilkinson 2007). SI contends that people act towards objects (people and things) based on meanings they have given those objects. Language is the tool (symbols) employed to negotiate meaning. Finally, people interpret these symbols in different ways. From our own perspective, we take on the roles of others and try to assume various points of view (MacKinnon, 2005).

The central notion of SI is that roles are based upon meanings which people attribute to situations and the interactions they have in those situations. It can be said that “behavior is not caused in a mechanical way, but continually constructed and reconstructed on the basis of people’s interpretations of the situations they find themselves in” (Lyon, 2004, p. 1280). Furthermore, these roles do not have intrinsic meanings, but instead come from expectations of roles that are learned in the process of socialization. These roles are negotiated as people try to “work to fit what they want with the expectations they encounter” (Zurcher, as cited in Cohen, 2008, p. 82). Therefore, meaning is crucial to human interaction and responses are not based on simple reactions but rather on interpretations of interactions.

SI originated from Mead (1934), and is associated with Blumer, Hughes, Becker and Goffman (Cohen et al., 2007). Although these scholars employ SI differently, there are three main tenets that these scholars adhere to:

- Symbolic interactionism focuses on the world of subjective meaning and the symbols by which they are produced and represented;
- This acknowledgement of meaning to objects through symbols is a continuous process. This process is always “emerging in a state of flux, and subject to change. The individual constructs, modifies, pieces together, weighs up the pros and cons;”
- This process takes place in a social context (Cohen et al., p. 24).

SI does not assert that role behavior is based on the individual psychological attributes or on how the social structure or social situation causes individual behavior (unlike structural role theory, Biddle, 1986). Instead, humans act as “active, creative participants who construct their social world, not as passive conforming objects of socialization” (Hunter & McClelland, 2012, p. 33). Therefore, role behavior is based

on the nature of the interaction and the dynamic activities that take place between two people. According to Cohen et al. (2007), “people are constantly undergoing change in interaction and society is changing through interaction. Interaction implies human beings in relation to each other, taking each other into account, acting, perceiving, interpreting and acting again. Hence a more dynamic and active human being emerges rather than merely an actor responding to others” (p. 25). That is to say humans are pragmatic actors who continually adjust their behavior to the actions of others.

In writing center literature, the only study to my knowledge that also employs SI as a framework for analysis is that of Brown (2010). He employs qualitative discourse analysis to understand the form and function of audiences that tutors represent to their clients when carrying out the work of a writing center consultation. According to Brown, interpreting audience expectation is a regular part of a tutor’s work. Tutors are regularly called upon to read and respond to the client’s paper from an imagined perspective of a target audience (such as a teacher or admissions counselor). Brown audio recorded 12 writing tutorials and employed discourse analysis to analyze the data. He employed Goffman’s theory on footing to analyze the data. According to Brown, a footing is a term Goffman assigns “to the relationship between the person’s identity and what the person says in interaction” (p. 76). Brown characterizes the tutor’s representation as an audience as a footing and creates a categorical scheme of four footings differentiated by orientation to the tutor. It was found that the tutor can take on the role of a target audience, “instantiating various forms of audience to help a client measure his or her intentions for a text against the tutor’s live reception of it” (p. 74).

As in Brown's work, SI is commonly employed to interpret discourse and analyze the construction of social problems in discourse (Keller, 2005). This study, however, utilizes SI as a lens to view intercommunication between the tutors and tutees on a micro level and to account for the different roles tutors performed during tutorials based on these interactions. More on how this theory affected data analysis will be explained in Chapter Five.

The framework for role analysis is guided by symbolic interactionist Erving Goffman's work in which he analyzed the structural underpinnings of social interaction. Goffman introduced the concept of footing in conversation, a term employed to describe the relationship between a speaker's identity and the speaker's words. According to Goffman (1981), a footing is "the alignment of an individual to a particular utterance" (p. 221). Many authors refer to footing as synonymous with position or role (Hale, 2011). A footing can represent how people shift roles during conversation. According to Goffman (1981), "a change in our footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (p. 128). Goffman identifies three different types of footings a speaker adopts during conversation: animator, author, and principal. These categories represent various footings taken by the speakers as they assume a stance towards interaction and discourse (Leahy, 2008).

Goffman's deconstruction of speakers into the verbal roles they adopt captures a "persistent feature of social interaction: the constant shifting of participants' footing and alignments, or the linguistic or paralinguistic expression of one's stance toward the social context" (Goffman as cited in Zidjaly, 2009 p. 180). However, for this

study, footing is employed to deconstruct the roles tutors undertake, not only in speaking but with their actions as well. Therefore, a change in footing represents how tutors shift and adopt new roles. For this reason, Goffman's analysis of footings provides a practical theoretical vocabulary for characterizing the tutors' behavior into different roles.

#### **4.2.2 Research Design**

This study is an exploratory study focusing on the issues experienced in EFL tutoring for beginner-intermediate students in Japan. It qualifies as an exploratory study because (as mentioned previously) there are few studies on this topic, therefore the aim is to gain insight and familiarity (Cuthill, 2002). This research generates new insights and ideas about this topic, as well as developing a well-grounded picture of the writing tutorial. The four research questions investigated are:

1. What do students perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?
2. What do writing tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?
3. What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?
4. What are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner- intermediate students?

#### **4.3 Research context**

This five month long exploratory study took place at an international college in Japan, International University (IU) (pseudonym), hosting over 5,000 students: 3,000 domestic students from Japan and 2,500 international students from 80 different countries. Chapter Two described in detail the context of this University. Specifically,

this study is conducted at the university's SALC (Self Access Learning Center) where international tutors provide writing help to Japanese students studying English. The focus of this service is to help students with basic writing skills such as the construction of paragraphs and at the highest level, the five paragraph essay. English language students are encouraged to sign up for a 30 minute slot with a writing help tutor. The SALC offers 24 writing help slots per week. Specific details concerning writing help procedures were described in Chapter Two.

#### **4.3.1 Participants: students**

As stated in Chapter Two, for this study, I am interested in researching tutorials with students who are just beginning to write in English, composing paragraphs and essays for the first time. Therefore, the focus of this study is on students in the three lowest levels, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate. At the Elementary and Pre-Intermediate level, students are learning paragraph writing while in the Intermediate level students focus on the basic five paragraph essay. Chapter Two provided information about these specific courses including the writing goals for each level as well as information concerning the type of students participating in this study. 24 students were participants in the questionnaire part of this study, while 30 students participated in the tutorial observations. The majority of students were first or second year university students, aged between 19 or 20.

#### **4.3.2 Participants: writing tutors**

Because this is an English medium international university there are many capable students who can serve as writing tutors. At the time of the study, all eight writing tutors were selected from the top Advanced English class and were recommended by a teacher based on the following two factors: their ability to work well with other students and their excellent English writing skills. Although the tutors' overall

proficiency in English is high, they are not native English speakers. They come from Korea, China, and Vietnam. The writing tutors are very proficient in Japanese (all tutors except Jay have passed the highest level or second highest level of the Japanese-Language proficiency test, JLPT). All eight tutors participated in the study. See table two for specific information regarding each tutor.

**Table 2: Writing tutor profiles**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Experience at the Writing Center</b>
Vy	Male	Vietnamese	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	1 year
Li	Male	Chinese	4 <sup>th</sup> year	2 years
Trang	Female	Vietnamese	4 <sup>th</sup> year	2 years
Tu	Female	Vietnamese	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	1 year
Jay	Male	Vietnamese	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	New
Lien	Female	Vietnamese	4 <sup>th</sup> year	2 years
Han	Male	Korean	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	New
Anh	Female	Vietnamese	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	2 years

Note: In order to protect anonymity, all the tutors' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Chapter Two described in detail the various training these tutors have received.

#### **4.4 Methods**

This study employs a mixed method approach. A method is the “systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data” (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, p. 4). In other words, a method is the technique by which one collects data while the methodology is the framework in which the methods are used. This study

employs a mixed methods approach, by utilizing various means to collect data, both qualitative and quantitative, to answer the research questions (Bazeley, 2006). There are many advantages to employing a mixed method approach. Dornyei (2007) notes, “mixed methods research offers researchers the advantage of being able to choose from the full repertoire of methodological options, producing as a result many different kinds of creative mixes” (p. 168). I employed four different methods that combine qualitative and quantitative data collection:

1. semi-structured interviews with writing tutors
2. tutor training workshops (a quasi-focus group)
3. observations of writing tutorials
4. questionnaires to Japanese EFL students

The following (table three) outlines the timeframe of the data collection and how each method and type of data relates to the research questions.

**Table 3: Data collection schedule**

Timeline	September	October	October – November		November	January
Method	One pre-semester tutor training workshop observation	Pre-semester interview with the eight writing tutors	Distributed 24 surveys to Japanese EFL students	30 tutorial observations, 3-4 per week	One mid-semester writing tutor training workshop	Post-semester interviews with the eight writing tutors
Data Collected	1 Tutor Training transcription	8 pre-semester transcribed interviews	Numerical survey data and 16 student open responses	Observation field notes	Tutor training transcription	8 post-semester transcribed interviews
Related Research Questions	<p>What do writing tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?</p> <p>What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?</p>	<p>What do students perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?</p>	<p>What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?</p>	<p>What do writing tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?</p> <p>What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?</p>		

Please note the fourth research question, “What are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring session with Japanese beginner-intermediate students?” is missing because this question was added after the data collection. More will be described about the origin of this question in section 4.6.2, Creating an explanatory schema.

This study employs a mixed method design in that the different types of data (both qualitative and quantitative) were collected (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The survey data was employed to answer RQ1 “What do students perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?” but it was also integrated with the other qualitative data to answer RQ3, “What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University” and question four “What are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner- intermediate students?” Both the quantitative data from the students’ perspective and the qualitative data from the tutors’ perspective were used to make multiple type of inferences.

#### **4.4.1 Pilot studies**

According to Nunan and Bailey (2008) the careful piloting of all “questionnaires and data collection devices are the best safeguards against instrumentation problems” (p. 87). Therefore, a pilot study was conducted to trial the interview, survey and observation procedures. The objective was to refine these procedures and to consider any details of instrumentation that may have been overlooked. In July, two writing center tutors were interviewed, 12 students were surveyed and 12 writing tutorials were observed. After this initial data collection, these three data collection tools were revised and as a result improved. In the following description of the different methods employed in this study, it is noted how each data collection tool was influenced and changed post pilot study.

#### **4.4.2 Semi structured interviews**

Interviews are commonly used in research aligned with an interpretivist perspective because they are viewed as one of the most powerful ways of understanding others’ perspectives thus enabling the researcher to access “people’s perceptions, meanings,

definitions of situations and constructions of reality” (Punch, 2005, p. 168). Given that RQ2 specifically investigates the tutors’ perceptions about writing tutoring, the interview method seemed fitting. This method provided tutors with the opportunity to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they lived and to express how they regarded the writing tutorials from their point of view (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Nunan and Bailey (2008), there are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. This study adopted a semi-structured interview procedure in that there was a set of prescribed questions but the interviews were not limited to those questions, as other questions were based on the tutors’ answers and were impromptu. In other words, the interviews were less rigid than structured interviews but more systematic than unstructured interviews (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). This type of interview was chosen for its flexibility and because it “can produce extraordinary evidence about life that you don’t get in structured interviews or questionnaire methodology- no matter how open-ended and qualitative you think your questionnaires are attempting to be” (Dowsett, 1986, p. 53).

The main purpose of the interviews was to determine how the tutors perceived the challenges of conducting EFL writing tutoring. Other writing center studies that employed interviews were examined in order to investigate the wording and types of questions asked. In particular, I rephrased many of the Coehlo’s (2011) and Stonerock’s (2005) questions. In appendix 10 and 11 the final list of questions is given, with a citation to note if the question was drawn from one of these studies. In the end, six different categories of questions were chosen; the role of a writing tutor, miscommunication with tutees, expectations and tension during the tutorial, error correction, and challenges of conducting an effective writing tutorial. These

categories were chosen because they reflect what the literature reports, as mentioned in Chapter Three, as the most problematic issues that impede tutors from conducting effective writing tutorials with EFL students. Based on the pilot study, I changed the wording and order of the questions and eliminated redundant ones (see Appendix 10 & 11 for the final interview questions).

All eight writing tutors were interviewed twice during the research project, initially in October (pre-semester) and then again at the end of January (post-semester). The interviews were held in my office and lasted from 25-45 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English because the tutors, although not native English speakers, speak English very fluently. The post-semester interviews were conducted not only to understand the tutors' experiences during the semester but also to examine if the tutors' ideas about their roles or challenges they encountered had altered. By asking the writing tutors the same questions from the pre-semester interviews, after participating in two additional training sessions and undergoing writing tutorials during semester, the tutors had more time to think further about the challenges they experienced in the writing center which might have modified their original views. During these interviews, parts of the tutors' pre-semester interview responses on the challenges they faced and the roles they played were read back to them. Then the tutors were asked to comment on whether they agreed with their original statement or would like to amend it (see Appendix 11 for the post-semester interview questions).

In addition, the second interview was utilized as a chance to follow up with tutors about their tutorial observations in order to gain more of an understanding about the specific approaches and techniques they used in each tutorial session. I also shared

with the tutors some of the conclusions I had drawn thus far from the tutorial observations and the pre-semester interviews so that they could judge the accuracy of my interpretations. In this way, member checking was carried out. Member checking requires people in the study under investigation to review the data and the interpretation thereof to provide the researcher with feedback (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). It increases the trustworthiness of a study's results (Dornyei, 2007).

#### **4.4.3 Tutor training workshop (Quasi-focus group)**

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the writing tutors had two training workshops throughout the 16 week semester, one at the beginning and one in the middle. Each workshop ranged from two to three hours. These training sessions are here termed quasi-focus groups, because in many ways they mirrored the discussion element of a focus group. As the coordinator, I guided and focused the discussion which revolved around the main issues and challenges the writing tutors experienced during tutorials (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). However, it was not a focus group interview in that its first objective was as a training session for the tutors. The advantage of this type of format was that the tutors were stimulated by each other, and thus discussed many issues. The result was that the data collected was in some ways more rich than the individual interviews (Nunan & Bailey, 2008).

In the first session, the new writing tutors and experienced writing tutors worked together with English teachers to act out different writing tutorial scenarios. The experienced writing tutors, usually well versed in the strategies they should apply during the tutorial, provided the models for the new writing tutors. After the role plays, writing tutors discussed the various issues that arose in the tutorial session such as

how to handle miscommunication, grammar errors, lexical errors and structural issues. The session was audio taped and later transcribed.

In the mid semester workshop, tutors were given two pieces of homework before the training. They were asked to email a list of problems they encountered during writing help tutorials; the problems were then collated and each one was discussed at the training session. The second homework activity was to read *Reassessing the 'Proofreading Trap': ESL Tutoring and Writing Instruction*, Myers (2003). While reading, tutors were asked to focus on her recommendations for working with nonnative English speakers. At the training session we discussed her recommendations. The training session was audio recorded and then transcribed.

#### **4.4.4. Tutorial Observations**

Observations are one of the three basic data sources most commonly used in educational research (Dornyei, 2007). They differ from the other three methods employed in this study, interview, quasi-focus group and survey, because they provided direct information rather than self-reported accounts (Dornyei, 2007). The main strength of observational data is that it allows for the researcher to see directly what is happening without relying on what the participants say is happening (Dornyei, 2007). Therefore, observing the tutorial sessions provided a third perspective and also provided the descriptive contextual information about the setting of the targeted phenomenon (Dornyei, 2007). This observation data, triangulated with the interviews, writing workshops and the student questionnaire was employed to answer RQ3: what are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?

Originally, the observations were unstructured adhering to an ethnographic narrative style (Nunan & Bailey, 2008) of taking detailed notes on a blank page. This unstructured observation method was piloted in five tutorials in July 2012. During the pilot it was discovered that the same information was repeatedly being written and that as a result other important aspects of the tutorial were being missed. Hence, an observation schedule was created. One of the advantages of creating an observation schedule is that it condenses the data and facilitates the process of identifying patterns (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). However, the contextual rich detail of the tutorial is not gathered when employing strictly an observational schedule, therefore a mixture of an observation schedule and an ethnographic narrative was employed.

The first draft of the observation schedule was created by reviewing the notes from the five tutorials and highlighting the phrases and words that were repeated in the tutorials. Next, I observed four more tutorials and added other items frequently witnessed. For instance, for the question. “What was the tutor’s style for error correction?” I added the category, “modeled correct usage and let the student choose the correct answer.” In the end, the final observation schedule draft was piloted with three observations to ensure its efficacy.

As stated, the other part of the observation note taking sheet was a blank page to take detailed notes. The advantage to this method is that it provided a more complete picture of the interaction than the coded data from the observation schedule (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). In these notes, I documented the actual language of the tutors and tutee as well as commenting on the social climate, and tutee-tutor interaction (see Appendix 13 for the final draft of the observation note taking sheet and Appendix 14 for an example of the notes taken during an observation). Of course, the disadvantage of this

method is the inherent biases of the person conducting the observation. However, since this data was triangulated with three other data collection methods I hoped to guard against those biases. Moreover, in line with Dornyei's (2007) recommendation this triangulation broadens the scope of the investigation and also enriches the study's ability to provide a more complete holistic portrayal of the subject under investigation. Another way in which I guarded against this bias was by conducting member checking (Cohen et al., 2007). At the end of each observation I discussed with the tutors some of the challenges observed to gain an understanding from their perspective. I also asked the tutors if they wanted to add anything to the notes I had taken.

During the observations, I adopted a passive non-intrusive role in order not to interfere with the tutorial process (Cohen et al., 2007). I observed three to four tutorials per week, each 30 minutes long, from October 1<sup>st</sup>- November 30<sup>th</sup>, 30 in total. I was able to observe each tutor three to five times which enabled me to gain a better understanding of each tutor's tutoring style (see Appendix 15 for the observation data). In total, I observed eight tutorials with elementary students, seven tutorials with pre-intermediate, and 15 tutorials with intermediate students. More intermediate students were observed simply because more intermediate students participated in writing help, perhaps because of the nature of the course which includes more difficult essay tasks. As I observed, I also made audio recordings in order to have a record of exactly what was being said in case my note taking was insufficient.

#### **4.4.5 Tutee Survey**

Surveys are frequently employed in education research to gather data on a range of issues (Johnson, 1992). Surveys are popular because they are relatively easy to

construct, versatile and uniquely capable of gathering large amounts of information quickly (Dornyei, 2007). According to Nunan and Bailey (2008), the overall purpose of a survey is to “obtain a snapshot of conditions, attitudes, and/or events of an entire population at a single point in time by collecting data from a sample drawn from that population” (p. 125). This study utilizes the survey method to gain an understanding of the students’ perspectives of the challenges experienced in the writing tutorial, responding to RQ2.

Originally, I had planned to interview the tutees. However, for reasons of communication and practicality, the questionnaire format seemed more appropriate. As the person conducting the interviews, I am limited by my conversational Japanese and thus could not conduct a detailed interview about the writing tutorial. An advantage of the survey method is that it allows the researcher to perfect easy to follow and understand questions beforehand (Bryman, 2004). Another reason a survey was advantageous is that it enabled the collection of a lot of data in a short amount of time. I wanted a sample size of about 20 or more students to participate in the survey, to provide as many different perspectives as possible. Therefore, a survey seemed like the logical method as interviews would be very time consuming and surveys are quicker to administer (Dornyei, 2007).

The survey was designed based on Dornyei’s recommendations (2003) and consisted of both closed response (quantifiable data) and open-ended questions where students could respond freely. The advantage of close-ended questions is that their coding and tabulation is straightforward (Dornyei, 2003). Parts one through five included multiple choice questions and positive or negative statements inserted into a Likert

scale with four categories, strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree. I avoided having a neutral option to encourage students to concur with or oppose the statement. Research reported by Nunnally and Robson has shown that “the inclusion or exclusion of a middle category does not affect the relative proportions of those actually expressing opinions and thus does not modify results significantly” (as cited in Dornyei, 2003, p. 38). In other words, the exclusion of a neutral option would not affect the results considerably.

The challenge in conducting survey research is to design a questionnaire that captures information the researcher wishes to elicit without unduly shaping that information (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). Therefore, the right wording is crucial to survey design. The questions were made in line with Dornyei’s (2007) and Cohen et al.’s (2007) recommendations to ensure that questions were relatively short, used simple and natural language, and avoided ambiguous or loaded words. The survey was also revised many times after feedback from my thesis supervisors, at which time they advised me to eliminate double barreled questions and to add both positively and negatively worded items, recommendations consistent with Dornyei’s (2007) advice. The items on the survey were constructed in line with writing center literature and from understandings gained from the pilot tutorial observations. The survey was divided into six parts:

1. Expectations of the writing tutor
2. Expectations of the writing help service
3. Overall impressions of the writing tutorial
4. Improvement of the paper
5. Appropriation or error correction style

## 6. Open response

Items concerning the first and second part, tutees' expectations of the writing tutor and the writing help service, were important items to include. As reported in the literature review, tutors' cultural expectations of tutoring sessions often differ from the tutees' cultural expectations, especially with the tutees from educational systems where the teachers are expected to pass knowledge on to their students through directive teaching (Harris & Silva, 1993). In Chapters Two and Three, research was cited that showed that this is particularly true of English education in Japanese high schools. According to Thonus (2004), tutees usually characterize the tutor as an 'authority figure' and want the tutor to be directive by telling them exactly what to fix in their paper. Therefore it was important to ask the respondents questions about their specific expectations of the writing tutor and writing help service.

The third part, overall impressions of the writing tutorial, was meant to answer RQ2 by investigating the different challenges tutees perceived at the writing center. For example, the survey asks about miscommunication as a challenge. According to the literature (Bell & Youmans, 2006; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Heather 2004), and from the pilot observations, this was a significant question to ask tutees. The fourth section asked tutees about the improvements to their paper since the goal of the service is to help students become better writers and enhance their papers.

The fifth section, items on error correction, was also important to include because, as reported in the literature review, one of the most pressing issues for writing tutors working with EFL students are the errors in the L2 writer's paper (Cogie et al.;

Cumming & So, 1996; Grimm, 2009; Harris & Silva, 1993; Linville, 2009; Myers, 2003; Nakamaru, 2010a; Reid, 1994; Severino, 2009; Shin, 2006). Therefore, the survey investigated EFL students' perceptions and expectations of the tutors' various error correction strategies.

The last part of the survey included an open response section to gain a more in depth understanding of certain items on the survey. Open response questions on surveys are advantageous because they provide richer detail, can offer illustrative quotes and can lead researchers to identify issues not previously anticipated (Dornyei, 2007). As mentioned, the items and themes for the questionnaire came from writing center theory and the tutorial observations. However, students might have different ideas about these categories. Therefore, this part was designed to provide students with a chance to put forward other possible analyses of the problems not identified in the survey response categories.

The open response part was at the end of the 36 item survey. It consisted of four short answer questions. Asking students to respond to the open response questions might evoke respondent fatigue and therefore the statement, "please feel free to write as little or as much as you like" was included. Some of the questions in the open response part were purposefully similar, to, items in the survey which asked specific questions about the tutor's error correction style. However, the students did not have a chance to state their opinion about this style. The open response part asked, "did you like your tutor's error correction style, why or why not?" This allowed them to give the specific reason for their preference. In addition, a question about the challenges tutees had experienced when working with the writing tutors was included. This

question was intended to provide a greater richness to this issue than the close-ended item's quantitative data (Dornyei, 2007).

After the survey was initially constructed it was translated into Japanese by a professional translator. Following this, an important procedure, back translation, was conducted in order to check for accuracy (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). In this procedure, a different professional translator, without seeing the original questionnaire or speaking to the first translator, translated the survey questions back into English. Next, the first and second translator compared the original questionnaire and the back translated questionnaire to determine the differences in wording. In this process, four questions out of the 40 were identified and together they resolved the ambiguity and changed the questions. Although this process was time consuming and costly, it was an important step in enhancing the reliable and valid measurements of the constructs the survey intended to capture (Nunan & Bailey, 2008).

The survey was piloted twice, once in July and then again in September. This was an important step in constructing a sound survey. Through this process I was able to locate and revise unclear items, confusing instructions, and different interpretations to the questions (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). First, the survey was administered in July to 12 students. At that time, double barreled questions and unclear instructions were located and revised. In September, a second pilot study was conducted. This time three students and I discussed the students' interpretation of the question. Their interpretations of six questions were different than the intended meanings, and hence revised. This was a very important procedure to illuminate the confusing questions

and thus amend them. From this study the final questions were established (see Appendix 12 for the final student survey).

The survey was administered online by clicking a SurveyMonkey link. Tutors handed out a piece of paper with the survey link on it to all tutees at the end of their tutorial. This way, the survey could be administered without my presence. In the beginning of the data collection period, the start of November, few students participated in the survey. Therefore, I devised a reward system by encouraging students with candy bars to complete the survey. Once the student finished completing the survey the word 'superstar' was displayed on the computer screen. Students were instructed to come back to the SALC and report the word 'superstar' to the tutors. Upon hearing this word, the tutors would give the student a candy bar. This was effective and the final number increased, resulting in a total of 24 respondents, out of 51 students.

#### **4.5 Ethical conduct**

In order to conduct honest and transparent research (Richards, 2003) the ethical research conduct code of the University of Exeter was followed; this code is in line with the ethical guidelines set forth by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) in terms of responsibility to the participants. All writing tutors and students whose tutorials were observed received a verbal and written explanation of the aim and purpose of the study. Permission through a signed consent form to audio record the interviews and tutorials was also obtained. On this form, it was explained to the participants that they could refuse to participate or withdraw at any point in the study (see Appendix 16 for tutor consent form and Appendix 17 for student consent form). The student consent form was also translated into Japanese to ensure that the students understood the form's content. For students whom I did not meet, but who

participated in the survey, at the beginning of the questionnaire the purpose of the research and how their answers would be used was explained. All participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity with regard to data collection, storage and reporting. As a further ethical consideration, the writing tutors in this study were not identified but rather represented by pseudonyms.

One area of concern was that the interviews were conducted with the writing tutors whom I coordinate. Therefore, I had to seriously reflect upon my dual role as researcher and coordinator of the tutors and the ethical issues that this involves and how it would influence my research. For example, I worried that tutors felt obliged to participate and that their answers might be biased. In other words, their responses might be what they think their coordinator would want to hear instead of what actually happened. According to Glesne & Peshkin (1992) there is no easy or perfect solution for resolving the ethical dilemmas; that may emerge hence it is up to the researcher to diligently work to ensure that the research is as ethical as possible and do what is right and decent according to his/her own conscience. I reflected on this obligation and honesty issue and as a result I explicitly explained to the tutors many times that choosing to participate in this research study was voluntary and that it in no way affected their job. During the interviews I also repeatedly reminded the tutors to answer honestly, and that the interview was not an evaluation of their work in the SALC.

#### **4.6 Analyzing the data**

In order to analyze the data the following items were transcribed:

- eight pre-semester interviews with the writing tutors,
- eight post-semester interviews with the writing tutors,

- one pre-semester writing tutor workshop,
- one mid-semester writing tutor workshop.

The students' open responses from the survey were also translated. Other data analyzed included the 30 tutorial observations and the writing help survey completed by 24 students.

Qualitative data gathered was analyzed through an interpretivist framework in which I coded and analyzed the data for reoccurring patterns and thematic constructs and interpreted the data by drawing on past research and personal reflections (Creswell, 2008). The quantitative data from the survey was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean and mode (Nunan & Bailey, 2008). Descriptive statistics were useful for this study because they could be employed to illuminate this specific sample's perceptions of writing tutoring and the challenges the students experienced, the aim of RQ1. In line with the other methods conducted in this study, these statistics did not allow for drawing any general conclusions that go beyond this sample (Dornyei, 2007).

#### **4.6.1 Initial coding into data units**

Before coding the qualitative data, it was divided into three main data units which arose from the research questions that guided this study:

RQ1- Challenges perceived by tutors: CPT

RQ2- Challenges perceived by students: CPS

RQ3- Issues in EFL tutoring: I

The questionnaire data illustrated the students' perceptions of the challenges during the writing tutorial RQ2, while the interviews and workshops with the writing tutors

illustrated their perceptions of the challenges experienced during the tutorial RQ1. By answering these questions through the participants' direct responses, combined with the observation data, I intended to answer the third overarching research question which addresses the major issues experienced regarding EFL writing tutoring with beginner-intermediate level Japanese students in a Japanese University.

Next, I began coding. The main purpose of this coding was to break the data down into separate units of meaning as they related to the three research questions. The beginning and end of each excerpt, each unit of meaning, was marked and in the margin labeled with a simple description that merely described what was happening in the excerpt, capturing only what was relevant. The codes were basic and avoided abstraction because the goal was to create codes that would let the data speak for itself, that is it could be explained to someone else using only the code (Bryman, 2004). For example, if the writing tutor described a challenge of working with students who expect the tutor to correct all their mistakes, the label read, "CPT (challenge perceived by tutor): Student expects writing tutor to correct all errors." The data was then coded again in order to ensure any important excerpts had not been missed (see Appendix 20 for an example of a coded interview and appendix 21 for an example of a coded observation. In appendices 20 and 21 please note an example of an excerpt). Sometimes there were two phenomena happening in one excerpt, therefore I employed simultaneous coding, which allowed for an excerpt to have two codes (Saldana, 2009).

By conducting simple coding and avoiding abstraction, I guarded against coding for what I "wanted to find" or my preconceived ideas. Charmaz, as cited in Bernard and

Ryan (2009), warns that prior theorizing can hinder fresh ideas about the data. When researchers code for what they want to find they are no longer conducting research, instead only confirming a position they already hold. Therefore, I tried to code with naiveté, creating codes that only described what was happening and letting the data speak for itself.

After coding the data twice and ensuring that all the excerpts were coded appropriately, each excerpt was cut and combined in one pile and then sorted. This method, cutting and sorting, involves identifying and cutting excerpts that seem important and then arranging them into piles that go together (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At the early stages of the data analysis, the widest possible themes were identified and combining piles together was avoided until later (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The differences between items were maximized in order to create numerous piles therefore generating more specific themes. Each pile was labeled to express succinctly what the excerpts had in common. To give an example, the excerpts from the observation data, “I (issue): Student cannot communicate with writing tutor in English” and “I(issue): Tutor can’t understand student” were labeled under the category “I(issue): miscommunication.” Physically moving the coded data into categories facilitated the identification of organizational concepts and relevant themes (Saldana, 2009). In the last stage of sorting, a final check to ensure that all the excerpts in each pile were relevant to the given label was conducted. (For the final list of categories see Appendix 25).

#### **4.6.2 Creating an explanatory schema**

Next an explanatory schema (an explanation to account for what the researcher sees across all the data) was created. This is the conceptual organizing principle that allows

the researcher to explain his or her data in an insightful way (Foss & Waters, 2007). I started by combining the categories that had clear relationships. Originally, I was searching for a simple narrative to theorize my research. However, this grand narrative needed to be replaced “by more local small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 20). Talking out loud and articulating key ideas about each category led me to realize that the different themes that emerged were each characteristics of a different role tutors performed or were expected to perform during writing tutorials. The writing tutors adopted many roles and each role had its own challenges. Consequently, therefore, through answering the three original research questions, a fourth research question was addressed: what are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner- intermediate students?

With this new research question, I looked for different ways to theorize about roles which could in turn further my analysis. I located symbolic interactionism as an appropriate theory to provide a framework for data interpretation because it depicts how meanings are formed when individuals relate to each other. Moreover, human interaction responses are based on the interpretations or definitions of interactions, multi-dimensional phenomena rather than on simple reaction. In other words, “behavior is not caused in a mechanical way, but continually constructed and reconstructed on the basis of people’s interpretations of the situations they find themselves in” (Punch, 2005, p. 151). The tutor adopts a plurality of roles and the roles the tutors enacted are based on not only simple reaction but rather on interpretations of interactions such as differing perceptions of the writing help service and the roles of the tutors and students.

Originally, nine roles were identified: doctor, expert, collaborator, translator, interpreter, coach, teacher, communicator, leader and timekeeper. After further analysis and combining of codes, the following six roles emerged to form the basis of organization of Chapter Five. These roles are: proofreader, translator, coach, teacher, mediator, and timekeeper (see Appendix 24 for the explanatory schema and how each category fit under each role). The following six roles encompass all the major categories of the data and present them in a coherent relationship, in which all the categories function together without strain. In addition, this explanatory schema produces new understandings. The different roles proposed are not conventional and produce new terms such as translator and mediator. Although common words, they have not previously been used to describe the roles a tutor performs during a writing tutorial. Each role is described in detail in the next chapter.

#### **4.7 Values of criteria for good quality qualitative research**

There is considerable debate about what it means to do good quality qualitative research since there are many threats to internal validity (Angen 2000; Punch, 2009). Validity in quantitative sciences is derived from adherence to systematic rules and procedures that guide the research process. If one uses this same criterion to judge qualitative research, the research becomes subjective and is denied legitimacy (Angen, 2000). As a response to this, many researchers have created specific procedures to increase the credibility of qualitative research. These different procedures include respondent confirmation, careful case selection, ongoing hypothesis testing, inductive analysis, quantifying through counting, triangulation, peer review, negative case analysis, member checks, thick description, and clarifying researcher bias (Punch,

2009). However critics of qualitative research point out that qualitative researchers are able to pick and choose sections from the data that confirm what they are researching.

Therefore, some qualitative researchers, for example, Angen (2000) and Klein and Myers (1999), argue for less normative methodological criteria and instead for broader principles to guide and judge qualitative research. Angen (2000) declares that within interpretative research, validation “is a judgment of trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research” (p. 378). Specifically, Angen (2000) argues for two broad principles to guide qualitative research; ethical validation and substantive validation. Ethical validation is choosing an approach that is connected to our shared humanity and diversity and answers the “so what questions” teachers often wonder about in their classrooms. Substantive validation, according to Angen (2000), means the researcher documents in detail “evidence of thoroughness and comprehensiveness of understandings used to form the resulting interpretations” (Madison, 1988 as cited in Angen, 2000 p. 390). In this way, threats to internal validity are no longer threats but the starting point for each researcher to analyze their research through self-reflexivity.

I support Angen’s use of the word validation instead of validity. As validity suggests objective truth that is impossible to obtain in any paradigm, validation refers to a process that furthers researchers understanding of the educational processes of our practice. As mentioned previously, I believe knowledge and social reality are socially constructed, hence subjective. Furthermore, I see validation as an attempt to assess the accuracy of findings according to the researcher and participant (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the researcher adds strength to the validation of qualitative research in that

the researcher has extensive knowledge about the specific field, provides thick descriptive detail and has spent time with the participants. These all add an element of accuracy to the study. I agree with Creswell and Miller (2000) in that researchers should employ accepted validation strategies to document accuracy of their studies. In line with the above conception of validation, this study adopts the following validation strategies as outlined by Creswell and Miller (2000).

#### **4.7.1 Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field**

According to Creswell and Miller, this includes building trust with participants and learning the culture the researcher is studying. By conducting my research over one semester, I attempted to engage in persistent observation. I observed 3-4 tutorials per week over a two month period. I was able to observe each tutor three to five different times to gain a clearer idea of their tutoring style. By observing numerous tutorials over two months I was able to see how events evolve over time, and the overall dynamics of each writing tutorial. According to Morrison (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) “by being immersed in a particular context over time not only will the salient features of the situation emerge and present themselves but a more holistic view will be gathered of the interrelationships of factors” (p. 405). Moreover, as coordinator of the writing tutors for over three years, I have a prolonged engagement in the field and working with these writing tutors.

#### **4.7.2 Triangulation**

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison, “triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data” (2000, p. 112). I employ a multi-method triangulation by using multiple and different sources to corroborate the

evidence (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, I use four different methods to collect data, interview, questionnaires, observations and tutor training workshops (quasi-focus groups).

#### **4.7.3 Member checking**

Member checking is when the researcher solicits the participant's views of the authenticity of the findings and interpretations thus made (Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participant also has an opportunity to add further information and correct factual information if need be. According to Creswell (2012), this strategy is the most critical technique for ensuring credibility. As mentioned previously, I employed member checking twice. First, at the end of each observation I had five to ten minutes to talk with the tutor about the tutorial. At that time I discussed some of the challenges I had observed, queried the tutors about these challenges from their perspective and asked if they wanted to add anything. Also, during the post interviews I shared with them my understandings of the pre-semester interviews and conclusions drawn thus far so that they could judge the accuracy of my interpretation.

#### **4.7.4 Rich, thick description**

A thick description of the context of the study is needed to represent the complexity of situations (Cohen et al., 2007). This detailed description allows the reader to make decisions on transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is the applicability to other situations. This enables the reader to transfer information to other settings and to determine themselves whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics (Erlandson et al. 1993, p. 32). In order to address this issue, Chapter Two provides thick descriptions to help the reader understand the

context of this study at a Japanese international university. Moreover, I also provide details about the participants, the writing tutors and the students utilizing the writing center. In this way, the insights offered by “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of this local context and these participants’ perceptions of their experiences may be of use to others in similar contexts elsewhere.

#### **4.8 Limitations**

This study is limited by its capacity to expose the total intricacy of the social world. This study, similar to other interpretivist studies, aims not to be generalizable but rather examine the experiences of writing center tutors and tutees in a Japanese environment. The findings from this study are grounded in the verbal responses of the writing tutors, and the survey results of the students concerning their perspective and understandings of the challenges they experience in EFL writing tutorials and the observations conducted by one researcher, who also serves as the coordinator of the SALC. Therefore, these findings are subjective and emic. But by documenting my methodological framework and meticulously describing the critical processes that have helped me to construct, connect and shape meanings (Morgan & Drury, 2003) as transparently as possible, I hope to establish validation in the knowledge that emerged. My aim is not to cite models of correct ways to deal with Asian EFL students in the writing center but rather to examine the nature and challenges of an Asian writing center. It is my hope that this exploratory study will contribute to a growing body of work that is beginning to be produced on writing centers in international contexts. These insights can be shared with others in similar contexts globally.

#### **4.9 Summary**

In Chapter Four, I have presented my own ontological and epistemological beliefs in line with the interpretivist paradigm and how they connect with my research aim to

explore the challenges faced when conducting writing tutoring with beginner-intermediate students in an Asian setting. I have detailed my methodological framework influenced by symbolic interactionism. I then explained the various ways I collected data and ethical guidelines I adhered to as well as data analysis. In the next chapter, I will clearly explain the roles and challenges emerging through the data analysis.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter I present the data collected in response to RQ1 and RQ2 regarding how students and tutors perceive the challenges experienced during EFL tutorials. The data obtained through questionnaires illustrates the students' perceptions of the challenges during the writing tutorial, while the interviews and quasi focus groups with the writing tutors illustrate their perceptions of the challenges experienced during the tutorial. By answering these questions through direct responses, combined with the observations notes and transcripts I collected, I will answer the third overarching research question which addresses the major issues experienced regarding EFL writing tutoring with beginner-intermediate level Japanese students at a Japanese University. As mentioned in the methodology section, symbolic interactionism (SI) provided the framework for analyzing tutors and their practices during EFL writing tutorials.

Through my analysis, I also added a fourth research question not originally conceived but developed after my initial analysis. I discovered that the writing tutors performed various roles during EFL tutorials, some of which are new to writing center theory. Therefore, through answering my three original research questions, I consequently address a fourth research question, "what are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner- intermediate students?"

I will present the data and discussion for each research question in numerical order, starting with research question number one. Throughout this chapter, the spoken data

from interviews, workshops and tutorials are presented verbatim and include any obvious language errors made by the tutors so as to provide a complete picture of the fluency and accuracy of each writing tutor's oral proficiency. The student questionnaires are also transcribed verbatim. Please note they were administered in the students' first language, Japanese, and then translated to English (See Appendix 23 and 24 for entire survey results).

### **5.1 RQ1: Student's perceptions of the challenges in EFL writing tutoring**

The following section presents the findings for RQ1: What do students perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial? Data analysis of 24 student questionnaires was employed to answer this research question.

#### **5.1.1 Miscommunication**

Communication was the biggest challenge reported. The tutees experienced both not understanding what the writing tutor was saying and the frustration of not being able to make themselves understood in English. Four students wrote about this issue on the open response section of the survey:

Student 1: *Occasionally the writing tutor didn't understand my meaning and it was hard.*

Student 2: *Sometimes the writing tutor talked rather quickly and I couldn't catch what they were saying.*

Student 3: *It was hard to explain what I wanted to say in English and I couldn't make myself understood.*

Student 4: *There were times when I could not communicate what I was thinking.*

The common theme running through these four open responses is that, not only do students find it difficult to communicate in English, they particularly find it difficult

in writing center tutorials. These tutorials are to help students overcome their communication problems, but instead present serious communication hindrances which prevent students from benefitting from the services the writing tutors provide.

Interestingly, despite the tutee’s English ability, many tutees wanted the writing tutors to conduct the tutorial in English. This was probably the most surprising data. One of the Likert Scale statements in the survey was “I want the writing tutor to use Japanese during the tutorial” (see table four).

**Table 4: Japanese use in the tutorials**

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I want the writing tutor to use Japanese during the tutorial.	9	6	4	4	0	1	24
	37.5%	25%	16.7%	16.7%	0%	4.2%	

Table four shows that the majority of the students, roughly 80%, did not want the tutor to speak Japanese during the tutorial. A possible reason for this response is that, despite being an international campus, students do not have many interactions with international students nor chances to practice their English. Also the tutees are aware that the tutors are nonnative Japanese speakers, so perhaps they do not think it is appropriate to speak Japanese with them. In any case, the students are clear that they did not want the tutor to speak Japanese.

### 5.1.2 Different expectations of the writing help service

Another challenge was that students expected their tutor to be an expert and sometimes questioned his/her ability. On the open response in the survey one student noted his frustration that the writing tutor did not know all the words he used. This student wrote:

*Some of the words I found in the dictionary were so difficult even the writing tutor didn't understand them. The writing tutor told me he wasn't sure about the correct usage, but I think this is a problem with his English proficiency.*

Another student recommended that the SALC *hire more native speakers.*

The students also expected the tutor to be the mediator for their English teacher so when the tutor stated different ideas than the students had learned in their English class it created tension. One student wrote in the open response:

*My English teacher's thoughts about how an essay should be constructed and what my writing tutor thought was a little bit different.*

More will be explored about student's expectations under the section 5.3.1 Expectations of the tutorial.

## **5.2 RQ2: Tutors' perceptions of the challenges in EFL writing tutoring**

The following section presents the findings for RQ2: What do tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial? Data analysis of the eight pre-semester and the eight post-semester interviews and of the two quasi-focus groups was employed to answer this research question.

### **5.2.1 Communication**

Communication was perceived as a major challenge by not only the tutees but also the writing tutors. Vy put it simply when asked about challenges he faces:

*Challenges? The challenges are mostly linguistic challenges. It's hard to explain to students and be understood in their second language.*

Tu and Lien also reported miscommunication as a major challenge. In addition, Vy and Trang said that they wanted to improve communication with students. Lien explained that:

*Students cannot understand English even when they are studying in the highest level English class so I have to speak very slowly and repeat many times.*

Sometimes the writer was actually quite good at writing English but struggled with expressing himself/herself orally. Lien exclaimed:

*He's a really good writer but he's not really good at speaking and expressing his idea so we cannot reach any conclusion after the writing help because he couldn't understand what I say.*

This problem of miscommunication was magnified with the students from the beginning levels. Anh stated that she had many problems working with beginner students because:

*They don't even understand what I say because of the vocabulary and I feel a little bit awkward because they didn't understand whatever I say and they couldn't even speak any, you know, quite a little bit of English. So it's quite difficult to start any conversation.*

However, sometimes the writing tutor's Japanese ability was not sufficient to explain a difficult English grammatical or lexical concept easily and efficiently. In fact, four of the tutors stated they worried about how to teach a grammar point in Japanese. When asked what they wanted extra training in, two writing tutors, Jay and Vy stated they wanted more training in the Japanese language. Jay said:

*I want to know how to explain to them (the tutees) different grammar and writing points in Japanese.*

### **5.2.2 Appropriation and translation**

Another issue tutors perceived as a challenge was how to deal with students who wanted their essay translated to English. Han told the story about one student who came and, according to him, could not even write a basic sentence in English. He said:

*I tried several ways to help her come up with what to write. At first she kept insisting that she write in Japanese and then translate it so I tried to show her a way that is better than Google Translate. But still it was hard to convince her.*

Helping the student reformulate their sentences raises the bigger issue of appropriation. Vy stated in the second tutor training workshop that he:

*Wondered to what extent is a word appropriate for a student of a particular level. For example, I might suggest a word that can be hard to use or beyond the student's English capability. In such cases is it better for a student to be encouraged to think by themselves?*

Tutors were nervous about appropriation. More will be discussed about appropriation in section 5.3.4 Appropriation.

### **5.2.3 Student Passiveness**

Another challenge that the writing tutors perceived as an issue was the students' passive attitudes during the writing tutorial. For this research, passive is defined as mainly unresponsive, a student going through the motions of the tutorial but with as little effort as possible without asking questions and without intellectual engagement (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). When I asked the tutors to summarize their worst tutorial experience, five of the eight tutors (Li, Lien, Trang, Jay, Tu) reported times when the tutee was non-active. Han said:

*She was very very very shy and it showed that she was uncomfortable sitting in the SALC. It was as if she didn't want me to help her with her essay, but then why did she come to the SALC?*

Tu talked about this challenge:

*In most of the tutorials the student only responds to what I say. I wish that they would take, how do you say, initiative and show me what they wanted help with.*

Jay commented on the general issue of passive students. He said when conducting error correction:

*I directly give them what I think and I read some model sentences and let them write it down, and after that I ask them, "do you agree?" And most of them are silent. I don't know how they feel because, I mean, do they understand or not?*

Another challenge, related to passiveness was that the writing tutors perceived that many of the students coming to the SALC were not intrinsically motivated, especially the students who were required by their teacher to come. Lien stated that she felt 70% of the students come on their own, while 30% come because it is required. Vy stated that:

*Many of the students don't have goals to improve, to make their writing better... most of them (the students) come because their teacher told them to do so, so they felt the feeling that they have to.*

Lien reiterated that:

*Students don't have motivation to improve their writing skills; they just come under their professor's instructions. They are not willing to work out the problems with writing tutors. They expect the writing tutors to fix everything.*

Writing tutors felt that even some of the students that came on their own initiative would only come to receive a good grade and had little patience to work together with the writing tutors.

#### **5.2.4 Perceived expectation to fulfill teacherly role**

Another challenge reported by the tutors was that tutor's felt pressure to fulfill a teacherly role and many writing tutors were uncomfortable in this position. I define the teacher role as someone who explains concepts and has extensive knowledge of English. The writing tutors willingly explained concepts about the English language and writing to the students, however, they questioned their knowledge of the English language. When asked during the pre and post-semester interviews as to what role a writing tutor should not take, six of the eight writing tutors responded 'teacher.' Han explained,

*I am not a teacher because I'm never confident that I'm as good as a teacher.*

Tu reiterated that by saying,

*We are writing tutors, we are assistants; of course we cannot take the role of a teacher.*

Perhaps one reason tutors were reluctant to say they are teachers is because teachers are held in high respect in Asian cultures. For example, in a recent international study, teachers in China, where the tutor Li is from, compared to 21 other countries, have the highest levels of public respect (Coughlan, 2013). In Vietnam (where tutors, Jay, Anh, Vy, Lien, and Trang are from), the word 'thầy,' which means teacher in Vietnamese, is one of the most important status pronouns. In Vietnamese this word is commonly used as part of a compound (thầy giáo or thầy học), and can mean both teacher and master, such as schoolmaster or master of a servant (Bankston & Hidalgo, 2006, p. 28). Finally in Korea, where the tutor Han is from, according to Brown (2009),

“education and educators have long been revered in Korea and, historically, educators were beyond reproach. The enormous respect for education dates back to at least the founding period of the Choson Dynasty (1300s–1400s) when a state examination system was developed through which civil service positions were awarded” (Brown, 2009, p. 7). Because the tutors come from cultures that revere teachers, they perhaps felt that to compare themselves to a teacher would be very presumptuous and disrespectful.

In addition to lacking confidence in taking a teacherly role, they also lacked confidence in their English ability. The writing tutors are painfully aware of the fact that they are nonnative English speakers. During the interviews, every writing tutor stated they lacked confidence due to the fact that they are nonnative English speakers. Furthermore, when asked if they felt comfortable in their role as a writing tutor, four writing tutors (out of eight) (Trang, Jay, Tu, Lien) answered no because they were not confident about their English ability.

Jay even questioned if he was even qualified to tutor these students. He said:

*We are not native speakers and we also do not specialize in education, we are just students who have more time to study English than them (the tutees) and honestly I think that writing tutors don't have enough qualifications to evaluate the English skills of students, we can just give some comments.*

Tutors reported receiving complaints from students who expected them to be native English speakers. For example, Jay explained that during a tutorial the tutee would not accept the writing tutors' ideas or corrections because that tutee had an American friend who corrected all of her work so she was *not willing to receive the advice from*

*the writing tutor, a nonnative speaker.* Unfortunately Jay did not know why he had come to the writing help service in the first place since his American friend had already corrected his writing. Han reported a similar situation where the tutee expected him to know every word he found in the dictionary and when the tutor did not he asked if there were any native speaker tutors.

### **5.2.5 Interpreting Teacher's feedback**

In post-semester interviews with Anh, Trang, Li and Han, they reported being confused by how to interpret the teacher's feedback. Anh stated:

*Sometimes I don't understand what the teacher means, why they circled the part they did or underline the part they did.*

Trang reported the same thing. She gave a specific example:

*I remember one time the professor wrote that the title was boring. But when I look in the sample essay the teacher had given the SALC, it has exactly similar title so he asked me what does boring mean. It seems to me the feedback itself is the problem.*

Coupled with this problem was that the tutors felt the students *expected* the writing tutor to help them interpret their teacher's feedback. The writing tutors did not like to express to the student that they did not understand their teacher's message. When I asked Trang what she did when she did not understand why the title was boring, she explained that she helped the student make a more exciting title. According to her, the problem was that she was not sure if the teacher would agree with her assessment of a more exciting title.

### **5.2.6 Time Management**

The last challenge the writing tutors felt was time management. When asked what were the challenges of conducting writing tutorials, six out of the eight writing tutors

said time management. The writing tutors had 30 minutes to work with each student on their essay or paragraph. In eight tutorials with the elementary students, time was not as much of an issue as there was only one paragraph for the tutor to check. However, many writing tutors thought 30 minutes was too short especially when working with students who brought in multiple page essays, as was the case with the remainder of the tutorials for pre-intermediate and intermediate students. In these tutorial observations the tutor was never able to finish looking at the entire paper.

Tu stated:

*for an 1,000 word paper, it is hard to check and work with students in only 30 minutes.*

Vy explained a specific scenario when working with an intermediate student who wanted help with his three page essay:

*He came to me with an essay full of mistakes in almost every sentence. That was so difficult that I could not, like summarize, what kind of mistakes he was having. So instead of showing any major mistake for him, we corrected sentence by sentence cause it was not about grammatical or word choice, it was about structure of the sentence also. We only got through one paragraph.*

Time was an issue for all of the tutors.

### **5.3 RQ3: Research Q3: Major issues in EFL writing tutoring**

The following section answers RQ3: What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese students in a Japanese University? The data employed to answer this research question included the student questionnaire, tutor interviews, quasi-focus group and 30 tutorial observations.

### 5.3.1 Expectations of the tutorial

One major issue arose when the students' expectations were different from the services provided. All eight writing tutors reported that most students expected them to make their paper mistake free. Simply put by Lien:

*They (the tutees) want the writing tutor to fix the grammar and spelling mistakes, in general all mistakes.*

Trang reiterated this by stating,

*They (the students) just come to the SALC with the hope of having a better essay. They just showed us their essays and (asked) "please help us to have a better one, an A+ one."*

Vy stated that many students insist that the tutor help them with their entire essay even when the tutor says they cannot.

Approximately half of the students agree on some level that the writing tutors should correct all mistakes (see table five and table six).

**Table 5: Expectations of error correction**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I expect the writing tutor to fix all of my errors for me and make my paper perfect.	3	6	3	5	3	4	24
	12.5%	25%	12.5%	20.8%	12.5%	16.7%	

**Table 6: Number of mistakes writing tutors should address**

Question	100%	99% -76%	75% -51%	50%-26%	25% -0%	Total
Around how many mistakes in your paper do you think the writing tutors should address?	10	8	5	1	0	24
	41.7%	33.3%	20.8%	4.2%	0%	

Table five shows that about half the students disagreed that the writing tutor should fix all mistakes. I followed up this question with a specific inquiry about how many mistakes students think a writing tutor should fix. Table six shows that 10 students thought writing tutors should address every mistake. Only one student thought the writing tutor should only address 50% of the mistakes. In reality, in 15 observations (out of 30), due to time constraints many tutors were not able to address even 50% of the mistakes when working with an intermediate student; the reason being that their essays are longer, usually more than one page. This created a challenge.

I noted in 10 separate observations that the student requested that the tutor fix every mistake. The writing tutor would usually respond to this by showing the writing help disclaimer (see Appendix 9) and explaining that this was not his/her job, and that he/she could not fix the student's assignment. For example in observation 23:

Lien: *What would you like to work on today?*

Student: *silence. What?*

Lien: *What do you want to do the, in the tutorial? Is there something you, um, want help with? To work on?*

Student: *Oh, correct paper please. Make perfect?*

Lien: *What part of the paper?*

Student: *What part? All paper? Zenbu (English: Everything).*

Lien: *Oh... sorry. That's not really our job. We can't really do that.. Let me show you (shows him the Writing Help Disclaimer)*

From my observations, the student would usually look disappointed but would accept the fact that the writing tutor could not fulfill his/her expectations. However, some students would become upset. During the post-semester interview, Jay told a story about a boy who came to him insisting that he correct every mistake in the essay. When he told him it was impossible to do that, especially in the amount of time allotted, the boy acted upset and confused. According to Jay, he did not understand why the writing tutor was refusing to help him,

*He just kept asking me to check everything and then got mad when I didn't. He didn't understand or maybe even listen to my answer.*

Coupled with this idea is that the students expected the tutor to be a teacher and invested tutors with authority. 42% of the students (10 out of 24) responded that they view the writing tutor as a teacher (see Table seven).

**Table 7: Role of the writing tutor**

<b>The Writing Tutor:</b>	<b>Results</b>	
Is like a teacher; he/she will directly teach me during the tutorial.	10	41.7%
Is like a peer; she/he will ask me questions during the tutorial to help me improve my paper myself.	14	58.3%

With that said, many students still chose the second option that they view the tutor as a peer. However, from my observations in all tutorials it was the tutor that dominated the discourse and called on the student. The challenge with this is that the tutors were uncomfortable in this authoritative role, as reported in section 5.2.4 Perceived expectation to fulfill teacherly role.

### **5.3.2 Expectations to know the essay's requirements**

The writing tutors were not always familiar with the essay's requirements. Coupled with this problem was that the student expected the writing tutor to know everything about the essay assignment. Thonus (2001) found that often students expect the writing tutor to interpret assignments and convey those interpretations to them in a way their instructors have not or cannot. Based on her qualitative ethnography methodology that combined tutorial observations with informant interviews she found that tutees expect the tutors to make sure the essays meet the requirements. In this study, within the student questionnaire, roughly 70% of the students responded that

they do expect the writing tutor to know how to make their paper an A+ paper (see table eight).

**Table 8: Tutor’s knowledge of an A+ paper**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
The writing tutor knows how to make my paper an A+ paper.	1	3	2	7	6	5	24
	4.2%	12.5%	8.3%	29.2%	25.0%	20.8%	

In English language classes teachers often have specific requirements for each essay. These essays are assigned by English language teachers and are therefore more prescriptive with specific requirements and evaluation rubrics. Essays in language classes differ greatly from a content class essay where, in the latter, a typical essay assignment is usually a brief writing prompt. Requirements for content class essays in the context of this study usually only include a word count. Rarely do they have specific organizational requirements and detailed criteria-referenced scales for evaluation. However, English language requirements are different. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for EFL students encourages English teachers to create specific requirements for every writing assignment and employ detailed criteria-referenced scales (Hyland 2006). General TESOL theory also supports the idea that a specific rubric must be created for the evaluation of the student’s writing (Brown 2001).

The English department at IU has been created in line with general TESOL theory and EAP. Therefore, within each course, every assignment has specific rubrics and requirements in terms of paragraphs, topic sentences, concluding sentences, thesis, quotes from outside sources, references, etc. The reason being that EFL students need

training in how to write an essay. Writing a formulaic essay with specific parts helps students to learn the basic skills of essay writing in English, their L2. If the student does not understand these requirements enough to explain them to the tutor then the tutor runs the risk of helping the student create a strong essay but one that does not fit the prerequisite.

In seven different tutorials, I observed the writing tutor giving writing advice that was in conflict with the format the course required. As the overall creator of each course's writing curriculum, I was aware of each level's specific requirements. The tutors, however, were not. The writing tutor was not incorrect but the information they gave was not in line with the essay's requirements. The table below lists the other inaccurate information I observed writing tutors telling students (see table nine).

**Table 9: Inaccurate information writing tutors told students concerning writing**

Issues	Times	Observations
a Telling the student to use I when the teacher had told them to avoid the use of I in formal academic writing	2	4, 28
b Moving the placement of the thesis to the beginning of the second paragraph instead of at the end of the first	2	3, 19
c Telling the student to add something new to the conclusion even though the teacher specifically told them not to do that.	1	6
d Teaching students how to reference even though the teacher does not require it.	2	29, 25

Unfortunately, research was not conducted to see how the teacher responded when the student had not fulfilled the assignment's requirements. With the cases of a, b, and c, I suspect the student was graded down.

In addition to being confused about the essay requirements, writing tutors also employed different words that were inconsistent with the English department's metalanguage. A metalanguage is a language for talking about writing and written

texts (Martin, 1999; Williams, 1999). The purpose is to create a transparent and consistent discourse about writing that promotes explicit discussion about texts and their features. By using the same words to define text features throughout the courses, the metalanguage builds simple relations for students between writing practice, review and feedback. The metalanguage in the English department at IU can be found in a document that contains all the different terms and concepts employed in the different levels. Level coordinators from each English level at IU have studied it to ensure teachers are utilizing the terms consistently throughout the curriculum. However, writing tutors have not been given access to this metalanguage. The tutors would therefore, at times, reference different terms that the students were not familiar with.

As a case in point, I observed Han, in observation 24, conducting a tutorial in English using the word “body detail” instead of “supporting sentences” to refer to the sentences after the topic sentence in a paragraph. Although using a different term might not be an issue to a native speaker of English, to a nonnative speaker, it can be confusing. Other inconsistencies of terms that the writing tutors employed are listed in table ten.

**Table 10: Different terms used by the writing tutors and IU’s English department**

<b>Terms used by Writing Tutor</b>	<b>Terms in IU’s Metalanguage</b>	<b>Times Observed</b>	<b>Observations</b>
a Counter argument	Opposing argument	2	28, 14
b Body of the paragraph	Supporting sentences	1	17

c	Citations	References	2	4
d	Expository essay	Research essay	1	22
e	Persuasive essay	Argumentative essay	1	15
f	Body detail	Supporting sentences	1	24

When the writing tutor used these terms, frequently the students would sit quietly. I wrote in my notes, “do they understand this term?” However in observation 22, the student pointed out that he was doing a research essay and not an expository one.

Why did most of the students remain silent when the writing tutor used a different term? I believe this can be accounted for by the following reasons:

1. The student was not confused because he/she was not aware of the teacher’s metalanguage;
2. The student was not confused and understood there can be more than one term used to describe a specific aspect in English writing;
3. The student was confused but believed it was due to their lack of English ability;
4. The student was confused but did not want to question the writing tutor who they viewed as the authority figure.

It is hard to tell which case accounted for the majority of the times the student remained silent. In any case, using the different metalanguage did create problems in the tutorials.

Another challenge writing tutors dealt with was that sometimes the writing tutors could not interpret the teacher’s feedback as reported in section 5.2.5 Interpreting

teacher's feedback. As mentioned in the context section, IU's English program follows a process approach in which the students receive feedback from their teachers on many drafts of the same writing. Therefore, the students would come to the Writing Help service with their first draft that the teacher had marked and wanted help revising it.

### **5.3.3 Error Correction**

Responding to error correction created three challenges for the tutors. First, when the tutor corrected many of the student's mistakes, it raised the question of how many errors are appropriate for the tutor to respond to. As stated in the literature review, common writing center theory explicitly states that tutors are not to serve as proofreaders because the tutorial should be a learning experience where the students gain and practice different writing skills and not an editing service. However, the writing center model for working with ESL students advocates tutors to give more direct feedback in error correction and revision, but how much error correction is appropriate? Moreover, should equal attention be given to every mistake? Vy explained this dilemma when working with students in the Elementary course. He said,

*For example, if I am helping a student in the beginner class should I only respond to some of the mistakes because the student hasn't learnt the other mistakes?*

The tutors were confused which mistakes they should focus on. As mentioned above, tutors tried to find the student's common errors and point them out. However, many times, it was difficult for the tutors to identify the 'common errors.' Only in tutorials 2, 9, 11, 14, 22 did the tutors identify the students' common errors, mainly because these common errors were easy to notice. As a case in point, in tutorial 14, the student had

failed to capitalize the proper nouns which was easy to spot and teach the student how to self-correct. Anh reported to the student

Anh: *See this, what is wrong here?*

Student: *silence*

Anh: *You need a capital letter for places and people. Do you know capital?*

Student: *Ya, like this?*

Anh: *Big letter. Like this (writes the letter). Now check other parts in your essay. Is International University capital?*

Student: *uhh,*

Anh: *Yes it is. Now go through and check the other parts.*

However, in the other tutorials, many of the students' errors were lexical which are not amenable to one error correction rule. The implications of this will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Another issue was the question of which strategy is most appropriate during tutorial sessions with EFL learners, implicit or explicit error correction. In tutorial observations, the level of direct error correction/proofreading tutors provided varied greatly per tutor. Although all writing tutors conducted a mixture of both implicit and explicit error correction, from the observations and the student survey it is evident that Li, Lien, Han and Anh tended to provide more direct feedback while writing tutors Vy, Trang, Tu and Jay employed more indirect questioning when correcting errors. Implicit error correction refers to when the writing tutor underlines and circles the mistake and, through indirect questioning and examples, helps the student realize his/her own error. For example in tutorial observation 15, Trang adopted various strategies while conducting implicit error correction. In the beginning of the tutorial she underlined some of the mistakes. She said,

Trang: *As I read your paper I will underline some problems. Try to think about why I underlined it.*

After reading through the paper she talked about the parts she underlined with the student.

Trang: *Do you see why I underlined this?*  
Student: *Maybe this?* (does something to the paper).  
Trang: *No, something different*  
Student: *I don't know*  
Trang: *Look again*  
Student: *silence*

Trang continued by showing him different examples of how to use the specific and non-specific articles.

Trang: *Now do you understand why I underlined this? What is it missing?*  
Student: *A?*  
Trang: *No, think again*  
Student: *The?*  
Trang: *Yes.*

Explicit error correction is when the writing tutor directly points out the error, telling the student the problem and how to fix it. For example, Han encountered a similar problem with a student who used articles incorrectly. He stated in tutorial 24:

Han: *What is wrong here?*  
Student: *Where?*  
Han: *Here, what is missing?*  
Student: *silence*  
Han: *School? A school? The school? Which one?*  
Student: *A school*  
Han: *No, in this case you are talking about IU right? So the school. It is specific. Wakaru? (English: do you understand?).*

As I observed in every tutorial, writing tutors would ask the students some version of this question, “Do you know why I underlined this?” and the student would not know why. However, Vy, Trang, Tu and Jay would ask more questions to encourage the student to detect his/her own mistakes (as observed in 16 observations). What resulted in all of these tutorial observations, except four, was a guessing game in which, at the end, the student sometimes still did not seem to understand the mistake. In these tutorials, I wrote in the observation notes, “does the student understand?” and “wasting time, tutor should tell the answer.” For example in tutorial 4 with Tu and an

Intermediate student, Tu tries to help the student re-write the sentence to make it passive form and include a subject(See appendix 16 for complete transcript).

Tu: ...people start studying [Reading the whole sentence aloud] This sentence is really nice. So, the next is that, "to investigated this idea by using questionnaire, summary of web articles and interviews". Umm, so applying this, subject, verb, plus clause or object, can you see?

Student: I can see the verb because...

Tu: Where is the verb?

Student: Humm...

Tu: Where is the subject?

Student: Ah...

Tu: First, tell me where is the subject of this sentence, the main subject?

Shuugo. [S: Shuugo?] Where? Ah...Just subject, this one? Shuugo ga nai janai desu ka? (English: there is no subject right?) Um, okay, here shuugo ga nai.(English: there is no verb, Where is the verb? Where is your main verb, the main action?

Student: To investigate.

Tu: To investigate. Okay, so now you have to "investigate" as the main action right?

Student: Um.

Tu: So who investigates? Is it me?

Student: No.

Tu: Or your teacher?

Student: No, the author.

Tu: Who is the author?

Student: It's me.

Tu: It's you. You are the author. Okay, now you have the shuugo. You are the main subject here. And your main action is to investigate this idea [S: This idea] Okay, so to investigate this idea, you? How... how could you investigate this idea?

Student: I investigate?

Tu: Sometimes "I" is okay in essays but your teacher says "no I". Right? Not for academic writing

Student: Yeah, yeah.

Tu: Okay, I know how to deal with this. Okay, so S and V and Clause ok? Here S is...?

Student: Also...

Tu: This is active form. S is you, right?

Student: Yeah.

Tu: Okay? Uh huh. Then Verb is...?

Student: Investigate.

Tu: Investigate is the verb. Investigate. Investigate what?

Student: What...This idea.

Tu: Okay, this idea. How could you investigate?

Student: By using questionnaires.

Tu: By using questionnaires, okay, by blah blah blah. Okay, so this is the active form: I investigate this idea by using questionnaires, summary of web articles and interviews. But, but your teacher doesn't allow using I, Okay?

*Student: Yeah.*

*Tu: So you have to write it in passive form. So you have to avoid using "I". [Student: Eh] You cannot use "I" so [Student: Uh huh] Do you know how to... [Student: Change?] change this active form to passive form?*

*Student: Ah, by, by questionnaires, er, er, investigate...*

*Tu: Okay, so I will write what you, you, say to me. So you say, by blah blah blah blah?*

*Student: By investigate this idea?*

*Tu: Investigate, okay, this idea. Okay, who? Again, if you by blah blah blah, investigate the idea, then you lack the shuugo. When you turn this active sentence form to passive form then you have to avoid, you cannot use "I" right? Then in this case, "this idea" should become the shuugo.*

*Student: Ooooh, this idea was investigated.*

*Tu: Oh, kanpeki! (English: Perfect) Good, so...? Again, can you tell me the sentence again?*

*Student: This idea was investigated by...*

*Tu: By?*

*Student: By questionnaires, summary of web's articles and interviews.*

Finally the student understands but it took 7 minutes and 8 seconds to revise one sentence. It would have been easier if the writing tutor could have told him to make the sentence passive tense instead of producing all this unfruitful dialogue.

After observation four, I asked Tu why she did not tell the student the answers more often. I noticed that sometimes she would offer explicit error correction but other times would not, even though the student seemed confused. In my observation notes, I wrote, "student is confused." She reported that she was trying to "teach the student how to self-edit." With this strategy, the tutors would try to focus on the student's common errors, ones that occur more than once, by first pointing out the problem, explaining why it is wrong, and then teaching the student how to fix the error. Then the second time a similar error was encountered, the tutor would ask the student to identify it and self-correct it, sometimes giving hints and further explanation. For example in observation 7, there was a successful exchange that resulted in the student being able to self-correct:

*Jay: See what is wrong here?*

Student: *I don't know*

Jay: *Can you write money? Or do you write moneys?*

Student: *Money?*

Jay: *Yes, money is what we called an uncountable noun. You don't add an s.*  
6 minutes and 37 seconds goes by in the audio tape while the tutee and tutor work on other aspects of the paper.

Jay: *What is wrong with this?*

Student: *maybe noun?*

Jay: *Yes, is it countable?*

Student: *No*

Jay: *So what is it?*

Student: *research*

Jay: *that's right!*

The student was able to understand how to change edit the word “researches” to “research” by himself. The benefit of this approach according to researchers is that “by refusing to give corrections, (the tutor) affirms (the tutee’s) ownership of the paper, encouraging him to become a proficient self-editor” (Linville, 2009, p. 122). However, as in observation 1, rarely could the student identify the error during the second time the error was encountered. For example when Vy tried to help the student with word form errors in tutorial 1:

Vy: *Can you think what is wrong here?*

Student: *What wrong here?*

Vy: *In this sentence, what is the problem?*

Student: *Where?*

Vy: *Here, look here. So do you say “He is interesting in the book” or “He is interested in the book”*

Student: *Interested?*

Vy: *Yes, this is a word problem. You picked the wrong type of word.*

Student: *Okay*

2 minutes and 20 seconds later in the tutorial.

Vy: *Here is another issue. Do you see it?*

Student: *See what?*

Vy: *We learned this before. You picked the wrong type of word?*

Student: *silence....Don't understand*

Vy: *See this, Please read this for me.*

Student: *This part?*

Vy: *Yes*

Student: *“I feel terribly after I missed my exam.” Change I feeling terribly?*

Vy: *No the problem isn't with the word feel. The problem is with the word terribly.*

Student: *How?*

Vy: *Terribly is adverb. What is the adjective?*

Student: *I don't know*

Vy: *Let's look it up on computer*

Together they looked it up on the computer. The student realized the correct word form is terrible. The student was not able to understand the issue with word form on his own.

According to Tu, when trying the self-editor approach with an intermediate English student,

*She still could not change the whole problem. I don't think it is difficult, she just seems to be scared of something, I don't know. She's not comfortable. Or she just doesn't know what to do.*

It's hard to interpret why the student was uncomfortable but one reason could be that the English concept was too difficult for the student to self-correct on her own without much practice.

As shown thus far in the data, it would usually take a very long time for students to answer tutors' questions about the mistakes. As witnessed during the observations, sometimes this process would take anywhere from 5-9 minutes (as observed in 11 observations) to go over a simple mistake. For example in observation 30 it took Vy eight minutes to try to explain why the verb tense was incorrect. The student had written a paragraph about her hometown in the past tense and Vy asked a series of questions to try to help the student realize that these types are paragraphs are written in the present tense.

Vy: *You wrote, "had" and "was". Why?*

Student: *silence*

Vy: *For example, you use the verbs, “was” and “liked”*

Student: *Yes*

Vy: *Why? Nande atta to suki data wo tsukatta? (English: why did you use was and liked?)*

Student: *ahh. Wakaranai (English: I don't understand)*

Vy: *Okay, let's look at some examples. I'll get some. Wait one second. (11 seconds later) Where are those examples. This class is Elementary right?*

Student: *Yes*

Together they look at examples for 4 minutes. Vy shows the student the paper and makes her read it out loud.

Vy: *Now what are the verbs like?*

Student: *Mo wakaranai (English: I still don't understand).*

Vy: *Fine, I guess I will tell you. You see your essay needs to be in present tense. What is yours in?*

Student: *uhh*

Vy: *Yours in in past tense.*

As an observer, it seemed to me that she was trying to elicit knowledge that the student did not have. The end result was that finally, after eight minutes, she explained to the student that academic essays are written in the present tense. In my observation notes I wrote, “why didn't she say that to begin with?”

The third challenge error correction highlighted was the appropriate approach tutors should adopt to teach grammar. Tutors wondered what the best way was to identify what the error is and the best way to teach the student why it is incorrect. Writing tutors were worried about this. Li stated:

*What if I teach them in the wrong way?*

From the post-semester interviews, Anh and Jay and Han identified two reasons why they were apprehensive about teaching grammar: they lack confidence in their own English ability (especially since they are not native speakers) and they did not know the correct way to teach grammar. More will be discussed about these issues under the section titled 5.4.4 Teacher.

### 5.3.4 Appropriation

Tutors reported that many students had nonsensical sentences and as a result would help the students reformulate them. Many of the writing tutors insisted this problem exists because the students write in Japanese first and then translate what they want to write using the Google Translate function on a computer. Google Translate is however not an effective translator and regarded as “inefficient, inaccurate and inappropriate, with its output capacity limited to simple texts and controlled language, especially in terms of the literary text translation” (Zengin, & Kaçar, 2011, p. 275).

Coupled with this problem was that students would regularly come to the writing tutorial with incomprehensible sentences translated word by word from Japanese to English through the use of a Japanese English dictionary. When the writing tutor asked the student what it meant in Japanese the student could not remember what they had originally intended to write. This was an issue that I observed in four tutorials.

For example in Tutorial 20:

Li: *I don't understand this sentence?*

Student: *What sentence?*

Li: *This one. What are you trying to say?*

Student: *I don't know*

Li: *Nihongo de itte. Nani wo kaketakatta? (English: Tell me in Japanese what you wanted to write)*

Student: *hmm, Nan kana...Obetenai des. (I don't remember).*

The student did not remember what she had originally intended to write. Regarding a separate case, Vy exclaimed that once a girl came to the writing tutorial and she:

*Didn't know what she was writing. Even though I asked her in Japanese that, "what do you mean by this and that?" she still had no idea what she wrote. It was a really painful tutorial.*

Besides helping students reformulate sentences, writing tutors also helped students find the correct word for the context of the sentence. Lien reported that she asked tutees in Japanese what the word they wanted to say was and then, *“together with them try to find a different English word that was more appropriate in that context.”* Students’ problems with word choice can be attributed to not having developed a large enough vocabulary in their second language combined with the arbitrary use of the Japanese English dictionary and thesaurus. Dictionary use is important for production use of English, however many novice learners of English lack the knowledge of dictionary conventions. Therefore it is difficult for novice learners to choose the correct word usage and the appropriate context (Takahashi, 2012). Many times students’ word usage did not fit the context. According to Nesi & Meara (1994), two reasons for incorrect word usage are that dictionary users only pay attention to part of the definition, not examining it close enough to see if it fits the context, and also that users misidentify the grammatical categories of the word.

Helping the students with word choice and reformulation raised the issue of appropriation. During the tutorial observations I questioned whether the writing tutor was appropriating the student’s work. For example, in tutorial 26,

Han: *What do you want to say here? Nihongo de itte* (English: You can say in Japanese).

Student: *Kyouiku wa shakai no motto mo juyona bubun des.*

Han: *Okay, so maybe something like, umm, Education is very important, juyona, right?* [Student: *ya*] *in society.*

Student: *One more time please.*

Han: *Education is very important part in society. Write it down.* (a few seconds pass). *That looks good. Add “part”. So, “Education is the most important part of a society.” Ya, like that. That’s good. Much more clear.*

Han told the student the sentence to write and the student wrote it down verbatim. The student did not participate in the reformulation of the sentence.

I also noticed the four tutors, Li, Lien, Han and Anh, in line with their direct error correction style, seemed to be more willing to tell the student the correct sentence. In tutorial sessions with these tutors, and in addition one observation with Vy, I questioned whether the writing tutor was appropriating too much of the student's work. I noted, "Tutor is appropriating the student's work." Another example, similar to the above example of tutorial 26 was in tutorial 3 with an Intermediate student.

Anh: *What are you trying to say here?*

Student: *hmm*

Anh: *I think you want to say, "In school, students can learn a lot of different subjects including English and math."*

Student: *okay, can you say again. Again please*

Anh: *Yes (says slowly), "In school, students learn a lot of different subjects including English and math. Did you get it?"*

The other four tutors, in line with their indirect error correction style, Vy Trang, Tu, and Jay were more reticent and instead tried to elicit the students to create the sentences themselves.

The question remains as to what is the appropriate amount of help the tutor should provide in reformulating sentences. During observation 3, I remarked, "whose work is this, the student's or the tutor's?" I also wrote many times, "tutor rewrites sentence for the student." According to writing center theory, which advocates avoiding all forms of appropriation, the tutor should be writing the sentence with the student not for the student. However, does the definition of appropriation differ in work with EFL students? The implications of this will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Another issue illuminated was the expectation that the writing tutor should serve as the student's translator. During the post-semester interview, Anh stated that students

would come with their study abroad application essays written in Japanese and insist that the writing tutor translate them to English. As mentioned earlier, half the writing tutors were more likely to help students translate their work while the other half were not. In fact, Trang refused to provide a translation service. If a student requested her to translate his/her sentences she would pass the student on to another writing tutor, usually Li or Lien. According to her, translation does not benefit the student. Trang stated:

*There were cases of students who, I felt that they expected me to do all the work, they expected me to read the sentences and then write my sentences down in English and I always refused to do that.*

She went on to say that with a lower level student she might translate one or two times in a session but an entire session that consists of translation is not *ethically appropriate*. However, other writing tutors thought helping students translate sentences was appropriate. Li commented that one of his strategies was helping students translate their Japanese into English and that it really enhanced the efficiency of the tutorial session. More about the ethical dilemmas this topic raises will be discussed in Chapter Six.

### **5.3.5 Use of L1**

Students were often silent in tutorials. I recorded that the students were passive 20 times out of 30 by writing one of the following phrases “silent, unresponsive and passive” to describe the students in my notes. Trang investigated why the students did not respond. In one tutorial, she asked the student directly why he remained silent, especially when she asked him a question. According to her, the student:

*Said he wanted to speak more during the tutorial but he didn't have the confidence (in English) and as a result remained silent.*

His lack of confidence to speak English hindered the communication in the tutorial. This suggests that actual and perceived English ability was one of the reasons students remained silent.

When the students were unresponsive, the writing tutor handled it in various ways. Strategies I observed in every tutorial included speaking slower and using simpler words. Often the tutors resorted to writing down their message on paper (observed in six observations). Another strategy I commonly observed was the writing tutor giving the student two simple options, one correct and one incorrect, allowing them to choose one (observed in 24 tutorials). If none of these strategies worked, finally the writing tutor resorted to speaking Japanese. For example in tutorial 12 with an Elementary student:

Lien: *How do you connect these two sentences? What conjunction do you use?*

Student: Silence

Lien: *I like hip hop. I don't like R and B. How do you connect it? Is there a word to connect?*

Student: *A word?*

Lien: *A conjunction? I like tomatoes, nani nani I don't like apples.*

Student: *Sorry I don't understand.*

Lien: *Tatoeba, Watashi wa tomato ga suki....nani nani.... ringo ga suki ja nai. Nan no tango ga ii? (English: For example. I like tomatoes.... I don't like apples. What word is good? )*

Student: *Kedo (English: but)*

Lien: *So so so. Eigo de nanto iu? (English: That's right. What do you say in English?)*

Student: *but*

Lien: *Good. Now put it in your essay. I like hiphop .... ?*

Student: *But I don't like R and B.*

Trang reported:

*When I think I can't find any other ways to communicate with the student in English, I resort to Japanese.*

The tutors agreed that using Japanese facilitated communication. Lien reported that when working with an Intermediate student:

*He was good at writing but could not explain his ideas and problems when he talked to me in English. Therefore I decided to switch to Japanese and that seemed to work well.*

Trang reiterated that:

*This last semester I used Japanese a lot because there were so many miscommunication issues that it was just better to use Japanese most of the time.*

In these situations the writing tutor would speak Japanese. However speaking Japanese was sometimes a struggle for the tutors. I observed six sessions where, from my perspective, the writing tutor struggled to explain his/her point in Japanese. In observation 17, Jay did not know how to say the word, “past participle” in Japanese and got stuck while trying to explain this concept to the student.

Jay: *You wrote, “The TV invented before the internet.” I think you want to use past participle.*

Student: *What?*

Jay: *You can't write, “The TV invented before the internet.” You need another verb. You have to include another verb. Do you know past participle?*

Student: *Past? What?*

Jay: *How do you add had or was?*

Student: *hmm?*

Jay: *Okay, I will tell you. You have to write, “The TV was invented before the internet.”*

Student: *Why?*

Jay: *Because that is the past participle. Don't you know. Err? What is that in Japanese? Do you know?*

Student: *Sorry, I don't understand.*

Jay: *Never mind. Okay, let's go onto the next point.*

Due to various interactions such as these, Jay believed his Japanese was not *good enough*. Of all the writing tutors, Jay was probably the least fluent in Japanese. He was a second year student and had only been taking Japanese for one year. He was

enrolled, however, in the Advanced Japanese class which means in theory his level was around level 2 on the Japanese proficiency JPLT test. This is the standard level companies require for foreigners to work in Japanese companies and a relatively high level of Japanese. Someone who attained level two proficiency would indeed be considered fluent based on Lenon's 1990 definition. He defines fluency as "an impression of the listener's part that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production are functioning easily and efficiently" (p. 391). Vy also lacked confidence in his Japanese ability saying that communicating in Japanese was one of the biggest challenges for him despite having passed the level one proficiency, the highest level on this proficiency test. Even though he speaks Japanese quite well he believes he does not have the ability to explain a lot of grammatical and linguistic aspects in English. However, in the observations I did not observe him struggling to get his point across in Japanese. For example:

Vy: *Sono bunsho wa, "transition" ga irimasu. Transition wa eigo no jyugyo de naratta? Nanka, listo ga arimasu?* (English: This sentence needs a transition. Did you learn about transitions in English class? Do you have a list of them?)

Student: *Hai* (student gets word list). *Kore des ka?* (English: Yes, is this the list?)

Vy: *Takusan "transition" ga aru kara bunsho ni yotte, chigau transition tsukatta ho ga ii. Tatoeba, koko de "but" wo kaita. Demo motto formalna no tango ga arimasu."* *Tango listo de mite.* (English: There are many types of transition words. It depends on the sentence but you can use different transitions. For example, here you wrote, "but" but, you can use a more formal word. Look at your word list.)

Student: *hmm, However kana?*

Vy: *Yes, that is a good word to choose.*

With that said, it should be noted that, although the writing tutors questioned their ability in Japanese, I noted ten times in the observation notes that the writing tutor had successfully switched to Japanese and explained a difficult concept, sometimes in the same tutorial I had observed them struggle to explain a concept in Japanese. I

observed both Jay (observation 7 and 25) and Vy (observation 1 and 20) demonstrate this on two occasions. From my observations, they successfully explained the English grammatical concept in Japanese correctly, and the student seemed satisfied. Here is an example of a successful negotiation with Jay and an Intermediate student in tutorial 7.

Jay: *What is the problem here?*  
Student: *I don't see it?*  
Jay: *How do you end the sentence? Read it for me?*  
Student: *That situation MEXT did not think of.*  
Jay: *Do you see the problem?*  
Student: *No*  
Jay: *You shouldn't end with a preposition?*  
Student: *A what?*  
Jay: *A preposition. Zenchishi (English preposition) are ,with, of, at, etc.*  
Student: *Why?*  
Jay: *Kore wa eigo no kisoku des. Preposition owatte wa ikenai. Meishi ka daimeishi no mae ni konakereba naranai. (English: It's just a rule of English. You shouldn't end with propositions because the prepositions should come before the noun or pronoun.)*  
Student: *okay*  
Jay: *Preposition wo tsukawai de, sumu ni wa dou kaetara ii? (English: So how can we change this to get rid of the preposition? )*  
Student: *That situation Mext did not think?*  
Jay: *Kore wa hen des. Hokka no tango wo tsukatta hou ga ii des. (English: But that sounds weird. Let's use a different word.)*  
Student: *Tatoeba? (English: Like what?)*  
Jay: *Kangaeru ka koryo suru tsukatta ho ga ii. (English: You can use consider or take into account.)*  
Student: *Kangaeru (English: consider).*  
Jay: *Okay, that is "consider" in English. Kakinaoshite (English: Then rewrite it.)*  
Student: *That situation MEXT did not consider.*  
Jay: *Good.*

Through Jay's use of Japanese he was able to explain to the student that English sentences do not end with propositions and as a consequence the student revised their sentence.

An interesting issue that use of L1 created was that, despite the tutee's English ability,

many tutees wanted the writing tutors to conduct the tutorial in English. This was probably the most surprising data. As mentioned in section 5.1.1 Miscommunication, one of the Likert Scale statements in the survey was “I want the writing tutor to use Japanese during the tutorial” and roughly 80% of the participants did not want the tutor to speak Japanese during the tutorial. The reason to account for this response is unknown.

### **5.3.6 Time management**

One major reason why time management was such a major issue was because the tutorial was usually conducted in the student’s second language, English, and therefore it took writing tutors a long time to elicit responses from the students. Thonus (1993) explains that tutors sometimes have to spend an “inordinate amount of time” working with ESL students (p. 20). While 30 minutes might suffice for tutors conducting tutorials with native English speakers it did not suffice for foreign language tutoring. During the observations I wrote down six times that “the writing tutor is doing a good job of helping the student understand his/her mistakes, but it is taking a very long time.” However, there were three tutorials I observed that were done entirely in Japanese, one with a single page essay from a pre-intermediate student (observation 6) and two with longer essays from the Intermediate course (9 and 14). In all three of these tutorials time was not as much of an issue. For the one page essay Tu, the writing tutor, managed to go through the entire paper, while with the intermediate students’ papers which were one-two pages, the writing tutors, Li and Anh, although not able to respond to everything, were able to move at a much quicker speed.

### 5.3.7 Teacher's misinterpretation of the service

Some teachers at IU misunderstood the purpose of the writing help service. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this model of a 'writing tutorial' is based on the western writing center and is new to Asian schools. Some teachers viewed the writing help service as an editing facility. Teachers would usually not come to the SALC but instead tell their students to go there to get their paper 'checked'. When writing tutors encountered these students who were misguided by their teacher, the writing tutor would spend time educating them about the real purpose of the writing help service, usually showing them the writing help disclaimer (see Appendix 9).

However, one time, a teacher actually accompanied her class of 20-25 students to the SALC. These students lined up to work for five minutes with each writing tutor doing what she called a 'grammar check.' In this grammar check the students would hand their paper to the writing tutor and the writing tutor would quickly correct the mistakes and then move on to the next student. The writing tutors felt they were not helping the student learn productively. It reinforced the misconstrued idea that the writing tutorial is an editing service that only makes the student's paper better. Anh described these 'grammar checks' as the worst tutorials she had experienced:

*I don't think they (the students) learn anything from grammar checks because they can ask anyone to do it for them. It's not helpful at all. It provides no meaning for the students.*

As a rule, if a student requested a five minute grammar check from a writing tutor, the writing tutor would refuse; however, because the teacher accompanied the students to the SALC the writing tutors did not think they could refuse the teacher.

#### **5.4 RQ4: Various roles tutors adopted during EFL tutoring sessions**

The following section details the answer to RQ4: What are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner-intermediate students? By looking at the following data, the student questionnaire, tutor interviews, quasi-focus group and 30 tutorial observations it was found that the tutors in this study do not play a singular role or a dualistic role because, in practice, tutors shift between roles and assume multiple positions sometimes at the same time. In line with symbolic interactionism, the roles the tutors play in this study “do not have inherent significances, but rather carry expectations for conduct that is learned in the process of socialization, and are constantly negotiated as people work to fit what they want with the expectations they encounter” (Zurcher as cited in Cohen, 2008 p. 82). The tutors and the students in this study respond to multi-dimensional phenomena according to the meaning it has for them, derived from and modified by the social interaction they have with members of their context (Charon, 1995). Through the data analysis, as described in Chapter Four, six main categories of roles emerged. Because the criteria and the definitions of each role are original to this study, definitions and examples are explained in table eleven below.

**Table 11: Roles tutors adopted in EFL tutoring**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Definition:</b>	<b>Descriptions of Writing Tutor's Actions</b>
Proofreader	A person who checks a written paper looking for errors to ensure that the paper meets the standard English writing conventions regarding punctuation, mechanics, spelling, sentence structure, and formatting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Searches through the paper to find errors</li><li>• Circles or underlines the error</li><li>• Explains to students, often directly, how to correct the error</li></ul>
Translator	A person who renders written work into another language, in this case, Japanese to English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finds sentences and words that do not make sense in the student's written work</li><li>• Translates the student's work from Japanese to English</li><li>• Helps the student reformulate the Japanese sentence into English</li><li>• Helps the student choose the correct word in English for the context of the sentence</li><li>• Helps the student formulate the sentences he/she wants to convey</li><li>• Speaks Japanese when there is a breakdown in English communication</li></ul>
Coach	A person who supports students to build confidence and motivation in English writing through personal individualized tutoring sessions and goal setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helps the student choose personal English writing goals</li><li>• Encourages the students to keep trying and not give up</li><li>• Praises parts of the student's essays</li></ul>
Teacher	A person with extensive and authoritative knowledge of English who explains ideas and concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teaches difficult concepts about the English language</li><li>• Teaches the rhetorical content</li><li>• Answers questions about the English language and English writing</li><li>• Evaluates student's work and suggests improvements</li><li>• Teaches academic writing and disciplinary conventions</li><li>• Teaches content, often indirectly</li><li>• Calls on students</li><li>• Leads the tutorial</li><li>• Answers and explains difficult concepts in Japanese</li></ul>
Mediator	A person who acts as an intermediary between the teacher the student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explains assignment rubrics to the student</li><li>• Interprets the student's assignment and conveys the meaning to the student</li><li>• Interprets the teacher's feedback on the student's written work</li></ul>
Time keeper	A person who keeps track of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensures the tutorial session ends in 30 minutes</li><li>• Devises various strategies to maximize the time in the tutorial</li></ul>

It is important to note that tutors do not maintain a single static role during their interactions with tutees. According to Goffman, it is far more common for participants to shift their footing in the give and take of conversation. These shifts are not simply changing from one footing to another. According to Goffman (1981), the idea of shifting from one alignment to another is

too mechanical and too easy.... For it seems that when we change voice-whether to speak for another aspect of ourselves or someone else... we are not so much terminating the prior alignment as holding it in abeyance with the understanding that it will almost immediately be reengaged... And within one alignment, another can be fully enclosed (p. 155).

In other words, tutors adopted many roles, sometimes at the same time; these roles were constantly shifted or reengaged. An example from observation 10 (see observation notes in Appendix 14, second page) illustrates this. In this tutorial, Li helped a pre-intermediate student rewrite part of a paragraph about his hometown.

Li: *This is too simple, anything else besides swim?*

Student: *Silence*

When Li asked the student what he wanted to write besides ‘swim’ the student was unresponsive. Therefore Li decided to speak to the student in Japanese while encouraging him to participate, enacting the coach role. Li asked him what he wanted to say in Japanese, and then translated the student’s response into English, performing the translator role. The following conversation was conducted in Japanese

Li: *At the beach, what other activities do people do?*

Student: *I don't know.*

Li: *Think about what you like to do when you are on the beach. Think first in Japanese. I will help you.*

Student: *I don't know.*

Li: *You can do this. First think of the content then think of what to say in English. Do you only swim there?*

Student: *No, I play volleyball sometimes.*

Li: *Okay, volleyball, now one more.*

Student: *Beach volleyball and building sandcastles*

Next, Li switched to the position of a teacher to explain to the student why those English words were correct and how to use them in a sentence, all the time encouraging him.

Li: *Great! What is beach volleyball and building sandcastles in English.*

Student: *Beach volliboll and to make sandcastles.*

Li: *That is really good. Now how do you say "volliboll" in English. What is "boll"*

Student: *Ball*

Li: *Good, so it is volleyball. Write it down. (5 seconds passes) Now, do you say to make something or to build something if you are making a sandcastle?*

Student: *To build?*

Li: *That's right. Okay now put the whole sentence together.*

Employing Goffman's (1981) terminology, in this way, the teacher role was 'fully enclosed' in the coach role. Li also 'reengaged' with the translator role by immediately reformulating the sentences with the tutee.

Thus the tutor plays a variety of roles as Harris (1995) describes as, "changing hats mid-sentence" (p. 63) or as Goffman (1981) puts it, shifts in footing. The tutor is not a precisely defined role but rather a range of roles varying from proofreader to teacher, shaped and negotiated through each interaction with individual tutees. Therefore, the writing tutor adopts new roles based on the interaction with the individual student. Each of the roles that the writing tutor embraced was coupled with its own challenges and responsibilities that the writing tutor must navigate.

#### **5.4.1 Proofreader**

One of the most prominent roles the writing tutors performed (noted numerous times in every observation), despite their reluctance, was as a proofreader. Harwood, Austin and Macaulay (2012a) define proofreading as "third-party interventions (that entail

some level of written alteration) on assessed work in progress” (p. 569). Other studies, (Pilotti, Chodorow, Agpawa, Krajniak & Mahamane, 2012) define proofreading as only detecting and correcting typographical errors, while other studies (Harwood, Austin & Macaulay, 2012) employ a different word “cleaner” for the same concept, someone who cleans up the text and provides error correction. For this study, a proofreader is defined as someone who reads one’s paper in order to find errors and ensure that the paper meets the English standard writing conventions regarding punctuation, mechanics, spelling, sentence structure, and formatting. As mentioned previously, writing center literature usually advocates tutors to avoid performing a proofreader role. In fact, as reported in Chapter Three in Cogie et al.’s (1999) article entitled “Avoiding the Proofreading Trap: The value of the Error Correction Process”, several strategies tutors can deploy when tutoring ESL students in order to avoid proofreading were outlined. They deem proofreading an ineffective strategy because it translates “into the tutor editing and the student observing” (p. 7).

Although common writing center theory advises against tutors acting as proofreaders, in actuality writing tutors performed this role, and more so in EFL tutoring because novice learners of English lack knowledge about grammatical and lexical aspects of the English language and thus make many mistakes. In Chapter Four, I demonstrated how this role emerged from the data analysis. It is worth noting that this term is used only to refer to times when the writing tutors marked errors and mistakes, not when they helped students change content, rearrange the essay structure or reformulate the sentences. These tasks are categorized under the teacher and translator role which will be discussed in section 5.4.2 Translator and in section 5.4.4 Teacher.

As mentioned in section 5.3.3 each tutor had their own style some more explicit and others more implicit. When analyzing the observation data, in response to question four, what was the tutor’s style for error correction, and question 5, how does the tutor reformulate an unclear sentence, I consistently circled: elicited responses from the students, identified common errors, and pointed out unclear sentences during the observations of Vy, Trang, Tu and Jay. On the other hand, during observations of the tutorials with Li, Lien, Han and Anh, I regularly marked: corrected for the student, suggested how to rewrite it and had the student think of the sentence in Japanese and together translated it.

This data was validated by the student questionnaires. 14 out of the 24 students who participated in the survey identified which tutor they worked with. When asked how the writing tutor conducted error correction, the students that had tutorials with Vy, Trinh, Tu and Jay answered that these tutors mostly asked questions to help the student figure out the answers or carried out both implicit and explicit correction. While the students who had tutorials with Li and Lien, Han and Anh responded that these tutors either always told them the correct answer, mostly told them the correct answers or did both implicit and explicit error correction (see table twelve).

**Table 12: Tutor’s error correction style**

The writing tutor		Always told me the correct answer	Mostly told me the correct answers	Did both	Mostly asked me questions to help me figure out the answers	Asked me questions to help me figure out the answers	Total
		7	3	11	3	0	24
		29.2%	12.5%	45.8%	12.5%	0%	
Tutorials by	Anh	1					
	Han	2	1				
	Jay			2			
	Li	1	1				

Lien	1		
Trang			2
Tu		1	
Vy		1	1

Although the tutors' style differed in terms of how direct they were, from this table it is evident that most tutors are telling the student the correct answer and engaging in some type of error correction. 11 out of 14 students selected for "Always told me the correct answer," "Mostly told me the correct answer" and "Did both."

#### 5.4.2 Translator

The writing tutors used Japanese, not only to explain concepts, but also to make sense of the students' essays. Many times the writing tutors could not understand what the student had written. When this happened Japanese greatly aided the tutorial, not only to facilitate communication but often to help the writer reformulate the sentences he/she wanted to convey. In this way, the writing tutor became a translator helping the students translate from Japanese to English. Commonly, the term translator is used to refer to the profession of someone who is certified to translate written work from one language to another for professional contexts such as a courtroom (Dobson, 2012). According to Garcia-Sanchez, Orellana, and Hopkins (2011), the translator role requires someone to be "a good listener and speaker in two languages, and to be able to express things appropriately for different audiences" (p. 148). For the purposes of this study, the term translator is employed to describe when the tutor helps translate the student's words from Japanese to English. The role is also employed to describe when the tutor helps the student choose the correct word in English for the context of the sentence and helps the student formulate the sentences he/she wants to convey. The tutors in this sense help students make meaning in their second language (Dobson, 2012).

The writing tutors played the role of translator by first pointing out that the sentence was unclear and then by helping the student reformulate it. Li clearly explained how he performed the role of translator:

*Miscommunication usually occurs when I read their essay and I misunderstood the content of the essay. They wanted to express actually another thing but I interpret it in a different way. I usually ask them, “what do you want to say in Japanese?” and the sentence turned out to be a totally different sentence, right? Then I started to reformulate the sentence with them by asking them, ‘please use simple English to try to say what you want to say again’ and tried to organize this sentence with them again. Many times they don’t know the word in English so I help them translate the word.*

I observed something similar to this situation in 14 different tutorials. The writing tutor would identify an incomprehensible sentence or a sentence that expressed something completely different than the student’s intended message, then together, the writing tutor and the student would reformulate the sentence sometimes using speaking-into-writing strategies (see Appendix 6, number 10). This strategy uses the student’s direct spoken voice. When the tutor does not understand what the student has written, or is trying to encourage him/her to expand on an idea, the tutor can ask the student to “tell me more” while writing down what the student says. This process is often conducted in both the student’s L1 and L2. Then together they formulate the sentence based on the student’s own words that the tutor recorded. Here is an example with Anh in tutorial 3 with an Intermediate student.

Anh: *This sentence is unclear. What do you mean here?*

Student: *Where?*

Anh: *This one*

Student: *Oh, not sure.*

Anh: *You wrote, old education system stop coming of ideas of the people. What does that mean?*

Student: *The old system makes it hard, or stops. "Samatageru" what is that in English?*

Anh: *Prevents or hinders*

Student: *Prevents. The old system..*

Anh: *Wait, let me get my paper. Okay, you explain this to me I will write down what you say.*

Student: *The old system prevents people coming new ideas.*

Anh: *The old system prevents people from coming up with new ideas?*

Student: *Yes, the old education system was only memory test, multiple choice. Students don't think or evaluate. So it stops people from new ideas.*

Anh: *Okay, so it stops people new ideas, what verb do you say. Having new ideas or coming up with new ideas?*

Student: *coming up with new ideas.*

Anh: *These are the words I wrote down from what you say. This is all your own words. Can you use them to make a clearer sentence.*

Student: *The old education system prevents people from coming up with new ideas.*

Anh: *Okay, now give an example.*

The student and the tutor negotiated the meaning of the sentences together. In other words, the tutor helped the student make meaning in his/her second language.

The idea of the tutor as translator has not been written about in writing center literature. However, in translation theory, Dobson (2012) puts forth the phrase *pedagogue as translator* to highlight the "teacher's need to teach the pupil to be active and collaborate with the pedagogue in order to co-author meaning through acts of translation in the classroom" (p. 283). He defines the pedagogue as a translator's goal, being "to determine which types of inaccuracies are present in the translated work of the pupil and to offer formative assessment as feedback to assist the pupil in the development of their proficiency in English as a second language" (Dobson, 2012, p. 281). This is similar to the goal of the writing tutor. In broad terms, the tutor, just as the pedagogue as translator, creates scaffolding to support the learning processes of the student (Dobson, 2012).

By way of illustration, in observation 12, the student had written, “I judgment him and told him he was not good enough.” Lien asked him what he wanted to say for the word judgement. The student answered, *hihan suru* which can mean judge and the noun ‘hihan’ also can mean judgment. But in this sense he meant to write criticize. He had chosen the wrong word and word form for the context of the sentence when he used his dictionary. Lien then suggested the more appropriate word “criticized.” This is an example when the tutor advised the student directly as to which word they should use.

### **5.4.3 Coach**

As a result of tutor perceived lack of student motivation, tutors adopted the role of a coach, encouraging students in order to motivate them to improve their writing. In this context, a coach is defined as someone who helps the student build confidence and motivation in English writing by providing support and goal setting. The role of a writing coach has been identified in writing center theory. According to Harris (1995), the coach is the “encouraging helper who tells students what they need to know in order to become more skilled and what exercises they need to work on in order to improve” (p 63). However, her definition varies from this study’s in that she defines a coach as someone working on the sidelines who can diagnose the problem but does not fix it for the student. This idea is in line with writing center theory for native speaker tutorials. As stated before, in Chapter 3 section 3.7.3 IU’s policy toward error correction the writing tutors in this study are advised to directly tell the students how to fix the problem and do not work from the sidelines. Furthermore, Harris does not adequately discuss how context hinders and even thwarts the fulfillment of the coach role.

The writing tutors conducted various strategies to motivate the students. For example, Li said he likes to praise the students. He stated:

*After reading a passage (from their paper) whatever the passage looks, even it's very poor, I find something that is good about it and say 'oh, this part is really good.' I always do this and say, 'you only have to improve a little bit, like these points so your article will be perfect' and then telling them what mistakes they have made like 'what if you pay attention to this kind of mistake next time, your writing will really improve.'*

The reason he does this is because *I think in Japanese culture when you say people are good, they start to pay attention to you.* Regardless of the reasoning, in every tutorial I observed, the writing tutors praised the students and encouraged them. Often they used phrases such as, *great, there you go, and you did it.* Writing tutors also often stressed opportunities to improve their paper. For example in tutorial 14 with Anh and an intermediate student:

*Anh: This is a very good sentence. Now if you change this sentence to be the same tense as this sentence it will be even better.*

*Student: Like this*

*Anh: Like that. Great! Good job.*

Other ways writing tutors motivated students were by helping them articulate an achievable performance goal for their English writing and then monitoring their progress throughout the semester. When asked what successes they had experienced in the writing help tutorial, three of the writing tutors explained they had succeeded in motivating individual students through goal setting. Trang said that, originally, a specific student did not want to come to the SALC but her teacher had encouraged her. At first she was not motivated at all but during the tutorial she started to open up more about how English was really difficult for her but that she wanted be able to speak and

write it. Together they set the goal to attain a grade of B or higher on her next paper. For the next couple of weeks she worked with the writing tutor and was able to achieve that goal. They continued to work together and by the end of the semester this student, who at one point was having great difficulty in English class, received an A in her English class.

#### **5.4.4 Teacher**

It has been affirmed in various studies that it is not uncommon for the writing tutor to perform the role of a teacher rather than a peer during writing tutorials. In an analysis of tutorials at a university writing center, Thonus and Plummer (1999) (as cited in Thonus 2001) found that tutors:

- evaluate students' work and suggest as often as they ask 'Socratic' questions
- teach academic writing and disciplinary conventions
- teach content, often indirectly
- think and comment critically about other's pedagogy including pedagogical practices of course instructors (p. 61).

Therefore, according to Thonus (2001), writing center tutors construct themselves not as peers but actually as teachers by evaluating, suggesting changes and advising; the tutors adopt a more didactic role. As explained in the literature review, Myers (2003) affirms the adoption of this role of writing instructor but adds that tutors working with ESL students also adopt the role of 'foreign/second language teachers.'

Although the teacherly role is not synonymous with a directive approach or an authoritative stance, writing center scholarship often discusses these concepts together. Corbett (2013) equates a tutor who employs directive methods with having more authority and power. He explains that often tutors use their authoritative knowledge of rhetoric to provide instruction that will be useful to the student in completing the

paper. Another study characterizes a tutor who employs more directive methods as a ‘mentor’ with more authority while tutors who employ non-directive methods are given the label ‘partners’ and are viewed as equals by the students (Ashton-Jones, 1988).

In some articles, being directive or ‘teacherly’ is presented in terms of an either/or dichotomy (Brooks, 1991; Shamoon & Burns, 1995; Thompson, 1995). In contrast to these studies, other contextualized studies have found the roles of a tutor vary on a continuum ranging from peer to teacher (Bell, Arnold & Haddock 2009; Blau et al., 1998; Clark, 2001; Corbett, 2011; Roswell, 1992; Soliday, 1995; Thonus, 2001). Clark (2001) conducted an empirical study to investigate the directive/nondirective dualism in writing center discourse. Her findings suggest that “in actuality, the concept should be considered a continuum, directiveness being a matter of degree, and to some extent, perception” (Clark, 2001, p. 35). Therefore, she recommends flexible, individualized approaches for tutors during tutoring sessions rather than monolithic ones. In line with this study, Bell, Arnold & Haddock (2009) found tutors use politeness strategies to shift between the collaborative role as peer and the authoritative role as tutor. Related to this shift, Soliday (1995) found that the roles shift not in a unidirectional flow from peer to teacher but instead in a bidirectional flow from peer to teacher and teacher to peer.

For this study, the role of the teacher is defined as someone who teaches ideas and concepts and has extensive and authoritative knowledge of a skill in a particular area, in this case, English. In other words when tutors adopt the teacher role, they instruct (often directly) and act as an authority figure. Of course, it is possible for tutors to

utilize non-directive methods and still be viewed as an authority figure. But in this role the tutor maintains pedagogical authority. In every observation I witnessed writing tutors teaching the students various points related to English writing. Some of these points included teaching the student how to make an outline, use transition words, write a thesis statement, and write a topic sentence. For example in observation 5 Lien explained to the students why the use of I was inappropriate in an academic essay.

Lien: *Here in the essay you use I a lot. Did you teacher talk to you about that?*

Student: *No, why.*

Lien: *Well, usually in an academic article you shouldn't be using I a lot. Instead of saying, like, "I think education is" or like... let me see...here, "I will show how" or "I will summarize" you can just write something like, "Education is" or "This essay will show" or "In summary." Does that make sense?*

Student: *yes*

Lien: *You don't need I. It will sound much more academic without I.*

As explained in the proofreader and translator section, writing tutors also instructed students on grammatical and lexical issues. In line with the tutors' error correction style, Li, Lien, Han and Anh tended to provide more directive explanations. However, within this role, the tutors who usually employ more indirect methods, Vy, Trang, Tu and Jay, also instructed the students directly on rhetorical issues. For example in tutorial 19 with an Intermediate student Vy instructs a student how to create an effective topic sentence.

Vy: *So this is your topic sentence?*

Student: *Yes*

Vy: *Well, what is this paragraph about?[Student:err,um] Your topic sentence needs to have a topic and a controlling idea. The controlling idea is what the paragraph is about. So... the topic of your essay is what?[Student:topic?] I mean, what is your main topic?*

Student: *Education*

Vy: *What is this paragraph about?*

Student: *I don't know*

Vy: *Well, look at it. What is it about? Current education? Japanese education?*

Student: *High school education*

*Vy: High school English education. Right? So now write a sentence that includes the topic and the controlling idea.*

Despite the tutors' reluctance to adopt the teacher role, as mentioned in section 5.2.4 perceived expectation to fulfill teacherly role, in every tutorial I observed, from the time the tutorial started until the end, it was the writing tutor who was in the position of power, dominating the tutorial, speaking and calling on the student to speak, just as a teacher controls the classroom. The implications of this dominance and how it relates to the tutor and student interactions will be discussed in Chapter Six. As mentioned previously in section 5.2.4 perceived expectation to fulfill a teacherly role, tutors were worried about their English ability, hence did not consider themselves teachers. During the observations, I did not witness the writing tutors struggle due to lack of knowledge about the English language. Nor did I see students' disappointment because the tutor was a nonnative speaker. From my observations, writing tutors answered questions about the English language confidently and correctly. For example in observation 23, I witnessed Lien explaining and modeling the correct way to write the past participle.

*Lien: You wrote. I was taked to the hospital.*

*Student: yes*

*Lien: Do you see something wrong with the verb?*

*Student: ahhh, no.... maybe?*

*Lien: Well some words end in past tense end with ed. Others like went end with what?*

*Student: err*

*Lien: What does went end with?*

*Student: T?*

*Lien: And some end with en*

*Student: oh*

*Lien: So taked becomes?*

*Student: taken*

*Lien: Uh huh. Great!*

Although sometimes I observed the writing tutors telling the students incorrect information, these mistakes had to do with a misunderstanding of the essay

requirements or lack of knowledge about the metalanguage employed in the English department. This topic will be discussed in more detail under the mediator section 5.4.5.

However, it should be noted that this lack of ‘mother tongue English,’ although perceived by the writing tutors and students as a challenge, brings an advantage of empathy, experience and understanding that nonnative speakers have over native English speakers. Jay explained:

*It seems I know why they made mistakes in their essay, because I am the same foreign student, studying English as a second language, so I can give more empathy.*

Besides empathy, the nonnative advantage also gives them a better understanding of how the students write English. Jay stated:

*Because I am not an English native speaker, I know the experiences that they use Japanese thinking in writing English.*

Writing tutors do not have an intuitive knowledge of English which actually gives them an advantage because they understand English grammar rules and can help students to understand them as well. Trang stated:

*English is not my mother tongue, it is my second language, and when I had the students to explain the mistake why they were wrong and why it must be this, I always tried to remember what I was taught when I learnt English before.*

#### **5.4.5 Mediator**

The writing tutor would not only take on a didactic role, but many times would be asked to help the students understand his/her teacher’s feedback or essay requirements. In that way the writing tutor became a mediator, someone who acts as an intermediary

or messenger between two sides, in this case, the student and the teacher. The term mediator is surprisingly absent in writing center literature considering “from a student’s perspective tutors merge the communities of student and institution in their simultaneous ties to both worlds” (Spigelman as cited in Parisi & Graziano-King, 2011, p. 32).

Lien described her role as a:

*Bridge between the teacher and the student to explain to them what the teacher really expects from them.*

When writing tutors were asked why students benefit from coming to writing help, Tu said:

*They benefit because they have someone to give them clear instructions. For example, if they are in class and they cannot catch the teacher’s explanation and they don’t know what their assignments are about, someone will explain to them again so they have a better explanation.*

During the 14 observations, I often observed the writing tutors helping students determine if their essay had fulfilled the teacher’s requirements. For example in tutorial 24 with Han and a Pre-Intermediate student:

Student: *Is this part okay?*

Han: *I don’t know. What do you mean, okay?*

Student: *What the teacher wants?*

Han: *Do you have information about the essay, like a reference scale?*

Student: *What?*

Han: *Show me any papers you have about this essay.*

Student: *This?*

Han: *What is this...no not this, something with numbers, things you need.*

Student: (10 seconds passes by) *This?*

Han: *Let’s see. Yes, this is a reference scale. Let me look at it. Okay, so you need a topic sentence with a topic and a controlling idea.*

Student: *Okay*

Han: *Let’s look, do you have that?*

Student: *This is the controlling idea. Is that okay?*

Han: *Yes, that looks good. Okay, you also need four supporting sentences. Do you have that?*  
Student: *Yes*

The conversation continued as Han helped the student go through the criterion reference sheet and determine if he had all the essay requirements. Other tutors also did this kind of activity in the tutorials.

Tu stated:

*When students come and bring their assignment with a rubric and requirements from the teacher, I spend time to read them and then find if the assignment matches the requirement.*

Trang also explained that often she helped the student understand the professor's instructions.

However, this role created problems because not only are the writing tutors not trained teachers, but moreover they are not the student's specific teacher responsible for assessing them. Parisi and Graziano-King (2011) stress that tutors are in the prime position to mediate the conflicts and tensions that arise for students within basic writing, provided the students and the tutors share the same understandings of good writing. It is this lack of shared understandings that created a challenge in this role that I discussed in section 5. 3.2 expectations to know the essay's requirement.

With that said, it should be noted that I also observed the writing tutors telling students' information that was in line with the essay requirements, metalanguage and correctly interpreting their teacher's feedback. For example, in observation 12, the student told Lien, *I didn't understand what my teacher said but now I do.* I wrote in my notes, "effective mediating between teacher and student." In eight observations

the students would ask the writing tutor some version of ‘*what does my teacher mean?*’ and from my evaluation the writing tutor correctly explained to the student the teacher’s intention of his/her comment. For example, in observation 7, the Intermediate student asked Jay why her teacher wrote, “unclear, provide more evidence.”

Student: *Why did my teacher write this?*

Jay: *Let’s look at it? Hmm. I guess because it isn’t clear. What education? How do you know this?*

Student: *Before education?*

Jay: *In the 1990’s?*

Student: *Yes*

Jay: *Okay, then add that the educational system from the 1990s was focused on too much what?*

Student: *achievement?*

Jay: *What do you mean?*

Student: *Too many tests*

Jay: *Okay, focused on too much test achievement not on learning. Now can you give me an example?*

Jay explained why the sentence was unclear and together they added an example and reworded the explanation. Overall, in my judgment as one of the creators of the English departments writing curriculum, on these occasions the writing tutor interpreted the teacher’s feedback and requirements correctly.

#### **5.4.6 Timekeeper**

Although on the surface the role of timekeeper seems trivial, it was an important role because it arose from a major challenge, time management, that forced the writing tutor to be a leader and manage the time of the tutorial. For this study, a timekeeper is someone who keeps track of time, and in this instance, kept track of the 30 minute tutorial. Improving writing skills requires a tremendous effort over a long period of time. However, writing center tutors need to focus on what can be done in a single 30 minute conference (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2013). The question then becomes one

of deciding what can reasonably be done in that amount of time (Harris & Silva, 1993). This is a challenge. Harris and Silva (1993) recommend tutors to confront the realities of time constraints they face in tutorials.

As mentioned in section 5.3.6 Time management, one of the reasons time management was an issue was because the tutorials were largely conducted in the students' L2. Therefore, it took writing tutors a longer time to elicit responses from the students. To meet this challenge, each writing tutor developed different strategies to be an effective timekeeper. For example, I observed in four tutorials that Jay liked to check the whole essay and address the biggest problem he found in the essay, while Lien, observed in four tutorials, asked the student which paragraph they would like to work on and only focused on that paragraph. The other writing tutors combined these two strategies. Regardless of the strategy they utilized all tutors functioned as timekeepers, keeping the pace of the tutorial and ending the session at the appropriate time.

## **5.5 Summary**

In this chapter I revisited my main research questions regarding how students and tutors perceive the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial and the major issues in the adoption of an ESL writing tutorial model for tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University. By answering these research questions I conceived a new research question: What roles do tutors adopt during EFL writing tutoring with beginner-intermediate Japanese students? Below table thirteen summarizes and connects my main findings.

**Table 13: Roles, challenges perceived by writing tutors and students, and major issues in EFL writing tutoring**

<b>Roles Adopted by Writing Tutors</b>	<b>Challenges Connected to this Role Perceived by Writing Tutors</b>	<b>Challenges Connected to this Role Perceived by Students</b>	<b>Challenges Observed during Tutorial Observations</b>
<b>Proofreader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncomfortable in their role as a proofreader.</li> <li>Unsure of how to prioritize errors in the student's paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of students expected the writing tutor to respond to most of their mistakes.</li> <li>Unsatisfied when the tutor did not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutors felt obliged to perform this role due to the expectations of the students. When performing this role tutors encountered 3 challenges, Uncertainty about the appropriate:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of errors they should respond to.</li> <li>way tutors should prioritize the mistakes in the paper.</li> <li>way in which tutors should teach grammar mistakes.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Translator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translation was perceived by some of the tutors as unethical.</li> <li>Uncomfortable in their Japanese ability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not perceived as a challenge</li> <li>When the tutorial was conducted in English, students had problems understanding the writing tutor. But students preferred that the tutorial be conducted in English.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutors appropriated the student's work.</li> <li>Even though many students did not speak English well, they wanted the tutorial conducted in English. However, sometimes this role was adopted because of the challenge of communication in English. Writing tutors did not think their Japanese was at a fluent enough level to teach difficult grammatical and lexical concepts in Japanese.</li> </ul>
<b>Coach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Felt many students were unmotivated and passive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not perceived as a challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Originally adopted because of the challenge of working with unmotivated students. Many students had passive attitudes hindering collaboration.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questioned their ability to teach English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected the writing tutor to be an English teacher and when they were not they were disappointed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main challenge of this role was that the writing tutors were not trained English teachers and were uncomfortable because they lacked confidence in their English ability.</li> </ul>
<b>Mediator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was confused by the teacher's feedback and essay requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected the tutor to understand everything in their course and when they did not they were disappointed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The writing tutor would give advice that was not in line with the:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher's requirement</li> <li>English department's metalanguage</li> <li>the teacher's feedback.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Timekeeper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes was too short to complete a tutorial in the student's second language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wanted the tutor to check everything and when they did not they were not satisfied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time was a major issue in the tutorial, because conducting tutoring in a student's second language takes a long time to elicit answers and understand concepts.</li> </ul>

It was found through data analysis that the tutor adopts a plurality of roles: proofreader, translator, coach, teacher, mediator and timekeeper. Each role is not clearly prescribed but is rather redefined and renegotiated in each interaction with the tutee during the tutorial. In the next chapter, I will conclude by discussing the implications of my findings, as well as by providing suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION**

In this final chapter, I will begin by presenting a summary of my research. I will then discuss the implications of my findings for EFL writing tutoring not only in Japan but worldwide. There will then be an analysis of the limitations of my study and finally I will conclude by suggesting potential areas for future research.

### **6.1 Summary of my research**

The purpose of this study was to enrich understanding of the problems encountered when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese university, a topic that has not been previously researched in depth. The study took place at a multicultural university in Japan hosting over 5,000 students: 3,000 domestic students from Japan and 2,500 international students from 80 different countries. In order to better understand the nature of the problems encountered, my four research questions were:

1. What do students perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?
2. What do writing tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?
3. What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level EFL students in a Japanese University?
4. What are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner- intermediate students?

RQ1 and 2 investigated the writing center from the tutors' and students' perspectives in order to add richness in detail that can inform theorizing about writing centers in Japanese contexts. RQ3 was intended to be a broader more encompassing question to elicit the overall issues and problems encountered by tutors, tutees and the administration. RQ4 was not originally conceived when I began this thesis but developed after my initial analysis because it was discovered that the writing tutors perform various roles, some of which being unique to EFL tutorials.

### **6.1.1 Data collection**

To answer my research questions I employed a mixed method approach that combined the collection of qualitative and quantitative data:

1. semi-structured interviews with writing tutors
2. tutor training workshops (a quasi-focus group)
3. observations of writing tutorials
4. questionnaires to Japanese EFL students

### **6.1.2 Analysis of my data**

Symbolic interactionism (SI) provided a framework for analyzing tutors and their practices during EFL writing tutorials. This view assumes that roles emerge from, and are significantly shaped by, interactions in specific social settings (Rees et al., 2007). Within SI, the term footing coined by Goffman (1981) provided the theoretical framework for characterizing the tutor's behavior into different roles which the writing tutor adopts based on the interaction with the individual student. Each of these six distinct roles is coupled with new challenges and responsibilities that the writing tutor must navigate.

### **6.1.3 Major Findings**

The following are the major findings of this research related to each research question.

1. What do students perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?

Overall, the students perceived the major challenge to be communication. They felt it was difficult to be understood and to understand what the writing tutor said in English, their foreign language. Despite this, however, the majority of the students wanted their tutor to conduct the tutorial in English. Other challenges arose from when their expectations were different from the services provided. Students expected the tutor to be a proofreader, an English teacher and a successful mediator for their teacher; however tutors could not always fulfill these roles in the ways students expected.

2. What do writing tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?

The writing tutors perceived many challenges based on the interactions and expectations of the students. These challenges included:

- Feeling uncomfortable being a proofreader
- Explaining difficult grammatical and lexical concepts in Japanese, their foreign language
- Wondering about the ethics of translating Japanese to English
- Motivating students
- Lack of confidence in the ability to teach English
- Confused by the teacher's feedback and essay requirements
- Trying to finish helping the student in only 30 minutes

These challenges not only represent the difficulty peers have in tutoring beginner-intermediate students in English writing, but also represent the tutors' perceptions of

the students' expectations of the writing tutorial. According to the tutors, they felt obliged to take on the proofreader role due to the expectations of the students.

3. What are the major issues experienced when tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level EFL students in a Japanese University?

Through triangulation of the observations combined with the student questionnaires, tutor interview and quasi focus groups, seven major issues were illuminated. The first two issues had to do with different expectations. Tutees expected the tutor to do grammar checks and act as teachers while tutors were uncomfortable in this role. The tutees also expected the tutor to be an effective mediator for the teacher and understand all the essay requirements. However, the tutor was not always able to function as an effective mediator. Other major issues included the appropriate way to conduct error correction, appropriation, effective use of L1, time management and teacher's misinterpretation of the writing help service.

4. What are the various roles tutors adopt during EFL tutoring sessions with Japanese beginner- intermediate students?

This question emerged from the data when it was discovered after analysis that the tutor adopts a plurality of roles: proofreader, translator, coach, teacher, mediator and timekeeper. I discerned that the tutor is not a precisely defined role, but rather a range of roles varying from proofreader to teacher, shaped and negotiated through each interaction with individual tutees.

## **6.2 Implications**

The results of this study indicate the various challenges perceived and experienced during EFL writing tutoring in Japan. Many of these issues should hardly surprise

writing center theorists. It is not surprising that the students expect the tutors to act as proofreaders and teachers. Nor is it a new discovery that tutors are not always comfortable in these roles and find them challenging. However, this research is one of the first in depth analyses of writing tutoring for beginner-intermediate EFL learners. The understandings gained from this research can serve as a basis for open discussion of the expectations and realities in the Asian setting of an EFL writing center. The findings corroborate anecdotal observations that tutors roles in EFL tutoring must be redefined to fit more appropriate contact zones. I will now discuss the implications of the six different roles the tutors adopted.

### **6.2.1 Proofreader role**

As reported throughout this study, common writing center theory warns against tutors adopting the role of a proofreader and carrying out complete error correction. However, in reality, tutors frequently adopted this role, even more so in EFL tutoring because novice learners of English lack knowledge about the grammatical and lexical aspects of the English language and thus make many mistakes. As mentioned in the literature review, there is an unresolved debate about error correction in the writing center. Some researchers advocate writing tutors to help EFL students with error correction through a directive approach while others advocate writing tutors to help EFL writers become independent self-editors through a more collaborative approach.

The tutors in this study tried both approaches, the latter usually unsuccessfully. As reported in Chapter Two, writing tutors were instructed to use a hybrid version of the ESL method and relied on the book *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* (2009) for guidance. This book, written for advanced ESL and international students immersed in a Western context, suggests that tutors teach students to become

independent self-editors and warns tutors against appropriating the students' work. Despite the training workshops, in which writing tutors were taught how to give directive explicit error correction, they were still very vigilant in noting that it was the student's paper first and foremost. They were well versed in different strategies that worked with higher level students to guard against appropriation and therefore sometimes tried to encourage the students to self-edit.

With this strategy, the tutors would focus on the student's common errors, ones that occur more than once, by first pointing out the problem, explaining why it is wrong, and then teaching the student how to fix the error. Then the second time the error was encountered, the tutor would ask the student to identify it and self-correct it, sometimes giving hints and further explanation. In this study, tutors had a challenging task teaching students to become efficient self-editors. In general, many times the error was too difficult for the student to self-correct on her own without much practice.

Another similar approach to the self-editor approach was implicit error correction. Implicit error correction is when the writing tutor underlines and circles the mistake and through indirect questioning and examples helps the student realize the error. As mentioned previously, each writing tutor had their own different style for error correction. Vy, Trang, Tu and Anh particularly did not give as many directive statements and instead would ask questions to help the student understand his/her mistake. These writing tutors would usually ask the students, "Do you know why I underlined this?" and often the student did not know. Then the writing tutor asked more questions to encourage the student to detect his/her own mistakes. What would

usually result, especially with the beginner students, was a guessing game in which at the end the student sometimes still did not seem to understand the mistake.

This research validates the argument regarding the difficulty in teaching EFL students to be independent self- editors and prompting students to complete their own error correction. It was unsuccessful for various reasons. Firstly, the writing tutor tried to elicit knowledge that the student did not have. These sort of elicitation devices did not work with beginning-intermediate students if they were not developmentally ready with enough background knowledge about the meaning and the use of language form (Minett, 2009, p. 71). In line with Harwood et al. (2012), some tutors chose direct methods for error correction because they felt indirect techniques were too challenging for the students. Another reason indirect approaches were unsuccessful was that many times the errors in the student's sentence were not amendable to a single systematic rule. Many of the errors were lexical and syntactical. As I will discuss later, when lexical errors occurred the tutors adopted the role of a translator, not a proofreader.

Finally, these approaches are very time consuming. As reported in Chapter Five, time was a major issue, especially for Vy, Trang, Tu and Anh who tried implicit error correction. It took a very long time for students to answer their questions about the mistake. As witnessed during the observations, sometimes this process would take up to 9 minutes to go over a simple verb tense mistake. At the end of the conversation, as an observer, I was still unsure if the student had understood the mistake. This is in line with research that has shown how time consuming it can be to prompt students to spot their error and self-correct it themselves (Cumming and So, 1996; Williams, 2004).

Tutors in this study, in line with Harwood et al (2012), chose to give direct corrections sometimes because there was not enough time to properly respond to indirect correction. When trying to elicit errors, too much time can be allotted for this ‘error correction’ and it takes away from the potential to learn other aspects of English writing. That is not to say that these strategies are useless. There is merit in implicit error correction with the student, as I will explain later, however, not all error correction needs to be implicit.

This research urges tutors to embrace the proofreader role. Although the research on the value of error correction has yet to be resolved, EFL research has shown that error correction can be effective for improving students’ accuracy in the long term and EFL students value receiving it (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ferris, 1999, 2004, 2006; Lee, 1997). Therefore, the writing center is the perfect setting for students to receive such error correction. Tutors must help tutees correct their errors and not be afraid to ‘proofread.’ The tutors in this study feared appropriating the student’s work. However, EFL tutors need to stop looking to the West as a model for writing centers. EFL students are different than native speakers and advanced ESL learners and, by coming to the writing center, are attempting to improve the linguistic aspects of their English production, which includes grammatical, lexical and syntactical aspects. Receiving feedback on errors is an important opportunity for these students to learn English because it raises the student’s consciousness of English grammar rules by drawing their attention to specific forms of the English language. According to Harwood et al (2021), “all proofreading feedback could be formative, presenting learners with an opportunity to reflect” (p. 577). Although I am arguing for direct feedback, it should

be noted that strategies should be adopted to impart learning through feedback, whether it is direct or indirect.

### **6.2.2 Translator**

The lack of the students' lexical facility and ability to express themselves in English were common issues identified by both students and tutors. This is no surprise since the students are only beginning to learn English and lack the productive language ability they have in their L1. Because of this, many beginner and intermediate students wrote their essays in their first language, Japanese, and then translated them into English, word by word or sometimes using web tools such as Google Translate. This method created many lexical issues and syntactical issues in their papers.

The literature for dealing with lexical issues suggests helping the L2 writer reformulate and revise their sentence to make it more grammatical, idiomatic and native sounding (Severino, 2009). Myers (2003) encourages tutors to provide explicit alternative language by saying, “‘Another way to say that...’, ‘One way of putting it is...’; ‘Some other phrases you can use are...’” (Myers, 2003, p. 65). Minett (2009) urges tutors to utilize a strategy from second language research called ‘focus on form’ where the tutor draws attention to the problematic linguistic feature in the student’s writing through communicative activities. In other words, the tutor helps the writer extract the correct English form (Doughty as cited in Minett, 2009, p. 71). One way of doing this is to repeat the unclear sentence back to the writer but with the mistake corrected. According to her, this might be enough to help the writer notice the problem and fix it by him/herself. If this does not work, then the tutor can offer more suggestions until it is clear what the writer wants to express.

These strategies are effective, however, this advice is aimed at advanced English learners and ESL college writers. Many times the tutors in this study did not know how to help the students clarify their intended meaning because they did not understand what the student had written to begin with. Therefore, the tutor could not repeat the sentence back to the tutor with the mistake corrected, nor could they always offer suggestions. In these instances tutors would use their Japanese ability to ask the students to clarify their meaning and to help them articulate their sentences and to put them into correct English. This is another productive way the tutors alternated between English and Japanese. The benefit of using the student's L1 to explain grammar and for error correction has been previously reported on and recommended (Atkinson, 1987; Atkinson; 1993; Aurbach, 1993; Brown, 2001; Ming-chu & Hung-chun, 2009). However, to my knowledge this use of the student's L1, to facilitate reformulation, has not been previously researched.

This role as translator highlights many issues regarding the ethics of the writing center. EFL and ESL writers need feedback on their sentences but it is not necessarily the tutor's job to directly translate those sentences. Naturally, many tutors in this study objected to this because they felt it is important for the EFL writer to maintain authorship. I argue that the tutor can still help the student reformulate the sentence without taking over his/her work. The tutors are not only writing tutors but also have a responsibility to be language informants. By helping the student negotiate the sentence they are facilitating learning and helping the student become a better writer (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990). As Minett (2009) points out, if the tutor offers choices in how to revise the sentence, ultimately it is still the writer's choice to choose which word he/she wants to convey in his/her message. With that said, helping a novice writer, the tutor has much more power to influence the final sentence

simply because the student does not have the productive English skills to effectively choose what they want to say. Therefore, writing center literature should reevaluate the importance of eliciting, modeling and offering suggestions with EFL learners, “but with a heightened sensitivity to when to provide models for imitation, and when to nudge students toward agency in their own inventive processes” (Corbett, 2008, para.9). According to Corbett (2008) “Tutor coaches (be they directors, or more experienced co-workers) can offer suggestions—or models, or examples—of when it might be more or less appropriate to be more or less directive or nondirective” (para. 11). However, more research needs to be conducted on when it is appropriate and when is it less appropriate to offer lexical suggestions and translations, especially for EFL learners.

### **6.2.3 Coach**

Tutors performed this role in order to motivate the students. According to the tutors, many students came to the writing help service because it was required by their teacher and hence maintained passive attitudes towards learning. Their tutors’ expectations can also be attributed to their passive attitudes. Williams & Severino (2004) found that L2 students who come to the writing center expect their tutors to assume authoritative roles and to simply provide them information to improve their paper through direct instruction. Therefore, the challenge was trying to not only motivate the students but to involve them in the tutorial.

Overall, the findings from this study are in line with other studies that have shown the benefits of tutees working with a more knowledgeable and competent peer in a supportive coaching role (Beasley, 1997; Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2006; Topping, 1996). For some tutees, the tutor became that student’s personal academic coach, providing him/her individualized attention and goal setting that addressed their needs.

As a result, this helped improve the student's motivation, autonomous learning skills and subsequently their English performance as it did in the two cases reported in Chapter Five. Overall, it is suggested that personal academic coaching conducted by students' peers is a cost effective way of providing support to students while enhancing English learning.

#### **6.2.4 Teacher**

The didactic role performed by tutors confirms the more recent research mentioned in the literature review that advocates tutors take a more directive approach when tutoring L2 students (Blau & Hall, 2002; Linville, 2009; Minett, 2009; Powers, 1993; Thonus, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002; Williams, 2004; Williams, & Severino 2004). Although the tutors stated in the pre- and post-semester interviews that the role of a teacher should be avoided, in practice, they adopted this role many times. When tutors did try to relinquish authority and try to create collaborative tutorials where power was equally distributed among the tutees and tutors, such as Vy, Trang, Tu and Anh attempted, it was unsuccessful. This study conflicts with Woodward –Kron and Jamieson's study (2007) that found the tutoring dynamic is not always one-way or top down and that changes to the tutee's draft were negotiated due to a challenge or request by the writer, probably because this study was conducted with native speaker tutees that had more know how to negotiate. Therefore, this study confirms Vallejo's (2004) findings in his study of six nonnative English speakers participating in writing center conferences throughout one semester at a large Midwestern University. His study showed that, although the tutors used a combination of strategies within the collaborative approach, these strategies were largely inefficient in engaging L2 writers in writing center conferencing.

Therefore, the results of this study are in line with other studies (Matsuda, 1999; Myers; 2003; Thonus, 2004; Vallejo, 2004; Yasuda, 2006) and recommends that the writing tutor be more directive and surrender the purely collaborative approach where tutors use the Socratic method to only prompt and elicit rather than suggest. Rather, the tutor should use a directive stance within a collaborative framework and be comfortable in their role as a teacher. As mentioned in the proofreader section, the tutor should embrace the role of language informant as well as writing instructor helping tutees learn English. Just as a teacher in a foreign language class would do, at the beginning of a learning cycle, it is important for the tutor to adopt a highly directive stance (Yasuda, 2006). Given the context of this study, the language informant seems to be the most feasible when working with beginner level Asian students.

One reason tutors lacked confidence to embrace the teacher role was because they questioned their own English ability. Despite excellent grades and high English proficiency scores, they believed they were deficient because they were not native speakers. With the advent of World Englishes, nonnative English teachers are gaining agency, and the world of English language teaching is moving towards a perspective that is more inclusive (Holliday, 2005). Moreover, “the outer and expanding circles are quite central to the currency of English today, recasting claims of ownership and reconfiguring relationships between varieties” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 23). Nevertheless, tutors in this program adhered to the inner circle perspective where language norms and professional expertise come for the center, ‘native’ English speakers. This was exacerbated by receiving complaints from students who wanted them to be native English speakers.

However, one unique point that emerged from the data was the potential benefits that L2 tutors can bring to such sessions through having empathy for the tutee and explicit grammar knowledge. L2 tutors have a greater understanding of the struggles EFL tutees face when writing in a foreign language. This is in contrast to the students' English teachers who, as mentioned previously, are almost all native English speakers. This empathy leads not only to a better understanding of the EFL students' difficulties of writing in English but also leads to a greater understanding of how their L2 affects their English writing and the nature of the strengths and weaknesses of the writer. Furthermore, because of this empathy, they can provide appropriate feedback (Nakamaru, 2010b, p.110). It is recommended that administrators highlight this point to tutors so as to diminish the L2 English tutors' lack of confidence.

#### **6.2.5 Mediator**

Another important role that the tutors enacted was the role of a mediator, between the student and the teacher. The role of mediator connects with the role Blau et al. (2002) conceptualized titled, "cultural counselors" and Harwood et al. (2012) found titled "helper." The tutors in these studies (one conducted with writing center tutors and the latter with proofreaders) found themselves mediating between the teacher and the student because the student viewed them as a less threatening but informed person who they expected to teach them about their lecturer's expectations.

Unfortunately, due to lack of knowledge about the assignment and the English Department's metalanguage, the tutor was not always equipped to mediate effectively. Harwood et al (2012) recommends the tutors to refer the tutees back to lecturer so that the tutors do not second guess what the lecturer's requirements are. This role highlights an interesting point as to whether the tutor needs to be aware of the specific requirements of an

essay to help the EFL tutee. I argue that it would greatly enhance the tutoring service if they were. These essays are assigned by English language teachers and are therefore more prescriptive with specific requirements and evaluation rubrics. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for EFL students encourages English teachers to create specific requirements for every writing assignment and employ detailed criteria-referenced scales (Hyland 2006).

### **6.2.6 Time keeper**

Although seemingly a trivial role, the role of timekeeper was significant to this study. Although most tutoring sessions were held in a mixture of both English and Japanese, English was the language predominantly spoken. If tutoring sessions are to be held in the student's second language then extra time allotment needs to be considered. Processing and negotiating in a second language for novice learners takes a considerably longer time (Cummming & So, 1996; Williams, 2004). Unfortunately, time was not the main focus of this study, therefore I did not obtain precise data on how long it took tutors to explain a particular grammatical aspect. More research needs to be conducted in this area.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

This research has shown that there are many challenges in EFL tutoring and many of those challenges are context specific. Therefore, it is hard to make recommendations for general EFL tutoring. With that said, there are some general recommendations and best practices that can be concluded from this study.

### **6.4.1 Implications for practice**

This study suggests that EFL writing tutors should not avoid teaching and helping students with error correction and reformulating sentences. They should think of it as

language instruction rather than proofreading (Nakamaru, 2010a). When helping students correct errors, prompting and eliciting can be efficient, however, the tutor should not be afraid to explain the error directly.

The following are the dilemmas tutors in this study experienced:

- What approach should tutors adopt towards grammar mistakes?
- How many errors are appropriate for the tutor to respond to?
- How should tutors respond to lexical mistakes?

Each one will be addressed below.

#### ***6.4.1.1 What approach should tutors adopt towards grammar mistakes?***

I have advocated a directive approach but what does that entail? From my own study I suggest two types of directive feedback, both of which I believed to be effective in the observations of tutorials. One is negotiated with the student and the other is quick and explicit. The first approach can be done in three phases, problem identification, problem negotiation, problem resolution (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Other researchers call these phases orientation, solution, and connection (Greenleaf and Freedman, 1993). Despite the different labels, the stages are the same and consist of “(a) the identification of a specific topical problem, (b) negotiation about the nature or qualities of the problem, then (c) resolution of the problem-consisting in sequences of brief exchanges of variable durations between tutors and students” (Cumming & So, 1996, p. 207).

For example, in tutorial observation six, Tu noticed the following sentence in the student’s paper (see appendix 4 for the entire writing sample), “How cell phones help

our life?” She asked the student, “Do you see something missing?” The student looked back at her blankly. She explained it was missing the verb. This was phase one, problem identification. The student still did not understand what she was referring to. Next she negotiated the problem with the student by providing different examples of using “how” in the question form, such as how is, and how does. She asked the student for other examples. This was the problem negotiation phase. Finally, for the last phase, the resolution phase, she asked him, “how cell phones help our life?” and the student answered, “how *DO* cell phones help our life?”

This style of directive error correction is seen as a middle ground between the Socratic method where tutors only prompt and elicit, and directly telling the student the mistake. However, as mentioned before, sometimes too much negotiation results in unproductive discourse. In each situation the tutor needs to consider whether immediate corrections or eliciting from the student may be more expedient or effective from the perspective of student learning. As shown in this study, tutors should not try to elicit knowledge that the student does not have. This can turn into a guessing game that is unproductive. It is recommended for tutors to give explicit error correction for errors that do not offer the opportunity for significant learning but instead may lead to spending time in unproductive discourse. Merrill, Reiser, Merrill, and Landes (1995) call these “low-learning consequence errors.” Tutors need to decipher if the error is a low learning consequence error. On the other hand, if the error is deemed beneficial for the student to learn, and if the tutor judges the student is ready to learn, then the tutor should explain the problem and let the student plan how to fix it. However, in reality it is difficult for tutors to quickly decipher which error has low-learning and beneficial-learning consequences. Therefore, if the tutor tries

implicit error correction and if it is not working the tutor should not be afraid to offer explicit instruction.

Not all implicit error correction is ineffective; in fact, one benefit of one-on-one error correction is that the tutor provides the context that facilitates the student's self-error correction. However, sometimes it is too difficult for the student to self-correct; hence the tutors should use a mixture of both implicit and explicit error correction. As shown in this study, the student must be developmentally ready to learn how to self-correct. He/she is only developmentally ready if he/she has enough background knowledge about the meaning and the use of language form (Minett, 2009). For novice English learners only some of their errors are possible for them to self-correct, as in the capitalization of proper nouns I referred to in Chapter Four. Moreover, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) recommend only offering help as long as it is needed. The writing tutor should withdraw help as soon as the writer is showing signs of self-control and the ability to do it on their own. Once more, for novice English learners, this self-control might not be exhibited in a 30 minute tutorial session. It is evident that more research needs to be carried out on whether it is more successful for second language learning to do quick corrections or patiently allow the students to negotiate the nature of their error.

#### ***6.4.1.2 How many errors are appropriate for the tutor to respond to?***

Should the tutor respond to every mistake, and should equal attention be given to every mistake? Vy experienced this dilemma when working with students in the Elementary course. He stated,

*For example, if I am helping a student in the beginner class, should I only respond to some of the mistakes because the student hasn't learnt the other mistakes?*

As reported in Chapter Three, many L2 writing specialists agree that error correction should focus on the most frequent, serious, and treatable errors (Ferris, 1995; Harris & Silva, 1993; Linville, 2009). However, this process is in line with teaching the student to become a proficient self-editor which I have shown to not be successful with novice EFL learners. I have already put forth my opinion that this is too ambitious to try with novice English learners. Tutors had trouble deciphering the mistakes as frequent, serious and treatable, because often the paper contained numerous errors many of which were grammatical but also lexical and syntactical (see appendix 3, 4, 5 for an example of a student paper with many lexical and syntactical errors). This strategy is from the ESL research and is not effective for EFL tutoring at low levels.

Therefore a suggested answer to this question is that the writing tutors should respond to as many errors as possible in the time allotted. Obviously, if it is a beginner student, his/her paper does not have to be 100% error free. Merrill, Reiser, Merrill, & Landes (1995) recommend tutors to respond to the errors that provide the most learning opportunities; however, in reality it is difficult for peer tutors to decipher this. Therefore, I recommend responding to as many errors as time allows. Obviously the errors that impede meaning are the most obvious and important to respond to first.

#### ***6.4.1.3 How to respond to lexical and syntactical errors***

When sentences are incomprehensible, tutors should help students reformulate them using their L1 if necessary. Tutors must guard against appropriating the student's

work but should not be afraid of making suggestions for more appropriate words and helping the student re-formulate the sentence in order to make it clearer.

The following is the procedure many of the tutors enacted when they encountered sentences and paragraphs that were incomprehensible. This procedure proved to be rather successful.

1. Identify the sentence that is incomprehensible;
2. Ask the student what they are trying to say in English;
3. If it is still unclear what the student wants to say, ask the student what he/she is trying to say in his/her L1, in this case Japanese;
4. Work together, alternating between the student's L1 and L2, with the EFL writer to negotiate the intended meaning and clarify what the writer wants to say.

Number four proves rather difficult because the tutor must be careful not to merely translate the sentence but instead negotiate it with the student. I recommend helping the student clarify their meaning using the students' L1 and L2 as it will help to confirm the student's intended message. Then together, the student and tutor can try to negotiate the intended meaning of the sentence. The ways the tutor can do this are by eliciting answers, modeling and suggesting appropriate words to negotiate what is written.

Here is an example of an actual case that seems to illustrate a successful negotiation of meaning to clarify the recommended procedures. A student wrote in her essay "Travel in foreign land, you will that you have never been provided a textbook." Upon encountering this sentence the writing tutor asked the student to read the

sentence again and to clarify what she was trying to say. This might be enough to help the writer notice what is wrong with this sentence and thus revise it. In this case it was not. Therefore, the tutor followed up by asking the student in Japanese what she was trying to say. The student explained in Japanese that she wanted to say, “When you travel abroad you learn many new things which you can’t learn from a textbook.” Next, the tutor chose specific words in Japanese and asked her what they were in English. She asked, “Kaigai no ryoku, eigo de wa nan des ka? (What is travel abroad in English?)” The student did not know so the tutor told her, “study abroad.” Alternatively, they could have looked the word up in the dictionary, but in the interest of time (there was not much left in the tutorial) the tutor decided to tell her the word directly instead.

Through answering and asking questions together they constructed the simple sentence, “When you travel aboard you learn many new things.” To help the student write the second part of the sentence, the tutor pointed out, “you can learn” and asked the student in Japanese what is the opposite of “you can learn.” In this case the student answered, “can’t learn.” The tutor explained in Japanese that because the word “you” is used in the first part of the sentence the student needs to write, “you can’t learn.” Next, the tutor modeled different prepositions that go with learn. The tutor asked, “You learn \_\_\_\_\_ a teacher? (in English) What proposition do you use? (in Japanese) By? At? From? (in English)? ” The student didn’t know so the tutor taught her the correct preposition. Finally, the tutor asked the student to put the whole sentence together. She wrote, “When you travel abroad you learn many new things, you can’t learn from a textbook.” The tutor pointed to the middle of the sentence and asked in Japanese what was missing. The student was able to understand that she was

missing the word “which” and wrote it into the sentence. As you can see, Japanese was successfully employed to help the student understand how to formulate the sentence. This was a successful negotiation of meaning.

#### **6.4.2 Recommendations for administrators**

This study suggests hiring writing tutors that are fluent in the EFL students’ L1. This will greatly facilitate tutorials and give the tutors and students a chance to alternate between languages if need be. Administrators should encourage writing tutors not to be afraid to take a didactic role and explicitly explain English grammatical and lexical concepts. The tutors should be comfortable in the role of an authority figure. It is recommended for administrators to create many role-play scenarios, such as teaching essay structure or error correction, where tutors have many opportunities to practice how to be more directive while still promoting student learning. Also, administrators need to think about how much time to allow, especially if tutoring is taking place in the student’s second language. As shown in my study, 30 minutes was not long enough for an intermediate student who wants help with a two page essay. However, 30 minutes did seem adequate for the students working only on one paragraph. Therefore, recommended time would be 45 minutes to an hour for an intermediate student working on a five paragraph essay and 30 minutes for a beginner working on a paragraph.

Yasuda (2006) suggests that the writing centers take a key role in making campus-wide writing curriculum work and should act as a liaison not only between writing instructors and subject teachers but also between teachers and students (p. 6). From this study it was shown that the writing tutors are in an excellent position to act as this liaison, however, they need to be properly trained to be able to take this role. Training

sessions should address English essay requirements so that the writing tutor is comfortable giving the students advice on their paper that is consistent with the teacher's requirement. In line with this idea, administrators should also give tutors access to the metalanguage that is utilized by the writing program at the university to ensure tutors are utilizing the terms consistently throughout the curriculum.

Overall, it is useful for administrators in non-Western environments to be mindful of the challenges tutors and students perceive so that the writing center can meet the specific needs and characteristics of the tutees. It is my hope that this study can help educators become more attuned to the tutees' specific local contexts.

### **6.5 Limitations**

There are several limitations to this study, most of which are issues with the survey that was conducted. For example, one limitation was the sample size being of only 24 students participated in the survey. I foresaw this problem when I conducted the pilot and therefore took steps to entice students to participate in the survey, such as a candy bar reward and an easy access email link to carry out the survey. However, I was still only able to attract 24 students to participate. It would have been interesting to see the results of the survey with a larger respondent size.

Another issue with the sample is that the characteristics of the students who participated in survey are not known. Were these conscientious students that came to the Writing Center on their own accord or were these students who were ordered by their teacher to come? If most of the 24 students are of the first type, being conscientious students who would take the extra time to fill out a survey in order to help improve the SALC's service, then their needs and expectations might be

different than those who are required to attend by their teacher. I could have controlled for this by simply asking why they attended the writing center tutorial. Asking more questions about their motivation to come to writing help would have provided more insight into student motivation. As mentioned in Chapter Five, tutors perceived students to be unmotivated and as a result very passive during the tutorial. More questions concerning this point would have provided the student's perspective on their perceived passiveness and lack of motivation.

Another student characteristic I did not attain in the survey data was the students' English level. The students were in Elementary, Pre-Intermediate or Intermediate English. However, it would have been interesting to separate the data based on the three levels and see if there are any major differences between the elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate students' responses. Finally, an interesting result of the survey was that 19 of the students did not want the tutor to speak Japanese. But why? A follow up question about whether they wanted the tutorial to be entirely conducted in English and why would have given a better understanding.

Another limitation with respect to data, was that data collection was conducted at only one place, the writing center at IU, an international university within Japan. What would the results have been at another university, perhaps one where English is not so prevalent? Interviewing tutors and conducting the survey at other writing centers at other universities would have strengthened the research. However, in response to this limitation, this study, like other interpretivist studies, aims not to generalize but rather it examines the experiences of writing center tutors and tutees in a Japanese environment at IU in order to examine the nature and challenges of an Asian writing

center. It is my hope that this exploratory study will contribute to a growing body of work that is beginning to be produced on writing centers in international contexts.

Another limitation of this study does not pertain to the data collection as much as it does to the researcher. Consequently, this thesis is limited to the extent that it reflects the subjectivity of someone who administers the writing center. Many of the insights generated here have resulted from my own observations. Although I tried to guard against my own biases and knowledge of writing center theory, I am only human. I know someone else, who was not well versed in this area, might have been able to bring fresh insights to the challenges of EFL writing tutoring. Furthermore, the writing tutors that were interviewed are my employees. This might have affected their responses during the interviews and therefore the interview data. With that said, my role as the researcher brings an added depth to this study because I know the culture of this context well and I have built up trust with the tutor participants. As reported in Chapter Four, my extensive experience coordinating the SALC, and the positive rapport I have built with the tutors, represent a prolonged engagement in the field, one of the validation strategies of qualitative research employed by Creswell and Miller (2000).

## **6.6 Further research**

By re-conceptualizing the challenges that EFL writing tutors and students experience, I have proposed various roles that tutors adopt during tutorial sessions. These results have several implications for future research. This section will detail recommendations for research in the following areas: 1) EFL writing tutoring at other universities, 2) Error correction and translation and 3) L1 and L2 usage during the

tutorial.

The most obvious need for future research is in theorizing more about the roles the tutors adopted in EFL writing tutoring; further inquiry and refining needs to be done. As mentioned in the limitation section, two weaknesses of this study are that the sample size was small and that data on the students' characteristics was not collected. Moreover, the data from this study is from only one case and more research with larger sample sizes are needed to support or reject the claims made here.

The tutors' reluctance to proofread and translate highlights the need for more research on the appropriate way to provide help with grammatical and lexical errors. For example, it is argued that tutors should respond to errors to provide learning opportunities but how do tutors, and students themselves, decide which errors provide learning opportunities? Furthermore, it is argued that the EFL writing tutor be directive when giving writing advice but still maintain the writer's authorship. The question remains as to how the writing tutors can avoid appropriation if they are direct? In addition, tutors reported to being uncomfortable when asked to translate sentences. Is this role ethical? Finally, more data needs to be gathered to determine whether it is more successful for second language learning to do quick corrections or patiently allow the students to negotiate the nature of their error. In particular, a longitudinal error correction study should be conducted to examine the effect of directive error correction on students' revising strategies over time.

The second area of EFL writing tutoring which could be enhanced with more research are the effects of conducting the tutorial in the student's L1, L2 or by alternating

between both languages. What would have the results of this study been if the tutorials were conducted entirely in Japanese? There is yet to be a study in how tutors alternate between the two languages and how that can be effective for tutoring writing and also language learning. Data needs to be gathered to describe how conducting the tutorial in the students' L1, L2, or alternating between both, affects the revision process during the tutorial. Is one better than the other? Does the language the tutorial is conducted in affect students' essays and their long-term performance in writing and revising texts independently? In addition, more research should be conducted on the writer's language preference for the tutorial.

## **6.7 Contribution to knowledge**

Nakamaru (2010a) urges writing center professionals in local contexts to begin producing more local studies in order to share new knowledge in the local contexts which can contribute to writing center literature. Thus, this study is one of these localized studies that will contribute to educational knowledge and practice in many ways. Below I highlight three specific contributions.

### **6.7.1 Contributions to research on Asian writing centers**

Writing Centers outside of North American contexts did not begin to appear until the 1990s and 2000s in Europe and Asia. This paper investigates writing centers in an Asian context providing a different perspective than most literature which comes from North America. As reported throughout this study, very limited research has been conducted on Asian writing centers, let alone in Japan. The published material that does exist consists of 'how to guides' that explain the operation and configuration of their writing centers, not qualitative research studies (Johnston, 2009; Johnston, et al., 2008; Johnston et al., 2010; Turner, 2006; Yasuda, 2006).

Thus, this exploratory study represents one of the first studies done on the writing center model in Japan. In this study, I have analyzed the major issue and challenges facing EFL writing centers in an Asian setting. As a result, my findings contribute empirical data and thus knowledge regarding the complex nature of conducting writing center tutorials in an Asian setting. In particular, the findings highlight not only the challenges writing tutors and students perceive, but also the major issues they faced. The results of the present study help countries outside Japan, especially other Asian countries, such as China, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Korea as they set up writing centers and create writing center policies.

### **6.7.2 Contributions to use of EFL tutoring**

Not only is this study important because it is one of the first studies to take place in an Asian setting, it is also one of the first studies to take place in an L2 context, with EFL learners. Furthermore, it examines the challenges writing centers face in the advent of the international proliferation of the writing center. This knowledge is grounded in qualitative data regarding the major issues EFL writing centers face. It therefore adds deeper understanding to how administrators and writing tutors can better conduct writing center tutorials with EFL students. It provides a new perspective that suggests the ESL writing tutorial model needs to be expanded or revised to account for working with beginner-intermediate EFL students in an L2 environment. EFL tutors need to translate, mediate and proofread. The roles put forth encompass a different way for tutors to think about effective tutoring in an EFL setting with beginning students. Furthermore, my findings not only identify what the challenges are that

tutors and students perceive but also theorize the different roles tutors play which contributes to implications for practice.

### **6.7.3 Contributions to theoretical knowledge on writing centers**

On the level of theoretical framework, using symbolic interactionism to analyze the data provided a new original way of looking at writing center roles. In writing center literature, the only study to my knowledge that also uses symbolic interactionism as a framework for analysis is Brown's (2010). I utilized symbolic interactionism as a lens to view intercommunication between the tutors and tutees on a micro level and to account for the different roles tutors performed during tutorials based on these interactions. From this framework emerged original roles. By adding new roles, such as translator and mediator as potential roles writing center tutors perform in EFL settings, I am contributing to the theorizing of tutor roles.

### **6.8 Conclusion**

This study highlights important issues other non-Western writing centers need to consider. It was found that the writing tutors adopt the following roles: proofreader, translator, coach, teacher, mediator and timekeeper based on their interactions with the individual student. I hope that my analysis was able to highlight new discussion on the challenges and issues that these tutors, administrators and students face in EFL tutoring. The research is related to findings at my specific university, a unique WC in an individual context and with a small number of participants. It is not meant to be generalized but it is my hope that this study contributes to the scarce research on EFL tutoring and Asian writing centers and suggests possible outcomes for theorizing about EFL writing tutoring.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Goals for the IU English program**

English program aims to develop individuals who are able to:

- Express their ideas and opinions clearly, confidently, and accurately in speech and in writing;
- Use English to develop their individual interests, to travel for work or pleasure, and to improve their understanding and enjoyment of other cultures;
- Use English to coordinate and/or work with others, especially as members of intercultural teams in which different varieties of English are used;
- Use English in academic and professional contexts to negotiate, to solve problems and to critically evaluate the ideas and opinions of others;
- Develop as autonomous learners who can continue to improve their English language knowledge and skills throughout their lives.

## **Appendix 2: Goals of the standard track**

The Standard Track aims to raise students' general proficiency in English, so that they may communicate with confidence in a range of real-world contexts, such as interacting with faculty, staff and students on campus, traveling for work or pleasure, or using English for daily communication and transactions in the workplace. More specifically, the Standard Track aims to cultivate students who are able to use English to:

- Communicate with confidence;
- Communicate reasonably accurately and fluently in speech and in writing;
- Communicate in a variety of social and intercultural contexts;
- Complete general listening, reading, writing and speaking tasks as required within or outside of class (i.e. on campus) and as might be required later in their workplaces;
- Begin to think critically about what they read and hear in English.

### **Appendix 3: Elementary sample**

When I was first year student in high school,I liked study to geoglogy.It is because it was very interesting for me to look over other countries to use an atlas.

I disliked study English because I was very weak in grammar.Therefore I did not study English in my high school life.

I liked go to dancing with my friend when I was second year student in high school.Therefore I like hip hop. However, I disliked leave the house.It is because I was a lazy.

When I was third year student in high school,I did study hard for an entrance examination.As a result,I realized one's dream what I want enter IU.

However I did not go to club activity.It is because I felt awkward in club room.

I did volunteer to clean our town once a year.It is refreshing our town and ourselves.

I did not go to a cram.Therefore at one time my record was bad.

(157 words)

#### **Appendix 4: Pre-Intermediate sample**

### **How cell phones help our life**

Most of Japanese people have cell phones. Japanese cell phone penetration rate is 93.3%. <http://www.garbagenews.net/archives/1869880.html> How cell phones help our life? Firstly, Cell phones can contact the other partner. By the fact that Japanese people have celled phones can send e-mail and call with family and friends regardless of location. Secondly, Cell phones have various applications. For example, watch TV, take a picture and listen to music. Cell phones can be watched TV, Japanese people can be watched TV outside. Cell phones camera is high quality; Cell phones camera has 12 million pixels. However, digital camera quality better than cell phone. Cell phones can download music. For example, “i phone” have the ability of “the i Pod” and can download music and movie at “i Tunes”. Also, Japanese people are needed not to have the audio players. Thirdly, Cell phones can be used Internet. For example, use twitter, facebook and read blog. Also, Japanese people can write new information quickly. For example, “what happen?” and “Do you think now?” Also, Cell phones equal small PC. Finally, Cell phones can link people to people must need item.

(Word count 195)

## **Appendix 5: Intermediate sample**

### **Education**

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.” This is the proverb which Oscar Wilde once said. In other word, people who are studying in school cannot be taught valuable knowledge necessarily. When I read this proverb for the first time, I thought this proverb has important meaning that it is needed when thinking about Education for young people. This paper is a discussion that compared to the past and now, how to change the Japanese teaching system. This paper finishes with a conclusion that the things young people should learn for future development. The purpose of this paper is to investigate what important education for the future.

Now, we can study many useful subjects for future in elementary or junior high school compared with past. Especially in university, we can choose various subjects that we want to learn. And it is very important thing. Many people think that it is more free for us to select subjects compared with past. Actually in old Japan, people who attended the school cannot choose the subjects which they really want to choose. Because due to the war, they were only allowed to study a certain subjects. Especially we have to take a class that to strengthen patriotic. All the student can use the same textbooks and language in the same way, This old education system in Japan can sometimes limit students` idea growth. In my case, if I could not study English, my motivation for study would stopped. Because I cannot study the things that I really want to study. Although I cannot say the old Japanese education system is completely bad, I believe it is more important to select the subject by ourselves freely than previous one. For instance, each person take the different subjects. This allow them to grew up their creativity and personality. As demonstrated by these examples, it is

clear that the education system changed compared with past and the education system today is more better than past one.

To sum up, it can be said that among we can choose subjects freely, people have different opinion about young people should learn in school. We can choose any subjects that we want to learn, and even if unable to select we can study in various field now. Although the old education system limited students idea growth The new education system allow young people to grew up their creativity and personality. It will be interesting to see how education system changes over the next several decades, especially because of Japan has been globalized. This movement in several countries will cause some change in education. In order to accommodate the new change, country should change the education system or style adapted to their age.

## **Appendix 6: Writing help procedures**

This year we (teachers, SALC staff, Academic Office) are encouraging students to come to the SALC to sign up for a 30 minute time slot to meet the writing tutor for writing. Therefore, the first thing you should do when you arrive is check who has signed up to meet you. Although the students are responsible for bringing the assignment details, many do not. Check the level's folder, Student Writing Resource, and Teacher Writing Resource.

### **What should you do when a student comes to you and wants help with writing?**

#### **Fill out the writing help record sheet**

##### **1. Make a plan with the student**

- Set goals for the session.
- Explain how you will spend the next 20 minutes.
- Ask, "What concerns do you have, or what do you want me to pay attention to?"

##### **2. Talk before reading the text**

- Ask about the assignment.
- Ask about their writing process.
- If possible look at the assignment.
- Ask what they chose to write about.

##### **3. Read the whole text first**

- Read through the whole text to get the overall impression. If the text is very long, ask the student which part they want help with.

##### **4. Give the student a task while you are reading the paper**

- Ask the student to fill out the writing help record sheet.

- Ask the student to think about why you underlined/circled certain parts.

**5. Address higher order concerns first**

- Look at organization.
- Look at thesis and evidence.

**6. Choose different paragraphs to work on**

- If some of the paragraphs don't work with the overall theme of the essay work on those paragraphs first.

**7. Address expressed needs**

- Work on what the student wants to work on.

**8. Always avoid appropriation**

- Accord the ESL writer authority.
- Point out mistakes and ask, "What is wrong?"
- Work together with students to change the wording of sentences.
- Do not change sentences on your own.

**9. Tell, show and model**

- When a student does not understand their mistakes explain to them what the mistake is.
- Show them the mistake.
- Model how to fix it.
- Let them try by themselves.

**10. Use speaking-into-writing strategies.**

- When a student is missing a lot of key information, ask the student for more information.
- Say, "Tell me more".

- Be the student's scribe as they talk to you.

**11. Ask students to participate in reformulation of decisions.**

- Don't change anything without asking.
- Don't change anything by yourself.

**12. Speak Japanese**

- When the student doesn't understand or you are discussing a difficult grammar point speak Japanese. If you think the student prefers that you speak English, ask if it is okay to speak Japanese.

**13. Let the student speak Japanese**

- When you reformulate sentences with the student, ask the student what they are trying to say in Japanese.
- Encourage the student to ask you questions in Japanese if they are unsure about something.

**14. Point out common errors.**

- Find the common errors they are making and point them out.

**15. Be Direct**

- Sometimes the students don't understand their mistake. At that time, please tell them the mistake. You can correct some of their errors.

**16. End by making a plan with the student with what they need to work on next.**

- Ask the student what they will work on next.
- Advise the student.

**17. Don't work with the same student for more than 30 minutes.**

- If there are a lot of people try to work with the student for a short time, advising them what to do next.

**18. Once you finish remind students that you are only a writing tutor.**

- Explain that you are just a writing tutor, not the teacher grading the paper and you don't know exactly what has been taught in class
- Remind them to review their notes and ask their teacher if they want to make sure if their paper is in the correct format

	When	How	Language	Focus of tutorial	Role of the PA	
ELE	All parts of the writing process including brainstorming and various drafts.	-The student fills out The Writing Help Record circling what he/she wants to work on. -P.As check what they worked on with The student and write a recommendation.	Can speak Japanese/L1 or English and P.A asks the student which language they prefer to have the session in.	Grammar point that the writing assignment is focusing on and if possible the previous grammar points taught in class + subject-verb agreement. <b>The P.A should not correct all the grammar mistakes.</b> For the second quarter, structure and format of a paragraph (margins, indentions, capitalization, topic sentence)	Work together with the student to correct his/her essay using the rubric. If the student does not understand the error through indirect correction	I.e. "Do you notice this mistake?" the P.A can explicitly tell the student some of his/her mistakes related to the rubric/assignment and work together with the student to change them and identify other similar mistakes.
PE	All parts of the writing process including brainstorming and various drafts.	-The student fills out The Writing Help Record circling what he/she wants to work on. -P.As check what they worked on with The student and write a recommendation.	Can speak Japanese/L1 if the student does not understand.	Structure of a paragraph-topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence. Overall clarity. Grammar. <b>The P.A should not correct all the grammar mistakes.</b>	Work together with the student to correct his/her essay using the rubric. If the student does not understand the error through indirect correction	I.e. "Do you notice this mistake?" the P.A can explicitly tell the student some of his/her mistakes and work together with the student to change them and identify other similar mistakes.
IE	All parts of the writing process including brainstorming and various drafts.	-The student fills out the Writing Help Record circling what he/she wants to work on. -P.As check what they worked on with the student and write a recommendation. -Students write down the new vocabulary words they learned	Can speak Japanese/L1 if the student does not understand.	Structure of the essay, organization, thesis, etc. Overall clarity. <b>The P.A should not correct all the grammar mistakes.</b>	Work together with the student to correct his/her essay using the rubric. If the student does not understand the error through indirect correction	I.e. "Do you notice this mistake?" the P.A can explicitly tell the student a few of his/her mistakes and work together with the student to change them and identify other similar mistakes.
UIE	All parts of the writing process including brainstorming and various drafts.	-The student fills out the Writing Help Record circling what he/she wants to work on. -P.As check what they worked on with the student and write a recommendation.	Can speak Japanese/L1 if the student does not understand.	Structure of the essay, organization, thesis, etc. Overall clarity. <b>The P.A should not correct all the grammar mistakes.</b>	Work together with the student to correct his/her essay using the rubric. If the student does not understand the error through indirect correction	I.e. "Do you notice this mistake?" the P.A can explicitly tell the student a few of his/her mistakes and work together with the student to change them and identify other similar mistakes.

## Appendix 8: Writing help record

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Visit Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested help with** (select letter(s) from table below):

**Help given with** (tick boxes next to the appropriate items)

<p>a. <b>Essay structure</b> <input type="checkbox"/> エッセイの構成</p> <p>b. Paragraph structure <input type="checkbox"/> パラグラフの構成</p> <p>c. Thesis statements <input type="checkbox"/> 主題文</p> <p>d. Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/> まとまり</p> <p>e. Summarizing <input type="checkbox"/> 要約</p> <p>f. Relevance <input type="checkbox"/> 関連性</p> <p>g. Clarity <input type="checkbox"/> 明確さ</p> <p>h. Sentence order (organizing ideas) <input type="checkbox"/>文章の順番 (アイデアの整理の仕方)</p> <p>i. <b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>j. Word choice <input type="checkbox"/> 単語・表現の選択</p> <p>k. Word form errors <input type="checkbox"/> 語形の違い</p>	<p>l. Using transition words <input type="checkbox"/> 接続副詞の使い方</p> <p>m. <b>Grammar</b> 文法</p> <p>n. Subject-verb agreement <input type="checkbox"/> 主語・動詞の一致</p> <p>o. Verb tense <input type="checkbox"/> 動詞の時制</p> <p>p. Verb form <input type="checkbox"/> 動詞の語形</p> <p>q. Singular and plural errors <input type="checkbox"/> 単数・複数 の違い</p> <p>r. Sentence structure errors <input type="checkbox"/> 文章構成 (語順)の違い</p> <p>s. Use of punctuation marks <input type="checkbox"/> 句読点の 使い方</p> <p>t. Article use <input type="checkbox"/> 冠詞の使い方</p> <p>u. Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/> その他 (具体的に)</p> <p>v.</p>
--	---

**Recommendations:**

**New Vocabulary you learned:**

## Appendix 9: Writing help disclaimer

- I brought an assignment for an English class (Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate).
- I understand that the SALC writing tutor will NOT take any responsibility for my grades.
- I understand that the SALC writing tutor will NOT correct all the grammatical mistakes in the paper.
- I understand that the SALC writing tutor will NOT do reading, thinking or writing for me.
- I understand that the SALC writing tutor and I will work together to correct the mistakes in the paper.

## **Appendix 10: Pre-semester interview questions**

### **Role**

1. How was your summer vacation? Are you looking forward to a new semester at the SALC?
2. Think about your role as a writing tutor during writing help as I read the following statements. Then state whether or not they apply to you. When applicable, state what and/or why:
  - a. I helped the student understand what the English teacher expected from him/her.
  - b. "I helped the student by encouraging her/him to do better."
  - c. "I shared some of my own difficulties as a writer with the student." (Coehlo, 2011, p 221)
3. Think about the pedagogical benefits of a writing help session to students in general. Read the statements below and complete them as you wish:
  - a. During a writing help session, I help students mostly by.....
  - b. During a writing help, my main roles are.....
  - c. Students who come to the Writing Center benefit mostly because.....  
(Coehlo, 2011)
4. Describe what you consider to be a successful tutorial session (Stonerock, 2005).
5. Which of the following best represents the role the writing tutor should assume in the writing help tutorial: friend, coach, guide, evaluator, critic, or teacher? Please explain (Stonerock, 2005).
6. Which, if any, of the above is the role the tutor should avoid assuming in the writing help tutorial? Please explain (Stonerock, 2005).

### **Miscommunication**

1. Do you use Japanese during some of the sessions? When and why do you use Japanese?
2. Are there ever times of miscommunication, the student does not understand you and you do not understand the student? What do you do in these situations?

### **Expectations and tension**

1. What are some of the students' expectations that come to the writing help service?
2. How do you handle the student when their expectation is different than the service you offer?
3. What issues did the student usually want to focus on during the session?

### **Error correction**

1. How do you do error correction?
2. What's your approach to tutoring? Describe steps you take during a tutorial and/or strategies you use.

### **Challenges**

1. What specific challenges have you encountered in the tutorials this semester?  
Please explain.
2. In general, what are the most common needs your students bring to the SALC for writing help? (Stonerock, 2005)
3. Do you feel the training helped you handle these needs? (Stonerock, 2005)
4. Do you feel you need more? Please explain.
5. At this point, do you feel comfortable in your role as a tutor? Please explain (Stonerock, 2005).
6. Do you feel you need more training? Please explain.
7. Is there anything you would like to see changed in the Writing Center?

### **Overall**

1. What have you learned from tutoring in the SALC thus far?
2. What do you hope to offer students in the SALC this semester? (Stonerock, 2005).
3. What do you hope to gain from your experiences in the SALC this semester?

## **Appendix 11: Post-semester interview questions**

### **Role**

1. Read and reflect on your attached responses to the following questions on your Beginning-of-Semester Interview. How would you change or add to your responses now?
  - a. During a writing help session, I help students mostly by.....
  - b. During a writing help, my main roles are.....
  - c. Students who come to the Writing Center benefit mostly because.....

(Coehlo, 2011)

2. Describe what you consider to be a successful tutorial session.

You said the role of the writing tutor should be a \_\_\_\_\_ and writing tutors should avoid being \_\_\_\_\_. Do you still agree with that?

Remember the choices were: friend, coach, guide, evaluator, critic, or teacher?

Please explain (Stonerock, 2005).

### **Miscommunication**

1. Did you use Japanese during some of the sessions this semester? When and why did you use Japanese?
2. Were there ever times of miscommunication, the student does not understand you and you do not understand the student? What did you do in these situations?

### **Expectations and tension**

1. What are some of the students' expectations that have come to the writing help service this semester?
2. How did you handle the students when their expectations were different than the service you offer?

3. What issues did the student want to focus on during the sessions this semester?
4. Tell me about any activities or strategies that you used during the tutorial that addressed the issues the student wanted to work on in the session.

### **Error correction**

1. How did you do error correction this semester?
2. Did you try any new style of error correction this semester?

### **Challenges**

1. What specific challenges have you encountered in the tutorials this semester?  
Please explain.
2. In general, what are the most common needs your students bring to the SALC for writing help? (Stonerock, 2005)
3. Do you think there are aspects of your tutoring that need improvement? If so, provide an example and explain. If not, why not?
4. Please describe the worst tutorial (or one of the worst) you have experienced as a writing tutor this semester; explain how/why that session especially qualifies.
5. At this point, do you feel comfortable in your role as a tutor? Please explain (Stonerock, 2005).
6. Do you feel you have been given adequate support and training to serve as a writing tutor? (Stonerock, 2005)
7. Do you feel you need more training? Please explain. Is there anything you would like to see changed in the training sessions?
8. Is there anything you would like to see changed about the writing help service in the SALC?

### **Overall**

1. What successes have you experienced in the writing help tutorials this semester? Please explain (Stonerock, 2005).
2. How would you assess your work with each of your students this semester?
3. What have you learned from tutoring writing in the SALC this semester?

## Appendix 12: Final student questionnaire

Dear Students,

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Lindsay Mack.

The purpose of this study is to report on the role of Writing Centers for EFL writers. I want to examine challenges that occur in the adoption of an ESL writing tutorial model for tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?

The survey is anonymous and your answers will remain confidential. By taking this survey you are giving your consent to be part of this research. I value your feedback. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. I appreciate it.

From,

Lindsay Mack

The English SALC Coordinator

writing tutor= writing tutor means Peer Advisor and they are the person you worked with during the writing help session.

writing tutor: \_\_\_\_\_ (if you don't remember leave it blank)

The day you visited writing tutor (please choose one)

Oct. 08 ~ Oct. 12

Oct. 15 ~ Oct. 19

Oct. 22 ~ Oct. 26

Oct. 29 ~ Nov. 02

Nov. 05 ~ Nov. 09

Nov. 12 ~ Nov. 16

Nov. 19 ~ Nov. 23

Nov. 26 ~ Nov. 30

Dec. 03 ~ Dec. 07

Please take a minute to fill out this questionnaire. Circle the number on the scale that best represents your response to that question. If you don't understand the question please leave it blank.

### 7. Expectations of the writing tutor (please choose one)

7.1 Around how many mistakes in your paper do you think the writing tutor should address?

A	b	c	d	e
100%	99% ~ 76%	75% ~ 51%	50% ~ 26%	25% ~ 0%

7.2 Which way do you prefer the majority of your mistakes to be corrected? (please choose one)

- A writing tutor does it all for me, by writing the correction on my paper.
- A writing tutor helps me notice the mistakes and then I correct them by myself.
- A writing tutor helps me notice them and we correct them together.

7.3 After working with writing tutor, my paper is (please choose one)

A	b	c	d	e
Perfect	Significantly better	Better	Slightly better	No change

7.4 The main role of the writing tutor (please choose one)

- a. is like a teacher; she/he will directly teach me during the tutorial.
- b. is like a peer; she/he will ask me questions during the tutorial to help me improve my paper myself.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

<b>2. Expectations of the writing help service</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1 to fix all of my errors for me and make my paper perfect.						
2.2 I want the writing tutor to use Japanese during the tutorial.						
2.3 I want to work on grammar.						
2.4 I want to work on content.						
2.5 I want to work on structure.						
2.6 The writing tutor knows how to make my paper an A+ paper.						
2.7 During the tutorial I expect to negotiate with the writing tutor and work with them to make the paper better.						

<b>3. Overall Impressions of the Writing Tutorial</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 I felt comfortable working with the writing tutor.						
3.2 The tutorial was a two way process where both the writing tutor and I shared our opinions.						
3.3 The tutorial met my expectation in a positive way.						
3.4 I led the tutorial by asking lots of questions.						
3.5 The writing tutor did most of the talking during the tutorial.						

3.6 The issues in the essay we discussed were chosen because (please choose one)

- a. I told the writing tutor what I wanted to work on and we addressed those issues.
- b. After the writing tutor read my essay the writing tutor decided what we should work on.
- c. During the tutorial we addressed some issues in my paper that I wanted work on but also some issues the writing tutor wanted to work on.
- d. Other (blank box)

<b>4. Improvement of the paper</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.1 I have a better understanding of how to improve my writing.						
4.2 I have improved my paper.						
4.3 I am satisfied with the result of this conference.						

<b>5. Appropriation or Error Correction Style During the tutorial, the writing tutor</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>5.1</b> suggested better lexical phrases for me to use.						
<b>5.2</b> circled my grammar mistakes and together we corrected them.						
<b>5.3</b> modeled the correct grammar point or lexical point.						
<b>5.4</b> I liked the error correction style my tutor used.						

**5.5** The writing tutor

- a. always told me the correct answers
- b. mostly told me the correct answers
- c. did both (told me the correct answers and asked me questions to help me figure out the answers equally
- d. mostly asked me questions to help me figure out the answers
- e. asked me questions to help me figure out the answers

**6 Open response:** Please answer those you can. Feel free to write as much or as little as you want.

**6.1** How did the tutor help you notice your errors? Did you like the style the tutor used?

**6.2** Did the tutorial meet your expectation? Why or why not?

**6.3** What challenges did you find when working with the writing tutor? (for example miscommunication because of language)

**6.4** What recommendation would you suggest to improve the writing tutorial?

Thank for your time. I value your feedback.

### Appendix 13: Observation note taking sheet

Email:

Student Level: ELE PIE IE UIE

Student: Girl Boy

Tutor:

Assignment:

Topic:

What did the student bring: draft of essay task sheet

Teacher's comments rubric

---

1. **Did the tutor use Japanese during the tutorial?** yes no
2. **Did the tutor let the student use Japanese during the tutorial?** yes no
3. **What did the student do while the tutor was reading the text?**

Nothing

Looked at the words the tutor circled

Read the text out loud

Made his/her own error correction

Filled out sheet

4. **What was the tutor's style for error correction?**

Elicited response from student

Identified common errors

Corrected it for the student

Modeled correct usage

Didn't do

Modeled correct usage and let the student choose the correct answer

**5. How does the tutor reformulate an unclear sentence?**

Elicit response from student

Point out unclear sentence

Rewrite it for the student

Model correct usage and let the student choose

Suggest how to rewrite it

Had the student think of the sentence in Japanese and together translated it

**6. Tutor responses to questions:**

**a. What was the biggest challenge in that tutorial?**

**b. What ways did the tutorial go well?**

**NOTES:**

## Appendix 14: Notes taken during an observation

Date: November 8, 2013

Observation # 10

Student Level: ELE (PIE) IE

Student: Girl (Boy)

Tutor: Li

Assignment: Descriptive Paragraph

Topic: My hometown

What did the student bring: draft of essay task sheet

(Teacher's comments) rubric

---

7. Did the tutor use Japanese during the tutorial? (yes) no

8. Did the tutor let the student use Japanese during the tutorial? (yes) no

9. What did the student do while the tutor was reading the text?

Nothing Looked at the words the tutor circled Read the text out loud

Made his/her own error correction (Filled out sheet)

10. What was the tutor's style for error correction?

(Elicited response from student) Identified common errors

(Corrected it for the student) (Modeled correct usage) Didn't do

(Modeled correct usage and let the student choose the correct answer)

11. How does the tutor reformulate an unclear sentence?

(Elicit response from student) Point out unclear sentence Rewrite it for the student

Model correct usage and let the student choose (Suggest how to rewrite it)

(Had the student think of the sentence in Japanese and together translated it)

12. Tutor response to question:

c. What was the biggest challenge in that tutorial?

He wanted me to correct every mistake but I didn't have time to do that

d. What ways did the tutorial go well?

He seemed to be understanding what I was saying and motivated to make her writing better.

NOTES:

T=Tutor

S=Student

\*= a potential issue I observe

Indented line is my own comment, many times an inference

Each line is a dialogue

Indented line is my own comments

The following notes were written during observation number 10 with pencil and then re-written on the computer. In order to keep the authenticity I kept spelling errors and other errors that were made due to taking shorthand notes.

S: Please fix all mistakes

T: I will, try but we might not have time for everything

Looks at paper

T: This looks really good

Offers specific comments about what is good

T: I think you should fix the format on your own

\*Did the student understand?

Goes through the rubric and checks that the student has everything

Tutor points out transitions

T: What are the 3 things you want to write about?

S: Beach, forest and shopping mall

T: But where is the connection to the beach?

Tutor explains how the para is not connected to beach

T: What is people who live in Kanagawa?

S: Residents

T: What are people who visit?

S: Visitors

T: Okay, lets use these words

Li helps the student use these words in the para

T: How can you connect beach with activities?

S: Silence

Li tells the students how to connect it to the activities

T: Write down this sentence

T: If you want to put a sentence here what do you need?

T: Do you need this or this?

Shows two examples

S: Silence

Student is passive unresponsive,

Li gives an the answer

Then go over structure

T: If you follow this structure, what is the second sentence?

T: This is too simple, anything else besides swim?

T: What do you want to say in Japanese?

Tutor and Student speak in Japanese, then the tutor teaches him what some of those words are in English, He explains why those words are correct and how to use them in Japanese

\*Student says the words in English with the tutor prompting

T: Write it down

Student writes down the words

Together they reformulate the sentence

Move onto next part

T: Always is how much percent?

S: 80%

T: No, it is 100%

Li writes down different percentages and how they connect to the word.

\*Makes it a learning opportunity

Last 5 minutes he goes through and corrects for the student, tries to illicit the answer but then tells him the correct answer because out of time.

Total time tutorial time= 25 minutes

Overall

\*Takes long time to illicit

\* Run out of time

## Appendix 15: Observation data

Student Level	Tutor	Observation number
Elementary	Anh	11
	Han	26
	Jay	18
	Li	20
	Lien	12
		23
	Tu	2
	Vy	30
Pre-Intermediate	Han	24
	Jay	17
		25
	Li	10
	Lien	29
	Tu	6
	8	
Intermediate	Anh	3
		14
	Jay	7
		27
	Li	9
	Lien	5
		21
		22
	Trang	15
		16
		28
	Tu	4
		13
Vy	1	
	19	

## Appendix 16: Tutorial Transcript

Tutorial: # 4

T= Tu

S= Intermediate Student

T: So how can I help you?

S: My teacher require to using this paper.

T: [reading from the paper the student had] Please don't write for them. Um..... Introduction umm ohh. Oh Okay, so the first part I have to check whether you have name, date, class. Uh? What is this?

S: Student number.

T: Student number, okay, good! Then, is this Times New Roman?

S: Yes.

T: 12 point?

S: Yes.

T: Um, how could I check this? Is it 1.5 or 2?

S: 2.

T: Okay. You have 5 separate paragraphs. [Counting the pages] One. Two. Three. Four. Five. At least 1000. So you have 1100 and then the title?

S: Yes.

T: Is that all I have to do?

S: And check this box, in this one. I'll bring this one so...

T: Oh okay write in here your name, student ID and what you want me to check. [Whispering the texts] This, this.

S: Umm.

T: Relevance? And sentence structure. But, this is quite long [S: Umm], so is there any paragraph that you are most concerned about, you want me to work with it the most? Or you want me to go through everything?

S: And, so, ah, I want to check my in conclusion.

T: Oh conclusion. So is this your conclusion?

S: Yes.

T: Okay, so what is the topic? The importance of making a goal and then, what is your thesis statement?

S: Thesis statement, so, my thesis are making goal is important point so we need that goal.

T: Where, where is this in this paragraph?

S: It's my introduction.

T: Is this statement?

S: Statement? Yes.

T: One sentence right? Making a goal for study by two. Okay, it is really important to make a goal and you conducted two surveys?

S: Yeah.

T: Umm, so one survey is "when you start to study something, do you make a goal?" This is one and where is the result? And the result is "helpful to study". The second question is "could you tell your experiences of making a goal?" Okay, so first question, "when you do something, do you make a goal?" They say most of them say yes?

S: Yes!

T: Er, umm, okay. The second question is “could you tell your experience?” Um, um, okay. So what is your conclusion?

S: Conclusion? [T: Um] Aaah, conclusion [T: So?] my conclusion is [T: Um] Eh...so summary in this paragraph [T: So summary of your paragraphs] Umm, and I suggest them to study for...for...for student or more than, like, during high school student or so, like, in the future to do action like same to make...

T: Oooh, so, basically you summarized your essay and then you made, erm, some suggestions right?

S: Yes.

T: Some advice [S: Yes] to students. Okay, I got it. [Reading aloud the text] Um, um, okay, so you already mentioned the result of your surveys here. [Reading aloud the text] Hmm, you, so, is it your thesis statement? This is what you want to say right? In the beginning this is really important that we need a goal, is this?

S: That we need a goal...Aaah...Umm.

T: Umm, umm [Reading aloud the text] Ooh, this is really nice conclusion. At first you summarize the whole essay and then you restate thesis statement and then you make some suggestions. Okay I see. Very good! So your second concern is that, sentence structure errors. Okay, this essay covered of making a goal when start studying. Um. [Reading aloud the text] Um, nice [Reading aloud the text] Hmm, umm. This is clear. This is clear. Umm, um. [Reading aloud the text] Okay, sentence structure of, first, “when start studying”. Do you know what’s wrong with this?

S: So...like...s...

T: What is this?

S: Ah, s...so...

T: Subject?

S: Yeah, yeah, subject.

T: Uuuh, this is not the subject? Ya, you’re right, in a sentence we should have the subject, the verb and the clause or the object. But “when” is not the subject [S: Yeah] Who, who study?

S: Errr...Who...err.

T: Who does this action?

S: People.

T: “When”?

S: They, or people?

T: Yes! “When” so, “when” just indicates the time [S: yes] The important thing is to mention “who”, who does the action, who studies. Okay?

S: Yeah.

T: So, when...?

S: People.

T: ...people start studying [Reading the whole sentence aloud] This sentence is really nice. So, the next is that, “to investigated this idea by using questionnaire, summary of web articles and interviews”. Umm, so applying this, subject, verb, plus clause or object, can you see?

S: I can see the verb because...

T: Where is the verb?

S: Humm...

T: Where is the subject?

S: Ah...

T: First, tell me where is the subject of this sentence, the main subject? Shuugo. [S: Shuugo?] Where?

S: Ah...Just subject, this one?

T: Shuugo ga nai janai desu ka? (English: there is no subject right?) Um, okay, here shuugo ga nai.(English: there is no verb, Where is the verb? Where is your main verb, the main action?)

S: To investigate.

T: To investigate. Okay, so now you have to “investigate” as the main action right?

S: Um.

T: So who investigates? Is it me?

S: No.

T: Or your teacher?

S: No, the author.

T: Who is the author?

S: It’s me.

T: It’s you. You are the author. Okay, now you have the shuugo. You are the main subject here. And your main action is to investigate this idea [S: This idea] Okay, so to investigate this idea, you? How, how could you investigate this idea?

S: I investigate?

T: Sometimes “I” is okay in essays but your teacher says “no I”. Right?

S: Yeah, yeah.

T: Okay, I know how to deal with this. Okay, so S and V and Clause ok? Here S is...?

S: Also...

T: This is active form. S is you, right?

S: Yeah.

T: Okay?

S: Uh huh.

T: Then Verb is...?

S: Investigate.

T: Investigate is the verb. Investigate. Investigate what?

S: What...This idea.

T: Okay, this idea. How could you investigate?

S: By using questionnaires.

T: By using questionnaires, okay, by blah blah blah. Okay, so this is the active form: I investigate this idea by using questionnaires, summary of web articles and interviews. But, but your teacher doesn’t allow using I, Okay?

S: Yeah.

T: So you have to write it in passive form. So you have to avoid using “I”. [S: Eh] You cannot use “I” so [S: Uh huh] Do you know how to... [S: Change?] change this active form to passive form?

S: Ah, by, by questionnaires, er, er, investigate...

T: Okay, so I will write what you, you, say to me. So you say, by blah blah blah blah?

S: By investigate this idea?

T: Investigate, okay, this idea. Okay, who? Again, if you by blah blah blah, investigate the idea, then you lack the shuugo. When you turn this active sentence form to passive form then you have to avoid, you cannot use “I” right? Then in this case, “this idea” should become the shuugo.

S: Ooooh, this idea was investigated.

T: Oh, kanpeki! (Perfect) Good, so...? Again, can you tell me the sentence again?

S: This idea was investigated by...

T: By?

S: By questionnaires, summary of web’s articles and interviews.

M: Very nice sentence.

T: Could you rewrite that sentence here, in case you, you, may forget it when you get home. Could you please rewrite, write it here. You just got the right sentence.

S: Right sentence?

T; Um, the passive form.

S: The passive form.

T: Um.

S: This idea was investigated by using questionnaires, summaries of web's articles and interviews.

T: You don't want to write here?

S: Ah, yeah yeah.

T: Do you want to write it now?

S: Yes.

T: Okay, okay so move on. "As demonstrated by specific example, it clear what advantages..." Um, Okay. So I think this sentence has the same problem with this sentence. [S: Uh huh] So it is clear [S: yeah yeah] Clear. The problem starts from here, "what advantages to making a goal for studying something". Again S, V, C. See, where is S? Where is V?

S: S...Haha.

T: It is clear, what? What is clear?

S: What's your, err... So I think my subject was...? [T: Um]

T: Aaaah, oh, I think I got your meaning but I need to clarify one more time. What do you mean by this sentence? Could you explain the meaning to me what do you want to say?

S: So I want to say, so, if you make a goal so what is the [T: Advantage?] advantage for you or so...rather than you don't make a goal.

T: Okay, so, so you mean that when you make a goal, the advantage? [S: Yes] So, as according to the example, what is clear here is the advantage of making goal right?

S: Yeah yeah.

T: Oookay, so I understand it now. So, "as demonstrated", your shuugo is "the advantage of making goal".

S: AAh, S is the advantage to make goal...ah, err [mumbling] that advantage to make a goal.

T: So the advantage? [S: yes] This advantage? [S: yeah] is clear. Is it clear? Did you want to say so?

S: Yes.

T: So what is clear? Is it?

S: [mumbling] err, umm, this advantage is clear to make a goal, or something...

T: To make it easier, what is clear? What do you want to say here? What is it?

S: Err...

T: So something must be clear here. Alright? [S: Yeah] So what do you mean by "it"? What is clear in this sentence?

S: It's... Ah, so to make a goal for study something.

T: Okay, so "to make a goal for study something" is "it"?

S: Yes.

T: So put it here, "to make a goal for study something is clear" [S: Ahh...] Uuuh, I don't know because you say so, "to make a goal for study something" is "it", so if we rewrite it, we don't use "it" here so the sentence becomes "to make a goal for study something is clear". Is it right? Is it what you want to say?

S: Umm, chotto chigau. (English: a little different)

T: Chotto chigau yo ne. (English: Yes, it is a little different)

S: So I want to say, ah, so, good point to make a [T: Um] goal for study something and, so, and the specific examples, so, it that says [T: the good point] good point [T: So] so...

T: So when you read the example, the good point becomes clear, you understand those good points?

S: Yeah yeah.

T: So, okay, so I think “it” here is this, the good points. Advantages means good points, right? So the good point, is advantages, to this is clear after you read this example, ok?

S: Yeah.

T: So, here “it” is “this”, right? This is clear, you say, after reading these examples [S: Yeah] you understand the good point of...[S: Making a goal] making a goal so why don’t you just replace it by this. You can say, “as demonstrated by specific examples, these advantages blah blah blah is clear” [S: Oooh, okay] So you have S is this, the Clause, Verb is “is”. And it is clear. You got it?

S: Yeah, I got it.

T: Okay, so...

S: So?

T: This is the structure of a sentence. Not it comes to grammar. The advantages to making to a goal for study something? Why do you think “study something”? Why don’t you add –ing here?

S: Err?

T: Why do you think it is wrong?

S: I-N-G, studying...Janai, he? (English: right)

T: It’s right! “For studying”. But here’s “for”, see? So in a sentence, if a verb goes after “to” then we can keep it “to study”. But if it goes after for, of, in or at blah blah blah then you have to use Verb-ing. [S: Verb-ing, yeah] And many examples. Okay so here is the shuugo (English: Subject) [S: Yes] Are they clear to you? [S: Yes] Um, good! Oooh the saaame, “it became clear”, the same structure. So now, do you know how to change this? So what is shuugo? (English: subject)

S: The importance of making a goal.

T: What became clear?

S: What became clear?

T: Um! So, what is “it”?

S: The reason for making a goal became clear.

T: Good, okay, this is the shugo, (English: subject) put it here. They have the same mistake so I don’t explain it anymore. Oh I think the rest is very good. Only the first part of it so... Okay, when you go home make sure you won’t forget our discussion here. If you have any questions [S: No], come back [S: Aaaah, Okay, come back] Yes, see ya.

## Appendix 17: Writing tutor consent form

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Lindsay Mack. Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, you should read this form and ask questions if there is anything that you do not understand.

The purpose of this study is to report on the role of Writing Centers for EFL writers. I want to examine:

- i. What are the major issues in the adoption of an ESL writing tutorial model for tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?
- ii. What do students and tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?

Although there will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, I may learn more about tutoring novice English users and how to improve the writing help service in the future. I would like to audio record the training session, tutorial sessions and interviews. With your permission, I would like to use transcripts from both these sessions and interviews. Your name will not be in the transcript or in my research study. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name will not be used in any report and will be kept anonymous.

The decision to take part in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in it. Even if you decide at first to take part, you are free to change your mind at any time and quit the study. Whatever you decide it will in no way penalize you nor will it affect your work as a Writing help TA.

If you have questions about this research, please contact me, Lindsay Mack at [mackli@iu.edu](mailto:mackli@iu.edu).

**Signature:**

Signing this document means that you understand the information given to you in this form and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the research described above.

\_\_\_ I agree to have the tutorial session and training session audio recorded.

\_\_\_ I agree to have my interview recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 18: Student consent form

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Lindsay Mack. Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, you should read this form and ask questions if there is anything that you do not understand.

The purpose of this study is to report on the role of Writing Centers for EFL writers. I want to examine:

- i. What are the major issues in the adoption of an ESL writing tutorial model for tutoring writing with beginner-intermediate level Japanese EFL students in a Japanese University?
- ii. What do students and tutors perceive to be the challenges experienced during an EFL writing tutorial?

Although there will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, I may learn more about tutoring novice English users and how to improve the writing help service in the future. With your permission, I would like to audio record the tutorial session and transcribe parts of the conversation you have with the tutor. Your name will not be in the transcript or in my research study and will be kept anonymous.

The decision to take part in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in it. Even if you decide at first to take part, you are free to change your mind at any time and quit the study. Whatever you decide it will in no way penalize your ability to use the service of writing help.

If you have questions about this research, please contact me, Lindsay Mack at [mackli@iu.ac.jp](mailto:mackli@iu.ac.jp).

Signature:

Signing this document means that you understand the information given to you in this form and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the research described above.

\_\_\_ I agree to have my tutorial session audio recorded and used for research purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 19: Coded post-semester interview

Coded: Post Semester Interview

M: So I asked you during the writing help session, “I helped students mostly by \_\_\_\_\_” You said “giving them examples”. [Li: Right.] Do you agree or do you want to add or change anything?

Li: Hmm, yeah, still give examples but for some of the specific Liuestions as we have done, like, discussed during the mid-term workshop, those lexical issues. Now I just tell them what to do because firstly it spends a lot of time to explain those issues and secondly as it is suggested, maybe sometimes just tell them is the better way.

M: Okay, and than I asked “during the writing help, my main roles are \_\_\_\_\_” you said “make them better writers”. Do you still agree?

Li: Yeah I think, I think this is always the goal of a tutor.

M: Okay, than the next one “students come to the writing center benefit mostly because \_\_\_\_\_”.

Li: Because they come to writing center because you get better essay or become a better writer.

M: And you still agree?

Li: Hmm, yeah I think that’s why they come to writing center.

M: But how do they benefit?

Li: [Repeating the question.] Okay I think more or less they will learn.

M: They will learn, okay.

Li: More or less, depends on what their attitude is.

M: Okay, and than I asked you to describe what you think is a successful tutorial session.

Li: Yeah, I said firstly they learn things, deep learning; secondly they are content with the work we cooperated.

M: Yeah, agree? Disagree? What is a successful tutorial?

Li: Well, I think I changed a little bit because after that I kind of thought of my responsibility as a tutor. I meant, not being responsible for what I should do but maybe something that I should not do. Oh, I think I have got some examples, sometimes, for example, of course as a tutor we are not responsible for their grade so I have to keep that in mind like I am just a tutor, I just teach them things, I should not pay too much attention on their grade like what grade will they get after coming to SALC. So I think also this relieves me a little bit when I am doing my tutorial session.

M: So successful tutorial doesn't, the tutor doesn't stress about the grade.

Li: I don't necessarily need to make them feel content with the work we have done but just let them learn new things.

M: Okay, you said the role of the PA should be, oh yeah, I asked you what’s the role of the PA, friend, coach, guide, evaluator, critic.

Li: I said “guide”.

M: You said “guide”. Do you still agree?

Li: Hmm, yeah, I think so and ...

M: You want to add or change anything?

Li: Cause actually when I was transcribing this I reconsidered the question and none of us chose critic, right?

M: Critic is the one that everyone think we should not be.

Li: We should not be, but I will say that everyone has a very negative image of critics. Well, I think critics are sometimes very positive to students like when they point out their mistakes, you have to tell them right? I mean, after the mid-term workshop, actually I am more direct as a tutor. Because firstly it spends a lot of time if you try to

Comment [MSOffice1]: CPT: Tutor feels responsible for the student's grade

be a very nice person and secondly I think critic is not necessarily a bad person, you just tell them what they have done is not correct.

M: So you think PA should be a guide and a critic? [Li: Yeah.] What should PA avoid being?

Li: Avoid being [thinking].

M: If there is anything, friend, coach, guide, evaluator, critic.

Li: Hmm, I think evaluator or ... I think evaluator maybe.

M: I think usually teacher is on there too.

Li: Because you didn't ask me that ...

M: Oh really, I left it out, friend, coach, guide, evaluator, critic, teacher.

Li: Oh teacher, okay.

M: Which one should they avoid being?

Li: Evaluator.

M: Evaluator, it's not about the grade.

Li: As I said, it's not about the grade; I won't care about their grade anymore.

M: Okay, next questions are just about your experiences last semester. So did you use Japanese during some of the sessions this past semester?

Li: Yeah, I think more, much more.

M: Much more? Why?

Li: I found it's more efficient. Students are comfortable with that. Even though this semester we had extended our session time, right? From 20 minutes to 30 minutes, well, once I feel that the time is abundant, I started to pay attention to the details that they can deep learning in that. So they can do the deep learning so hmm, actually to explain something more specifically and to make them understand I have to use Japanese because if I do that in English they will not understand that.

M: Okay, so were there times of miscommunication?

Li: Oh, much less.

M: Much less because of Japanese?

Li: Oh I think so.

M: What about just in general, miscommunication, did you always just speak Japanese, what would you when there was a time of miscommunication?

Li: Okay, miscommunication usually occurs when I read their essay and I misunderstood the content of the essay. They wanted to express actually another thing but actually I interpret in a different way. I usually asked them "what do you want to say in Japanese?" and the sentence turned out to be a totally different sentence, right? Then I started to reformulate the sentence with them by asking them "please use simple English to try to say what you want to say again" and tried to organize this sentence with them again. I think this is how will eliminate the misunderstanding during the tutorial session.

**Comment [MSOffice2]:** CPT:  
Misunderstanding of the content of their essay

M: So you asked them how to say in Japanese and you helped them reformulate it in simple English?

Li: Right, right.

M: Okay, what are some of the students' expectations that have come to writing help this semester?

Li: This semester, I think it's basically the same, they just want us to help them correct the mistakes. Emm, I don't know, some of them came with a scored or evaluated essay so of course they wanted a better grade.

M: How did you handle the students when their expectations were different than the service you offer?

Li: Oh, this semester we have a disclaimer, right? I think that really helps, I don't have to spend (a lot of time) explaining to them what our roles are.

M: You just showed it to them?

Li: I just showed it to them, I say, "you can read it".

M: That's good. What issues did the students want to focus on this semester mostly? In the writing.

Li: I see slight change there. Now they know the importance of, for example, the structure and the global concerns instead of grammars. And yeah, I think they know that maybe, because of the teacher's instructions in the class, they know that sometimes it's very important for them to organize their essays in a very clearly understandable way. So I think we have more unified goals with the students.

M: What activities or strategies did you use during the tutorial to address the issues that students want to work on?

Li: Hmm, actually I'm not sure about that if I was using a correct way as I said I ...

M: Well, one strategy you said was using Japanese.

Li: Right, right, using Japanese because I think maybe when they try to translate their Japanese into English they may make mistakes and I just tell them how to translate Japanese into English. So actually I am little doubted there because maybe it's not a good way but anyway, I think it really enhanced the efficiency of the tutorial session.

M: Okay, any other strategies would you use?

Li: Any other, hmm, being more direct as I mentioned.

M: How did you do error correction this semester if there is a mistake in the sentence?

Li: Oh, hmm, actually I think error correction has two things, right? The first is very simple grammar mistakes. (I) just check once and I tell these are the mistakes you have, I don't go on to point out others I just tell them, "go back home and you find any similar mistakes, you fix by yourself. You find by yourself and fix by yourself." That's very important because maybe we should not find every single mistake for them.

M: Right, right, they want the paper perfect.

Li: So this is one thing and for the global concerns ...

M: So, in the paper, you go through and find the mistakes, would you underline them or circle them?

Li: Yeah, do that at the beginning. I don't circle out everyone I have to let them find it by themselves.

M: Okay, so you would check but you won't circle any of them?

Li: I will circle only the first one.

M: Only some, okay, if it was a tense error, you would just go over that with them and then you tell them find the rest of mistakes yourself. Okay, you said there are two things you did?

Li: And the global concerns. I think because this semester I make better usage of the writing resources like the examples and instructions of the essay, the organization. So I show that to them like, "can you see what is written in the examples?" Or "what is written in the instructions?" "What do you think you should make change to your essay?" especially when students were really confused with the flow of the essay and the thesis statement. They have two thesis statements, one before that and one after that. I will say, "What is thesis statement about? Where should you put it? And should it be specific or should it be briefly introducing your main idea of the essay?" Something like that. So I think they get better understanding of what they should do and how should they fix their essay.

M: Did you try any new style of error correction this semester?

**Comment [MSOffice3]:** CPT: Japanese way of writing English

Li: No, I don't think so. More directly, probably, especially for lexical problems, error.

M: What specific challenges did you encounter this last semester? If any.

Li: Oh, challenges. I can't recall them right now, maybe later?

M: Okay, we'll come back to that. In general, what are the most common needs your student brought to the SALC? What do they need help with the most? Anything.

Li: From their perspective? Or?

M: No, from your perspective. What did you think they need help with?

Li: Thesis statement. [M: Oh, really?] Many of them are confused with that.

M: Do you think there are aspects of your tutoring that need improvement? If so, explain and give an example.

Li: Their expectation?

M: No, of your tutoring that needs improvement.

Li: [Repeating the question] As I said, I have to find a better to help them reformulate their sentence. Like, make them think as a like, you know, English studying student (but) not a pure Japanese, that's very important I guess.

M: Please describe the worst tutorial you have experienced this past semester.

Li: Okay, hmm, there was one student who came with a very obvious objective to just want us to fix his mistakes and of course I showed the disclaimer but you know, sometimes the students they are just unmotivated, they don't feel to respond to us and of course I should not be angry about that. But I used Japanese all the way, trying to communicate with him and of course he made some responses but you can see that he was not really focusing on me; he was even reading his own book.

M: Okay, his own paper you mean?

Li: I was a little upset about that because I think he treated me just as a machine. So I don't think he learnt a lot.

M: As this point, do you feel comfortable with your role as a tutor?

Li: Yes I think I'm more experienced. Actually I feel more confident than the previous semester because I'm more direct and the student didn't feel uncomfortable about that. I think it's very good.

M: Do you feel you've been given adequate support in training to serve as a writing tutor?

Li: Yes, the training is very helpful, it changed my style actually, and it changed my way of tutoring.

M: Do you think you need more training? If so, what would like to see changed in the training sessions?

Li: Oh, yes, I think the way we do it is very good, the training session. And yeah, why not? Maybe I can have new ideas about that because this semester's training session is very helpful as it turned out to be.

M: So you think you need more training?

Li: I need.

M: In what?

Li: For example, reformulating the sentences, how to help them. Like, write beautiful sentences but much more English way, not a Japanese way.

M: Right, is there anything you would like to see changed in the writing help service in the SALC?

Li: Hmm, nothing much.

M: What successes have you experienced in the writing help tutorial this semester?

Li: Success? Students learn new things.

M: Can you be more specific?

Li: Okay, let's say, I don't know, because I don't if they learn vocabulary especially they used suggested vocabulary cause I just tell them, right? It's not deep learning, but for sentence, it's also part of vocabulary but it's much easier, for example, they learnt to use different words if they wanted to express the same logical devices for several times and also I feel that, for students who came to SALC at the first time, they don't know what we do but after some time, for example, a week, we make adjustment for the first several times then they understand what we are doing and they can make responses by themselves. It's very positive feedback.

M: How would you assess your work with your students this semester?

Li: A? [laughter] in "APU system".

M: What have you learnt from tutoring writing in the SALC this semester?

Li: Oh, one thing is responsibility as I said, I have to clarify what I'm doing and what I should focus on. I think before that I just thought about this role too much, maybe I had to make them happy but now I don't think about that.

M: Okay, so your role. Anything else?

Li: The challenge?

M: No, what you learnt. [Li: No.] Oh, challenge question, good point. What specific challenges did you encounter this last semester?

Li: That was one, the student lacks motivation. Especially when he got out his book and started reading. I couldn't believe what I just saw.

M: Okay, good, thank you!

**Comment [MSOffice4]:** CPT: Students need help with thesis statement

**Comment [MSOffice5]:** CPT: Students are not motivated

**Comment [MSOffice6]:** CPT: want training in how to help students reformulate sentences

**Comment [MSOffice7]:** CPT: Question the type of student learning

**Comment [MSOffice8]:** CPT: Want to please student

**Comment [MSOffice9]:** CPT: Student lack motivation

## Appendix 20: Coded observation notes

Date: November 8, 2013

Observation # 10

Student Level: ELE PIE IE

Student: Girl Boy

Tutor: Li

Assignment: Descriptive Paragraph

Topic: My hometown

What did the student bring: draft of essay task sheet  
Teacher's comments rubric

---

1. Did the tutor use Japanese during the tutorial? yes no

2. Did the tutor let the student use Japanese during the tutorial? yes no

3. What did the student do while the tutor was reading the text?

Nothing    Looked at the words the tutor circled    Read the text out loud

Made his/her own error correction    Filled out sheet

4. What was the tutor's style for error correction?

Elicited response from student    Identified common errors

Corrected it for the student    Modeled correct usage    Didn't do

Modeled correct usage and let the student choose the correct answer

5. How does the tutor reformulate an unclear sentence?

Elicit response from student    Point out unclear sentence    Rewrite it for the student

Model correct usage and let the student choose    Suggest how to rewrite it

Had the student think of the sentence in Japanese and together translated it

6. Tutor response to question:

T: How can you connect beach with activities?

S: Silence

Li tells the students how to connect it to the activities

T: Write down this sentence

T: If you want to put a sentence here what do you need?

T: Do you need this or this?

Shows two examples

S: Silence

Student is passive unresponsive,

Li gives an the answer

Then go over structure

T: If you follow this structure, what is the second sentence?

T: This is too simple, anything else besides swim?

T: What do you want to say in Japanese?

Tutor and Student speak in Japanese, then the tutor teaches him what some of those words are in English, He explains why those words are correct and how to use them in Japanese

\*Student says the words in English with the tutor prompting

T: Write it down

Student writes down the words

Together they reformulate the sentence

Move onto next part

T: Always is how much percent?

S: 80%

T: No, it is 100%

Li writes down different percentages and how they connect to the word.

\*Makes it a learning opportunity

Last 5 minutes he goes through and corrects for the student, tries to illicit the answer but then tells him the correct answer because out of time.

Total time tutorial time= 25 minutes

Overall

\*Takes long time to illicit

\* Run out of time

Comment [MSOffice4]: I: Student is not answering, the tutor.

Comment [MSOffice5]: I: Student is unresponsive

Comment [MSOffice6]: I: Explains concept in Japanese

Comment [MSOffice7]: I: Tutor uses Japanese to facilitate communication

Comment [MSOffice8]: I: together they reformulate the sentence

Comment [MSOffice9]: I: Runs out of time so the tutor provides more explicit feedback

**a. What was the biggest challenge in that tutorial?**

She wanted me to correct every mistake but I didn't have time to do that

**Comment [MSOffice1]:** CPT: Student wants tutor to fix all mistakes

**b. What ways did the tutorial go well?**

She seemed to be understanding what I was saying and motivated to make her writing better.

**NOTES:**

T=Tutor

S=Student

\*= a potential issue I observe

Indented line is my own comment, many times an inference

Each line is a dialogue

Indented line is my own comments

The following notes were written during observation number 10 with pencil and then re-written on the computer. In order to keep the authenticity I kept spelling errors and other errors that were made due to taking shorthand notes.

S: Please fix all mistakes

**Comment [MSOffice2]:** I: Student wants tutor to fix all mistakes

T: I will, try but we might not have time for everything

Looks at paper

T: This looks really good

Offers specific comments about what is good

T: I think you should fix the format on your own

\*Did the student understand?

**Comment [MSOffice3]:** I: Not sure if student understands the tutor

Goes through the rubric and checks that the student has everything

Tutor points out transitions

T: What are the 3 things you want to write about?

S: Beach, forest and shopping mall

T: But where is the connection to the beach?

Tutor explains how the para is not connected to beach

T: What is people who live in Kanagawa?

S: Residents

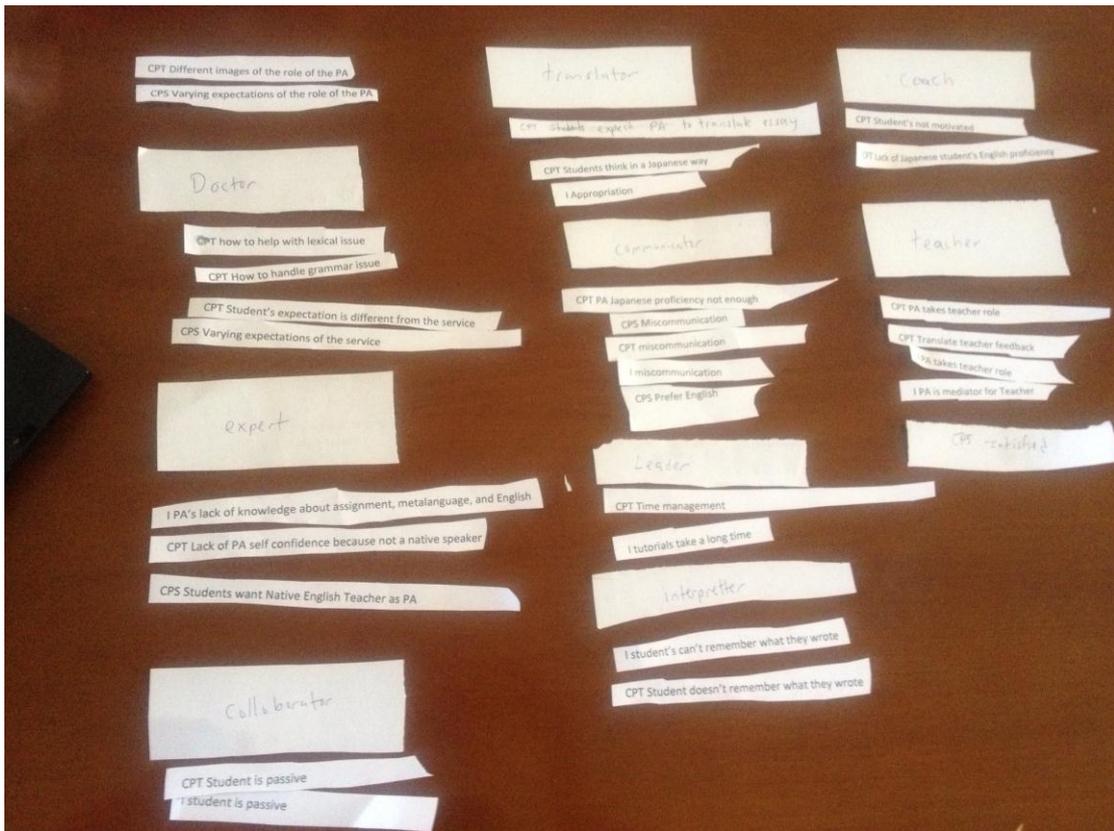
T: What are people who visit?

S: Visitors

T: Okay, lets use these words

Li helps the student use these words in the para

# Appendix 21: Conceptual map



## Appendix 22: Survey questionnaire and results

### 1. Expectations of writing tutor

Questions	Options and results					Total
	100%	99%-76%	75%-51%	50%-26%	26%-0%	
Around how many mistakes in your paper do you think the writing tutor should address?	10	8	5	1	0	24
	41.7%	33.3%	20.8%	4.2%	0%	
Which way do you prefer the majority of your mistakes to be corrected? (please choose one)	A writing tutor does it all for me.	A writing tutor helps me notice the mistakes and then I correct them by myself.		A writing tutor helps me notice them and we correct them together.		
	4	10	10			24
	16.7%	41.7%	41.7%			
After working with writing tutor, my paper is (please choose one)	Perfect	Significantly better	Better	Slightly better	No change	
	4	16	4	0	0	24
	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	0%	0%	
The main role of the writing tutor (please choose one)	is like a teacher; she/she will directly teach me during the tutorial.		is like a peer; she/he will ask me questions during the tutorial to help me improve my paper myself.			
	10	14				24
	41.7%	58.3%				

## 2. Expectations

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I want the writing tutor to fix all my errors for me and make my paper perfect.	3	6	3	5	3	4	24
	12.5%	25%	12.5%	20.8%	12.5%	16.7%	
I want the writing tutor to use Japanese during the tutorial.	9	6	4	4	0	1	24
	37.5%	25%	16.7%	16.7%	0%	4.2%	
I want to work on grammar.	0	1	4	2	7	10	24
	0%	4.2%	16.7%	8.3%	29.2%	41.7%	
I want to work on content.	0	2	6	2	5	9	24
	0%	8.3%	25%	8.3%	20.8%	37.5%	
I want to work on structure.	1	0	3	3	7	9	23
	4.3%	0%	13.0%	13%	30.4%	39.1%	
The writing tutor knows how to make my paper an A+ paper.	1	3	2	7	6	5	24
	4.2%	12.5%	8.3%	29.2%	25%	20.8%	
During the tutorial I expect to negotiate with the writing tutor and work with them to make the paper better.	0	1	1	0	9	13	24
	0%	4.2%	4.2%	0%	37.5%	54.2%	

## 3. Overall impression

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I felt comfortable working with the writing tutor.	1	0	1	3	8	11	24
	4.2%	0%	4.2%	12.5%	33.3%	45.8%	
The tutorial was a two way process where both the writing tutor and I shared our opinions.	1	0	1	3	7	12	24
	4.2%	0%	4.2%	12.5%	29.2%	50%	
The tutorial met my expectation in a positive way.	1	0	0	3	8	12	24
	4.2%	0%	0%	12.5%	33.3%	50%	
I led the tutorial by asking lots of questions.	1	4	3	6	4	6	24
	4.2%	16.7%	12.5%	25%	16.7%	25%	

The writing tutor did most of the talking during the tutorial.	1	5	7	6	5	0	24
	4.2%	20.8%	29.2%	25%	20.8%	0%	

#### 4. Improvement of the paper

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I have a better understanding of how to improve my writing.	1	1	0	3	8	9	22
	4.5%	4.5%	0%	13.6%	36.4%	40.9%	
I have improved my paper.	1	0	0	4	10	8	23
	4.3%	0%	0%	17.4%	43.5%	34.8%	
I am satisfied with the result of this conference.	1	0	1	3	7	11	23
	4.3%	0%	4.3%	13%	30.4%	47.8%	

#### 5. Error correction

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I felt comfortable working with the writing tutor.	2	0	1	3	9	8	23
	8.7%	0%	4.3%	13.0%	39.1%	34.8%	
The tutorial was a two way process where both the writing tutor and I shared our opinions.	2	0	0	4	7	10	23
	8.7%	0%	0%	17.4%	30.4%	43.5%	
The tutorial met my expectation in a positive way.	2	0	1	5	9	6	23
	8.7%	0%	4.3%	21.7%	39.1%	26.1%	
I led the tutorial by asking lots of questions.	1	0	1	6	9	6	23
	4.3%	0%	4.3%	26.1%	39.1%	26.1%	
The writing tutor	always told me %the correct answer	mostly told me the correct answers	did both	mostly asked me questions to help me figure out the answers	asked me questions to help me figure out the answers		
	7	3	11	3	0	24	
	29.2%	12.5%	45.8%	12.5%	0%		

## Appendix 23: Students' open responses

### 1. How did the tutor help you notice your errors? Did you like the style the tutor used?

1. The writing tutor circled the parts that were wrong and explained them to me as they underlined them. It was really good.
2. The writing tutor would ask me, "How would you fix this?" and then help me to fix the sentence. It was a good method.
3. I read my essay lowder and she asked me question. for example, what do you mean? what is the most important thing you want to tell?

[Translator's note: #3 was already in English; original version provided here.]

4. The writing tutor would draw my attention to my mistakes and then ask "What would work better here?" and make me think it through.
5. Rather than giving me the answer, the writing tutor would lead me to it. I learned a lot this way.
6. While giving an example, the writing tutor would bring my mistakes to my attention. I liked this method.
7. It was good because none of the writing tutors simply corrected my reports. Rather, while asking me what it was I wanted to do, they helped me to progress. They supported me in improving my reports while thinking things through for myself.
8. The writing tutor supported me by saying things like "Hmmm, this word doesn't work here. What do you think would be appropriate?" and made me figure out the answer in this way. It worked really well.
9. The writing tutor taught me by pointing out my mistakes and then quizzing me by asking, "How should we fix this?" Even though there were a lot of times that I couldn't answer, it was a really easy to understand way of teaching.
10. He/she pointed out my mistakes and asked me to think about why they were wrong. I think this is a good method.
11. He/she read my report and made note of possible mistakes.
12. I could tell because he/she stopped reading the report.
13. I liked him/her.
14. He/she marked my mistakes with red pen.
15. He/she taught me in easy-to-understand English, using simple vocabulary.

## **2. Did the tutorial meet your expectation? Why or why not?**

1. It was just what I expected. I got advice that I could use not only now, but for my writing in the future, too.
2. Overall my expectations were met. At first I thought the mistakes in my essay would be highlighted one by one and explained to me; but thinking about it, it wasn't so much the writing tutor uni-directionally pointing out my mistakes to me as it was having someone to discuss and think things through with and then correcting and fixing my mistakes. I realized this is a good way of instructing.
3. My expectations were met. It was really easy to understand, with the writing tutor giving examples and explaining things to me.
4. The writing tutor taught me expressions I didn't understand on my own. I am very satisfied.
5. My expectations were exceeded. This is because the writing tutor fixed the parts I didn't think were good enough.
6. My expectations were exceeded. This is because the writing tutor didn't just give me the correct answer, but explained the reason why I was wrong and taught me the correct answer by asking questions.
7. My expectations were met. Because I didn't know how to write a report in English, the writing tutor also pointed out the mistakes I made in construction and grammar.
8. Yes, because the writing tutor was kind in how they taught me.
9. My expectations were met. This is because not only did the writing tutor correct my grammar and spelling, but also the overall content and construction of my writing.
10. I learned more than I thought I would.
11. I received the support I expected because I learned to recognize grammar errors that I didn't notice before.
12. I received the support I expected. He/she completely corrected my essay.
13. I received the support I expected. The session was not just the writing tutor speaking the whole time.
14. It left a good impression on me.
15. The quality of my report improved considerably.

16. I received the support I expected.

**3. What challenges did you find when working with the writing tutor? (for example miscommunication because of language)**

1. Nothing in particular.
2. It's not hard for me to converse in English, so there weren't any problems. Also, I didn't have any problem with the writing tutor's English pronunciation.
3. My English teacher's thoughts about how an essay should be constructed and what my writing tutor thought was a little bit different.
4. Nothing in particular.
5. Occasionally the writing tutor didn't understand my meaning, and it was hard.
6. Sometimes the writing tutor talked rather quickly and I couldn't catch what they were saying. However, the writing tutor would explain over and over again using different wording, which was really good.
7. Nothing in particular. The writing tutor carefully explained things in good Japanese.
8. When it was hard to explain what I wanted to say in English and I couldn't make myself understood.
9. Nothing in particular.
10. There were times when I could not communicate what I was thinking.
11. I had no problems because when I didn't understand something, he/she used simple English words.
12. I had no problems with the language. However, some of the words I found in the dictionary were so difficult even the writing tutor didn't understand them. The writing tutor told me he/she wasn't sure about the correct usage, but I think this is a problem with his/her English proficiency.
13. Selection of subjects; expression
14. It was fine.
15. Nothing in particular.
16. Nothing in particular.

**4. What recommendation would you suggest to improve the writing tutorial?**

1. Nothing in particular!

2. Because the setup was hard to figure out, I'd like to see more easily noticed and understood posters or something hung in front of SALC. For freshman or other people who haven't used SALC yet, if they can't figure out how to use it, in the end they end up not using it at all. If the University wants to raise TOEFL scores or students' average academic ability, then in order to accomplish that the University should make the maximum effort possible to increase the number of SALC users.
3. Today was the first time I used SALC Writing Support, but it was very easy to understand and I really felt like my essay got better because of it.
4. I think it would be nice if we could make appointments via the internet.
5. I don't think there's anything in particular you can improve. I plan to continue using SALC in the future.
6. I felt the method that the writing tutor I worked with this time used was really good: not just simply giving me the answer, but rather making me properly think things through and fix them myself.
7. I am satisfied. Thank you.
8. I would like more support staff and more native speakers.
9. Overall, I think it is fine, but if I had to say something, I would like extended hours for support.
10. The room is hot.
11. Nothing in particular.
12. I would like extended hours for support.
13. I think there should be more writing tutors. There aren't enough writing tutors, so some people have to wait to see a writing tutor.

## **Appendix 24: Final categories**

### CPT= Challenges Perceived by Tutors

CPT: Tutor takes teacher role  
CPT: Student doesn't remember what they wrote  
CPT: Students think in a Japanese way  
CPT: Student is passive  
CPT: Lack of Japanese student's English proficiency  
CPT: Lack of tutor self confidence because not a native speaker  
CPT: Student's expectation is different from the service  
CPT: Tutor Japanese proficiency not enough  
CPT: miscommunication  
CPT: Student's not motivated  
CPT: Different images of the role of the tutor  
CPT: Translate teacher feedback  
CPT: How to help with lexical issue  
CPT How to handle grammar issue  
CPT: Time management

### CPS=Challenges Perceived by Students

CPS: Miscommunication  
CPS: Students want native English teacher as tutor  
CPS :Varying expectations of the service  
CPS: Varying expectations of the role of the tutor  
CPS: Prefer English

### I=Issues

I: ESL methods don't work  
I: miscommunication  
I: Tutor's lack of knowledge about assignment, metalanguage  
I: Tutor is mediator for Teacher  
I: tutorials take a long time  
I: Appropriation  
I: Tutor takes teacher role  
I: Teacher doesn't understand the service  
I: student's can't remember what they wrote  
I: student is passive

## **Appendix 25: Data explanatory schema**

### **Proofreader:**

1. Issue
  - a. CPS varying expectations of the service as “fix up shop”
  - b. CPS varying expectations of the role of the PA as “proofreader”
  - c. CPT Student’s expect A+ after coming to the service
2. Challenge in the tutorial
  - a. I What level of help is okay
  - b. CPT how to handle lexical issue
  - c. I How to handle grammar issue

### **Translator:**

1. Issue
  - a. CPT students expect PA to translate essay
  - b. CPT Students think in Japanese way
  - c. CPT students don’t remember what they wrote
2. Challenge in the tutorial
  - a. I Appropriation
  - b. I Students don’t remember what they wrote

### **Coach:**

1. Issue
  - a. CPT students not motivated
  - b. CPT Student is passive
2. Challenge in the tutorial
  - a. I motivating students
  - b. I student is passive

### **Teacher:**

1. Issue
  - a. CPT PA takes teacher role
  - b. CPS Expect Native Speaker Expert
  - c. CPT Lack of PA self-confidence because not native speaker
2. Challenge in the tutorial
  - a. I PA takes teacher role
  - b. I PA’s lack knowledge of English

### **Mediator:**

1. Issue
  - a. CPT translate teacher feedback
2. Challenge in the tutorial
  - a. I tutor is mediator for the teacher
  - b. I PA’s lack knowledge of metalanguage

### **Fluent Japanese Speaker:**

1. Issue
  - a. CPS miscommunication
  - b. CPT miscommunication
  - c. CPT PA Japanese proficiency
  - d. CPS Prefer English
2. Challenge in the tutorial
  - a. I miscommunication

**Time Keeper:**

1. Issue
  - a. CPT time management
2. Challenge in the tutorial
  - a. I time management

**Issue that doesn't fit into a role**

Teacher does not understand the service.